



CURRENT CONNECT MARCH - 18

North Delhi	Central Delhi	Jaipur	Bhopal	Patna	Indore
2521, Hudson Line, Vijay Nagar, Near GTB Nagar Metro Station, Delhi 110009. Tel: 9717380832	1/1-A, 2nd Floor, Old Rajender Ngr. Market, Near Karol Bagh Metro Stn, Delhi - 110060. Tel: 9811293743	403-404, Apex Tower, Lal Kothi, Tonk Road Jaipur - 302015. Tel: 8290800441	43, R.R. Arcade, 2nd Floor, Zone II M.P.Nagar, Bhopal-462011. Tel: 7509975361	Above Toyota Showroom, Exhibition Road, Patna-800001. Tel: 9386337412	232-233, 2nd Floor ,Veda Building, Bhawar Kua Square, Indore - 452001. Tel: 9893772941

For any Query regarding Current Connect Pls. e-mail us at: cc@ksgindia.com

S.N.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
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 issues, National boundary and disputes	Indian society features, issues, 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- Amendments, 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 issues, 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, POI and other import ant 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 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 ant topics			
Mis.											

INDEX

1. No confidence Motion	5
2. Special Status to Andhra Pradesh	5
3. Transformation of Aspirational Districts	6
4. IMPRINT-II	7
5. Sri Lanka declares State of Emergency	8
6. Enemy Property Act	8
7. Protected Area Permit	9
8. Vehicle Scrapping Policy	10
9. International Women's Day 2018	11
10. Women Entrepreneurship Platform	11
11. Rajasthan passes Bill to give death penalty for Child Rape	12
12. Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018	13
13. Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT)	14
14. Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal	15
15. Annual Survey of India's City-Systems	16
16. Co-operative Election Authority	18
17. Higher Educational Institutions granted autonomy	18
18. India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians	19
19. National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement	20
20. Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana	21
21. Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry	21
22. Social Security for Construction Workers	22
23. e- Office Programme	23
24. Know India Programme (KIP)	23
25. National E-Mobility Programme	24
26. Social security scheme	25
27. Integrated Scheme for School Education	26
28. Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)	27
29. LaQshya Programme	28
30. India, Vietnam ink three MoUs	28
31. Myanmar puts off border pact with India	29
32. Philippines to quit International Criminal Court	30
33. Namaste Shalom	30
34. India, France New Confidentiality Agreement	30
35. International Competition Network	31
36. Odisha: KISS to host 'Commonwealth Big Lunch'	32
37. ACI World	32
38. Indo-French Knowledge Summit	33
39. World Hindi Secretariat	33
40. World Happiness Index	33
41. WEF Energy Transition Index	34
42. International Solar Alliance Meets in Delhi	34
43. In-situ management of crop residue	35
44. Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)	36
45. Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES)	38
46. Animal Welfare Board of India	39
47. Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences	39
48. Brazzaville Declaration	40
49. Yellow Fever	41
50. Global Status Report 2017	42
51. Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA TS) survey	43

52.	Neutrino project gets environmental nod	44
53.	Newton-Bhabha Fund	45
54.	A Floating Laboratory to save the Loktak Lake	45
55.	World Wildlife Day – Wildlife Under Threat	46
56.	Air-Breathing Electric Thruster	46
57.	Earth Hour 2018	47
58.	Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project	47
59.	South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme	48
60.	National Conference on Down Syndrome	48
61.	The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS)	49
62.	Regulation of E-Cigarettes	49
63.	Biggest space telescope Launch delayed	50
64.	Rare Disease Day	50
65.	105th Indian Science Congress	51
66.	Threat of new malware looms over cyberspace	51
67.	Airtel acquires India leg of GBI submarine cable	52
68.	Rydberg Polarons	53
69.	Shakti Sthala	53
70.	JNCASR's novel material to convert waste heat into electricity	54
71.	Govt. forms panel to probe illegal cultivation of HT Cotton	54
72.	HAMMER Spacecraft	54
73.	GSLV-F08/GSAT-6A Mission	54
74.	Copernicus	55
75.	Action Plan for Champion Sectors in Services	55
76.	Important indices	56
77.	Relief measures for telecom sector	58
78.	Dispute Settlement Body (DSB)	58
79.	National Financial Reporting Authority	58
80.	Privatisation of PSBs	59
81.	India Size Chart' Survey	61
82.	Centre sets up Panel to study issues in Fintech Space	61
83.	Continental Free Trade Area	62
84.	Draft Policy on Defence Production	62
85.	Exercises	64
86.	Crime Free Zone Along International Border	66
87.	Kuthiyottam Ritual	66
88.	Nabakalebar festival	67
89.	Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship	67
90.	Tribal Diaries	68
91.	Wings India-2018	68
92.	Chipko Movement	69
93.	Dr. Anandibai Joshi	69
94.	Smart India Hackathon-2018	69
95.	Diu becomes First UT to run 100% on Solar Power	69
96.	Concept Clearing Assignment	70
97.	P.T. Oriented Questions	71

No confidence Motion

Why in News

The no-confidence motion notices against the NDA government, moved by the TDP and the YSRCP for the Centre’s refusal to grant a special category status to Andhra Pradesh.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

No-confidence motion

While Article 75 of the Indian Constitution specifies that the council of ministers shall be collectively responsible to the House of the People, there is no mention of a no-confidence motion in the constitution: All it means is that the majority of Lok Sabha members must be with the Prime Minister and his Cabinet.

The Rajya Sabha does not have a procedure for moving of an adjournment motion, censure motion or no-confidence motion against the Government.

There is no mention of a no-confidence motion in the constitution.

PEPPER IT WITH
Censure Motion, No-Day-Yet-Named-Motion, Privilege Motion

Procedure

Article 118 of the Constitution permits each house of Parliament to make its own rules for conduct of business. **Rule 198 of the Lok Sabha** specifies the procedure for a motion of no-confidence. Any member might give a written notice before 10 am; the Speaker will read the motion of no-confidence in the House and ask all those favouring the motion be taken up to rise. If there are 50 MPs in favour, the Speaker could allot a date for discussing the motion – but this has to be within 10 days. However, this cannot be done in conditions of din or confusion in the House.

What happens if both a motion for no-confidence and a motion for confidence are tabled?

In 1990, when V P Singh had tabled a motion of confidence and a member had given the notice for a no-confidence motion, the Speaker had given precedence to government business and taken the motion of confidence.

What happens if the prime minister loses a motion of confidence?

He has to resign, and the President has to identify another person who enjoys the confidence of the Lok Sabha.

Special Status to Andhra Pradesh

Why in News

Andhra Pradesh Governor recently asked the Centre to expedite resolution of all provisions in the **AP Reorganisation Act, 2014**, including according special category status to the state.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

What is the basis of A.P.’s claim for SCS status?

Following the bifurcation of A.P., Andhra lost a large volume of its revenue due to Hyderabad remaining the capital of Telangana. In a debate in the Rajya Sabha on the A.P. Reorganisation Act in 2014, then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had said that SCS would be “extended to the Successor State of Andhra Pradesh for a period of five years.” This oral submission by the then PM has been the basis for A.P.’s claim to the status.

14th Finance Commission viewpoint

The 14th Finance Commission did away with distinction between general and special category states since it had taken into account the level of backwardness of states in the proposed transfer of funds to states. The granting of special category status itself was restricted by the 14th Finance Commission. It suggested that the resource gap of each state be filled through ‘tax devolution’, **urging the Centre to increase its share of tax revenues to the states from 32% to 42%.** If

devolution alone could not cover the revenue gap for certain states, the Commission said, the Centre could provide a revenue deficit grant to these states.

What is Special Category Status?

Special Category Status used to be granted to some regions that have historically been at a disadvantage compared with the rest of the country. This decision was taken by the **National Development Council (NDC)**, a body of the former Planning Commission, and was based on various parameters such as:

1. Hilly and difficult terrain
2. Low population density
3. Low resource base
4. Strategic location along the borders of the country
5. Economic and infrastructure backwardness
6. Non-viable nature of the state’s finances.
7. Sizable share of tribal population

PEPPER IT WITH
AP Re-organisation Act,
Gadgil-Mukherjee formula

They are seven States of North-Eastern regions (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland and Tripura), Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand recognized as SCS by NDC.

Benefits availed by SCS

1. Preferential treatment in getting central funds assistance
2. Concession on excise duty to attract industries to the state
3. A significant 30 per cent of the Centre’s gross budget goes to the special category states
4. These states can avail the benefit of debt swapping and debt relief schemes
5. In the case of centrally sponsored schemes and external aid, special category states get it in the ratio of 90 per cent grants and 10 per cent loans, while other states get 30 per cent of their funds as grants.
6. Tax breaks to attract investment

Transformation of Aspirational Districts

Why in News

Cabinet Secretary recently in a meeting reviewed the progress of the transformation of 115 Aspirational Districts. The meeting was attended by the **Prabhari Officers**, the officer in-charge coordinating the exercise for transformation of 115 Aspirational Districts along with the Secretaries and representatives from 12 Union ministries.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Transformation of Aspirational District Scheme

1. The Government, in November 2017, identified 115 backward districts for rapid transformation by 2022, the 75th year of India’s independence.
2. The strategy envisaged is to adopt a focused approach, ensure convergence of efforts of the Central, State and local Government and establish a real time monitoring mechanism to focus on outcomes that matter to common people in these backward districts beside giving rise to a virtuous cycle of economic development.
3. For each of the Districts, a senior official in the rank of Additional secretary and Joint secretary has been nominated as **Prabhari officer**.

Criteria of selection

A total of 115 districts have been identified for this purpose on the basis of objective criteria. These districts include 35 districts which are affected by violence by Left Wing Extremists.

Such criteria include **49 indicators across 5 sectors:**

KSG – (DELHI VN) 9717380832, (DELHI RN), (JAIPUR) 8290800441, (BHOPAL) 7509975361, (PATNA) 7463950774, (INDORE) 7314977441, www.ksgindia.com

1. Agriculture and water resources
2. health & nutrition (institutional delivery, stunting of children and wasting in children)
3. education (elementary dropout rate and adverse pupil-teacher ratio)
4. infrastructure (un-electrified homes, lack of toilets, villages not connected by road and lack of drinking water)
5. financial inclusion and skill development

PEPPER IT WITH
HMIS, MPLAD, Mission
Antyodaya, DAY-NRLM

Way Ahead

If these districts are transformed, there would be tremendous improvement in the internal security environment of the country. If Prabhari officers can bring convergence in the development efforts of different Ministries and state Governments and the schemes specially launched by Home Ministry in these districts, it would serve as a great opportunity to ensure rapid development in the country. The importance of convergence of the efforts of ASHA, ANM and Anganwadi workers can't be overlooked to trickle down the benefits till grass root level.

IMPRINT-II

Why in News

The Union Minister for Human Resources and Development recently said that in a major boost for research and innovation in the country, the Central Government has sanctioned a sum of Rs. 1000 crore for the phase two of the **Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT) India** programme.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

IMPRINT

It is the first of its kind **MHRD supported Pan-IIT + IISc joint initiative** to address the major science and engineering challenges that India must address and champion to enable, empower and embolden the nation for inclusive growth and self-reliance. This novel initiative with twofold mandate is aimed at:

- (a) Developing new engineering education policy
- (b) Creating a road map to pursue engineering challenges

IMPRINT provides the overarching vision that guides research into areas that are predominantly socially relevant.

These projects cover crucial domains like security and defence, information technology, energy, sustainable habitat, advance materials, health care, nano technology, climate change, etc.

Aim

Address all major engineering challenges faced by the nation by translating knowledge into viable technology (product/process)

IMPRINT II

PEPPER IT WITH
SWIFT, ICEGATE portal

IMPRINT-2 has been approved by Government of India (GoI) with a revised strategy under which, this national initiative will be jointly funded and steered by MHRD and Department of Science and Technology (DST). The project will be run as a separate vertical in coordination with the DST. Prof. Indranil Manna of IIT-Kharagpur will be the National Coordinator.

Features

1. Principal objective is to translate knowledge into viable technology
2. About 425 projects with up to Rs 2 crore budget will be supported
3. MHRD and DST are equal partners to steer the scheme
4. IMPRINT-2 is open to all MHRD funded HEIs / CFTIs

- 5. 27 ministries of GoI remain partners of IMPRINT-2
- 6. Projects with industry support will be preferred

Sri Lanka declares state of emergency

Why in News

Sri Lanka has imposed a nationwide state of emergency of 10 days for the first time since the civil war era in response to days of violent unrest between Sinhalese and Muslim communities.

Issue

The violence in **Kandy** is understood to have been sparked when a group of Muslim men in **Digana** town were accused of killing a man belonging to the majority **Sinhala Buddhist community**, who make up about 75% of the population.

Some Buddhist nationalists (**BoduBalaSena**) have also protested against the presence in Sri Lanka of Muslim Rohingya asylum-seekers from mostly Buddhist Myanmar, where Buddhist nationalism has also been on the rise.

Facts

PEPPER IT WITH
Maldives' political crisis

- ❖ Muslims make up about 9 percent of Sri Lanka's 21 million people. Buddhists make up about 70 percent and ethnic Tamils, most of whom are Hindus, about 13 percent.
- ❖ Sinhalese: They are an Indo-Aryan-speaking ethnic group native to the island of Sri Lanka. They constitute about 70% of the Sri Lankan population. The Sinhalese people speak the Sinhalese language, an Indo-Aryan language, and are predominantly Theravada Buddhists, although a small percentage of Sinhalese follow branches of Christianity.
- ❖ **PM** Ranil Wickremesinghe **President** Maithripala Sirisena.
- ❖ **Kandy is a Sinhala majority city**; there are sizable communities belonging to other ethnic groups, such as Moors and Tamils. The city remains an important religious centre of the Sinhalese and a place of pilgrimage for Buddhists, namely those belonging to the Theravada school.
- ❖ The Royal Palace of Kandy (known as Mahawāsala), located to the north of the Temple of the Tooth (Daladā Māligāwa) in Kandy.

Enemy Property Act

Why in News

The government has started the process of monetisation of more than 9,400 enemy properties by issuing guidelines and directing the office of the custodian to submit a list of all such movable and immovable assets.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II	■										
III											
IV											
M											

The Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Act, 2017

- It voids the legal sales undertaken by enemies of enemy properties since 1968. This means that a person who may have bought an enemy property in good faith when such sale and purchase was legal, now stands to lose the property.
- It prohibits Indian citizens who are legal heirs of enemies from inheriting enemy property and brings them within the definition of 'enemy'.
- It prohibits civil courts and other authorities from hearing certain disputes relating to enemy property.
- Retrospectively amends the definition from 1968 to include: (i) legal heirs of enemies even if they are citizens of India; (ii) enemies who have changed their nationality; (iii) enemy firms which have partners who are Indians, etc.

What are enemy properties?

The term “enemy property” is derived from the Enemy Property Act of 1968 (EPA 1968), which allowed the government to vest all property belonging to Pakistani and Chinese nationals in India. This law was a result of the wars India fought with Pakistan and China in the 1960s.

Present scenario

1. The government has vested these properties in the Custodian of Enemy Property for India, an office instituted under the central government and directing the office of the custodian to submit a list of all such movable and immovable assets.
2. The move comes after the amendment of the Enemy Property (Amendment and Validation) Act 2017 and the Enemy Property (Amendment) Rules, 2018, which ensured that the heirs of those who migrated to Pakistan and China during partition and afterwards will have no claim over the properties left behind in India.
3. There are 9,280 properties left behind by Pakistani nationals and 126 properties which belonged to Chinese nationals. The sale of enemy properties is expected to fetch around Rs 1 lakh crore for the government exchequer.
4. The central government will also constitute an Enemy Property Disposal Committee, with an additional secretary of the MHA as chairman and an additional secretary and financial adviser in the ministry, joint secretary in the Department of Disinvestment and Public Asset Management, joint secretary in the Ministry of Law and Justice, chief engineer, CPWD, Custodian of the enemy property for India as members, and the joint secretary in the MHA dealing with the enemy property as member-secretary.

Protected Area Permit

Why in News

The Centre is set to relax the Protected Area Permit (PAP) regime to enable foreign tourists to access border areas.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Protected Area Permit (PAP)

Every foreigner except a citizen of Bhutan, who desires to enter and stay in a Protected Area, is required to obtain a special permit called **PAP** from a competent authority delegated with powers to issue such a special permit to a foreigner on application.

Under the **Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958**, all areas falling between the ‘Inner line’, as defined in the said order, and the International Border of the State have been declared as a Protected Area. Currently, Protected Areas are located in the following States: -

1. Whole of Arunachal Pradesh
2. Parts of Himachal Pradesh
3. Parts of Jammu & Kashmir
4. Whole of Manipur
5. Whole of Mizoram
6. Whole of Nagaland
7. Parts of Rajasthan
8. Whole of Sikkim (partly in Protected Area and partly in
9. Restricted Area)
10. Parts of Uttarakhand

Restricted Area Permit (RAP)

Every foreigner except a citizen of Bhutan, who desires to enter and stay in a Restricted Area, is required to obtain a special permit called **RAP** from a competent authority delegated with powers to issue such a special permit to a foreigner on application.

Under the Foreigners (Restricted) Areas Order, 1963, the following areas have been declared as 'Restricted' Areas:

1. Andaman & Nicobar Islands - Entire Union Territory
2. Sikkim - Part of the State

Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals of Pakistani origin are not issued the permit without the Home Ministry's approval.

Inner Line Permit

Inner Line Permit (ILP) is an official travel document issued by competent authority of GoI to allow travel permission to Indian citizen into a protected area for a limited period.

Inner Line Permit is required for Indian citizens to enter Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Mizoram. Inner Line Permit is issued under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation.

Vehicle Scrapping Policy

Why in News

The much-awaited policy was given 'in-principle' approval at a high-level inter-ministerial meeting at the PMO to pave way for scrapping of **20 years** old commercial vehicles (CVs) from April 1, 2020.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Key Highlights

1. The policy targets to take polluting vehicles out of the roads and help the automobile industry register higher sales.
2. Medium and heavy commercial vehicles (M & HCVs) that typically have a life of 20 years, would be eligible under the scheme.
3. As per the Ministry's draft on 'voluntary vehicle fleet modernisation plan,' vehicles bought on or before March 31, 2005, would be eligible for the scheme and get 50% waiver on excise duty, scrap value of the truck and additional discounts from the original equipment manufacturers.
4. The benefit offered under the scrappage policy would be 15% of the vehicle's price. But this advantage would be muted as prices of diesel vehicles were expected to rise 10-15% once the new norms (**BS-VI**) come into force.
5. The Road Transport and Highways Ministry is keen on implementing the **Voluntary Vehicle Fleet Modernisation Programme** (V-VMP) policy that aims at scrapping 20-year-old commercial vehicles in the first phase.

PEPPER IT WITH
V-VMP policy, BS-VI norm, Motor Vehicle Act

Concerns

- The new policy for scrapping of 20-year-old vehicles is likely have limited impact and may not boost demand for new vehicles significantly as per Crisil Research.
- The total population of commercial vehicles that will be older than 20 years in fiscal 2021 would be 50,000 vehicles, much lower than the government's earlier estimate of 2.8 crore vehicles and our internal estimate of 6,40,000 vehicles.
- Most of these older vehicles are used in rural areas and smaller towns by small fleet operators who operate used vehicles and have limited financial resources to purchase new vehicles. Thus, the proposed scrappage policy is unlikely to be materially positive for commercial vehicle demand.

International Women’s Day 2018

Why in News

International Women’s Day is being celebrated on March 8 across the world.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I					■						
II								■			
III											
IV											
M											

About

- This year, International Women’s Day comes on the heels of unprecedented global movement for women’s rights, equality and justice. This has taken the form of global marches and campaigns, including **#MeToo** and **#TimesUp** in the United States of America and their counterparts in other countries, on issues ranging from sexual harassment and femicide to equal pay and women’s political representation.
- Echoing the priority theme of the upcoming 62nd session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women, International Women’s Day will also draw attention to the rights and activism of rural women, who make up over a quarter of the world population and are being left behind in every measure of development.
- The first Women’s Day was celebrated on February 28, 1909, in New York by the Socialist Party of America.
- In 1910, a **German activist Clara Zetkin** proposed the idea of celebrating Women’s Day in March at the 1910 International Conference of Working Women in Copenhagen.

PEPPER IT WITH
 #YesIBleed Campaign, Nari Shakti Puraskar, WASH, UdyamSakhi Portal, Swachh Shakti 2018

The government has expanded the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao programme from 161 districts to all the 640 districts in India.

The government has launched ‘Suvidha’, the 100% **Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin**, under the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).

Theme

The theme for International Women’s Day 2018 is **‘Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women’s lives.’** The theme aims to encourage women to raise voice for their rights and promote growing global movement to support gender parity.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform

Why in News

NITI Aayog launched the Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP), on the occasion of International Women’s Day recently.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I					■						
II								■			
III											
IV											
M											

Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP)

- WEP would provide a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem where women do not face any gender-based barriers. The platform aspires to substantially increase the number of women entrepreneurs who will create and empower a dynamic New India. WEP will provide opportunities to women to realize their entrepreneurial aspirations, scale-up innovative initiatives and chalk-out sustainable, long-term strategies for their businesses.
- The WEP theme song **“Naari Shakti”** composed and sung by Kailash Kher was released on this occasion.

