



# CURRENT CONNECT

## OCTOBER- 18

North Delhi	Central Delhi	Jaipur	Bhopal	Patna	Indore	Bengaluru
2521, Hudson Line, Vijay Nagar Near GTB Nagar Metro Stn Delhi 110009 9717380832	B-5/4 Poorvi Marg Old Rajender Ngr. Market Near Karol Bagh Metro Stn Delhi 110060 9811293743	403-404 Apex Tower Lal Kothi Tonk Road  Jaipur 302015 8290800441	43-44 2nd Floor R.R. Arcade Zone - II M.P.Nagar  Bhopal 462011 7509975361	Above Toyota Showroom Exhibition Road Near Gandhi Maidan Patna 800001 7463950774	232-233 2nd Floor Veda Building Bhawar Kuan Square  Indore 452001 9893772941	116/C-1 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, 5 <sup>th</sup> Block KHB Colony Koramangala Bengaluru  Karnataka 560095 7619166663
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GS- I	Culture-Art Forms, Literature and Architecture from ancient to modern times.	Indian history' significant events, personalities, issues and the Freedom Struggle	Post independence 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-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 important aspects of S&T	Environment and disaster: government initiatives, various judgment, pollution, degradation and conservation efforts	International agreements and works of various international bodies, award, 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 important topics			
Mis.											

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**Karnataka's Good Samaritan Bill**

**In News**

With the Good Samaritan and Medical Professional (Protection and Regulations during Emergency Situations) Bill, 2016, **Karnataka becomes the first state in India to implement such a law.** The president has given his assent to the bill.

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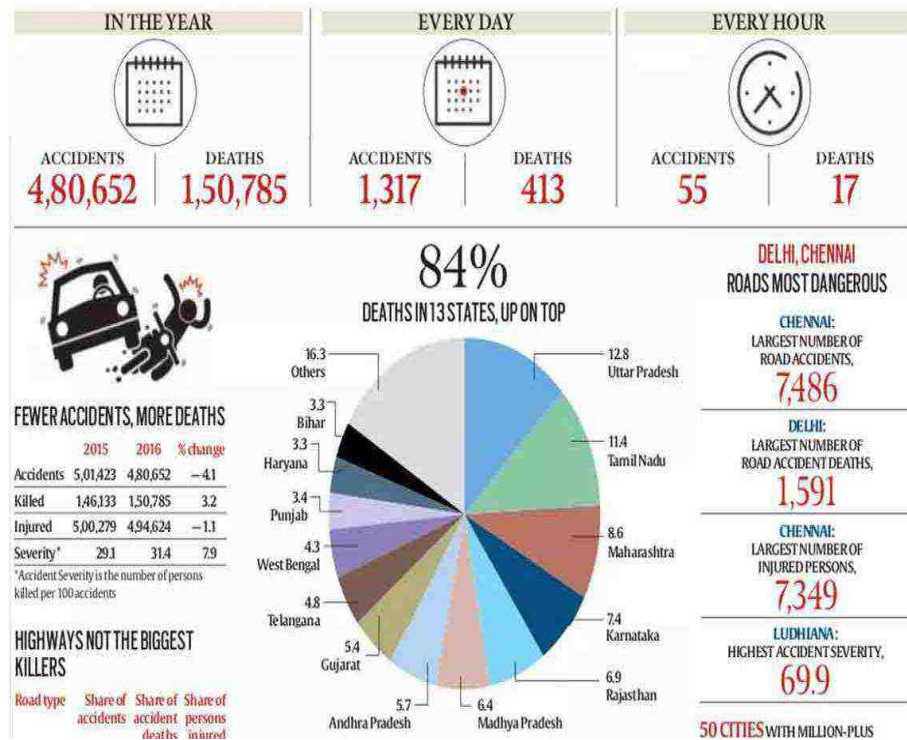
**Key Highlights**

- The legislation aims to provide legal protection to ordinary citizens so that they step forward without hesitation and help accident victims get to the nearest medical facility within the **'golden hour.'**
- Under the legislation, the government will provide financial help to Good Samaritans who help victims. They will be exempted from repeated attendance in courts and police stations, and in case attendance is mandatory, expenses of such "running around to courts and police stations" will be taken care through the proposed Good Samaritan Fund.
- It also makes it mandatory for all government and private hospitals to give first aid to accident victims.