- WEP is to operate within a broader framework of industry collaborations and partnerships, which cut across sectors in the economy. From providing unique services such as credit evaluation of women-led startups by CRISIL and potential equity investments through an INR 10 crore fund established by DICE Districts, the WEP opens up avenues of growth and opportunity for women entrepreneurs.
- **WEP was envisaged by the CEO NITI Aayog** during Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) last year in Hyderabad. The three pillars on which WEP is built are:
 - ✓ **Ichha Shakti** (motivating aspiring entrepreneurs to start their enterprise)
 - ✓ **Gyaan Shakti** (providing knowledge and ecosystem support to women entrepreneurs to help them foster entrepreneurship)
 - ✓ **Karma Shakti** (providing hands-on support to entrepreneurs in setting-up and scaling up businesses).

Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (FINE)

It is a celebration of country's Innovation potential, particularly those ideas which stem from grassroots level including the citizen at the last mile and also a reflection of power of children's creativity. It is an initiative to recognise, respect, showcase, reward innovations and to foster a supportive ecosystem for innovators.

The WEP shall aim to:

1. Promote women entrepreneurship by collaborating with various partner organisations.
2. Provide industry linkages & partner support to women entrepreneurs Increase the visibility of existing schemes, programmes & services across government and private sectors
3. Identify and address issues and bottlenecks through appropriate channels
4. Develop a national database through a centralised portal for registration of women entrepreneurs
5. Provide evidence-based policy recommendations to develop a vibrant entrepreneurial ecosystem

According to the index India scored an overall 41.7 points, ranking 49 among 54 economies globally with comparatively low in Women Business Ownership percentages.

Way Ahead

While necessity and grit are often important to foster women entrepreneurship, strong supporting conditions are an imperative for ensuring a high business ownership by women. While India is yet to travel a long road for scaling up opportunities that foster women entrepreneurship, the potential presented by the country is vast. Women entrepreneurs have been carving out a niche for them across the globe, including India especially in niche and unconventional businesses. However, there is significant potential to harness the untapped potential of women's entrepreneurship in India.

PEPPER IT WITH
Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs, Women Business Ownership' index, WomenInTech' forum

Rajasthan passes Bill to give Death Penalty for Child Rape

Why in News

Rajasthan has passed a Bill providing for death penalty to those convicted of raping girls of 12 years and below.

Background

The National Crime Records Bureau-2016 report ranked Rajasthan in the fifth position in crimes against women, with 27,422 cases being reported in 2016. The total

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II	■										
III											
IV											
M											

number of rape cases registered in 2016 came up to 3,656 – half a dozen of which involved children under six years of age; 37 pertained to kids under 12; 195 were against those below 16; and 539 concerned those between 16 and 18.

Key Highlights

- 1. It is the prime duty of the state and society to protect children against all odds and provide them with an environment conducive for their mental and physical development. This is why such heinous offences need to be dealt with an iron hand and The Criminal Laws (Rajasthan amendment) Bill-2018 is introduced.
2. The Criminal Laws (Rajasthan amendment) Bill-2018, which found unanimous support cutting across party lines, was introduced in the state assembly recently. The amendment was carried out through the insertion of two sections (376-AA and 376-DD) into the Indian Penal Code-1860.
3. Section 376-AA states that whoever rapes a girl of up to 12 years of age shall be punished with death or rigorous imprisonment for a term that shall not be less than 14 years but may extend to the remainder of his natural life. The convict will also be liable to pay a fine.
4. Section 376-DD – on the other hand – specifies that those found guilty of gang-raping a girl of up to 12 years shall be punished with death or awarded rigorous imprisonment for a term not less than 20 years and extending to the remainder of their natural lives. The convicts will also be liable to pay a fine.
5. Rajasthan has become the second State, after Madhya Pradesh, to pass a Bill providing for death penalty to those convicted of raping girls of 12 years and below.
6. The Bill will become a law after it gets the Presidential assent.

Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018

Why in News

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal of the Ministry of Finance to introduce the Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 in Parliament. The Bill would help in laying down measures to deter economic offenders from evading the process of Indian law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts.

GS CONNECT table with columns 1-11 and rows I, II, III, IV, M.

Key Highlights

- 1. Who is Fugitive economic offender? A fugitive economic offender has been defined as a person against whom an arrest warrant has been issued for committing any offence (listed in the schedule). Further the person has: (i) left the country to avoid facing prosecution, or (ii) refuses to return to face prosecution. Some of the offences listed in the schedule are: (i) counterfeiting government stamps or currency, (ii) cheque dishonour for insufficiency of funds, (iii) money laundering, and (iv) transactions defrauding creditors. The Bill allows the central government to amend the schedule through a notification.
2. How a person is declared an offender? A director or deputy director (appointed under the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002) may file an application before a special court (designated under the 2002 Act) to declare a person as a fugitive economic offender. The application will contain: (i) the reasons to believe that an individual is a fugitive economic offender, (ii) any information about his whereabouts, (iii) a list of properties believed to be proceeds of a crime for which confiscation is sought, (iv) a list of benami properties or foreign properties for which confiscation is sought, and (v) a list of persons having an interest in these properties.
3. What does the offender have to do? Upon receiving an application, the special court will issue a notice to the individual: (i) requiring him to appear at a specified place within six weeks, and (ii) stating that a failure to appear will result in him being declared a fugitive

economic offender. If the person appears at the specified place, the special court will terminate its proceedings under the provisions of this Bill.

4. The Bill will give the right to the government to confiscate the property of such economic offenders in India and abroad. The Bill will also be applicable on the proxy-owned properties of the economic offenders.
5. The Bill makes provisions for a Court ('Special Court' under the Prevention of Money-laundering Act, 2002) to declare a person as a Fugitive Economic Offender.
6. The cases where the total value involved in such offences is Rs.100 crore or more, will come under the purview of this Bill.

Significance

In order to address the lacunae in the present laws and lay down measures to deter economic offenders from evading the process of Indian law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts, the Bill is being proposed. This would also help the banks and other financial institutions to achieve higher recovery from financial defaults committed by such fugitive economic offenders, improving the financial health of such institutions. The Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill 2018 is expected to quicken and facilitate the seizure of assets of scheduled economic offender. More importantly, the Bill addresses the trending habit of economic offenders to exit the country and stay abroad to escape the legal proceedings in India.

PEPPER IT WITH
PMLA 2012, NFRA, NPA

Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT)

Why in News

A recent decision of the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal's Pune bench allowing pharmaceutical companies to account for their spending on doctors as a deductible expenditure has sparked off a fresh debate on ethics.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II			■								
III											
IV											
M											

Issue

Since the companies are out of the purview of the Medical Council of India (MCI), money spent on promotions, which in some cases could be gifts, travel, and hospitality and so on for doctors, besides medical conferences and samples, can be claimed as deductible expenditure. Doctors accepting such promotions may be violating the code of ethics of the MCI.

About ITAT

- **ITAT is a quasi-judicial institution** set up in January 1941 and specializes in dealing with appeals under the Direct Taxes Acts.
- It was set up by virtue of section 5A of the Income Tax Act, 1922.
- It functions under **the Department of Legal Affairs in the Ministry of Law and Justice.**
- By virtue of **Article 227** of the Constitution, the Tribunal is under the superintendence of the High Court and thus subordinating to the High Court and is bound to follow the judgment of the High Court in the State in which it functions and of the Supreme Court under **Article 141.**
- The Appellate Tribunal shall consist of **judicial members and accountant members** as hereinafter defined.
- A **judicial member** shall be a person who has for at least ten years either held a civil judicial post or been in practice as an advocate of a High Court, and an **accountant member** shall be a person who has for at least ten years been in the practice of accountancy as a chartered accountant.

POWERS AND FUNCTIONS:

1. Power to Restore an Ex-parte order
2. Power to Restore Appeal
3. Power of Remand
4. Power to Admit New Plea
5. Power of Review and Rectification
6. Power to Recall Its Order

PEPPER IT WITH
 Securities Appellate Tribunal, Benami law

Significance

The most essential quality of ITAT is imparting justice to the litigants by an inexpensive, forum free from technicalities and its expert knowledge on the subject of Direct Taxes. It is noteworthy that the success and achievement of ITAT has motivated the Government of India to constitute similar Appellate Tribunals for indirect taxes i.e. Central Administrative Tribunal, Railway Claims Tribunal, Foreign Exchange Appellate Board, etc. Indian tax administration and adjudication needs urgent reforms. For this, a comprehensive performance analysis of ITAI is necessary. Also, more studies should be conducted to identify the exact institutional weaknesses in tax administration, improving which could help improve India’s low ranking on the “Paying Taxes” parameter in the Ease of Doing Business Index.

Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal

Why in News

The Union Cabinet recently approved the setting up of a tribunal to settle a row between **Odisha and Chhattisgarh** on sharing the waters of the river Mahanadi.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II			■								
III											
IV											
M											

Background

The Mahanadi water Dispute Tribunal shall determine water sharing among basin States on the basis of the overall availability of water in the complete Mahanadi basin, contribution of each State, the present utilization of water resources in each State and the potential for future development.

As per provisions of the **ISRWD Act, 1956** the Tribunal is required to submit its report and decision within a period of 3 years which can be extended to a further period not exceeding 2 years due to unavoidable reasons.

As per provisions of the Inter-State River Water Disputes (ISRWD) Act, 1956, the Tribunal shall consist of a **Chairman and two other Members nominated by the Chief Justice of India from amongst the Judges of the Supreme Court or High Court.**

PEPPER IT WITH
 ISRWD Act, Mahanadi Bachao Manch, Upper riparian state

- 1) Mr Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, Judge, Supreme Court of India as Chairman
- 2) Dr Justice Ravi Ranjan, Judge, Patna High Court as Member
- 3) Mrs Justice Indermeet Kaur Kochhar, Judge, Delhi High Court as Member

Bone of contentions

- ❖ The team Odisha government alleged that the Chhattisgarh government has been supplying water from the controversial **Kelo project** to industries, instead of using it for drinking and irrigation purposes.
- ❖ According to Odisha, Chhattisgarh reportedly plans to build 13 barrages across the Mahanadi, in a plan to extract more water. Chhattisgarh has also been constructing 7 pickup weirs (small dams) across the river.

- ❖ Odisha govt. claimed that water flow will fall further after Chhattisgarh constructs six industrial barrages — **Kalma, Saradi, Basantpur, Mirauni, Sheorinarayan and Samoda** — on the Mahanadi. Incidentally, four of the structures have already been completed.
- ❖ The Chhattisgarh government defended the ongoing projects by stating that they would impact less than 4% of the river water. “These barrages are designed to store monsoon water, so they can be used in the summer. No non-monsoon water will be stored.
- ❖ Chhattisgarh has been against the setting up of a tribunal and argued that the water sharing agreement was with the erstwhile Madhya Pradesh government, before the state was carved out in 2000.

Mahanadi Facts

- ✓ Mahanadi originates in **Sihawa Mountains** in **Dhamtari district** of Chhattisgarh terminating in Bay of Bengal.
- ✓ Total Length: 851km Odisha: 494 km Chhattisgarh: 357km
- ✓ Total drainage area of basin 141,589 km2 Chhattisgarh: 75,136 | Odisha: 65,238 | Jharkhand: 635 | Maharashtra: 238
- ✓ It is bounded by the **Central India hills** on the north, by the **Eastern Ghats** on the south and east and by the **Maikala range** on the west.
- ✓ The main soil types found in the basin are red and yellow soils, mixed red and black soils, laterite soils, and deltaic soils.
- ✓ At Sambalpur the **Hirakud Dam** on the Mahanadi River has formed a man-made lake 35 miles (55 km) long.
- ✓ It enters Orissa State below **Baloda Bazaar** and crosses the Eastern Ghats to enter the Plains of Orissa near Cuttack.
- ✓ Tributaries of the Mahanadi include the **Tel, Mand, and Hasdo rivers**.
- ✓ On the environmental front, as many as six biodiversity hotspots in Odisha, including the Bhitarkanika wildlife sanctuary, Chilika Lake, Tikarpada sanctuary and Chandaka elephant reserve, directly depend on the river.

Dry facts

- 1) By 2051, Odisha and Chhattisgarh will need 36.18 MAF and 27.48 MAF water per year from Mahanadi respectively.
- 2) The total availability of water from the river currently stands at 40 MAF. This will only reduce as the years go by.
- 3) The total catchment area is 1.41 lakh square kilometres (45.73 % in Odisha and 53.9% in Chhattisgarh).
- 4) Over three crore people are likely to be affected across Chhattisgarh and Odisha dispute.

Annual Survey of India’s City-Systems

Why in News

Pune came on top in the fifth edition of the Annual Survey of India’s City-Systems (ASICS), edging out Thiruvananthapuram which had topped the previous two editions of the survey. Bengaluru was ranked at the bottom.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

About

- ❖ ASICS is India's only **independent** benchmarking of cities using a systemic framework. It evaluates India's city-systems: the complex, mostly-invisible factors (such as **laws, policies, institutions, institutional processes**) that underpin urban governance and strongly influence the quality of life in India's cities.
- ❖ ASICS is a health diagnostic of our cities; the better a city scores, the better it stands to provide its citizens high quality of life in the medium to long term.
- ❖ ASICS aims to provide a common frame of reference for political and administrative leaders, business and academia, media and civil society, in different cities to converge on their agenda

for transformative reforms. In its 5th edition, ASICS 2017 brings insights and data on City-Systems to the foreground.

- ❖ It is prepared by **Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy**, a Bengaluru-based non-profit institution.

“City-systems” refer to laws, policies, quality of institutions and accountability mechanisms that drive or give rise to the quality of life that we experience in our daily lives. ‘City-Systems’ are interconnected and interdependent and emphasize the systemic nature of our cities, their challenges and solutions.

Parameters

The cities were measured under four key components of governance: urban planning and design; urban capacities and resources; empowered and legitimate political representation; transparency, and accountability and participation.

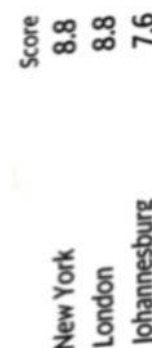
Performance of various cities

TOP FIVE CITIES

Rank 2016	Rank 2017		Score
2	1 ▲	Pune	5.1
3	2 ▲	Kolkata	4.6
1	3 ▼	Thiruvananthapuram	4.6
10	4 ▲	Bhubaneswar	4.6
17	5 ▲	Surat	4.5

BOTTOM FIVE CITIES

Rank 2016	Rank 2017		Score
16	23 ▼	Bengaluru	3
21	22 ▼	Chandigarh	3.1
18	21 ▼	Dehradun	3.1
11	20 ▼	Patna	3.3
8	19 ▼	Chennai	3.3



Challenges

1. The pace of reforms in India has been painfully slow. Recurring floods, garbage crises, air pollution, fire accidents, building collapses and dengue outbreaks are symptoms of this deeper governance crisis in our cities.
2. India’s cities have virtually no platforms where citizens can participate in matters in their neighbourhood. This impacts not just municipal accountability, but the quality of democracy itself.
3. Lack of a modern, contemporary framework of spatial planning of cities and design standards for public utilities such as roads, footpaths, bus stops and other underground utilities such as water and sewerage networks
4. Weak finances, both in terms of financial sustainability and financial accountability of cities
5. Poor human resource management, in terms of number of staff, skills and competencies of staff, organisation design and performance management
6. Powerless mayors and city councils and severe fragmentation of governance across municipalities, parastatal agencies and state departments
7. Total absence of platforms for systematic citizen participation and lack of transparency in finances and operations of cities

Way Forward

The report underlines the need for sharp focus on city-systems or institutional reforms to city governance in our cities. This indicates slow progress on fixing city-systems which is worrisome given the pace at which India is urbanising and the already poor state of public service delivery in our cities.

PEPPER IT WITH
ULBs, AMRUT, Smart Star-Rating of Garbage-Free Cities

Co-operative Election Authority

Why in News?

The Haryana government recently announced that a Cooperative Election Authority would be set up in the State for supervising the election process in cooperative bodies.

The authority would have the powers of superintendence, direction and control of the election process in the cooperative organizations. Strengthening the cooperative sector will enable people to capitalize on their collective strength of human and economic resource.

Constitution 97th Amendment Act, 2011

The constitution 97th amendment is mainly aimed at encouraging the development of cooperatives in India. As per the amendment, the changes done to the constitution are:

- In part III of the constitution, in **Article 19**, after words “or unions” the words “Cooperative Societies” was added.
- In Part IV of the constitution a **new Article 43B** was inserted, which says that The state shall endeavour to promote voluntary formation, autonomous functioning, democratic control and professional management of the co-operative societies”.
- After Part IXA of the constitution, a new part- Part IXB was inserted to accommodate State vs Centre roles. **It added article 243ZH-ZT.**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II	■										
III											
IV											
M											

- Co-operatives were introduced to India **in 1904 when the Indian Co-operative Societies Act was promulgated.**
- **Right to form cooperatives is a fundamental right**
- In India there are four major types of cooperatives –
 - i. The Primary agricultural credit or service societies
 - ii. Agricultural non-credit societies
 - iii. Agricultural co-operative marketing societies
 - iv. Co-operative farming societies

Higher Educational Institutions granted autonomy

Why in News

In a historic decision recently, the University Grants Commission has granted autonomy to 60 Higher Educational Institutions which have maintained high academic standards.

Implications of move

- ✓ Although these universities will remain within the UGC’s ambit, they will have the freedom to launch new courses, off-campus centres, skill development courses, research parks and new academic programmes.
- ✓ They will also have the freedom to hire foreign faculty members, enroll foreign students, give incentive-based emoluments to faculty members, enter into academic collaborations and run open-distance learning programmes.
- ✓ They will also be exempt from regular UGC inspections, obtaining appraisals on the basis of self-reporting. Besides this, they will be allowed to hire global talent for up to 20% of their total faculty strength and fill up 20% of their seats with international students.

Criteria

The UGC had earlier approved the (Categorisation of Universities for Grant of Graded Autonomy) Regulations-2018, under which autonomy was granted to these institutes.

PEPPER IT WITH
AICTE, HEEFA,
HEERA, UGC, SATH-E

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II			■								
III											
IV											
M											

1. Academic reputation and previous performance in university examinations and its academic/co-curricular/extension activities in the past.
2. Academic/extension / research achievements of the faculty.
3. Quality and merit in the selection of students and teachers, subject to statutory requirements in this regard.
4. Adequacy of infrastructure, for example, library, equipment, accommodation for academic activities, etc.
5. Quality of institutional management

106th Indian Science Congress theme: **“Future India: Science & Technology”** to be held at Bhopal.
 105th Indian Science Congress Theme: **“Reaching the Unreached Through Science & Technology”** held at Manipur.

Way Forward

This is certainly a welcome step. They have reduced the oversight of the UGC, which is crucial. Its role has been extremely regressive and counter-productive in the last few years. This will also reduce governmental interference in the day-to-day affairs of universities. It will induct competition among institutions and propel them to achieve international standards across globe. Autonomy will help institutionalise quality and accountability, thereby encouraging institutions to incorporate unique developments and practices into the curriculum which will prepare the youth of India to embrace Industry 4.0 in an efficient and effective way.

India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians

Why in News

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for closure of India Development Foundation of Overseas Indians (IDF-OI) to enhance synergies in channelizing Diaspora's contributions to Government of India's flagship programmes such as National Mission for clean Ganga and Swachh Bharat Mission.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

About IDF-OI

1. IDF-OI was set up by Government of India with the approval of Cabinet in 2008 as an autonomous not-for-profit Trust, to facilitate Overseas Indian philanthropy into social and development projects in India.
2. IDF-OI used to promote flagship programmes of Government of India- Swachh Bharat Mission and National Mission for Clean Ganga; and projects identified by the State Govts, for funding by Overseas Indians.
3. IDF-OI receives a Grant-in-Aid from the Government of India for meeting its operational expenses and administrative costs for its activities and outreach. Therefore, **IDF-OI does not deduct any operational or administrative charges** from the contributions it receives from Overseas Indians.
4. **Chairperson:** External Affairs Minister

Reason for shutdown

Its ambit of work was promotion of Government of India's Flagship programmes - National Mission for Clean Ganga and Swachh Bharat Mission; and Social and Development projects identified by State Governments - was added to the mandate of IDF-OI. In order to enhance synergies, improve efficiencies and avoid duplication of work, it was decided by the 9th Meeting of Board of Trustees of the IDF-OI that the Trust would be closed down by March 31, 2018.

National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement

Why in News

The Ministry of State for Home Affairs inaugurated the two-day first National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement recently. The conference is being organised by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB).

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Issues on horizon

1. Narco-terrorism and its funding is a serious problem for the world, especially for India. Inaugurating the two-day first National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement and highlighting the challenge for law enforcement agencies and the society is to prevent drug abuse among youth. The problem of drug trafficking assumes importance for India as it lies in the **“Golden Crescent” and “Golden Triangle”** as a transit route for drug mafia.
2. Conference working sessions are focused on various topics such as ‘Wider context of drug trafficking in India’, ‘Financial Investigations’ and ‘Foreign & Cyber Investigations’.
3. Involvement of foreign nationals in drug peddling poses another significant challenge of drug trafficking in India. During 2017, 332 foreign national have been arrested in drug cases in India. These foreign nationals were found involved in trafficking of Cocaine from South America to India via Africa and trafficking of Heroin and Precursor chemicals to South East Asia and Africa.
4. The illicit cultivation of Opium and Cannabis in some parts of India is a matter of concern and must be suppressed and also diversion of precursor chemicals and production and trafficking of New Psychoactive Substances poses another challenge.

The National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances is based on the Directive Principles, contained in Article 47 of the Indian Constitution, which direct the State to endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption, except for medicinal purposes, of intoxicating drugs injurious to health.

Government initiative against Drug trafficking

The Government has framed several strict policies and taken harsh initiatives to deal with drug trafficking problem.

- ✓ It constituted **Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD)** and revived the scheme of “Financial Assistance to States for Narcotics Control”. Besides the government approved new Reward Guidelines with increased quantum of reward for interdiction or seizure of different illicit drugs.
- ✓ In pursuit of effective coordination with foreign countries including neighboring countries, India has signed 37 Bilateral Agreements/Memoranda of Understanding over the period. In last four years, India signed 5 Bilateral Agreements/MoUs with Australia, Singapore, Mozambique, Thailand and Nepal in drug matters.
- ✓ Narcotics Control Bureau has been provided funds for developing a **new software** i.e. **Seizure Information Management System (SIMS)** which will create a complete online database of drug offences and offenders.
- ✓ The government has constituted a **fund** called **“National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse”** to meet the expenditure incurred in connection with combating illicit traffic in Narcotic Drug, Psychotropic Substances; identifying, treating and rehabilitating addicts, and educating public against drug abuse, etc.
- ✓ The government is conducting National Drug Abuse Survey to measure extent, pattern and trends of drug abuse in India through Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment with the help of National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre of AIIMS.

PEPPER IT WITH
Golden Crescent, NDPS Act,
NCB, Golden Triangle

- ✓ The GoI also called for identifying drug syndicates & cartels and their kingpins and take stern action against them to disrupt their illegal business. To stop the inflow of money generated from illegal trade of narcotic drugs into our economy, proper financial investigation needs to be conducted in each significant NDPS case.
- ✓ Unique initiatives are under taken to spread more awareness among the public particularly among youth about ill effects of drug abuse and need to create adequate infrastructure for treatment, rehabilitation and harm reduction for the victim of the drug abuse.

Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana

Why in News

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for enhancing the scope of Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY).

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

About PMRPY

1. The Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana(PMRPY) Plan Scheme has been designed to incentivise employers for generation of new employment, where Government of India will be **paying the 8.33% EPS** contribution of the employer for the new employment.
2. The scheme is being implemented by the **Ministry of Labour and Employment.**
3. The Government of India will now contribute the Employer's full admissible contribution for the first three years from the date of registration of the new employee for all the sectors including existing **beneficiaries for their remaining period of three years.**

Eligibility Criteria

All establishments registered with Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) can apply for availing benefits under the scheme.

Benefits

The informal sector workers would get social safety net and there would be more job creation. Till now, the scheme has produced quite encouraging results and has added about 31 Lakhs beneficiaries to the formal employment involving an expenditure of more than Rs. 500 crore.

Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry

Why in News

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for Central Sector Scheme "Integrated Scheme for Development of Silk Industry" for the next three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

About Scheme

The core objective of the scheme is to improve the productivity and quality of silk through R&D intervention. The focus of R&D intervention is to promote improved crossbreed silk and the import substitute **Bivoltine silk** so that Bivoltine silk production in India enhances to such a level that raw silk imports become nil by 2022 thereby making India self-sufficient in silk.

The Scheme has four components –

1. Research & Development (R&D), Training, Transfer of Technology and IT Initiatives
2. Seed Organizations and farmers extension centers
3. Coordination and Market Development for seed, yarn and silk products and
4. Quality Certification System (QCS) by creating amongst others a chain of Silk Testing facilities, Farm based & post-cocoon Technology Up-gradation, and Export Brand Promotion.

Brand Promotion of Indian silk will be encouraged through quality certification by Silk Mark not only in the domestic market but in the Export market as well.

Financial Outlay

A total allocation of Rs. 2161.68 Crore has been approved for the implementation of the Scheme for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20. **The scheme will be implemented by the Ministry through Central Silk Board (CSB).**

PEPPER IT WITH
SMOI, CSB, Bivoltine silk

Way Ahead

The scheme will promote Women Empowerment and livelihood opportunities to SC/ST and other weaker sections of the society. The scheme will help to increase productive employment from 85 lakhs to 1 crore persons by 2020. This scheme creates the appropriate eco-system for greater participation of States in implementing the Scheme as have an important role to play in increasing the silk production of the country.

Social Security for Construction Workers

Why in News

The Supreme Court recently directed the Centre to frame a model scheme to address the issues of education, health, social security and pension for construction workers, saying they build not just infrastructure, but also the nation.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II					■			■			
III											
IV											
M											

Concerns

- ✓ The Centre and states are not addressing the plight of construction workers despite Parliament framing **Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act in 1996 for levy and collection of 1% cess on cost of construction.**
- ✓ Failing to get exact figure of funds collected so far through the Cess, the top court said that "it is quite shocking that even the CAG does not have all the figures and whatever figures are available, may not be reliable".
- ✓ The figures presented to us by the CAG or even the Standing Committee do not reflect such a huge collection. Obviously, there is something terribly rotten with the collection and accounting mechanism.

Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act:
Under the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, every State Government has to constitute a State Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. The functions of the Board include providing welfare and social security measure in order to live a life of dignity such as immediate assistance to a beneficiary in case of accident, payment of pension to the beneficiaries who have completed the age of 60 years, loan and advances for construction of house, paying amount in connection with premium for Group Insurance Scheme etc.

Government initiatives to tackle issue

1. The Government has enacted the Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996 and the Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Act, 1996 with a view to regulating the employment and conditions of service of building and other construction workers and to provide for their safety, health and welfare measures etc.
2. The Government has also enacted the **Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008** for the social security and welfare of unorganized workers which includes building and other construction worker.

Court propositions

1. In preparing the model scheme, the Ministry of Labour and Employment is expected to include within it, inter alia, issues and concerns of education, health, social security, old age and disability pension and other benefits that are necessary for living a life of dignity as postulated by the Constitution of India
2. It is also expect the model scheme to be framed and publicized within a specified time-frame to be decided by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, preferably within six months, but in any event on or before September 30, 2018.
3. The top court further directed all the state governments and union territories to constitute an expert committee and bring out statutory rules within six months.

Way Forward

It has a strong flavour of social justice and is a serious attempt by Parliament to ensure that building and construction workers are not exploited because of their poverty and their children do not suffer their fate in terms of education, healthy living and whatever it takes to live a life of dignity. Referring to the situation of construction workers, the bench said that many of them are women and at least some of them have children to look after and "even they are victims of official apathy".

e- Office Programme

About e- office programme

The Government of India, in recognition of the long-felt need for efficiency in government processes and service delivery mechanisms, has included e-Office as a core mission mode project (MMP) under the **National eGovernance Plan** (NeGP) of Digital India Initiative. It is estimated that this MMP has the potential of targeting over 2 lakh users.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II						■					
III											
IV											
M											

This **MMP** aims at significantly improving the operational efficiency of the Government by transitioning to a "Less Paper Office".

The **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAR & PG)** is the nodal department for implementation of e-Office project. **National Informatics Centre (NIC)** is the technical partner in this project.

Objectives

1. To improve efficiency, consistency and effectiveness of government responses
2. To reduce turnaround time and to meet the demands of the citizens charter
3. To provide for effective resource management to improve the quality of administration
4. To reduce processing delays
5. To establish transparency and accountability

Know India Programme (KIP)

Why in News

Forty Indian-origin students from nine countries met Railways Minister recently as part of Know India Programme, an initiative of the central government to engage with the Indian diaspora in the age group of 18 to 30 years.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II						■					
III											
IV											
M											

KIP

It is a flagship initiative for Diaspora engagement which familiarizes Indian-origin youth (18-30 years) with their Indian roots and contemporary India, through a three-week orientation programme organised by the **Ministry of External Affairs**.

Mission & Vision

Know India Programme of the Ministry of External Affairs is a three-week orientation programme for diaspora youth conducted with a view to promote awareness on different facets of life in India and the progress made by the country in various fields e.g. economic, industrial, education, science & technology, communication & information Technology, culture. KIP provide a unique forum for students & young professionals of Indian origin to visit India, share their views, expectations & experiences and to develop closer bonds with the contemporary India.

Eligibility

Minimum qualification required for participating in KIP is graduation from a recognized University /Institute or enrolled for graduation and ability to speak in English. The applicant should not have visited India through any previous Programme of Government of India. Those who have not visited India before will be given preference.

PEPPER IT WITH
Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam,
Namaste Shalom

National E-Mobility Programme

Why in News

Union Ministry of State (IC) Power and New & Renewable Energy, launched the National E-Mobility Programme here, recently.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II						■					
III											
IV											
M											

National E-Mobility Programme

The Programme aims to provide an impetus to the entire e-mobility ecosystem including vehicle manufacturers, charging infrastructure companies, fleet operators, service providers, etc.

The Programme will be **implemented by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL)** which will aggregate demand by procuring electric vehicles in bulk to get economies of scale.

These electric vehicles will replace the existing fleet of petrol and diesel vehicles. EESL had procured 10,000 e-vehicles last year and will issue a new tender very soon for 10,000 more e-vehicles to cater to the growing demand.

It is a composite scheme using different policy-levers such as:

1. Demand side incentives to facilitate acquisition of hybrid/electric vehicles
2. Promoting R&D in technology including battery technology, power electronics, motors, systems integration, battery management system, testing infrastructure, and ensuring industry participation in the same
3. Promoting charging infrastructure
4. Supply side incentives
5. Encouraging retro-fitting of on-road vehicles with hybrid kit

PEPPER IT WITH
FAME, SLNP, EESL,
NEMMP-2020

Significance

- ✓ With these 20,000 electric cars, India is expected to save over 5 crore litres of fuel every year leading to a reduction of over 5.6 lakh tonnes of annual CO₂ emission on the sidelines of Paris Summit.
- ✓ The National E-Mobility Programme is a step towards ushering in an era of clean, green and future-oriented technologies in the country.
- ✓ India has embarked on an ambitious e-mobility plan and the government has taken

Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has launched a new mobile app called '**SukhadYatra**' Sukhadyatra mobile application has been developed by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) and offers a number of convenient features including real-time data waiting-time at toll-plazas.

the leadership in enabling e-mobility in India with the Government of India’s vision of 100% e-mobility by 2030.

- ✓ The Indian automobile industry is the sixth-largest in the world and accounts for a whopping 22% of the country’s total manufacturing output. The large-scale adoption of electric vehicles can play an important role in increasing the share of manufacturing in India’s GDP from the current 15% to 25% by 2022.

Social Security Scheme

Why in News

The **Labour ministry** has proposed a comprehensive social security system to provide retirement, health, oldage, disability, unemployment and maternity benefits to 50 crore workers in the country, a month after the government announced the National Health Protection Scheme announced in the Budget.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Implementation

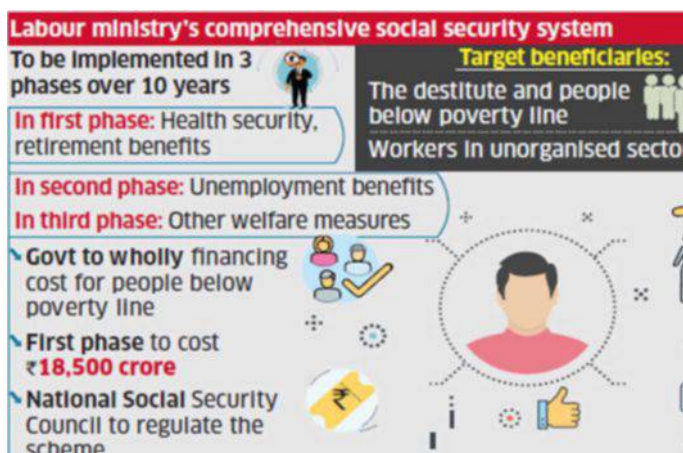
- ❖ The plan is to implement the scheme in **three phases** over 10 years, after which the government hopes to make it universal. The scheme will be implemented in four tiers with the government wholly financing the cost for people below the poverty line. The first phase of the scheme will cost Rs 18,500 crore.

PEPPER IT WITH
EPFO, ESIC, Equal Remuneration Act

I. The first phase will see all workers getting the bare minimum, which includes health security and retirement benefits.

II. The second phase will see unemployment benefits being added to it while in the third phase, other welfare measures can be added.

- ❖ Its implementation would be regulated and monitored by an overarching regulatory body called the **National Social Security Council** to be chaired by the prime minister with finance minister, health minister and chief ministers of all states along with workers and employers as its members.



Labour ministry's comprehensive social security system

To be implemented in 3 phases over 10 years

Target beneficiaries: The destitute and people below poverty line, Workers in unorganised sector

In first phase: Health security, retirement benefits

In second phase: Unemployment benefits

In third phase: Other welfare measures

Govt to wholly financing cost for people below poverty line

First phase to cost ₹18,500 crore

National Social Security Council to regulate the scheme

Fund structure

The scheme will be largely funded from the Building and Construction Worker Cess and funds allocated to other scattered schemes through the National Stabilisation Fund set up for the purpose.

The 50 crore beneficiaries will be classified into four tiers.

1. The first tier will comprise destitute and **people below poverty line** who cannot contribute for their security and hence the cost will be entirely borne by the government under tax-based schemes.
2. The second tier will comprise **workers in the unorganised sector** who have some

According to the survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in 2011-12, about 83 per cent or 39.14 crore persons out of total 47.41 crore employed persons were employed in unorganised sector.

contributory power but are not self-sufficient may be covered under the subsidised schemes.

- 3. The third tier of beneficiaries will include those who either by themselves or jointly with their employers can make adequate contribution to the schemes, so as to be self-sufficient.
- 4. The fourth tier will comprise **comparatively affluent people** who can make their own provisions for meeting the contingencies or risks as they rise.

Way Ahead

The central government is readying the blueprint for a social security scheme that is specifically aimed as a safety net for workers in the informal labour sector. The draft social security code, drafted by the Ministry of Labour& Employment, aims for universal coverage that includes those who are outside the ambit of the EPFO and the ESIC. The scheme envisages mandatory pension, insurance against disability and death, and maternity coverage, alongside optional medical and unemployment coverage.

Integrated Scheme for School Education

Why in News

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) recently gave its nod to form an Integrated Scheme on School Education. The scheme comes in the backdrop of PM’s vision of **Sabko Shiksha, Achhi Shiksha** and aims to support the States in universalizing access to school education from classes pre-nursery to XII across the country.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II						■					
III											
IV											
M											

Main Features of the Scheme:

- ✓ The new scheme subsumes Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education (TE).
- ✓ The vision of the Scheme is to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education from nursery to senior secondary stage in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goal for Education.
- ✓ The main emphasis of the Integrated Scheme is on improving quality of school education by focusing on the **two T's - Teacher and Technology**.

The objectives of the Scheme, across all levels of schooling, are:

1. Provision of quality education and enhancing learning outcomes of students;
2. Bridging Social and Gender Gaps in School Education;
3. Ensuring equity and inclusion at all levels of school education;
4. Ensuring minimum standards in schooling provisions;
5. Promoting vocationalization of education;
6. Support States in implementation of **Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009**; and
7. Strengthening and up-gradation of State Councils for Educational Research and Training (SCERTs)/State Institutes of Education and District Institutes for Education and Training (DIET) as nodal agencies for teacher training.

PEPPER IT WITH
SSA, RMSA, TE, MUSK

Impact:

- ❖ The Scheme gives flexibility to the States and UTs to plan and prioritize their interventions within the scheme norms and the overall resource envelope available to them.
- ❖ It will help improve the transition rates across the various levels of school education and aid in promoting universal access to children to complete school education.

- ❖ The Scheme, by providing quality education, aims to equip the children with varied skills and knowledge essential for their holistic development and prepare them for the world of work or higher education in the future.
- ❖ It would lead to an optimal utilization of budgetary allocations and effective use of human resources and institutional structures created for the erstwhile Schemes.

Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

Why in News

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the continuation of Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) beyond 12th Plan for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with a total outlay of Rs.5,500 crore.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

About PMEGP

PMEGP is a major credit-linked subsidy programme being implemented by the **Ministry of MSME**. The Scheme is aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector by helping traditional artisans and unemployed youth in rural as well as urban areas. A total of 4.55 lakh micro enterprises have been assisted with a margin money subsidy of Rs 9564.02 crore providing employment to an estimated 37.98 lakh persons from inception till 31.01.2018.

The maximum cost of the project/unit admissible under manufacturing sector is Rs.25 lakh and under business/service sector is Rs.10 lakh.

PEPPER IT WITH
KVIC Act 2006, RGUMY, PMRY

Implementation

The **Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** is the nodal implementation agency for the PMEGP at the national level. At the state/district level, state offices of KVIC, Khadi and Village Industries Boards (KVIBs) and District Industry Centres (DIC) are the implementing agencies.

Targets are fixed taking into account:

1. Extent of backwardness of State;
2. Extent of unemployment;
3. Extent of fulfillment of previous year targets;
4. Population of State/Union Territory; and
5. Availability of traditional skills and raw material.

General category beneficiaries can avail of margin money subsidy of **25 % of the project cost in rural areas and 15% in urban areas**. For beneficiaries belonging to special categories such as Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe/OBC /Minorities/Women, Ex-serviceman, Physically Handicapped, NER, Hill and Border areas etc. the margin money subsidy is 35% in rural areas and 25% in urban areas.

Following modifications/improvements have been made in the Scheme:

1. Merger of Coir Udyami Yojana (GUY) in PMEGP;
2. Mandatory Aadhaar and Pan card;
3. Geo-tagging units;
4. Negative list under PMEGP amended allowing serving/selling non-vegetarian food at Hotels/Dhabas and Off Farm/Farm Linked activities.
5. Dispensing the ratio of 30:30:40 for KVIC/KVIB/DIC.
6. Cap the working capital component for manufacturing units to 40% of the project cost and for service/trading sector to 60% of the project cost.

LaQshya Programme

Why in News?

Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has recently announced the launch of programme 'LaQshya', aimed at **improving quality of care in labour room and maternity Operation Theatre (OT)**.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II						■					
III							■				
IV											
M											

- The programme will improve quality of care for pregnant women in labour room, maternity Operation Theatre and Obstetrics Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and High Dependency Units (HDUs).
- The LaQshya programme is being implemented at **all Medical College Hospitals, District Hospitals and First Referral Unit (FRU), and Community Health Center (CHCs)** and will benefit every pregnant woman and new-born delivering in public health institutions.
- LaQshya will reduce maternal and newborn morbidity and mortality, improve quality of care during delivery and immediate post-partum period and enhance satisfaction of beneficiaries and provide Respectful Maternity Care (RMC) to all pregnant women attending public health facilities.
- The programme aims at **implementing 'fast-track' interventions for achieving tangible results within 18 months**. Under the initiative, a multi-pronged strategy has been adopted such as improving infrastructure up-gradation, ensuring availability of essential equipment, providing adequate human resources, capacity building of health care workers and improving quality processes in the labour room.
- The quality improvement in labour room and maternity OT will be assessed through NQAS (National Quality Assurance Standards). **Every facility achieving 70 per cent score on NQAS will be certified as LaQshya certified facility**. Furthermore, branding of LaQshya certified facilities will be done as per the NQAS score. Facilities scoring more than 90, 80 and 70 per cent will be given Platinum, Gold and Silver badge accordingly.
- Facilities achieving NQAS certification, defined quality indicators and 80 per cent satisfied beneficiaries will be provided incentive of Rs 6 lakh, Rs 3 lakh and Rs 2 lakh for Medical College Hospital, District Hospital and FRUs respectively.

PEPPER IT WITH

Out of pocket expenditure, gratuitous payment, National Health Policy-2017, Mission Indradhanush, Pneumococcal Conjugate Vaccine (PCV), Measles-Rubella (MR) vaccine, Pradhan Mantri Dialysis Program, AMRIT

For more information on LaQshya programme please see current connect (December-2018).

India, Vietnam ink three MoUs

In News

India and Vietnam inked three Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs), including on cooperation between the Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership, India (GCNEP) and the Vietnam Atomic Energy Institute (VINATOM), after talks between Indian Prime Minister and Vietnamese President.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II									■		
III											
IV											
M											

Background

The purpose of the MoU is to **strengthen the technical cooperation in the field of atomic energy for peaceful purposes**. Besides this, the two countries signed a MoU on economic and trade cooperation aimed at establishing a framework for enhancing economic and trade promotion.

A work plan for the years 2018-2022 between the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam was also signed between the two nations. The purpose of this work plan is to promote cooperation in the transfer of technology and exchange of visits of technical experts in the fields of agriculture and allied.

PEPPER IT WITH
Brahmos Missile, South China Sea Dispute

Significance

1. Vietnam is an important partner in Southeast Asia under New Delhi’s Act East Policy and is currently the country coordinator for India with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) regional bloc, a role that will be handed over to Thailand later this year.
2. India-Vietnam trade stood at \$6.24 billion in fiscal 2016-17 and the two sides have agreed to raise this to \$15 billion by 2020.

Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP)

- Government of India has approved the establishment of Global Centre for Nuclear Energy Partnership (GCNEP) in September 2010. GCNEP is the sixth R&D unit under the aegis of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE).
- It conduct research, design and development of nuclear systems that are intrinsically safe, secure, proliferation resistant and sustainable.
- GCNEP will help in capacity building, in association with the interested countries and the IAEA, involving technology, human resource development, education & training and giving a momentum to R&D in enlisted areas.

Myanmar puts off border pact with India

In News

Myanmar has **indefinitely deferred signing an agreement with India to streamline the free movement of people within 16 km along the border.** India is keen to sign the agreement but Myanmar — citing “domestic compulsions” — has asked more time before the agreement is sealed.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Myanmar has been dragging its feet on the agreement. They have asked for more time and are reluctant due to domestic compulsions. They fear that if they sign the pact, the international agreement will have to be adhered to.

Background

Recently, the Union Cabinet had approved the agreement between India and Myanmar on land border crossing to enhance economic interaction between people of the two countries.