The **golden hour**, in medical terms, is the first hour following a traumatic injury during which medical attention is very crucial.

- After admitting the accident victim to the hospital, the Good Samaritan can leave immediately, all government as well as private hospitals are bound to give first aid to the accident victims, according to the new legislation.

- The new legislation does not address several issues around road safety** that have been highlighted by other committees such as: (i) creating road safety agencies, and (ii) improving road design and engineering



**Facts**

- Road accidents in the country have decreased by around 4.1% during 2016.
- 'Road Accidents in India-2016' report was released by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MORTH).
- MORTH had launched the road safety website [www.missionroadsafety.com](http://www.missionroadsafety.com), developed with the help of IIT, Delhi. This website provides data about road accidents and related information.
- Top 3 cities with maximum death by road accident are **Chennai, Delhi and Bengaluru** as per Road Accident in India 2016 report.

**Causes of road accident**

- Speeding
- Overtaking
- Use of mobile while driving
- Potholes
- Faulty Speed-breaker

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Motor Vehicles  
 (Amendment) Bill, 2016,  
 Solatium Fund, SaveLIFE  
 Foundation,

**Women in Detention and Access to Justice**

**In News**

The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Ministry of Home Affairs organised the **First ever Regional Conference at Shimla on 'Women in Detention and Access to Justice' in collaboration with the Prison Department, HP.**

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**Concerns discussed in Conference**

- Reproductive Health Rights of Women Prisoners: National and International Legal Norms
- Health Needs of Women Prisoners
- Health, Skill, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women Inmates and Their Children
- Prison Reforms, Structural Managerial and Legal Issues with Focus on Women Inmates & Comparison to Global Norms
- Neuro-Criminology Program for the Offender
- Transforming Prisons

**Mahila Kisan Diwas**  
 The Union Agriculture Ministry celebrated, for the first time ever in India, **'Mahila Kisan Diwas' or the Day of Women Agriculturists on October 15.** It was organised in association with the Ministry of Women and Child Development.  
 The tagline for the commemoration - **'Sashakt Mahila, Sashakt Bharat'** (empowered women, empowered India).

**Background**

The Standing Committee on Empowerment of Women (**Chairperson: Ms. Bijoya Chakravarty**) submitted its report on 'Women in Detention and Access to Justice' in 2017. **The Indian Prison Act, 1894** is the primary legislation for matters dealing with prison governance. Other laws including the Indian Penal Code, 1860, and the **Indian Evidence Act, 1872**, also provide safeguards against detention, torture, and other crimes during custody.

**Key observations and recommendations**

- Overcrowding of jails:** The Committee observed that overcrowding of jails is a serious problem with women jails having more occupancy than capacity. This leads to the lack of basic facilities to prisoners such as sanitation, food, and health care in jails. It has also lead to an increase in expenditure for jails.
- The Committee observed that one of the key reasons for overcrowding was the delay in trials resulting in many under trials being detained in jails for long periods. To resolve this issue, the Committee recommended that **alternative methods should be used for dealing with non-criminal offenders and petty criminals.**
- Custodial excesses:** The Committee observed that infringement of rights of prisoners as a result of police behaviour during detention was an important issue. This included cases of rapes and deaths that have taken place in custody. The Committee recommended that better surveillance measures may be put in place to ensure effective prison management.
- Training and recruitment of officials:** The Committee stated that in order to ensure gender sensitisation in prison management, officials should be given training to develop

positive attitudes towards women prisoners. It also observed that there was a shortage of women officials in prison management, which adversely impacts the management of women inmates.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Women in Prison report,  
Onen Prison. CCTNS

- 5. **Health-care needs:** The Committee observed that data was not available for common health ailments prevalent among women prisoners. It recommended that surveys be undertaken across prisons, in collaboration with state governments and NGOs, to compile such data. It also noted that there was a shortage of doctors, para-medical staff, and equipment in jails.
- 6. **Model prison manual:** The Committee observed that no notable steps were taken to ensure implementation of the **Model Prison Manual, 2003**. The Committee recommended that an impact assessment should be conducted regarding implementation of both the Model Prison Manual, 2003 and the **new Model Prison Manual, 2016**.
- 7. **Access to justice:** The Committee observed that District Legal Aid Societies (DLASs) are active in all districts and provide legal aid to inmates. The Committee recommended that DLSAs should focus on providing legal resources to all classes of inmates, and particularly under trials. Further, there should be a concerted effort to rope in legal volunteers for helping with drafting of applications, affidavits, and other legal procedures. The Committee also recommended that more women lawyers should engage with DLSAs to facilitate access for justice to women prisoners.

### NRC for Tripura

#### In News

The Supreme Court recently issued a notice to the centre and the Election Commission of India on a plea seeking that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) be updated to include Tripura.

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#### Issue Background

- The Indigenous Peoples Front of Tripura (IPFT) had earlier demanded NRC revision in Tripura claiming that the indigenous communities in the State were suffering from identity crisis.
- The petition contended the “influx” of illegal immigrants into Tripura amounted to ‘external aggression’ under **Article 355** of the Constitution. The presence of illegal immigrants violates the political rights of the citizens of Tripura
- The petition asked the Supreme Court to direct the authorities to update the NRC with respect to Tripura in terms of **Rules 3 and 4 of The Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003** by taking July 19, 1948 as the cut-off date as provided for in **Article 6** of the Constitution.

#### Tripura fact file

- Princely State of Tripura merged with the Indian Union on October 15, 1949
- Attained full statehood on January 21, 1972
- Fresh communal disturbances in 1950 in East Bengal, West Bengal, Assam and Tripura lead to the Nehru-Liaquat Agreement on April 8, 1950
- National Register of Citizens prepared in 1951
- Treaty for friendship, co-operation and peace signed between India and Bangladesh on March 19, 1972
- The Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983 and The Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Rules, 1984 are struck down by SC
- As per the government, the estimated number of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in India as on 2002 was 1,20,53,950. In Tripura, there were approximately 3,25,400 illegal immigrants

#### Need for NRC highlighted by petition

1. The indigenous people/original inhabitants of Tripura are called as ‘**Boroks (Twiprasa)**.’ It is a known position that Tripura and Assam have faced the major brunt of illegal immigration from Bangladesh.
2. It argued that the petition has been filed in a ‘**representative capacity**’ of a majority of the indigenous people living in Tripura for enforcement of their fundamental rights.
3. The deportation of illegal immigrants, the petition argued, is required to restore the “socio-economic, socio-political and socio-cultural equilibrium” of the State.

4. Uncontrolled influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh to Tripura has caused huge demographic changes in Tripura. Tripura was a predominantly tribal State, but now it has become a non-tribal State. Indigenous people who were once the majority have now become a minority.

**What is NRC?**

NRC means the register containing the names of Indian citizens. NRC updation basically means the process of enlisting the names of citizens based on **Electoral Rolls up to 1971 and 1951 NRC.**

**What is NRC 1951?**

National Register of Citizens, 1951 is a register prepared after the conduct of the Census of 1951, in respect of each village showing the houses or holdings in a serial order and indicating against each house or holding the number and names of persons staying therein. These registers covered each and every person enumerated during the Census of 1951 and were kept in the offices of Deputy Commissioners and Sub Divisional Officers according to instructions issued by the Government of India in 1951.