As per the proposal, there would have been no restrictions on the movement of people across the borders. **The domiciles were to be allotted border passes and those going across for agriculture, work or to meet relatives should carry the pass at all times. Both the countries intend to put a system in place** after India raised the issue of movement of extremists and smugglers freely across the border.

India and Myanmar share a 1,643 km unfenced border along Arunachal Pradesh (520 km), Nagaland (215 km), Manipur (398 km) and Mizoram (510 km) and permit a ‘free movement’ regime up to 16 km beyond the border.

To give it shape, the Centre had asked four States — **Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram** — that share the unfenced border with Myanmar to distribute “border pass” to all the residents living within 16 km from the border.

PEPPER IT WITH
Rohingya Crisis, India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway, Cox Bazar, Aung San Suu Kyi

Philippines to quit International Criminal Court

In News

Philippines President Rodrigo Duterte said that he was pulling the Philippines out of the treaty underpinning the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is examining his **deadly drug war**.

The Hague-based ICC announced last month it was launching a “**preliminary examination**” of Duterte’s bloody anti-drug crackdown that has drawn international concern. Police say they have killed nearly 4,000 drug suspects as part of the campaign, while rights groups claim the toll is around three times the numbers given by authorities.

The outspoken Philippine leader, who is accused of stoking the killings with inflammatory statements, has taken issue over the Philippines becoming the first south-east Asian nation put under a preliminary examination by the ICC prosecutor.

PEPPER IT WITH
ICJ, PCA, Rome Convention
Dalveer Bhandari

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

ICC

Opened in 2002, **the ICC is the world’s only permanent war crimes court and aims to prosecute the worst abuses when national courts are unable or unwilling**. The Philippines, under previous President Benigno Aquino, ratified in 2011 the Rome Statute which underpins the ICC, giving the tribunal authority to investigate crimes on its soil.

Namaste Shalom

Indian Government launched the social media of “**Namaste Shalom**”, a **magazine devoted to India-Israel relations. The magazine is edited by former MP Shri Tarun Vijay.**

Government also announced that a food processing centre with collaboration of Israeli expertise will be inaugurated in Aizwal, Mizoram next week on 7th March. This will be the first such centre in the North East region of India that is being established with Israeli collaboration. Set up at a cost of Rs 8-10 crore, this centre is exclusively for processing of citrus fruits. **The project has been set up with the tripartite collaboration of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Government of India, Government of Israel and State Government of Mizoram.** Though located in Mizoram, this centre will cater to the whole North-East.

Ministry of Communications has launched the **Cool EMS Service** which will come into force this month. Cool EMS service is **one-way service from Japan to India which allows customers in India to import Japanese food items for personal use which is allowed under Indian regulations.**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

India, France New Confidentiality Agreement

Key Highlights

- Stepping up strategic cooperation, India and France signed a pact **that will enable their defence forces to access each other’s facilities and extend logistical support on a reciprocal basis**. The deal, which is similar to the logistical support pact with the US, is an indicator of the strategic depth and maturity in defence ties between the two countries.

The pact will facilitate reciprocal provision of logistics support, supplies and services between the armed forces of the two countries during authorised port visits, joint exercises, joint training, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief efforts.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

- 2. The two sides also signed a new confidentiality agreement, **replacing the 2008 pact that shields government from sharing classified information on defence deals, including the Rafale fighter aircraft deal.** The pact is about the exchange and reciprocal protection of classified or protected information.
- 3. The two sides also made common cause on maritime security, as they signed a **joint strategic vision on the Indian Ocean Region to counter more proactive and assertive Chinese activities in the area.** The cooperation on Indian Ocean will be crucial in order to maintain the safety of international sea lanes for unimpeded commerce and communications in accordance with the international law, for countering maritime terrorism and piracy, for building maritime domain awareness, for capacity building and for greater coordination in regional/ international fora in the region.
- 4. On the much-delayed Jaitapur nuclear power project, the two leaders reiterated the goal of commencing work at the Jaitapur site “around the end of 2018” and encouraged NPCIL and EDF to accelerate the contractual discussions in that respect. They signed an agreement which prescribes a way forward for implementation of the project.

Once installed, the Jaitapur project will be the largest nuclear power plant in the world, with a total capacity of 9.6 GW. It will contribute to achieving India’s goal of 40 per cent non-fossil energy by 2030.

- 5. India and France also called upon all countries to work towards rooting out terrorist safe havens and infrastructure, disrupting terrorist networks and their financing channels, and halting “**cross-border movement of terrorists**”.

As France had played an active role in **grey-listing Pakistan at the FATF last month**, the two leaders agreed to strengthen counter-terrorism in multilateral fora such as the UN, GCTF, FATF and G20. They called upon all UN member countries to implement the UNSC Resolution 1267 and other relevant resolutions designating terrorist entities, in a reference to the global listing of Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Maulana Masood Azhar.

PEPPER IT WITH
 Rafael Deal
 Scorpion Submarines
 Saomitra Chatterjee

- 6. The joint statement also **had a reference to China’s One Belt One Road project.** The two sides underlined that connectivity initiatives must be based on key principles of international norms, good governance, rule of law, openness, transparency; follow social and environmental standards, principles of financial responsibility, accountable debt-financing practices; and must be pursued in a manner that respects sovereignty and territorial integrity. The references to “**sovereignty and territorial integrity**” are clearly aimed at the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor” which is being opposed by India.

In all, India and France inked 14 pacts in key areas of defence, security, nuclear energy and protection of classified information, as well as cooperation in other areas including railways, environment, solar energy, maritime awareness and checking trafficking of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

International Competition Network

In News

India hosted the **17th Annual Conference of International Competition Network 2018 (ICN 2018) in New Delhi.** This is the first time India is hosting the ICN 2018 Annual Conference since it joined International Competition Network (ICN) in 2009.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

ICN

It is an informal network comprising 138 competition authorities from 125 jurisdictions. This Annual Conference is a key international platform in the field of competition law and policy and its 17th edition will bring together over 500 heads and senior officials of competition authorities, non-governmental advisors, distinguished legal experts and economists from over 100 countries.

PEPPER IT WITH
Indo-US science and technology forum (IUSSTF), Competition Commission of India, CPEC

Significance

1. The conference is in line with India’s ever-growing engagement with the world on vital policy issues. **With globalisation and digitalisation blurring the geographical boundaries for business, need for international cooperation and experience-sharing has increased.**
2. The Conference will provide an opportunity to exchange ideas and strategies for effective enforcement of competition law and for strengthening cooperation amongst the competition authorities as they strive to promote and sustain competition in rapidly changing markets.
3. The ICN advocates adoption of superior standards and procedures in competition enforcement around the world, formulates proposals for procedural and substantive convergence, and facilitates effective international cooperation to the benefit of member agencies, consumers and economies worldwide.

Odisha: KISS to host ‘Commonwealth Big Lunch’

In News

Kalinga Institute of Social Sciences (KISS), Bhubaneswar, in partnership with British Council, India, has hosted the ‘Commonwealth Big Lunch’.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Background

- British Council is celebrating 70 years of inception in Commonwealth countries. On this occasion, it has organised a mega lunch. **KISS is the only organisation from Asia to be selected by British Council to host the Commonwealth Big Lunch.**
- The motto of the programme is to encourage people to get together to celebrate their Commonwealth connections through food.
- **The Commonwealth Big Lunch is an international initiative launched by UK PM Theresa May.** The initiative comes as the UK is set to host the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting, bringing together up to 52 leaders from across the Commonwealth to London and Windsor from 16-20 April.

PEPPER IT WITH
Commonwealth of Nations BIMSTEC, TPP, SCO

ACI World

- Airports Council International (ACI) World announced the winners of the prestigious 2017 Airport Service Quality (ASQ) Awards.
- Mumbai scoops first place for airports in Asia-Pacific serving over 40 million passengers a year. In North America, the top spot goes to Toronto Pearson and in Europe to Rome Fiumicino.
- ASQ is the only worldwide programme to survey passengers on their day of travel, measuring passengers’ views of 34 key performance indicators. 74% of the world’s 100 busiest airports are part of the ASQ network which delivers 600,000 individual surveys per year in 42 languages across 84 countries.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											



- The ASQ Awards Ceremony will be held during the inaugural ACI Customer Excellence Global Summit, to be held in Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada from 10–13 September 2018, hosted by Halifax International Airport Authority.

Indo-French Knowledge Summit

The first ever Indo-French Knowledge Summit ended successfully **with a landmark agreement on mutual recognition of educational qualifications between the two countries and a record 15 other MoUs between universities and research institutions on joint initiatives and partnerships.** The two-day summit was held in New Delhi and coincided with the state visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to India.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II									■		
III											
IV											
M											

The summit was organized by the French Embassy in India and co-hosted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

This agreement will go a long way in boosting the educational relationship between the two countries, will encourage mobility of students from both the countries by facilitating possibilities for them to continue their studies in the other country and would also promote excellence in higher education through cooperation, university and research exchanges.

World Hindi Secretariat

The President of India inaugurated the World Hindi Secretariat building on his visit to Mauritius.

The President noted that the **11th World Hindi Conference is going to be held in Mauritius in August 2018. Apart from India, Mauritius is the only country where this conference is being hosted for a third time.**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II									■		
III											
IV											
M											

Hindi has played an important role in society and culture in both India and Mauritius. It is a global language and the Indian community, spread across the world, has preserved its culture and traditions – and passed it to the next generation – through its linguistic traditions, including Hindi. Hindi is being taught in about 175 universities in various countries.

World Happiness Index

- The World Happiness Report ranked 156 countries by happiness levels, based on factors such as life expectancy, social support and corruption.
- Unlike past years, **the annual report published by the U.N. Sustainable Development Solutions Network** also evaluated 117 countries by the happiness and well-being of their immigrants.
- Finland has been ranked the happiest country in this year's report, while Burundi has been placed last. **But the real shocker is the fact that India has been ranked 133rd, 11 spots below its ranking last year.**
- Each country's score is broken down into seven components. The first six are: **Per capita gross domestic product (GDP), healthy life expectancy, freedom, generosity, social support and absence of corruption in government or business.** The seventh component is based on how survey responses differed from the predicted value derived from the first six components.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II									■		
III										■	
IV											
M											

PEPPER IT WITH

Global Happiness council, Gallup World Poll, Cantril Ladder

WEF Energy Transition Index

- India has been ranked at 78th, lower than its emerging market peers like Brazil and China, among 114 countries on the **World Economic Forum's Energy Transition Index that was topped by Sweden.**
- The report titled "**Fostering Effective Energy Transition**", ranks countries on how well they are able to balance energy security and access with environmental sustainability and affordability.
- The overall list was topped by Sweden, followed by Norway at the 2nd position and Switzerland at the 3rd rank.
- According to the report **India has taken "bold measures" to improve energy access, energy efficiency, and to improve the deployment of renewable sources of energy.**
- Interestingly, between 2013 and 2018, India improved its performance score by 5.6 percentage points, mainly with improved energy access, reduced subsidies and reduced import costs.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Cold Fusion

India is taking tentative steps towards restarting research into it, **some 25 years after it was shut down at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) following global criticism heaped on the idea.**

Cold fusion seeks to produce nuclear energy without harmful radiation, complex equipment and the application of very high temperatures and pressures. But it has no conclusive theory explaining it and flies in the face of a well-established physics law that goes against easy fusion of nuclei. **There is no guarantee that every time a cold fusion or LENR experiment is done, energy will be produced.**

International Solar Alliance Meets in Delhi

In News

India and France co-hosted first ISA summit at Rashtrapati Bhavan with emphasis on finance and technology transfer.

India also pledged to generate 175 gigawatts-GW (including 100 GW from solar) of electricity in India from renewable energy sources by 2022 and said that it would require a mobilisation of investment of over \$1 trillion by 2030. India called for concessional financing and less-risky funds being made available for such projects.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Concerns

- ✓ Mobilising financial resources for additions to global solar capacity has become tougher **after the United States backed out from the Paris climate agreement**, under which industrialised countries have committed to provide \$100 billion a year from 2020 onwards to developing countries to help them fight climate change and implement mitigation and adaptation measures.
- ✓ In 2014, the US offered about \$2.7 billion in climate finance, a sum comparable with contributions from Germany and France. If it refuses to finance climate mitigation and adaptation in developing countries, industrialised countries could have a hard time keeping their promise to offer \$100 billion in climate finance every year from 2020.
- ✓ **India has targeted to mobilise \$1 trillion in financing and deploy solar capacities of 1,000 GW by 2030 as part of the strategy for the mitigation of climate change.** However, India can neither supply technology nor provide the financing needed for the massive capacity addition envisaged by the ISA. Nor is India's proposal to impose a safeguard duty on solar equipment likely to inspire confidence among ISA members.

PEPPER IT WITH
UNFCCC, Kyoto Protocol
SDG, US backs out of Paris Deal

Membership

- ❖ India, a founding member of the International Solar Alliance, said **that membership of the body will be thrown open to all countries that want to join the grouping, with no restrictions on duration of sunlight or geographical location.**
- ❖ When the International Solar Alliance was announced in 2015, 121 nations situated between the **Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn** and receiving 300 days of sunlight were deemed eligible for membership.

Significance

1. The maiden International Solar Alliance Summit is not only an attempt to fight climate change through cost effective renewable energy means but also a concerted attempt by India to acquire a leadership role in the developing world where China, by virtue of its economic prowess, has made huge inroads over the past two decades.
2. This Summit would help India to express power in a manner that is benign and rule-based, unlike China’s more aggressive and expansionist postures in geo-politics. At the Summit, **India offered Line of Credit worth \$1392.48 m for solar projects for African countries besides Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. This Line of Credit is being offered at interest rates cheaper than Chinese commercial loans.**
3. **The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), signed the Host Country Agreement.**
4. The Agreement will give ISA a juridical personality and gives it power to contract, to acquire and dispose off movable and immovable properties, to institute and defend legal proceedings. Under this agreement, ISA shall enjoy such privileges, applicable tax concessions and immunities as are necessary for ISA’s Headquarter to independently discharge its function and programmes. ISA shall be deriving its status, privileges and immunities as per Article 10 of Framework Agreement.

In-situ management of crop residue

Why in News

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for ‘Promotion of Agricultural Mechanization for in-situ Management of Crop Residue’ in the States of **Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi.**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III			■								
IV											
M											

Background

To address air pollution and to subsidize machinery required for in-situ management of crop residue, a new Central Sector Scheme (100% Central share) in this regard in the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and NCT of Delhi for the period 2018-19 to 2019-20 has been proposed.

Beneficiaries:

- The government, under this fully centrally-funded scheme, will assist individual farmers, cooperative societies, farmer producer organisations (FPOs), Self Help Groups (SHGs), private entrepreneurs and registered groups of women farmers.
- Respective State Governments through District Level Executive Committee (DLEC) will identify various beneficiaries and location - specific agricultural equipment depending on the farming system and will identify and select beneficiaries for establishment of Farm Machinery Bank for Custom Hiring and procurement of machines on individual ownership basis to avail the benefit in transparent and time bound manner.

PEPPER IT WITH
Paramparagat Krishi Vikas
Yojana, PMFBY, RKVY

Fund

The total outgo from the Central funds would be Rs. 1151.80 crore (Rs. 591.65 crore in 2018-19 and Rs. 560.15 crore in 2019-20).

Implementing Agencies

- 1) At the Central level the scheme will be administered by Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers Welfare. A National Steering Committee headed by Secretary, DAC&FW will formulate the policy whether as Executive Committee chaired by Additional Secretary will oversee the activities of the scheme
- 2) At the State level the nodal implementing agency will be the Department of Agriculture of the concerned State Government. State Level Executive Committee (SLEC) chaired by Principle Secretary (Agriculture)/ Agriculture Production Commissioner shall oversee the implementation of the scheme in their State. The SLEC shall ensure that no crop residue burning takes place in the farmer field.
- 3) The District Level Executive Committee shall be responsible for carrying forward the objectives of the scheme for project formulation, implementation and monitoring in the districts and will constitute Surveillance Committees involving farmers group / progressive farmers to mobilize farmers for not burning the crop residue and will also ensure active participation of Panchayati Raj Institutions.

Key Components of Scheme

- ✓ Establish Farm Machinery Banks for Custom Hiring of in -situ crop residue management machinery. Financial assistance @80% of the project cost will be provided to the cooperative societies of the farmers, FPOs, Self Help Groups, Registered Farmers Societies/ Farmers Group, Private Entrepreneurs, Group of Women Farmers.
- ✓ Financial Assistance to the farmers for Procurement of Agriculture Machinery and Equipment for in -situ crop residue management. Financial assistance @50% of the machinery/ equipment will be provided to individual farmer for crop residue management.
- ✓ Information, Education and Communication for awareness on in-situ crop residue management will be facilitated via financial assistance to the State Government/ KVKs, ICAR Institutes, Central Government Institutes, PSUs, etc.

Significance

1. When crop-residue is incorporated into soil, the soil’s physical properties and its water-holding capacity are enhanced.
2. Organic residues and N fertilisers increase soil organic carbon and subsequently improve soil structure and aggregate stability. By stabilising soil aggregates, soil organic matter is more protected from microbial decay.
3. The use of organic residue management cover crops and manures can lead to soil organic carbon accumulation by improving aggregation as well as reducing the need for synthetic fertiliser application while providing crops with equally adequate amounts of nutrients.
4. Addition of organic residue to the soil reduces environmental pollution potential while maximising the N-use efficiency and providing crops with sufficient N.

Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA)

Why in News

European Investment Bank (EIB) and Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency (IREDA) Ltd. have signed a loan agreement for a second line of credit (LoC) of Euro 150 million on non-sovereign basis recently.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Background

The line of credit of Euro 150 million is for tenure of 15 years including a grace period of 3 years, and it will be used for financing Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency projects in India. More than 1.1 million households are expected to benefit from clean energy produced with these funds.

The loan agreement was signed by Chairman and Managing Director, IREDA and Mr. W. Hoyer, President, EIB in the presence of Union Minister of State (IC) Power and New & Renewable Energy and MNRE.

PEPPER IT WITH
Masala bonds, NBFIs, Gift
City, Mini Ratna

About IREDA

- ❖ Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) is a Mini Ratna (Category – I) Government of India Enterprise under the administrative control of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- ❖ IREDA is a Public Limited Government Company established as a Non-Banking Financial Institution in 1987 engaged in promoting, developing and extending financial assistance for setting up projects relating to new and renewable sources of energy and energy efficiency/conservation with the motto: “**ENERGY FOR EVER**”
- ❖ IREDA’s mission is “Be a pioneering, participant friendly and competitive institution for financing and promoting self-sustaining investment in energy generation from Renewable Sources, Energy Efficiency and Environmental Technologies for sustainable development.”

The main objectives of IREDA:

- 1) To give financial support to specific projects and schemes for generating electricity and / or energy through new and renewable sources and conserving energy through energy efficiency.
- 2) To maintain its position as a leading organization to provide efficient and effective financing in renewable energy and energy efficiency / conservation projects.
- 3) To increase IREDA’s share in the renewable energy sector by way of innovative financing.
- 4) Improvement in the efficiency of services provided to customers through continual improvement of systems, processes and resources.
- 5) To strive to be competitive institution through customer satisfaction.

About EIB

EIB is the long-term lending institution of the European Union owned by its Member States. It works closely with other EU institutions to implement EU policy and is also engaged in multilateral financing. More than 90 per cent of its activity is in Europe but it is also a big investor globally. EIB’s activities focus on four priority areas including innovation and skills, access to finance for smaller businesses, infrastructure and climate & environment.

Mechanism of Operation

- 1) **Lending:** The vast majority of our financing is through loans, but we also offer guarantees, microfinance, equity investment, etc.
- 2) **Blending:** Our support unlocks financing from other sources, particularly from the EU budget. This is blended with loans to form a full financing package.
- 3) **Advising:** Lack of finance is often only one barrier to investment. We help with administrative and project management capacity to facilitate investment.

Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES)

Why in News?

The Odisha government is set to collaborate with Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for strengthening its early warning services and enhancing preparedness for management of hazards in the State.

- Odisha State Disaster Mitigation Authority (OSDMA) and RIMES would forge a partnership in the field of drought monitoring and early warning for different natural disasters.
- **At present, India is chairing RIMES.** Under the drought monitoring system, both institutions would work on a system to archive, analyse and visualise data, besides evaluating station performance and validating forecast data.
- Similarly, RIMES is expected to provide a one-stop risk management system for all OSDMA needs. **Odisha is particularly concerned about tsunami originating from the Andamans. RIMES is already working with the Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Authority.**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

The Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (**INCOIS**) of the **Ministry of Earth Sciences** inaugurated the Ocean Forecasting System for Comoros, Madagascar, and Mozambique at the third Ministerial Meeting of RIMES held in 2017.

The INCOIS has already been providing these operational services to the Maldives, Sri Lanka and Seychelles.

The Ocean State Forecast Services (OSFS) provide advance information on wave height, direction and period (of both wind waves and swell waves), sea surface currents, sea surface temperature, mixed layer depth (the well-mixed upper layer of the sea), depth of the 20-degree isotherm (a measure of the depth of the thermocline), astronomical tides, wind speed and direction and oil-spill trajectory.

About RIMES

- 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.
- It was **established in April 2009** and operates from its regional early warning center located at the campus of the Asian Institute of Technology in **Pathumthani, Thailand**.
- It aims to provide regional early warning services and build capacity of its Member States in the end-to-end early warning of tsunami and hydro-meteorological hazards. Its mission is of building capacity and providing actionable warning information towards forearmed, forewarned and resilient communities.
- RIMES presently have 12 Member States: **Bangladesh, Cambodia, Comoros, India, Lao PDR, Maldives, Mongolia, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Seychelles, Sri Lanka and Timor-Leste**.
- RIMES was registered with the United Nations under Article 102 in July 2009 and has been supported since inception by UNESCAP and DANIDA.

PEPPER IT WITH

Kallkadal, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), National Geoscience Award, National Meteorological and Hydrological Services

Animal Welfare Board of India

Why in News?

The headquarters of the Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) **has been shifted from Chennai to Haryana's Ballabgarh** for "better coordination" between the environment ministry and the the board.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II			■								
III											
IV											
M											

Rule 3 of the Animal Welfare Board (Administrative) Rules, 1962 reads as "The Headquarter of the Board shall be at New Delhi or at such other place as the central government, may, after consultation with the Board direct".

About AWBI

- The Animal Welfare Board of India, the first of its kind to be established by any Government in the world, **was set up in 1962**, in accordance with Section 4 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Acts 1960 (No.59 of 1960).
- Shrimati Rukmini Devi Arundale (Dancer and Social Activist)** pioneered the setting up of the Board, with its Headquarters at Chennai. She guided the activities of the Board for nearly twenty years till her demise in 1986.
- The Board is a **statutory advisory body** and consists of 28 Members. **The term of office of Members is for a period of 3 years.**

Rukmini Devi (born in 1904) was instrumental in its constitution donating the Valmiki Nagar building to the Board and later, in 1991, the DMK government allotted 1,400 sq m of land in Chennai's Thiruvannamiyur solely for the AWBI's use.

PEPPER IT WITH

Regulations for animals used in Films, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 (PCA Act), Jallikattu, Bharatanatyam Dance

Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences

Why in News

The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Science (CCRAS) has initiated Tribal Health Care Research Programme (THCRP) in 14 States through 15 Institutes under the Council.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II				■							
III											
IV											
M											

The aim & objectives of THCRP are as under: -

- To Study the living conditions of tribal people
- To Collect information related to health statistics
- To study dietetic habits, nature and frequency of prevalent diseases, use of common medicinal plants in the area
- To provide medical aid at the door steps of tribals.
- To propagate knowledge about Ayurvedic concept of Pathyapathya including hygiene habits, dietary practice.
- To prevent diseases by adopting healthy way of living & clean environment (Swachhata)
- To collect LHTs/folk medicines/traditional practices prevalent in the area.

PEPPER IT WITH

Tribal Diaries app, TRIFED, AadiMahotsav

"Sowa-Rigpa"(Science of healing) commonly known as Amchi system of medicine is one of the oldest, living and well documented medical tradition of the world. It has been popularly practiced in Tibet, Mongolia, Bhutan, some parts of China, Nepal, Himalayan regions of India and few parts of former Soviet Union etc.

About CCRAS

The CCRAS is an autonomous body of the Ministry of AYUSH. It is an apex body in India for the formulation, coordination, development and promotion of research on scientific lines in Ayurveda and **Sowa-Rigpa system** of medicine.

CCRAS is actively involved in scientific process of drug development adopting prevalent guidelines such as Good Clinical Practices Guidelines for ASU drugs (GCP-ASU), Ministry of AYUSH and National ethical guidelines for Bio-Medical Research (ICMR), WHO guidelines for traditional medicines etc. as per requirement and as feasible through its peripheral institutes.

New drugs developed& commercialized:

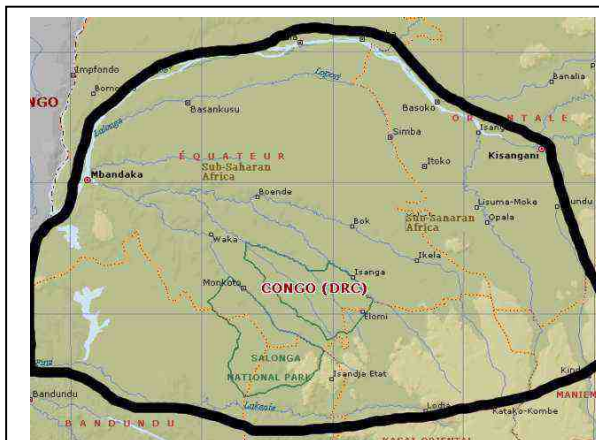
- ✓ AYUSH 82, an Anti-Diabetic Ayurvedic Formulation
- ✓ AYUSH SG an Anti- Rheumatoid Arthritis preparation.

The government has launched “E- Tribes” to expand tribal commerce and the availability of tribal products over large area, reaping greater benefits for tribal artisans.

Brazzaville Declaration

- The Brazzaville Declaration was signed by the environment ministers of the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Republic of Congo, and Indonesia. **It was signed in the third meeting of partners of the Global Peatland Initiative.**
- The declaration aims to highlight the countries’ commitment to sharing knowledge, experiences and tools to help the peat-rich developing countries in protecting their valuable peatlands. It is also supposed to help protect the **world’s largest tropical peatlands, the Cuvette Centrale region in the Congo Basin.**
- Peatlands, cover only 3 percent of the land surface but **contain 30 percent of the world’s organic soil carbon.** This special type of wetlands is home to diverse flora and fauna and provides essential ecosystems services that support local livelihoods.
- However, peatlands are often drained for agriculture, forestry and energy use, sometimes involving burning for clearing the ground. The deforestation or degradation of forest cover on peatlands creates a double hit for carbon emissions, with losses from both standing tree biomass as well as from the drying and degradation of peat soils.
- Such changes also have implications for biodiversity and livelihoods of local communities, including fishing and hunting.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											



The Cuvette Centrale is a region within the Democratic Republic of the Congo that is bounded by the Congo river in the north, east and west. In the south it is bounded by the Kasai river and further east by the border between rainforest and savannah. It includes an area of approximately 800 000 km².

What is Peat and where it is Found

Peat is partially decayed plant material that accumulates under water-logged conditions over long time periods. **Natural areas covered by peat are called peatlands.** Terms commonly used for specific peatland types are peat swamp forests, fens, bogs or mires. **Peat is found around the world – in permafrost regions towards the poles and at high altitudes, in coastal areas, beneath tropical rainforest and in boreal forests.** Peatlands store

large amounts of carbon. Although they cover less than three per cent of global land surface, estimates suggest that peatlands contain twice as much as in the world’s forests.

Threats to Peat

- Despite their importance especially to climate change, there is significant uncertainty around peatlands because their extent, status and dynamics have never been globally mapped with sufficient accuracy.
- **The major threat to the peat carbon stocks globally is drainage.** Drained peatlands are mainly used for agriculture and forestry, and peat is extracted for horticulture and energy production. Drainage of peatlands and poor management can result in a variety of problems, the most obvious of which are large and persistent peat fires, such as those in parts of Southeast Asia and Russia in recent years.
- In addition to the often-reported recent loss of tropical peatlands, degradation remains a significant source of emissions in many temperate and boreal countries after decades of non-sustainable use. In boreal areas, permafrost is thawing, causing land subsidence and potentially leading to high greenhouse gas emissions. Further degradation and loss of peat ecosystems, regardless of their location, could seriously hamper climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts and the achievement of the Paris Agreement.
- Although there has not been a detailed or comprehensive global assessment, it can be stated with confidence that improved management of peatlands – reducing their drainage and degradation – can be achieved with available tools and measures.

Global Peatland Initiative

Peatlands are wetlands that contain a mixture of decomposed organic material, partially submerged in a layer of water, lacking oxygen. **The Global Peatlands Initiative is an effort by leading experts and institutions to save peatlands as the world’s largest terrestrial organic carbon stock and to prevent it being emitted into the atmosphere.** The current greenhouse gas emissions from drained or burned peatlands are estimated to amount up to five percent of the global carbon budget — in the range of two billion tonnes CO2 per year.

PEPPER IT WITH
Green Economy, Food and Agriculture organisation, Wetlands International, UNEP

Partners to the Initiative will work together within their respective areas of expertise to improve the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of peatlands. **In this way the Initiative will contribute to Several Sustainable Development Goals, including by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, maintaining ecosystem services and securing lives and livelihoods through improved adaptive capacity.** One of the first outputs of the Global Peatlands Initiative will be an assessment, which will focus on the status of peatlands and their importance in the global carbon cycle. It will also examine the importance of peatlands for national economies.

Yellow Fever

- Yellow fever is an acute viral haemorrhagic disease transmitted by infected mosquitoes. **The "yellow" in the name refers to the jaundice that affects some patients.**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III							■				
IV											
M											

- Symptoms of yellow fever include **fever, headache, jaundice, muscle pain, nausea, vomiting and fatigue**. A small proportion of patients who contract the virus develop severe symptoms and approximately half of those die within 7 to 10 days.
- The virus is endemic in tropical areas of Africa and Central and South America. Large epidemics of yellow fever occur when infected people introduce the virus into heavily populated areas with high mosquito density and where most people have little or no immunity, due to lack of vaccination. **In these conditions, infected mosquitoes of the *Aedes aegypti* specie transmit the virus from person to person.**
- Yellow fever is prevented by an extremely effective vaccine, which is safe and affordable. A single dose of yellow fever vaccine is sufficient to confer sustained immunity and life-long protection against yellow fever disease and a booster dose of the vaccine is not needed. The vaccine provides effective immunity within 30 days for 99% of persons vaccinated.
- Good supportive treatment in hospitals improves survival rates. There is currently no specific anti-viral drug for yellow fever.
- **The Eliminate Yellow fever Epidemics (EYE) Strategy launched in 2017 is an unprecedented initiative.** With more than 50 partners involved, the EYE partnership supports 40 at-risk countries in Africa and the Americas to prevent, detect, and respond to yellow fever suspected cases and outbreaks.

The yellow fever virus is an **arbovirus of the flavivirus genus and is transmitted by mosquitoes, belonging to the *Aedes* and *Haemogogus* species**. The different mosquito species live in different habitats some breed around houses (domestic), others in the jungle (wild), and some in both habitats (semi-domestic).
 Yellow fever can affect monkey and human. If a mosquito bites a monkey that has the fever, they can pass it to humans. **After having it once, a person is generally immune, meaning that they are unlikely to have it again.**

Global Status Report 2017

In News

It is published by **UN Environment and the International Energy Agency.**

Context

- The **'Global Status Report 2017: Towards a zero-emission, efficient, and resilient buildings and construction sector**, was prepared by the International Energy Agency (IEA) for the Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GABC). The GABC aims to bring together the building and construction industry, countries and stakeholders to raise awareness and facilitate the global transition towards for low-emission, energy-efficient buildings.
- **Buildings and construction together account for 36% of global final energy use and 39% of energy-related carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions when upstream power generation is included.**
- The energy intensity per square meter (m2) of the global buildings sector needs to improve on average by 30% by 2030 (compared to 2015) to be on track to meet global climate ambitions set out in the Paris Agreement.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II									■		
III										■	
IV											
M											

DSR 2017 has listed the **EMC campus (Kerala) as one of the recent achievements in the deployment of key technologies for energy-efficiency in buildings**. The 40,000-square foot building is the only one from India to figure in the list, along with five other projects worldwide.

Significance

- ❖ This **Global Status Report 2017 reconfirms the significance of the buildings and construction sector in global energy consumption and related emissions.** It also shows that efforts to decarbonise the sector are progressing, thanks to implementation of comprehensive policy frameworks, deployment of low-carbon and energy-efficient technologies, better building design approaches and solutions, and an improving investment market.
- ❖ While the pace and scale of improvement is still not enough to meet global climate ambitions, noteworthy examples highlighted in this report nevertheless show that increased effort can still deliver on those objectives, while also bringing forward multiple positive economic, social, health and environmental benefits.

PEEPER IT WITH
IEA, Smart City, Urban Heat Island, Paris Agreement

GABC

The Global Alliance for Buildings and Construction (GABC) is an initiative launched at COP21, as part of the Lima Paris Action Agenda. It aims to mobilise all stakeholders, including member states and non-state actors from the Buildings and Construction sector to scale up climate actions in the sector. **The GABC focuses on the achievement of the low-carbon and energy transition through fostering the development of appropriate policies for sustainable, energy efficient buildings, which allows a concrete value-chain transformation of the sector.**

Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) survey

- **Only 13 per cent of the tiger conservation areas met the global standards of an accreditation system, the Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS),** a new survey of current management methodologies at 112 sites located in 11 tiger-range countries, including India, said.
- The survey is the first and largest rapid assessment of site-based tiger conservation across Asia and has been driven by 11 conservation organisations and tiger-range governments that are part of the CA|TS coalition.
- Under the accreditation system of CA|TS, tiger conservation **areas provide evidence under seven pillars and 17 elements of critical management activity to demonstrate that they meet a range of criteria for effective conservation management.**
- To date, three sites - **Lansdowne Forest Division in Uttarakhand, India, Chitwan National Park in Nepal and Sikhote-Alin Nature Reserve in Russia** - have been awarded CA|TS Approved status.
- The CA|TS was developed in response to the need for stringent conservation procedures for protection of the big cat through a partnership between governments and conservation organisations to assess the levels of effective management, among others. Of the 112 global sites surveyed, only 12.5 per cent was currently able to meet the full CA|TS criteria.
- CA|TS is an important tool in the achievement of the **Convention on Biological Diversity - CBD's Global Aichi Targets. It works closely with IUCN.**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III									■		
IV											
M											

PEPPER IT WITH
NTCA, Orange Tiger Reserve Project Tiger, Tiger Census

Major Highlights

1. Half of the assessed sites (52.5 per cent) report fairly strong management, although there are improvements needed. The remaining 35 per cent (the majority of which are in Southeast Asia) have relatively weak management. Basic needs such as enforcement of laws against

poaching, engaging local communities and managing conflicts between people and wildlife, remain weak for all areas surveyed.

2. Positive findings highlight the fact that **tiger monitoring is being implemented in 87 per cent of the sites and all sites surveyed in South Asian and East Asian countries like Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Nepal and Russia have management plans.**
3. However, several sites in Southeast Asia, including countries such as Cambodia, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar and Thailand, did not have management plans and about 85 per cent of the sites also had no systems for assessing management effectiveness.
4. Despite poaching being one of the greatest threats faced by big cats, 85 per cent of the areas surveyed do not have staff capacity to patrol the sites effectively and 61 per cent of the areas in Southeast Asia have a very limited anti-poaching enforcement.
5. Low investment from governments in Southeast Asia was one of the reasons for the lack of management of these supposedly “protected areas”.

Way Forward

An ineffective management of tiger conservation areas led to the extinction of tigers from certain areas. To halt and reverse the decline of wild tigers, effective management is thus the single-most important action. To achieve this, long-term investment in tiger conservation areas is absolutely essential and this is a responsibility that must be led by the tiger-range governments.

Unless governments commit to sustained investments in the protection of these sites, the tiger population might face catastrophic decline that they had suffered over the last few decades.

Neutrino project gets environmental nod

In News

The India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) project has got a fresh lease of life with the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) taking it up as a special case and granting it environmental clearance (EC) to set up the lab in **Bodi West hills (Tamil Nadu).**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

The panel was informed that there was no scope for radioactivity and leaching of water and these have been explained to the courts. The project proponents clarified that studies showed there would be no impact of blasting on any habitation in the vicinity.

Two conditions

While granting EC, the committee stipulated specific conditions, of which two are key for the project to take off. One is the consent to establish and operate to be obtained from the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board (TNPCB). Also, the INO team has to obtain the necessary forest and National Board for Wild Life clearances as per law. The Mathikettan Shola National Park in Idukki district, Kerala, is situated within five km from the project site.

Fluorimeter

- The instrument, "**Fluorimeter**", **has been developed by the DAE.**
- The device would help in **detecting traces of uranium in water.** It will be especially helpful in **areas like Punjab where uranium traces in water sources have been found to be at dangerous levels.**

About INO

- ❖ The project, which is to come up at **Pottipuram village in Tamil Nadu**, comes at an investment of Rs 1,500 crore. **The project will be funded jointly by the Department of Science and Technology and Atomic Energy, while the infrastructure will be created with the help of the Tamil Nadu government.**
- ❖ The detector will be put underground, because on the surface, there are other interactions, which will completely submerge the Neutrino event.

- ❖ India will also seek international participation in the project, so that it turns out to be an international hub for high-end research such as CERN in Geneva. **However, Indian participation in the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) project will continue.**

Neutrino

- Neutrinos are one of the fundamental particles which make up the universe. They are also one of the least understood.
- Neutrinos are similar to the more familiar electron, with one crucial difference: **neutrinos do not carry electric charge.** Because neutrinos are electrically neutral, **they are not affected by the electromagnetic forces** which act on electrons. Neutrinos are affected only by a "weak" sub-atomic force of much shorter range than electro-magnetic and are therefore able to pass through great distances in matter without being affected by it.
- **Three types of neutrinos are known;** there is strong evidence that no additional neutrinos exist unless their properties are unexpectedly very different from the known types. Each type or "flavor" of neutrino is related to a charged particle (which gives the corresponding neutrino its name). Hence, the "electron neutrino" is associated with the electron, and two other neutrinos are associated with heavier versions of the electron called the **muon and the tau.**

PEPPER IT WITH
LHC, Gravitational Waves, LIGO, Neutron Star, Black Hole, BIRAC

Newton-Bhabha Fund

In News

An India-UK Joint Team has won the Newton-Bhabha Fund for a project on Groundwater Arsenic Research in Ganga River Basin.

The Department of Science and Technology has undertaken the project with the Natural Environment Research Council, UK, **to find solutions to the water challenges faced in the pervasively arsenic-affected Ganga River Basin.**

The team members involved with the project will try to assess how the problem of arsenic poisoning can get aggravated in the next 25 to 30 years and influence groundwater management practices and suggest water remedial technologies accordingly.

The project will be conducted from three sites - **Bijnor and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Nadia in West Bengal.**

Newton Bhabha Fund

1. The Newton Bhabha Fund, provided by the British Council, aims to bring together the UK and Indian scientific research and innovation sectors to find joint solutions to the challenges facing India in economic development and social welfare.
2. The Indian team comprises representatives of the IIT Kharagpur, the National Institute of Hydrology, the IIT Roorkee and the Mahavir Cancer Sansthan and Research Centre of Patna.
3. The UK team consists of representatives of the University of Manchester, the British Geological Survey, the University of Salford and the University of Birmingham.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III						■		■			
IV											
M											

PEPPER IT WITH
National Water Commission
Cauvery Water Dispute
Mahanadi Water Dispute
Drip and Sprinkle irrigation

A Floating Laboratory to save the Loktak Lake

In News

Rising urbanisation and land-use change over the years has seen the Loktak Lake, the largest in the northeast, become a dump-yard for the city's municipal waste, ranging from plastic refuse to chemical runoff from farming. This worsens during years of floods.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

The model of a floating laboratory ties into a larger initiative by the Centre's Department of Biotechnology (DBT) to monitor the health of aquatic systems in the northeast. Last September, the DBT announced plans to have multiple floating boats cruising the 3,500-km Brahmaputra river and collecting water samples to track its health.

The health of the lake also affects the **Phumdis, or the unique 'floating islands', of the Loktak lake.**

These islands, made of a mix of vegetation and soil, coalesce to form a thick mat that, for centuries, has hosted huts and fishing settlements.

PEPPER IT WITH
Keibullamjao National Park, Orange National Park, Sangai Deer, Okhla Bird Sanctuary

Loktak Lake

- ✓ It is the largest freshwater (sweet) lake in North -East India, **also called the only Floating lake in the world due to the floating phumdis (heterogeneous mass of vegetation, soil, and organic matters at various stages of decomposition) on it, is located near Moirang in Manipur state, India.** The Keibullamjao National Park, which is the last natural refuge of the endangered sangai or Manipur brow-antlered deer, one of three subspecies of Eld's Deer, is situated in the southeastern shores of this lake and is the largest of all the phumdis in the lake.
- ✓ Considering the ecological status and its biodiversity values, the lake was initially designated as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention. It was also listed under the Montreux Record, "a record of Ramsar sites where changes in ecological character have occurred, are occurring or are likely to occur".

World Wildlife Day – Wildlife Under Threat

Every year March 3 is celebrated as World Wildlife Day to raise awareness about our planet's flora and fauna.

The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was finalised on March 3 and the day has been celebrated as World Wildlife Day since 2014.

This year the theme is **"Big cats – predators under threat."**

UN World Wildlife Day 2018 featured a star-studded cast — cheetah, clouded leopard, jaguar, leopard, lion, puma, snow leopard, tiger. These most majestic predators on our planet are facing many and varied threats, primarily caused by human activities, be it habitat loss, poaching, human-wildlife conflict or climate change.

A Rs 5 crore **insect museum** with the state-of-the-art amenities was unveiled at the Tamil Nadu Agricultural University.