**As per the latest Order of Supreme Court inclusion eligibility in case of Assam:**

1. All Indian Citizens including their children and descendants who have **moved to Assam post 24th March 1971** would be eligible for inclusion in the updated NRC on adducing satisfactory proof of residence in any part of the country (outside Assam) as on 24th March, 1971.
2. All the members of the Tea Tribes shall be covered under **'Original inhabitants of Assam'** category provided for under Clause 3(3) of the Schedule of The Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.
3. All such original inhabitants shall be included on the basis **of proof to the satisfaction of the Registering Authority.** On establishment of the citizenship of such persons beyond reasonable doubt, their names shall be in the updated NRC.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Assam Accord, Art 355,  
Art 6, RPA

**Section 151 A of RPA**

**In News**

Amidst murmurs in political circles that the Lok Sabha bypolls in Karnataka to three seats was “unnecessary”, the Election Commission has cited Section 151 A of the Representation of People Act, which mandated it.

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**Issue background**

- The concerned has written to the President questioning the rationale behind holding by-elections close to general elections. The exercise would be a “waste of money, energy and use of government machinery.”
- The President has been requested to withdraw notification of the by-election, adding that the announcement of by-elections to parliamentary constituencies were only in Karnataka while there are vacant constituencies in Andhra Pradesh too.

**Section 151 A**

Time limit for filling vacancies referred to in sections 147, 149, 150 and 151.— Notwithstanding anything contained in section 147, section 149, section 150 and section 151, a bye-election for filling any vacancy referred to in any of the said sections shall be held **within a period of six months from the date of the occurrence of the vacancy:** Provided that nothing contained in this section shall apply if—

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Art 190(3), OCI, Citizen Charter,  
Proxv Voting

- (a) remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is less than one year; or
- (b) Election Commission in consultation with the Central Government certifies that it is difficult to hold the bye-election within the said period.



**EC response**

- The EC said that the provision mandates by-elections within six months of the seat falling vacant, provided that the remainder of the term of the member in relation to the vacancy is one year or more.
- As vacancies in Karnataka occurred more than a year before the expiry of the term of the house, bye-elections are required to be held under Section 151A of RP Act within six months from the date of occurrence of the vacancy. In case of vacancies in Andhra Pradesh, there is no need to hold bye-elections as the remaining term of Lok Sabha is less than one year, it added.

**Gorkha Citizenship issue**

**In News**

Ministry of Home Affairs has issued a clarification to the Government of Assam on the citizenship status of members of the Gorkha Community living in the State as per the **Foreigners Act, 1946**.

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**Issue Background**

- Names of over 1 lakh of nearly 2.5 million Gorkha people residing in Assam had not found their names in the updated draft list of National Register of Citizens (NRC).
- Election Commission had referred the cases of some Gurkhas to the Foreigners Tribunals as their names were included in the voters’ list, in contravention to the **India-Nepal Treaty signed in 1950** that bars them from Indian citizenship.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Writ, Mandamus, India-Nepal Treaty 1950, Foreigners Act 1946, Assam Accord

**Government directions**

1. The Gurkhas who were Indian citizens at the time of commencement of the Constitution, or those who are Indian citizens by birth, or those who have acquired Indian citizenship by **registration or naturalisation** in accordance with the provisions of the **Citizenship Act, 1955** are not “foreigners” and therefore, such cases will not be referred to the Foreigners Tribunals.
2. Any member of the Gurkha community holding Nepalese nationality and who has arrived in India by land or air over the Nepal border even without a passport or visa and staying in India for any length of time shall not be treated as an illegal migrant, if he/she is in possession of any of the identity documents, namely the Nepalese Passport, Nepalese Citizenship Certificate, voter identification card issued by the Election Commission of Nepal, limited validity photo-identity certificate issued by Nepalese Mission in India when deemed necessary and for children between age group of 10-18 years, photo ID issued by the principal of the school if accompanied by parents having valid travel documents as per the provisions of India-Nepal Treaty signed in 1950.
3. No such document is required for children **below the age group of 10 years**, the communication added citing provisions of India-Nepal Treaty signed in 1950.

**POCSO Act**

**In News**

The government has clarified that **there is no time bar on reporting crimes related to child sexual abuse**. Survivors of child sexual abuse can file a police complaint after they become adults.