The museum, established at a 6,691 sqft. area, is fully dedicated to insects and claimed to be the first of its in the country.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Air-Breathing Electric Thruster

In a world-first, an **European Space Agency - led team has built and fired an electric thruster to ingest scarce air molecules from the top of the atmosphere for propellant, opening the way to satellites flying in very low orbits for years on end.**

Replacing onboard propellant with atmospheric molecules would create a new class of satellites able to operate in very low orbits for long periods. Air-breathing electric thrusters could also be used at the outer fringes of atmospheres of other planets, drawing on the carbon dioxide of Mars, for instance.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Earth Hour 2018

- Earth Hour was **started by the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) to ‘call for greater action on climate change’.**
- It does so by encouraging millions of people around the world to switch off their lights and electrical appliances **for 60 minutes to ‘show they care about the future of our planet’.**
- Earth Hour 2018 will be the **initiative’s 11th year.** The event started in Sydney back in 2007 when 2.2 million people and 2,100 businesses switched off their lights for an hour.
- The WWF hopes Earth Hour will inspire people to become more environmentally-friendly and make ‘sustainable life choices’ that includes energy consumption in homes, diets and choice of transport.
- Earth Hour 2018 started at **8.30 pm GMT on March 24 2018.** It lasted 60 minutes.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project

The foundation stone of the 60 MW Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project (NMHEP) in Uttarkashi (Uttarakhand) was laid down recently.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

The Proposed Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project (NMHEP) is located on the **river Tons – a tributary of the Yamuna,** in Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand. This **run-of-the river project** was allocated to SJVN Ltd by the Government of Uttarakhand. SJVN Ltd is a Mini Ratna PSU under administrative control of the Ministry of Power, Govt. of India.

With environment clearance accorded in 2016, all statutory clearances for the project are in place. Major civil works were awarded in December 2017 and the project is scheduled to be completed by December, 2021, in a period of 4 years. **It will have two underground generating units of 30 MW each.** The estimated project cost at October 2016 PL is Rs. 648.33 crore with a debt equity ratio of 70:30. Levelised tariff is Rs. 6.39 per unit.

Surat has become the **first district in the country to have 100 percent solar powered Primary Health Centers (PHC).**

There are a total of 52 PHCs in the district and all of them are now powered by solar system. This initiative will not only bring down the electricity Bill by 40 percent but also help fight global warming.

Significance

Naitwar Mori Hydro Electric Project will add 265.5 Million Units of renewable energy to the grid and would result in CO2 emissions reductions to the tune of 0.21 Million tons annually. Besides socio-economic development and employment generation, the project would provide 12 per cent free power to Government of Uttarakhand and 1 per cent additional for Local Area Development Fund (LADF).

PEPPER IT WITH
 Indus Water Commission
 Hydro Projects in J&K
 Cauvery Water Dispute

South Asia Cooperative Environment Programme

In News

The Union Cabinet has approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and South Asian Cooperative Environment Programme (SACEP) for **cooperation on the response to Oil and Chemical Pollution in the South Asian Seas Region.**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

About

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) will be the Competent National Authority and national operational contact point for implementation of "Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan" under the MoU and shall respond to oil and chemical spills on behalf of Government of India. Further, ICG Maritime Rescue Coordination Centres (MRCCs) will be the national emergency response centre for marine incidents.

PEPPER IT WITH
Bioremediation
IMO, Coral Reefs

The MoU intends to promote closer cooperation between India and other maritime nations comprising the South Asian seas region namely Bangladesh, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for protection and preservation of marine environment in the region.

SACEP

In order to promote and support protection, management and enhancement of the environment in the South Asian region, the **Governments of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka established the SACEP in 1982 in Sri Lanka.**

The SACEP jointly with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) developed a "**Regional Oil Spill Contingency Plan**" to facilitate international co-operation and mutual assistance in preparing and responding to a major oil pollution incident in the seas around the Maritime States of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

National Conference on Down Syndrome

In News

A 'National Conference on Down Syndrome' was organised by the National Trust **under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.** A book entitled "Twilights Children" based on the lives of person suffering from Down Syndrome was released on the occasion.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

In 2011, the United Nations General Assembly declared to observe **21st March as World Down Syndrome Day (WSDS)** and since then every year, this day is officially observed by UN to create awareness about people with Down Syndrome.

Down Syndrome

Down syndrome is a **chromosomal condition associated with intellectual and learning disabilities.** Delayed development and behavioral problems are often reported in children with it.

PEPPER IT WITH
National Conclave on Psychological Trauma, Child Protection, and Mental Illnesses, Print Biennale India 2018, Autism

Down syndrome is a genetic disorder and the most common autosomal chromosome abnormality in humans, where extra genetic material from chromosome 21 is transferred to a newly formed embryo. These extra genes and DNA cause changes in development of the embryo and fetus resulting in physical and mental abnormalities. Each patient is unique and there can be great variability in the severity of symptoms.

National Trust

- The National Trust is a **statutory body set up by an Act of Parliament for the Welfare of Persons with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities** under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.

KSG – (DELHI VN) 9717380832, (DELHI RN), (JAIPUR) 8290800441, (BHOPAL) 7509975361, (PATNA) 7463950774, (INDORE) 7314977441, www.ksgindia.com

- Since, the inception, the National Trust has been running various schemes and programmes for the welfare of these persons with disabilities. Amongst these one of the major activities is creating awareness amongst the general public by organizing various workshops, seminars and conferences on these disabilities and the capabilities of such persons.

The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS)

About

- It is a mission by **NASA and SPaceX**.
- The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) is the **next step in the search for planets outside of our solar system, including those that could support life**. The mission will find exoplanets that periodically block part of the light from their host stars, events called transits. TESS will survey 200,000 of the brightest stars near the sun to search for transiting exoplanets.
- TESS will find the most promising exoplanets orbiting our nearest and brightest stars, giving future researchers a rich set of new targets for more comprehensive follow-up studies.
- In addition to its search for exoplanets, TESS will allow scientists from the wider community to request targets for astrophysics research on approximately 20,000 additional objects during the mission through its Guest Investigator program.
- The transit method of **detecting exoplanets looks for dips in the visible light of stars** and requires that planets cross in front of stars along our line of sight to them. Repetitive, periodic dips can reveal a planet or planets orbiting a star.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

PEPPER IT WITH
BeiDou, Insight Mars Mission
Falcon, SpaceX

Regulation of E-Cigarettes

In News

WHO recently released its report on E-Cigarettes.

Key Highlights

As per a report prepared by WHO, **Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) (also known as e-cigarettes) emits nicotine**, the addictive component of tobacco products. In addition to dependence, nicotine can have adverse effects on the development of the foetus during pregnancy and may contribute to cardiovascular disease.

The WHO report further says that although **nicotine itself is not a carcinogen**, it may function as a “tumour promoter” and seems to be involved in the biology of malignant disease, as well as of neurodegeneration. Foetal and adolescent nicotine exposure may have long-term consequences for brain development, potentially leading to learning and anxiety disorders. The evidence is sufficient to warn children and adolescents, pregnant women, and women of reproductive age against ENDS use and nicotine.

E-cigarettes

It produce an aerosol by heating a liquid that usually contains nicotine—the addictive drug in regular cigarettes, cigars, and other tobacco products—flavorings, and other chemicals that help to make the aerosol. Users inhale this aerosol into their lungs.

Using an e-cigarette is sometimes called “**vaping**.” E-cigarettes can be used to deliver marijuana and other drugs.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

PEPPER IT WITH
ENDS, COTPA 2003
Alcohol Prohibited States

Biggest space telescope Launch delayed

In News

NASA has delayed the launch of its much awaited, \$8 billion **James Webb Space Telescope** — set to be the world’s biggest space observatory — until at least May 2020.

The telescope is currently undergoing final integration and test phases that will require more time to ensure a successful mission.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III						■					
IV											
M											

James Webb Telescope

- ✓ The James Webb Space Telescope will be complementing the scientific discoveries of NASA’s Hubble Space Telescope and other science missions. **The observatory will solve mysteries of our solar system.**
- ✓ The James Webb Space Telescope (sometimes called JWST or Webb) will be a large infrared telescope with a 6.5-meter primary mirror. The telescope will be launched on an Ariane 5 rocket from French Guiana in 2020.
- ✓ Webb will be the premier observatory of the next decade, serving thousands of astronomers worldwide. **It will study every phase in the history of our Universe**, ranging from the first luminous glows after the Big Bang, to the formation of solar systems capable of supporting life on planets like Earth, to the evolution of our own Solar System.
- ✓ Webb was formerly known as the "**Next Generation Space Telescope**" (NGST); it was renamed in Sept. 2002 after a former NASA administrator, James Webb.

PEPPER IT WITH
 Jupiter’s polar storm
 Stephen Hawkings
 Geomagnetic Storms

Rare Disease Day

- It takes place on the **last day of February each year**. The main objective of Rare Disease Day is to raise awareness amongst the general public and decision-makers about rare diseases and their impact on patients' lives.
- The campaign targets primarily the general public and also seeks to raise awareness amongst policy makers, public authorities, industry representatives, researchers, health professionals and anyone who has a genuine interest in rare diseases.
- **Rare Disease Day was first launched by EURORDIS and its Council of National Alliances in 2008**. The campaign started as a European event and has progressively become a world phenomenon, with the USA joining in 2009 and participation in over 90 countries all over the world in both 2017 and 2018.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III							■				
IV											
M											

Rare Disease

- ✓ A disease or disorder is defined as rare in Europe when it affects less than 1 in 2000.
- ✓ A disease or disorder is defined as rare in the USA when it affects fewer than 200,000 Americans at any given time.
- ✓ 80% of rare diseases have identified genetic origins whilst others are the result of infections (bacterial or viral), allergies and environmental causes, or are degenerative and proliferative. 50% of rare diseases affect children.
- ✓ Over 6000 rare diseases are characterised by a broad diversity of disorders and symptoms that vary not only from disease to disease but also from patient to patient suffering from the same disease.

105th Indian Science Congress

In News

Indian PM inaugurated the **105th Indian Science Congress at Manipur University**. This is just the second time in over a century that the Indian Science Congress is being held in the North-East.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Background

This congress focused on translational science for promoting affordable sustainable innovation. During the five days, thrust was given on various science disciplines, which has reached to the society. In a way, discussions were on science for all, Science and Technology Fostering Inclusive Societal Development and Science & Society: Bridging the Gap through Innovations.

106th edition of the Indian Science Congress will be held next year from 3rd to 7th January, 2019 at **Barkatullah University Bhopal**, with the theme, "Future India: Science & Technology".

Significance

Scientific temper has been a part of ancient Indian heritage and every achievement is a continuation of ancient India's scientific achievements. Due to the efforts of scientists, **India figures in top 10 positions in the world on various parameters**. The process of "brain drain" has been reversed into "brain gain" with hundreds of scientists returning to serve the nation. Scientists were urged to put their heart and soul into finding new solutions to the problems facing the nation and improve the quality of life of common man. Stressed was laid on the need to ensure that the fruits of development reach out to the unreached people of the 115 aspirational districts of the country.

PEPPER IT WITH
Scientific Temper, Fundamental Duties, Innovate in India

Threat of new malware looms over cyberspace

In News

A new threat looms large on the horizon of cyberspace. After Mirai and Reaper, cybersecurity agencies have detected **a new malware called Saposhi, which is capable of taking over electronic devices and turning them into 'bots', which can be then used for any purpose, including a Distributed Denial Of Service attack which**, with enough firepower, can cripple entire industries.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Saposhi was detected around 15 days ago and is currently being watched and studied. Saposhi is similar in its intensity to Reaper, which was taking over millions of devices at the rate of 10,000 devices per day.

Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT), a central government body that deals with cyber attacks, had issued an alert about reaper, a highly evolved malware capable of not only hacking devices like WiFi routers and security cameras, but also able to hide its own presence in the bot — a device taken over by a malware.

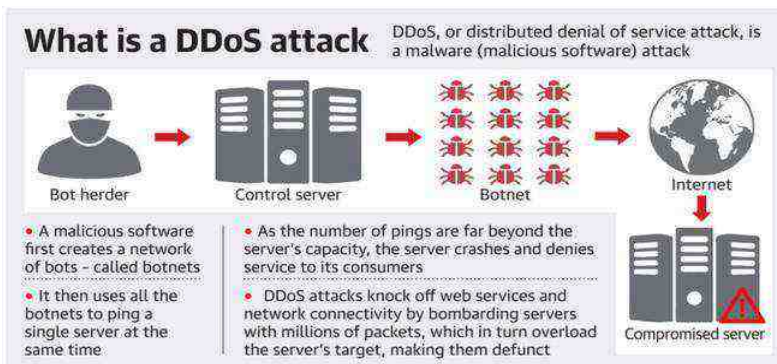
Malwares like Saposhi, Reaper and Mirai are primarily aimed at DDoS attacks, in which the malware first creates a network of bots — called a botnet — and then uses the botnet to ping a single server at the same time. **As the number of pings is far beyond the server's capacity, the server crashes and denies service to its consumers.**

PEPPER IT WITH
CIMON (Crew Interactive, Mobile Companion), WannaCry, Ransomware, Mirai and Reaper.

In 2016, Mirai, using a botnet of 5 lakh devices, had caused the servers of Dyn, a leading domain name service provider, to crash, affecting services of popular websites like Twitter, Netflix and Reddit.

How a malware works?

- A malware is released into cyberspace, with specific instructions programmed into it. **The instructions direct the malware to take over as many devices connected to the internet as possible.**
- Depending on its programming, the malware turns internet-connected devices into ‘bots’ and starts building a botnet.
- Malwares like Reaper and Saposhi are capable of identifying weaknesses in devices and exploiting them to turn the devices into bots.
- Once a large enough botnet is created, simultaneous pings are sent to a single server, causing a server failure, **which is called a Distributed Denial of Service attack.**



- Depending on the size of the botnet, malwares can execute multiple DDOS attacks at the same time, or over a period of time.

Airtel acquires India leg of GBI Submarine Cable

Telecom major Bharti Airtel has acquired India leg of **Gulf Bridge International submarine** cable which will boost its data carrying capacity.

Under the agreement, Airtel will acquire the ownership of the India leg of GBI’s India-Middle East-Europe submarine cable. Airtel will also pick up a significant capacity on Middle East-Europe leg of GBI’s cable system.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Significance

1. **Submarine cables are considered backbone of internet.** Airtel and GBI have also agreed to formulate joint “**go to market**” strategies and leverage the footprint of their respective global networks to serve global customers.
2. With this, India is adding a large capacity to meet the growing data, content demand in markets as well as serve the connectivity needs of global carriers and enterprise customers.
3. With this new investment Airtel now has large capacities—owned and leased — on multiple international submarine cable systems and offers the multiple number of connectivity routes between India and Europe.

PEPPER IT WITH
TAPI pipeline, Urja Ganga, NSTC, CPEC

GBI

- ❖ Established in 2008, **GBI’s mission was to connect the Arabian Gulf countries and to meet the growing demand for capacity providing onward connectivity to the rest of the world over its subsea and terrestrial cable systems.**
- ❖ GBI operates a multilayer, carrier-neutral network that provides direct reach to most countries in the Middle East, extending connectivity Westward into Europe and East towards India and the Asia Pacific.
- ❖ GBI is a carrier of choice for telecom operators, ISPs and governments throughout the Middle East, Europe and Asia offering capacity and a portfolio of wholesale and enterprise services.

Rydberg Polarons

- An international team of physicists have successfully created a “giant atom” and filled it with ordinary atoms, **creating a new state of matter termed “Rydberg polarons”. These atoms are held together by a weak bond and are created at very cold temperatures.**
- It uses ideas from two different fields: **Bose Einstein Condensation and Rydberg atoms.**
- In this work, the authors used laser light on a BEC of strontium atoms so that it impinges on one strontium atom at a time. This excites an electron into a large orbit, forming a Rydberg atom. This orbit is large enough to encircle many other strontium atoms inside it.
- As the electron moves around many strontium atoms, it generates ripples of the BEC. **The Rydberg atom becomes inextricably mixed with these ripples and forms a new super-atom called a ‘Rydberg polaron’.**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III						■					
IV											
M											

A BEC (Bose Einstein Condensate) **is a liquid-like state of matter** that occurs at very low temperatures. A BEC can be perturbed to create excitations which are akin to ripples on a lake. Here, the authors have used a BEC of strontium atoms.

A ‘Rydberg atom’ is an atom in which an electron has been kicked out to a very large orbit. These have interesting properties and have been studied for a long time.

Significance

- ✓ This new, weakly bound state of matter is an exciting new possibility of investigating the physics of ultracold atoms.
- ✓ A particularly interesting implication is for cosmology. **Our universe is believed to be filled with a mysterious ‘dark matter’ which exerts a gravitational force on other matter.**
- ✓ Some theories of dark matter postulate that it is a cosmic Bose Einstein Condensate, perhaps composed of an as-yet-unknown type of particle. If we are indeed living in an invisible all-pervading Bose Einstein Condensate, this experiment can suggest ways to detect it.

PEPPER IT WITH
 PSLV and GSLV, Cryogenic Engine, MARK III, IRNSS Mars Orbiter Mission

Shakti Sthala

- The Karnataka government inaugurated the first phase of a 2,000 megawatts (MW) solar park in the drought-prone Pavagada region of Tumkur district, about 180km from Bengaluru.
- The solar project, touted as the largest in the world, is spread over 13,000 acres and five villages. **It is part of the “Karnataka Solar Policy 2014-2021” which aims to decrease dependence on traditional power sources and move to environmentally friendly ones to meet the growing power needs of the state.**
- The move is intended to curb the mass migration of people from the region which has been declared drought-hit in 54 of the last 60 years.
- The park’s development was initiated with the creation of the Karnataka Solar Power Development Corp. Ltd (KSPDCL) in March 2015 as a joint venture between Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Ltd (KREDL) and Solar Energy Corp. of India (SECI).
- **KSPDCL uses the “plug and play” model**, under which it acquires and develops land as blocks for solar power generation, embedded with the required government approvals, and gives it out to solar power developers (SPDs) through auctions.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II						■					
III							■				
IV											
M											

JNCASR's novel material to convert waste heat into electricity

A novel compound that exhibits poor thermal conductivity in the 25-425 degree C range but shows good electrical conductivity has been developed by a team of researchers from Bengaluru's Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR). The compound, **silver copper telluride (AgCuTe)**, shows promise as a thermoelectric material for converting waste heat into electricity.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Since nearly 65% of utilized energy is wasted as heat, the focus is on **developing materials that exhibit good thermoelectric property with both glass- and metal-like properties**. Potential applications of the thermoelectric technology are in automobile industry, chemical, thermal and steel power plants where large quantities of heat are wasted.

Due to the low thermal conductivity of the material developed by JNCASR, one end of the 8 mm-long rod that is contact with waste heat remains hot while the other end maintains cold temperature. The temperature difference is essential for the generation of electrical voltage. At the same time, the material exhibits good electrical conductivity like metal.

Govt. forms panel to probe illegal cultivation of HT Cotton

- The government has constituted a committee to investigate into illegal cultivation of HT cotton in four states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Maharashtra after receiving several representations for ban of illegal cultivation of Herbicide Tolerant (HT) or BG-III cotton in the country.
- Department of Biotechnology in the Ministry of Science and Technology has constituted a Field Inspection and Scientific Evaluation Committee (FISEC) to investigate the matter of illegal cultivation of HT cotton.
- The cultivation of BG-III or HT cotton** has not been approved by Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of the Ministry of Environment.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

HAMMER Spacecraft

NASA and the National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA) are working on a new spacecraft design that could potentially deflect a dangerous asteroid before that happens. The craft is called "HAMMER," and it does what the name implies.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

HAMMER, which stands for **Hypervelocity Asteroid Mitigation Mission for Emergency Response**, has two modes. In its preferred mode of operation, it would act as an impactor that collides with the asteroid to gently nudge it off course, so it doesn't hit the planet. If there's not enough time for that, HAMMER's other option is to detonate a nuclear weapon in order to destroy or deflect the object.

GSLV-F08/GSAT-6A Mission

GSLV-F08 is the 12th flight of Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) and Sixth flight with indigenous Cryogenic Stage. The Launch of GSLV-F08 carrying GSAT-6A took place from the Second Launch Pad (SLP) in Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR, Sriharikota.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

GSAT-6A, similar to GSAT-6 is a high-power S-band communication satellite configured around I-2K bus. The mission life of spacecraft planned is about 10 years. The satellite will also provide a platform for developing technologies such as demonstration of 6 m S-Band

Unfurlable Antenna, handheld ground terminals and network management techniques that could be useful in satellite based mobile communication applications.

Copernicus

- ❖ Copernicus is the most ambitious Earth observation programme to date. It will provide accurate, timely and easily accessible information to improve the management of the environment, understand and mitigate the effects of climate change and ensure civil security.
- ❖ Copernicus is the **new name for the Global Monitoring for Environment and Security programme, previously known as GMES.**
- ❖ This initiative is headed by the European Commission (EC) in partnership with the European Space Agency (ESA).

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III						■					
IV											
M											

Action Plan for Champion Sectors in Services

Why in News

An action plan for **12 champion services sector** identified by the ministry of commerce and industry for special focus has received Cabinet approval.

Champion service sectors

The sectors are IT and IT enabled services(ITes), tourism and hospitality, medical value travel, transport and logistics, accounting and finance, audio visual, legal, communication, construction and related engineering, environment, financial and education.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III	■				■						
IV											
M											

Key Highlights

- ❖ A dedicated fund of Rs. 5000 crores has been proposed to be established to support initiatives for sectoral Action Plans of the Champion Sectors.
- ❖ The Cabinet has also directed the Ministries/Departments concerned with these sectors to utilize the available draft sectoral plans to finalize and implement the Action Plans for the identified Champion Services Sectors.
- ❖ The respective line Ministries/Departments shall finalize the Action Plans and the implementation timelines along with a monitoring mechanism to monitor implementation under the overall guidance of the Committee of Secretaries (CoS) under Cabinet Secretary.

PEPPER IT WITH
INDIAsize, GDP, GVA

Corollary

- ✓ This initiative will enhance the competitiveness of India’s service sectors through the implementation of focused and monitored action plans, thereby promoting GDP growth, creating more jobs and promoting exports to global markets
- ✓ The move is expected to “promote GDP growth, create more jobs and promote exports.”
- ✓ Services sector in India has immense employment potential. The proposal will enhance the competitiveness of India’s service sectors through the implementation of focused and monitored Action Plans
- ✓ Through these focus sector the government will also targets raising gross value added (GVA) from about 53% in 2015-16 (61 % including construction services) to 60 % (67% including construction services) by 2022.

Important Indices

Human Development Index

Released by:: United Nations Development Programme

Parameters::

1. Life expectancy for Health
2. Expected years of schooling
3. Mean of years of schooling for education
4. Gross National Income per capita for standard of living

India's rank:: 131

Best country:: Norway

Global Human Capital Index

Released by:: World Economic Forum

Parameters::

1. Capacity
2. Development
3. Deployment
4. Know how

India's rank:: 103

Best country:: Norway

Ease of doing business

Released by:: World Bank

Parameters::

1. Starting a business
2. Dealing with construction permit
3. Electrification
4. Registering property
5. Getting credit
6. Protecting minority investors
7. Paying taxes
8. Trading across borders
9. Enforcing contracts
10. Resolving Insolvency

India Rank: 100

Best country: New Zealand

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Global Innovation Index

Released by:: Cornell University, INSEAD and World Intellectual Property Organisation

India's rank:: 60

Best country:: Switzerland

Corruption Perception Index

Released by:: Transparency International

India rank:: Fell from 71 to 81

Best country:: New Zealand and Singapore

Global Travel and Tourism ranking

Released by:: World Economic Forum

India rank:: 40

Best country:: Spain

Index

Released by

World Press Freedom Index : Reporters without Borders

Global Peace Index : The Institute of Economic and Peace

Inclusive Development Index : World Economic Forum

Intellectual Property Index : US Chamber of Commerce

Global Gender Gap Index : World Economic Forum

Gender Inequality Index : UNDP

World Cyber Security : International Telecommunication Union

Relief Measures for Telecom Sector

Why in News

In a bid to provide relief to financially stressed telecom sector, the Cabinet has allowed telcos to pay for spectrum over **16 years instead of 10 years** and permitted them to hold **more airwaves**.

The Union Cabinet has approved **two key measures** in telecom sector to facilitate investments, consolidation in the sector and enhancing ease of doing business. These include restructuring the deferred payment liabilities of spectrum auction

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III	■				■						
IV											
M											

of telecom service providers and revising the limit of the cap for spectrum holding for telecom service providers.

1. Restructuring of Deferred Payment Liabilities of telecom Service providers for spectrum

By giving one-time opportunity to opt for higher number of installment (max. 16 installment) apart from currently permitted 10 installments. The increased installment is based upon the principle that the Net Present Value (NPV) of the Payment Due is protected as per respective notice inviting application for auction of spectrum from 2012. The total amount received will be higher by Rs. 74446.01 crore till 2034-35.

PEPPER IT WITH
TRAI, Telecom Ombudsman,
WRC, COAI

2. Revision of limits of cap for spectrum holding

Based upon the recommendations of TRAI and Telecom Commission, the Cabinet also approved the revision of limits of cap for spectrum holding as follows:

- a) The overall spectrum cap is revised from the current limit of 25% to 35%.
- b) The current intra-band cap is removed. Instead, there is a cap of 50% on the combined spectrum holding in the sub-1 GHz bands (700 MHz, 800 MHz and 900 MHz bands).
- c) There will be no cap for individual or combined spectrum holding in above 1 GHz band.
- d) The revised spectrum caps limits may be revisited after Final Acts of World Radio-communication Conference (WRC) 2019.

Impact

- ❖ With the restructuring of the deferred payment liability had been proposed by the inter-ministerial group (IMG), the cash flow for the telecom service providers will increase in the immediate timeframe providing them some relief.
- ❖ Revising the limit for the spectrum cap holding will facilitate consolidation of telecom licensees and may encourage the participation in the future auction. The changed limits may be revisited after the Final Acts of World Radio-communication Conference (WRC) 2019, a global convention which reviews regulations and international pacts around spectrum.
- ❖ The new spectrum caps will facilitate consolidation in the industry - Jio and RCom, and Idea and Vodafone. It will only have a minimal benefit through cash flow relief, but total payments will increase.

Way Ahead

While the move to relax spectrum, cap will help in consolidation and time extension would ease cash flow issues, but these were like 'short term band-aids'. Long-term systematic issues have not been addressed and they need to be addressed quickly before more companies get into financial problems.

The systemic issues of the industry still remain unaddressed, like excessive taxes and levies of 30% or more. We hope the government will accelerate these relief measures. The government could have given more relief, especially in areas such as licence fee, revenue share, GST, given that the sector is the most taxed and that it is now considered an essential service.

Dispute Settlement Body (DSB)

Why in News

In an unprecedented show of unity on the face of a potential crisis, most members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), which includes India, have joined forces to work out a strategy to beat the US action of disrupting the working of the dispute settlement body (DSB) by blocking appointment of judges.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Issue

- The potential crisis in the DSB is largely due to the US blocking the appointment of new appeal judges which has resulted in the seven-member Appellate Body being reduced to just four
- A large group of countries has decided to opt for an alternative mechanism of dispute resolution, provided for in the WTO rules, which would allow them to have arbitration outside the DSB. A formal submission on the matter is likely soon.
- The 60 members who proposed to the DSB last month to start the process of appointing judges are all part of the group looking for an appropriate alternative mechanism. These include India, China, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Argentina, Bolivia, Russia, Paraguay, Vietnam, the EU, Peru and Korea.

How is it affecting India?

- ❖ In 2016, New Delhi had lost a case against the US at the WTO after the global trade body stated that power purchase agreements signed by the Indian government with solar firms for its National Solar Mission did not meet international trade norms.
- ❖ The first request for a panel was struck down by the US, but the DSB, in its meeting, agreed to India’s second request as WTO rules don’t allow a blockage more than once.
- ❖ India, however, has been maintaining that it has complied with the WTO’s ruling. India had requested the WTO to set up a panel to determine its compliance with the rulings of the dispute.

PEPPER IT WITH
 Permanent Court of
 Arbitration, International
 Court of Arbitration

DSB

The **General Council convenes as the DSB** to deal with disputes between WTO members. Such disputes may arise with respect to any agreement contained in the Final Act of the Uruguay Round that is subject to the Understanding on Rules and Procedures Governing the Settlement of Disputes (DSU).

The DSB has authority to establish dispute settlement panels, refer matters to arbitration, adopt panel, Appellate Body and arbitration reports, maintain surveillance over the implementation of recommendations and rulings contained in such reports, and authorize suspension of concessions in the event of non-compliance with those recommendations and rulings.

National Financial Reporting Authority

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet recently approved the creation of National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA). The NFRA is to be an independent regulator overseeing the auditing profession. Its creation was first recommended by the **Standing Committee on Finance in its 21st report.**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

While many provisions of the Companies Act, 2013 came into force in 2014, the setting up of NFRA, a key recommendation, was delayed. The decision appears to have been prompted by the latest bank scam to have hit the headlines that went undetected by auditors.

About NFRA

- **Under section 132 of companies Act-2013** the Central Government may, by notification, constitute NFRA to provide for matters relating to accounting and auditing standards.
- NFRA shall consist of a chairperson, who shall be a person of eminence and having expertise in accountancy, auditing, finance or law to be appointed by the Central Government and such other members **not exceeding fifteen** consisting of part-time and full-time members as may be prescribed.
- It have the power to investigate, **either suomotu or on a reference made to it by the Central Government**, for such class of bodies corporate or persons, in such manner as may be prescribed into the matters of professional or other misconduct committed by any member or firm of chartered accountants, registered under the **Chartered Accountants Act, 1949**.
- **The accounts of the NFRA shall be audited by the Comptroller and Auditor-General** of India at such intervals as may be specified by him and such accounts as certified by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India together with the audit report thereon shall be forwarded annually to the Central Government by the NFRA.
- It can impose penalty of not less than one lakh rupees, but which may extend to five times of the fees received, in case of individuals and not less than ten lakh rupees, but which may extend to ten times of the fees received, in case of firms. **It will also have the power to debar erring auditors or audit firm for up to 10 years.**
- The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) had initially voiced its discontent with the idea of a regulator for the sector, saying the existing structure was adequate. The government has clarified that the roles of the new regulator and those of the ICAI will not overlap.
- **NFRA would cover all listed companies and large unlisted companies, the benchmark size for which would be set down in the rules.** Smaller unlisted companies would continue to be audited by the ICAI. ICAI would continue to play its advisory role with respect to accounting and auditing standards and policies by making its recommendations to the NFRA. The Centre could also refer other entities for investigation where public interest would be involved.
- Quality Review Board (QRB) would continue quality audits for private limited companies and public unlisted companies below the prescribed threshold. **The NFRA would also have the power to refer cases to the QRB as and when it decided to do so.**
- Most of the major economies of the world have independent audit regulators, and over the last decade or so, umbrella bodies have come up that have provided an element of cohesion to these regulators. **The International Forum of Independent Audit Regulators (IFIAR) was set up in 2006**, and now it has more than 52 independent audit regulators worldwide as members.

NFRA have the same powers as are vested in a **Civil Court under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908**, while trying a suit, in respect of the following matters:

- (a) Discovery and production of books of account and other documents, at such place and at such time as may be specified by the NFRA.
- (b) Summoning and enforcing the attendance of persons and examining them on oath.
- (c) Inspection of any books, registers and other documents of any person referred to in clause (b) at any place.
- (d) Issuing commissions for examination of witnesses or documents.

PEPPER IT WITH

Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO), Appellate Authority, CAG, Standing committee on finance, Companies Act 2013

Privatisation of PSBs

Several experts, including Chief Economic Advisor Arvind Subramanian and former Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Arvind Panagariya, had pitched for privatisation of PSBs after spate of frauds were unearthed in state-owned banks.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III	■										
IV											
M											

Arguments in Favour

- If PSBs are privatised then the banks **would be out of the clutches of the CVC, CBI and CAG**, giving more autonomy and confidence to the top management to lend freely without fear of being haunted.
- **Efficiency and productivity** too demand that the government relinquish its control of the large number of banks whose market valuation has dwindled despite the fact that they hold the bulk of the deposits.
- Disbursing loans to friendly industrial houses/companies has always been a practice that has been followed by all political parties in power. **Public sector banks have been the channels through which governments have opted to grant loans to industrial houses/companies close to them.** Subsequently, the inability to pay the amount by some of these players has led to mounting of bad loans in the books of public sector banks.
- Over Rs 2.6 lakh crore capital infusion in the past eleven years has had limited impact in improving their health, and the move would also reduce drain on the exchequer.

In October 2017 government of India approved a recapitalisation plan for PSBs worth Rs 2.11 lakh crore. This is not the first time PSBs have required capital infusion. Between 2009 and March 2017, approximately Rs 1.5 lakh crore of taxpayers' money was infused into public sector banks in order to keep their books in proper shape

Arguments Against

- This (privatisation) involves a large political consensus. Also, **that involves an amendment to the law (Banking Regulation Act).**
- Public sector banks have become a channel for subsequent governments to extend benefits of their welfare schemes to the people. A recent example of the same is the opening of nearly **30 crore Jan Dhan accounts** in PSBs for the purpose of financial inclusion. Privatisation of public sector banks will close this route for disbursing funds for welfare of the people.
- Every year, the government announces in its Budget funds to be allocated for the overall development of economy. **The government losing control over public sector banks will lead to the drying of pipeline of funds to different sectors for economic growth.**
- The RBI in its half yearly financial stability report in December 2017 observed while NPAs of the public-sector banks increased by 17 per cent on year-on-year basis in September, the rate of increase was 40.8 per cent in the case of private sector banks during the same period.

The RBI came out with its list of 40 defaulter firms in two phases last year who are accountable for Rs 2 lakh crore of bad loans. Among the lenders who have taken the hit are private sector banks too. That also means not all loans granted by public sector banks go bad. There are private sector banks too which have followed public sector banks off late.

PEPPER IT WITH

Muhammad Yunus, The committee on Banking Sector Reforms, The committee on Financial system (Narasimham committee), Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBs)

Conclusion

A dynamic banking sector is the need of the hour and we should examine if there is at all a case for public sector domination in the banking sector. **India needs sustainable high growth for**

its socio-economic development which will not be possible in the absence of support from a robust healthy financial sector. PSBs, which constitute almost 70 per cent of the Indian banking system, are saddled with burgeoning stressed assets. Privatisation of PSBs is not a permanent solution and will not be effective unless the inherent issues related to governance, productivity, risk management, talent, customer service, etc. are resolved.

'India Size Chart' Survey

- Seeking to come up with a standardised "India size chart" for the garment industry, **the NIFT, under the aegis of the ministry of textiles, will soon begin a national survey that will sample 25,000 people using high-tech 3D whole body scanners.**
- The National Sizing Survey will cost nearly Rs 30 crore and entail studying a population, aged 15-65 across six cities, with men and women in equal numbers.
- This would be a scientific exercise where anthropometric data will be collected from a sample population of 25,000 to create a database of measurements that will culminate in a standardised size chart, truly be representative of the Indian population, which can then be adopted by the entire apparel industry.
- **The project will be carried out in six cities spread across six regions** of the country -- Kolkata (east), Mumbai (west), New Delhi (north), Hyderabad (centre), Bengaluru (south), and Shillong (northeast) using 3D whole body scanners.
- In India, either the US or the UK system of 'Small, Medium, Large, Extra Large' has been used, and people then go for fitting accordingly. But, after this uniform size chart is available, whole country will have a "standard reference point" for ready-to-wear industry.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III	■				■						
IV											
M											

Centre sets up Panel to study issues in Fintech Space

The Centre has set up a steering committee to go into various issues relating to Fintech space in India. **The committee will be headed by Subhash Chandra Garg**, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs. The move is a follow up to the announcement made by Finance Minister Arun in his Budget speech of 2018-19.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II						■					
III	■										
IV											
M											

Significance

1. The committee will consider means of using data with GSTN and data residing with information utilities such as credit information companies (CICs) and others in open domain with a view to developing applications for financing of micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
2. It will also develop regulatory interventions e.g., regulatory sandbox model, that will enhance the role of Fintech in sectors identified for focused interventions. The ideas is to facilitate ease of doing business in the Fintech sector.
3. According to the terms of reference, the committee will work with government agencies such as UIDAI to explore creation and use of unique enterprise identification number. It will also look into the possibility of international co-operation opportunities in Fintech with countries such as Singapore, the U.K., China and others.

Fintech

Fintech is a portmanteau of financial technology that describes an emerging financial services sector in the 21st century. Originally, the term applied to technology applied to the back-end of established consumer and trade financial institutions. Since the end of the first decade of the 21st century, the term has expanded to include any technological innovation in the financial sector, including innovations in financial literacy and education, retail banking, investment and even crypto-currencies like bitcoin.

Continental Free Trade Area

In News

The leaders of 44 African countries have signed a deal to create one of the world's largest free trade blocs. **The agreement was signed at a summit in the Rwandan capital, Kigali.** It is hoped the deal will come into force within six months and increase prosperity for 1.2 billion Africans.

But 10 countries, including Nigeria, have refused to sign the deal, and it will need to be ratified by all the signatories' national parliaments before the bloc becomes a reality.

One of the obstacles is the relatively low level of manufacturing that takes place on a continent where trade often means selling raw materials to the outside world. Another is getting Africa's largest economy, Nigeria, on board.

Significance

1. The African Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) would **remove barriers to trade, like tariffs and import quotas, allowing the free flow of goods and services between its members.**
2. Trade between African countries is relatively low. It accounts for only 10% of all commerce on the continent - compared with 25% in south-east Asia.
3. Once the free trade area is established, the ambition is to take further steps that echo the creation of the European Union - like a customs union, a common market, and even a single currency.

PEPPER IT WITH
 India Ethiopia Agreements
 India-Somalia Agreement
 Horn Of Africa, ICC, ICJ

African Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA)

The 18th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the African Union, held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2012, adopted a decision to establish a Continental Free Trade Area (CFTA) by an indicative date of 2017.

Objective

The main objectives of the CFTA are to create a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments, and thus pave the way for accelerating the establishment of the Customs Union.

Functions

It will also expand intra-African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade liberalization and facilitation and instruments across the RECs and across Africa in general. The CFTA is also expected to enhance competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level through exploitation of opportunities for scale production, continental market access and better reallocation of resources. The establishment of the CFTA and the implementation of the Action Plan on Boosting Intra-African Trade (BIAT) provide a comprehensive framework to pursue a developmental regionalism strategy.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II									■		
III											
IV											
M											

Draft Policy on Defence Production

Why in News?

The Department of Defence Production (DDP) of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) released a draft policy recently. **The draft Defence Production Policy (DPrP) 2018 is intended to replace the earlier policy promulgated in 2011.**

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

The broad mission of the draft policy is to promote the Make in India initiative in the defence sector and create a world-class arm manufacturing base, fulfilling not only the larger goal of self-reliance but also the requirements of friendly foreign countries. The laudable mission notwithstanding, the draft policy suffers from a number of shortcomings, which, if left unaddressed, may limit its usefulness.

Salient Features:

- The draft DPrP 2018 is ambitious and forward looking. Unlike the 2011 policy, the draft of the 2018 policy sets a clear vision, a set of objectives and strategies.
- Its vision is to put India **“among the top five countries of the world in aerospace and defence industries”** though the timeframe within which this is to be achieved has not been articulated.
- The key objectives of the policy include development of a strong defence industry leading to higher self-reliance.
- Setting its sight on the need to reduce the current high import dependency, the draft policy identifies 13 sets of weapon systems/platforms **whose development and manufacture would commence latest by 2025.**
- Other objectives include an increase in domestic arms sales to Rs 170,000 crore (\$26 billion) by 2025, with around one-fifths of it –Rs 35,000 crore (\$5.0 billion) – coming through exports.
- The policy also intends to make India a “global leader in cyberspace and AI [artificial intelligence] technologies.”

Challenges

1. The policy does not identify any specific new projects by name that would have given the industry an indication of the likely business prospects. Without such an indication, the draft policy suffers from the same uncertainty that the previous policy faced. **A simple step to mitigate this policy gap would have been to deduce a comprehensive production list from the approved Long Term Integrated Perspective Plan (LTIPP), which projects the services’ equipment requirements over a 15-year time horizon.** The deduced list could have further been divided into two broad categories: items to be produced based on domestic R&D, and items to be produced under license.
2. The draft policy, like its predecessor, does not fully address the private sector’s trust deficit with the government, even though the former is expected to play a major role under the Make in India initiative. Notwithstanding the various promises, including that of providing open competition in contracts, the private sector has a genuine reason to mistrust the policy in the making. **The mistrust**

The draft policy talks of further ease of doing business for the industry by:

- ✓ Including the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs).
- ✓ Pruning the existing list of items subject to industrial licence.
- ✓ Increasing the FDI cap under automatic route from the current 49 to 74 per cent for certain niche technologies.
- ✓ Streamlining the offset policy to attract investment and facilitate the speedy and transparent execution of offsets.
- ✓ Rationalising the taxation system to support domestic manufacturing.

To put the country among the top-five aerospace and defence manufacturing countries, as the draft policy’s vision states, would mean India joining the ranks of such countries as US, Russia, France, UK and China, which are presently the global leaders in arms production. To join such a coveted club would also mean some of the established Indian defence manufactures breaking into the club of top global arms producers. Can this happen in a realistic timeframe of say the next 10 years? At present not a single Indian defence company figures in the list of top-10 global companies, **though India is counted among the top-five military spenders in the world (Also the largest importer of arms).** As per the US-based *Defense News’s* list of top-100 defence companies in 2017, HAL, India’s biggest defence company, is placed at 35 and Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL), the second biggest Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU), at 59.

is largely due to the representation of senior MoD officials in the governing boards of the defence public sector companies, which often leads to the nomination of larger contracts in their favour.

- 3. DPrP does not address the issues of inefficiency and lack of accountability on the part of the DRDO, DPSUs and OFs, which, being the mainstay of Indian defence industry for the last several decades, are responsible for much of the indignity of the country’s poor track record in attaining self-reliance. Instead of suggesting some bold steps to reform these entities, the draft policy merely talks of the professionalization of OFs and “disinvestment of minority stakes in DPSUs.”
- 4. **The policy also faces stiff budgetary constraints that may not allow the policy’s promised investments to fructify in a time bound manner.** In all, the draft policy talks of investments worth over Rs 77,000 crore by 2025—which includes nearly Rs 70,000 crore as additional investment to increase domestic production. In all likelihood, these investments will come largely from the defence budget, either directly or indirectly. To accommodate such a large investment, the defence budget has to provide an extra Rs 11,000 crore or so per year for next six to seven years.

Conclusion

The achievability of the stated objectives and goals in the draft policy does not seem to be in sync with the current trajectory of defence budget outlays. The credibility of the new defence production policy is inextricably interlinked with the financial viability of the roadmap envisaged therein as well as the ability of the MoD to take hard decisions to remove programme-specific roadblocks. The track record on this count is not very encouraging.

PEPPER IT WITH

Defence investor cell, IDDM, Technology Perspective Capability Roadmap, Make II process, FDI in Defence

Exercises

Varuna-18

- The navies of India and France engaged in a joint bilateral exercise, "Varuna-18", in the Arabian Sea off the Goa coast, which commenced days after the leaders of the two countries decided to further deepen their maritime cooperation.
- The drill included anti-submarine, air defence and asymmetric engagement exercises.
- The two countries explored the measures to facilitate the operational-level interactions between their respective armed forces and increase mutual cooperation, considering the common global threats.
- The exercise also comes at a time when the Indian Ocean is witnessing an increased Chinese naval presence.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II									■		
III											■
IV											
M											

Multilateral naval exercise

- The Indian Navy held an eight-day-long mega naval exercise along with leading maritime powers of the region at the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, amid heightened regional tension in the region.
- The biennial exercise — Milan — is taking place in the backdrop of imposition of state of emergency in Maldives and Sri Lanka, two of India's maritime neighbours, and China's growing assertiveness in the region.
- Indian Navy officials said 28 warships including 17 from India and 11 from Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand are participating in the exercise.

- The aim of the 10th edition of the exercise is to expand regional cooperation and combat unlawful activities in critical sea lanes.
- Maldives, which is reeling under political crisis, has declined India's offer to participate at the exercise citing the current situation in the island nation.
- 'Milan' was first held in 1995 with the participation of just five navies. The aim of the initiative was to have an effective forum to discuss common concerns in the Indian Ocean Region and forge deeper cooperation among friendly navies.

Multilateral air Exercise (MAE)

- The first Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise of the Indian Air Force (IAF) in association with South Asian Region nations was held off the coast of Kerala from March 12 to 17.
- The multilateral exercise named 'Samvedna' involved representatives from air forces of Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and the UAE.
- The objective of the exercise was to galvanise all stakeholders in synergising unified HADR efforts. The exercise, spearheaded by IAF and conducted by Southern Air Command (SAC), was to ensure better understanding and sharing of response procedures between a number of friendly neighbouring nations.

Significance

- Samvedna, which means 'Empathy', was focused on practicing Air Force-centric HADR solutions in a Multi-national cooperative Disaster Management environment.
- This exercise helped in putting in place a basic framework for the conduct of Joint Air HADR operations, which will be further refined during subsequent exercises. This exercise is expected to lead to more coordinated and efficient HADR Air operations in the entire South Asian region when the need arises.

Paschim Leher

- The Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy concluded a major operational exercise, conducted in the Arabian Sea. The nine-day Long, Exercise Paschim Leher (XPL) tested the combat readiness of the Command at sea, including mobilisation and operational synchronisation.
- A large number of ships, submarines and aircraft participated in the exercise. Various manoeuvres and deployments were exercised, in a networked environment, with a number of support units ashore also participating.
- The exercise also saw participation of Indian Air Force, with a number of aircraft, and Indian Coast Guard units. The scale of the exercise was enhanced this year, and the exercise itself was renamed as Exercise Paschim Leher. Proactive operations as well as defensive operations were exercised, including various contingencies off the coasts of Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa and Karnataka.

LAMITYE 2018

- Joint military exercise 'Lamitye', was held between India and Seychelles.
- The joint military exercise is named 'Lamitye' which in the local dialect 'Creole' means friendship. This exercise was the eighth in the series of bilateral exercises being conducted in the beautiful island nation.
- India and Seychelles have been conducting this joint exercise since 2001 with the aim of enhancing military cooperation and interoperability between the armies of the two countries.
- The focus of the ongoing exercise is to conduct counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations in semi-urban environment under the United Nations (UN) Charter.

Crime Free Zone along International Border

- Border Security Force (BSF) of India and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) of Bangladesh **declared an 8.3 km stretch of the Indo-Bangladesh border as a 'crime-free zone' recently**. The aim of creating a crime-free zone is to have select border locations that are clear of illegal, anti-social and criminal activities
- **Both border guarding forces with the help of the civil administrations of the two countries, NGOs and the local populace** will help in ensuring that no crime takes place along the stretch that covers the **Gunarmath and Kalyani Border Out Posts (BOPs) in India and the Puthkhali and Daulatpur BOPs across the border**.
- This will add a new dimension to border management with all countries in the world concerned about terrorism and crimes such as smuggling of drugs and human trafficking. **Both the forces will work together to ensure that no crime or anti-social activity occurs along this stretch**.
- This is a positive and constructive way of border management. **The decision was taken during the DG level talks in New Delhi in October 2017**. This is a pilot project that will be reviewed after 5-6 months. Once the pilot project succeeded, similar crime-free zones would be created all along the 4,096-km border that ran across various states.
- This stretch is one of the most vulnerable with cattle smuggling and other criminal activities prevalent. The idea is to target the more difficult areas along the 913 km of Indo-Bangladesh border under the BSF's South Bengal Frontier.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II									■		
III										■	
IV											
M											

India sharing international Land boundary

Bangladesh:	4,096.7
China:	3,488
Pakistan:	3,323
Nepal:	1,751
Myanmar:	1,643
Bhutan:	699
Afghanistan:	106

PEPPER IT WITH
 Border Haat, Thengar
 Chaar, Teesta River

Kuthiyottam Ritual

Why in News

The Kerala State Commission for the **Protection of Child Rights** registered a *suomotucase* in connection with the Kuthiyottam ritual. The commission said it would examine if the ritual, reportedly involving piercing children's sides with a hook, violated child rights in any manner.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I	■										
II											
III											
IV											
M											

About Kuthiyottam

- ❖ The Kuthiyottam ritual is usually performed every year during the Pongala festival at the **Attukal Bhagavathy Temple in Thiruvananthapuram**, Kerala.
- ❖ It is also performed in Bhadrakali temples of Alappuzha and Kollam and is conducted in the Malayalam month of *Kumbham* (February/March).
- ❖ According to Kerala's Department of Tourism, the Attukal Pongala festival is the largest congregation of women for a festival in the world. Pongala, which means 'to boil over', is a ritual in which women prepare a pudding made from rice, jaggery, coconut and plantains cooked together, and offer it to the goddess. The ritual can only be performed by women, and the streets of the city are known to be jam packed with devotees during the festival.

What does the Kuthiyottam ritual involve?

Nearly 1,000 young boys undertake a seven-day penance before Pongala day. According to an earlier report by The Hindu, these boys are said to represent the wounded soldiers of the goddess.

“The boys have to observe strict discipline and stay inside the temple for seven days. The rigours include sleeping on the floor, strict diet restrictions, and bathing three times a day. They also have to prostrate 1,008 times before the deity,” the report said.

The ritual also reportedly involves piercing the child’s side with a small hook and knotting a thread through it to symbolise their bond with the Goddess.

Nabakalebar festival

President Ram Nath Kovind released commemorative coins in denominations of ₹10 and ₹1000 on **Lord Jagannath’s Nabakalebar festival**.

The President, who is visiting Odisha, released the coins during the centenary celebration of Rastriya Sanskrit Sansthan in Puri. He described the pilgrim town of Puri as the ‘**Vidya Nagri**’ (education hub) for its connection with knowledge and science since ancient times.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Nabakalebara Festival

- Nabakalebara is a festival observed in the Shree Jagannath Temple at Puri at a predefined time according to Hindu Calender. **Naba means new and Kalebara is body. Lord Shree Jagannath adorns a new body during Nabakalebara. It is the re-embodiment of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Sudarshan when they relinquish their old bodies and assume a new one. However, the Brahmopadartha (soul-substance) remains the same.**
- The soul or the Brahma is transferred from the old idols to their new bodies in a highly technical and conspicuous manner, prescribed and inherited from generations by the Daitas and the Rakshaks. They are the up-keepers of the Shreeangas or the bodies of the trinity of the Grand Temple.
- The Nabakalebara niti is observed in a gap of 12 to 19 years. Most of the Nabakalebars are performed after a gap of almost 19 years as in 1912, 1931, 1950, 1969, 1977 and 1996.

Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

- The Festival of Innovation & Entrepreneurship (FINE) {**previously known as Festival of Innovation FOIN**} **is a unique initiative of the Office of the President of India to recognise, respect and reward grassroots innovations and foster a supportive ecosystem.**
- Hosted in the month of March at The President's House, the FOIN has become a national celebration of creativity and innovation at and for grassroots. This year FINE was organised from March 19-21, 2018 at Rashtrapati Bhavan by the President's Secretariat in association with National Innovation Foundation-India and Department of Science & Technology.
- FINE is a celebration of country's Innovation potential, particularly those ideas which stem from grassroots level including the citizen at the last mile and also a reflection of power of children's creativity.**
- FINE provides platform to the innovators for building the linkages with potential stakeholders whose support can improve their prospects in coming years for the larger social good. It also helps in promoting lateral learning and linkages among the innovators to enrich the ecosystem for new India.
- It is imperative that India becomes a growth engine for the world and provides a new model of inclusive development by providing a large number of open technological and other solutions for the developing and developed world. In sync with the policies of the government of India, FINE aims to provide a window to the creative and innovative solutions for social development through grassroots innovations, student ideas and other technologies for

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

agriculture, rural development, sanitation, health, women and child development, biotechnology and medical innovation for grassroots.

Tribal Diaries

- The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has developed an **android based mobile application called Tribal Diaries for internal monitoring** and also connecting with officers/officials concerned with implementation of schemes / programmes for tribal development.
- The application is for accredited users. This application provides an opportunity for visual feedback in terms of photographs, videos, uploading reports of official tours / inspections and sharing of best practices etc.
- The application is being extensively used to get an overview of the Ekalavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) funded by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs. The principals of the EMRS are being encouraged to use the application and create projects highlighting the physical infrastructure of the schools, special achievement of the students and share success stories.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS)

It is an online web-enabled system is the platform which primarily aims to enable submission of grievances by the aggrieved citizens from anywhere and anytime.

PEPPER IT WITH
Madhavpur Mela

Wings India-2018

- The four-day biennial event 'WINGS INDIA 2018', **jointly organized by Ministry of Civil Aviation and Airport Authority of India and FICCI** was held in Hyderabad.
- The theme for this year's event was '**India-Global Aviation Hub**'. WINGS INDIA 2018 is a platform for interactions, forging alliances, investments and air connectivity between the States and the global aviation players & stakeholders.
- WINGS 2018 saw the representation from 10 countries. Besides the conference and exhibition, Roundtables on Tourism, Cargo and Logistics and Skills and G2B and B2B meetings were also held.
- The conference focused on fostering partnership to transform Indian aviation and the role of conducive regulatory framework to facilitate growth of civil aviation market.
- Coinciding with WINGS India 2018, FICCI launched its maiden edition of '**WINGS INDIA AWARDS' for Excellence in the aviation sector**. The awards were conferred upon the Aviation-related Companies/Institutions/Organizations in 14 categories.
- Government of India is committed to connecting the cities and towns to increase regional connectivity in the country and is also emphasizing the aviation sector to grow at 15% over the next couple of decades.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Chipko Movement

- ✓ Google Doodle marked the **45th anniversary of the forest conservation initiative called the Chipko Movement.**
- ✓ The goal of the Chipko Movement was to draw attention to and prevent deforestation, which had begun to occur on a mass scale to make way for dams or industry or roads. **The movement began in 1973 in Uttar Pradesh, and was an initiative of Sunderlal Bahuguna, a renowned environmentalist.**
- ✓ The 1973 movement was inspired by a similar movement in 1730 AD in Rajasthan. During the 18th century movement, as many as 363 people are said to have sacrificed their lives to save 'khejri' trees.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Dr. Anandibai Joshi

- 31st March was the 152nd birth anniversary of **Dr Anandi Joshi, who fought her way to become India’s first lady doctor.**
- Dr Joshi lived a mere 21 years but achieved so much in that brief span that a **crater on Venus has been named in her honour.** The 34.3 km-diameter crater on Venus named ‘Joshee’ lies at latitude 5.5° N and longitude 288.8° E.
- She was also the first Indian woman who was trained in western medicine and the first woman to travel to the United States of America.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Smart India Hackathon-2018

All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) under the aegis of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) in collaboration with i4c, MyGov, Persistent Systems and Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhin organized **Smart India Hackathon 2018.**

SIH- 2018 harnesses creativity and expertise of students, builds funnel for ‘Startup India, Standup India’ campaign, crowd sources solutions for improving governance and quality of life, and provides opportunity to Students to provide innovative solutions to India’s daunting problems. SIH- 2018 would be the second massive scale hackathon initiative in India following Smart India Hackathon 2017.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Diu becomes First UT to run 100% on Solar Power

- The harnessing of solar energy has made Diu the country’s first energy surplus Union territory and a model for an effective way for people to harness this renewable energy source.
- In just three years, Diu has made rapid progress in solar power generation. The Union territory has an area of just 42 square kilometers. Despite scarcity of land, solar power plants have been installed over more than 50 acres.
- Diu generates a total of 13 megawatts of electricity from solar power generating facilities daily. Around 3 MW is generated by rooftop solar plants and 10 MW by its other solar power plants.

GS CONNECT											
GS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
I											
II											
III											
IV											
M											

Concept Clearing Assignment

1. Briefly discuss Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme. Bring out the salient features of this scheme and comment on how it will help in the employment generation in backward states.
2. Without setting standards for learning, school management and things like attendance rate, qualification of teachers, infrastructure, how do you make sure states priorities and do not neglect the sector after subsuming of the three schemes into Integrated Scheme for School Education?
3. "Fighting Drug Trafficking Equals Fighting Terrorism". The two phenomena of narcotics trafficking, and terrorism are interconnected and subsequently that a coordination of anti-drug and anti-terror policy can be used. Elucidate the initiatives adopted by GoI to effectively deal with both threats.
4. In a bid to provide relief to financially stressed telecom sector, the Cabinet has allowed telcos to pay for spectrum over 16 years instead of 10 years and permitted them to hold more airwaves. How this relief measure will impact the Indian economy in Telecom sector? Critically analyse.
5. Bring out the salient features of Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018. How it will address the lacunae in the present laws and lay down measures to deter economic offenders from evading the process of Indian law by remaining outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts?
6. Central government recently approved the creation of Nation Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA). What are the objectives and impacts of the regulator? Is there really a need for yet another regulator?
7. Big private banks have also shown sudden increase in NPA after 2015 on the lines of public sector banks. Hence, privatisation of PSBs is certainly not the only solution to the bad loans problem plaguing the banking system. What steps do you suggest for solving the problem of bad loans in India?
8. Stepping up strategic cooperation, India and France signed a pact that will enable their defence forces to access each other's facilities and extend logistical support on a reciprocal basis. Bring out the key highlights of the pact and critically analyse how it will affect Indian Defence logistics in present scenario?
9. India is keen to sign the agreement with Myanmar to streamline the free movement of people within 16 km along the border. How it affects the Rohingya Crisis? Elucidate.
10. Briefly discuss African Continental Free Trade Area and discuss the significance of its impact on trade relation with India.
11. Discuss the key highlights of ISA. Highlight the major hurdles in the successful implementation of ISA agendas at global level.
12. India is all set to become the 69th member of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD). How EBRD membership will affect the major leading Indian companies, such as Tata, Mahindra, SREI and Jindal, on investments in its regions. Critically analyse.
13. What is Fintech? How the fight between information technology, fintech and e-commerce firms in India and Google and Facebook will affect the Net Neutrality? Comment.
14. Briefly discuss LaQshya scheme. How will this scheme improve quality of care provided to pregnant mother in Labour Room and Maternity Operation Theatres (OTs)?
15. Discuss about RIMES and its role in combating natural disasters in India.
16. How will 'Draft policy on defence production' help India in realizing ambitious goals of making India one of the world's top five defence manufacturers and a global leader in cyberspace and artificial intelligence; achieving self-reliance by 2025? Critically analyse.

P.T Oriented Questions

1. Consider the following statements about National Financial Reporting Authority and mark the correct one/ones.

- (1) It is to be headed by the retired judge of Supreme Court
- (2) While trying a suit, it have the same power as vested in a civil court
- (3) It can function suo-motu or on a reference made to it by the central/state government

Code:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) Only 2
- (d) All of the above

2. Consider the following statements about LaQshya programme

- (1) It is a country-wide initiative
- (2) The programme will reduce maternal and newborn morbidity
- (3) It is being implemented at Medical College Hospitals, District Hospitals and Community Health Center (CHCs)

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

3. Which among the following are not the members of Regional Multi-Hazard Early Warning System Integrated (RIMES)

- (1) Timor-Leste
- (2) Mongolia
- (3) Mauritius

Code:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) All of the above

4. Democracy Index is released by

- (a) UNHCR
- (b) Economic Intelligence Unit
- (c) WEF
- (d) UNO

5. Consider the following about Swadhar Greh and choose the correct one/s

- (1) It is a supportive institutional framework for women victims.
- (2) The benefit of the component could be availed by women above 18 years of age.

Code:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 2
- (d) None

6. Consider the following about Healthy States, Progressive India Report and choose the correct one/s

- (1) It has been developed by NITI Aayog, with technical assistance from the WHO.
- (2) It is the first attempt to establish an annual systematic tool to measure and understand the heterogeneity and complexity of the nation's performance in Health.

Code:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 2
- (d) None

7. Consider the following about National Productivity Council and choose the correct one/s

- (1) NPC is mission Oriented apex organization to promote the cause of productivity in all sectors of the Indian economy.
- (2) It is an autonomous organisation under Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises.

Code:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) 1 and 2
- (d) None

8. Operation Greens is related to:

- (a) Doubling Farmers Income
- (b) Horticulture
- (c) Environment Financing
- (d) Afforestation

9. Consider the following about corruption perception index and choose the correct one/s
- (1) It is published by Transparency International
 - (2) India has been worst placed among SAARC members.
- Code:
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
 - (c) 1 and 2 (d) None
10. Consider the following about Ashgabat Agreement and choose the correct one/s
- (1) Ashgabat Agreement envisages facilitation of transit and transportation of goods between Central Asia and the Persian Gulf.
 - (2) India is the only SAARC country to join Ashgabat agreement.
- Code:
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
 - (c) 1 and 2 (d) None
11. Minamata convention is on
- (a) Mercury
 - (b) Ozone
 - (c) Global Warming
 - (d) Migration
12. Consider the following about olive Ridley turtles and choose the correct one/s
- (1) Garimatha beach is the largest nesting area of Olive Ridley Turtles.
 - (2) They have been classified as Endangered by IUCN.
- Code:
- (a) 1 only (b) 2 only
 - (c) 1 and 2 (d) None
13. Y H Malegam committee has been constituted to look into
- (a) GST rates
 - (b) Financial Inclusion
 - (c) Digital Transaction
 - (d) Bad Loans

14. Consider the following statements about No-Confidence Motion (NCM) and choose the correct one/ones:
- (1) There is no mention of NCM in the constitution of India
 - (2) A NCM can be moved in both the houses of parliament
- Code:
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
15. Which among the following is not a criterion for granting special status to a state
- (a) Low population density
 - (b) Strategic location along the borders of the country
 - (c) Economic and infrastructure backwardness
 - (d) None of the above
16. Consider the following statements about Enemy Property Act (1968) and choose the correct one/s
- (1) The Act was a result of the war fought in 1960's by India
 - (2) It applies to China, Pakistan and Bangladesh
- Code:
- (a) 1 only
 - (b) 2 only
 - (c) Both 1 and 2
 - (d) Neither 1 nor 2
17. Women Entrepreneurship Programme was launched by which among the following
- (a) World Economic Forum
 - (b) World Trade Organisation
 - (c) Niti Ayog
 - (d) None of the above
18. Consider the following statements about Income Tax Appellate Tribunal
- (1) It is judicial body

(2) It functions under Ministry of Law and Justice

(3) It can only be headed by a retired judge of high Court

Which of the statement/s given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) Only 2

(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) None of the above

19. River Mahanadi flows between which among the following countries/states:

(1) Chhattisgarh

(2) Madhya Pradesh

(3) Orissa

Code:

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) All of the above

20. Which among the following statements are correct about Mahanadi?

(1) It originates from Sihawa mountains

(2) Hirakud dam is situated on this river

(3) Tel and Mand are tributaries of Mahanadi

Code:

(a) 1 and 2 only

(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) All of the above

21. Which among the following is/are correct about 97th amendment of the constitution of India?

(1) It made right to form a cooperative society a fundamental right

(2) It added a new article in Part IV of the constitution

Code:

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

22. Consider the following statements about Know India Program (KIP) and mark the correct one/ones

(1) It is an initiative of Government of India and Commonwealth nations

(2) Minimum qualification required for KIP is graduation from a recognized university

Code:

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

23. National e-mobility program is being implemented by which among the following

(a) Energy Efficiency Services Limited

(b) Bureau of energy efficiency

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) None of the above

24. Namaste Shalom, a magazine is devoted to which among the following

(a) India-France relations

(b) India-Afghanistan relations

(c) India-Israel relations

(d) India-Nigeria relations

25. Consider the following statements about International Criminal Court (ICC)

(1) It is World's only permanent crime court

(2) It was established after Nairobi declaration

Which among the statements given above is/are correct?

(a) 1 only

(b) 2 only

(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

26. World Happiness Index is published by which among the following

(a) International Bank for reconstruction and Development

- (b) UNESCO
- (c) United Nations Sustainable development Network
- (d) None of the above

27. Consider the following statements about Animal Welfare Board of India and choose the correct ones

- (1) It is a statutory body
- (2) It is headquartered in New Delhi
- (3) The term of office of members of the board is of 3 years

Code:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 1 and 3 only
- (d) All of the above

28. Which among the following countries signed the Brazzaville declaration?

- (1) Indonesia
- (2) Democratic republic of Congo
- (3) Kenya
- (4) Namibia

Code:

- (a) 1 and 2 only
- (b) 2,3 and 4 only

- (c) 1,2 and 4 only
- (d) 1,3 and 4 only

29. Consider the following statements

- (1) Nabakalebar festival is situated in Karnataka
- (2) Madai festival is celebrated in Jharkhand only

Code:

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

30. Consider the following statements about Dispute Settlement Body (DSB) of World trade organization (WTO)

- (1) The general council convenes as the DSB
- (2) It deals with disputes between WTO members only

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2