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**Provision mentioned in Act**

POCSO Act 2012 does not lay down a time limit for reporting crimes covered under it. “The Ministry of Law, after examining the provisions of POCSO Act vis-à-vis provisions of CrPC, has advised that there appears no period of limitation mentioned in **Section 19** in regard to reporting of the offences under the POCSO Act, 2012”.

**Legislation**

**Section 19 of the POCSO Act**, which deals with sexual crimes against children, lays down the procedure for reporting a crime but doesn't specify a time limit or statute of limitation for reporting it.

Whereas the **CrPC** lays down different time-limits for crimes which carry a punishment of up to three years, there is no time bar for crimes that would attract a jail term of more than three years.

The Act defines a child as any person **below eighteen years of age**. It defines different forms of sexual abuse, including penetrative and non-penetrative assault, as well as sexual harassment and pornography.

**Significance**

Often, children are unable to report such crimes as the perpetrator in most cases is either a family member, a relative or closely known person. Studies have also shown that the child continues to carry the trauma of sexual abuse till very late in life. In order to overcome this trauma many grown up people have started coming out to report the abuse faced by them as children.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
SHe-Box, #MeToo, Sexual Harassment (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013

This is an important step for survivors of child abuse, who may try to file a complaint as adults but are turned away at police stations.

**Renaming of State and City**

**In News**

West Bengal government's move to rename West Bengal as "Bangla".

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**Procedure for Renaming a City**

Renaming of a city is a task that is given to the **State Legislators**. To complete the renaming of a state, the State Legislator should follow a guideline that will rule the validity of a particular renaming done by the said authority. The procedure differs from state to state but regulations that need to be followed are -

The **First schedule** of the constitution has the list of all the states and union territories. A new state in India can be created **by three different** means as follows:  
1. Breaking / reorganizing an existing state(s)  
2. Giving status of full-fledged state to a union territory  
3. Acquiring a new territory

1. The first step involves raising of a request in form of a resolution by any Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) which proposes the renaming of any particular city or street.
2. On the basis of the request of the MLA, the issue would be deliberated upon and the consequences of the same shall be discussed upon. So, the second step involves the deliberation over the request of the renaming of the city or the street.
3. The final step involves voting of the validity of the resolution. If there are majority votes in favour of the resolution, the said resolution shall be declared passed. If the majority of votes for a resolution are not achieved, the resolution shall fail. **The majority here involves simple majority.**

**New district carved out in MP**  
The Madhya Pradesh government has carved out a new district, 'Niwari', in the state. Niwari which formally started functioning, has been carved out of the Tikamgarh district by including its three tehsils -- Niwadi, Prithvipur and Orccha. With Niwari, the state now has 52 districts. The decision to create the new district was taken by the state government recently to fulfil the long-pending demand of people from the area.

The State Legislation on the basis of the majority view shall make the necessary changes in the name of the state or city public. One example of the renaming of a city is the renaming of the Aurangzeb Road in

Lutyens’s Delhi as Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Road. The resolution was unanimously passed by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC).

**Procedure for Renaming a State**

One of the most cumbersome task for the Parliament is the procedure that needs to be followed in order to rename a state. **The Constitution of India provides for the renaming of a state under Article 3 and Article 4.**

The procedure of renaming of the state can be initiated by either the Parliament or the State Legislator and the procedure is as follows:

1. A bill for renaming a state may be introduced in the Parliament on the recommendation of the President.
2. Before the introduction of the bill, the President shall send the bill to the respective state assembly for expressing their views within a stipulated time. **The views of the state assembly are not binding, neither on the President nor on the Parliament.** But the process must not be skipped as it is of vital importance as any law so made will be affecting that particular state.
3. On the expiry of the period, the bill will be sent to the Parliament for deliberation.
4. The bill in order to take the force of a law must be **passed by a simple majority.**
5. The bill is sent for approval to the President.
6. After the approval of the said bill, the bill becomes a law and the name of the state stands modified.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Flag Code of India 2002,  
 The Prevention of Insults  
 to National Honour Act

**Conclusion**

There have been no studies done to date to measure the impact of name changing of state/city but that there are costs is beyond dispute. When cities re-brand, highway traffic signs out into neighbouring States have to be changed. Railway signage, systems and paperwork across the country have to be updated. Government and business stationery have to be destroyed and remade at a cost to the environment. The biggest cost may be in re-educating outsiders about the name change, an intangible line item whose true costs will never be known.

**Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2016**

**In News**

The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill is gaining momentum yet again as the Assam Government has refused the proposed rally of organisations from West Bengal in support of the Bill.

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**What does the Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016 seeks?**

- The Citizenship Amendment Bill was proposed in Lok Sabha on July 19, amending the Citizenship Act of 1955.
- If this Bill is passed in Parliament, **illegal migrants from certain minority communities** coming from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Pakistan will then be eligible for Indian citizenship.
- In short, illegal migrants belonging to the Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian religious communities from Afghanistan, Bangladesh or Pakistan would not be imprisoned or deported.
- Moreover, these citizens gain permanent citizenship after six years of residency in India instead of 11 years -- as mentioned in the Citizenship Act (1955).
- The registration of Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) cardholders may get cancelled if they violate any law.

**5 ways of acquiring citizenship**

1. Birth
2. Descent
3. Registration
4. Naturalization
5. Incorporation of the territory

### **Who are illegal immigrants?**

According to the Citizenship Act, 1955, an illegal immigrant is one who enters India without a valid passport or with forged documents. Or, a person who stays beyond the visa permit.

### **What is the Citizenship Act 1995?**

- Under **Article 9** of the Indian Constitution, a person who voluntarily acquires citizenship of any other country is no longer an Indian citizen
- **Citizenship by descent:** Persons born outside India on or after January 26, 1950, but before December 10, 1992, are citizens of India by descent if their father was a citizen of India at the time of their birth
- **From December 3, 2004**, onwards, persons born outside of India shall not be considered citizens of India unless their birth is registered at an Indian consulate within one year of the date of birth
- In **Section 8** of the Citizenship Act 1955, if an adult makes a declaration of renunciation of Indian citizenship, he loses Indian citizenship

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
RPA 1951, Delimitation Commission Act of 1952, Termination of Citizenship

### **How will the Bill affect the updated NRC list?**

While Bill is designed to grant citizenship to some illegal migrant communities persecuted in neighbouring countries, **NRC does not distinguish migrants on the basis of religion.** It will consider deporting anyone who has entered the State illegally **post-March 24, 1971**, irrespective of their religion.

## **Anti- Defection Law**

### **In News**

In a major relief to the AIADMK government in Tamil Nadu, the Madras High Court has upheld the state Assembly Speaker’s decision disqualifying 18 AIADMK legislators last year.

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### **Anti-Defection Law**

- The 10th Schedule to the Constitution, popularly referred to as the ‘Anti-Defection Law,’ was inserted by the **52nd Amendment in 1985.**
- The grounds for disqualification are mentioned under Articles 102 (2) and 191 (2).

### **Provision of Act**

#### **Disqualification**

Members of Political Parties: A member of a House belonging to any political party becomes disqualified for being a member of the House, (a) if he voluntarily gives up his membership of such political party; or (b) if he votes or abstains from voting in such House contrary to any direction issued by his political party without obtaining prior permission of such party and such act has not been condoned by the party within 15 days.

- **Independent Members:** An independent member of a House (elected without being set up as a candidate by any political party) becomes disqualified to remain a member of the House if he joins any political party after such election.
- **Nominated Members:** A nominated member of a House becomes disqualified for being a member of the House if he joins any political party after the expiry of six months from the date on which he takes his seat in the House. This means that he may join any political party within six months of taking his seat in the House without inviting this disqualification.

### **Exceptions**

The above disqualification on the ground of defection does not apply in the following two cases:

1. If a member goes out of his party as a result of a merger of the party with another party. A merger takes place when two-thirds of the members of the party have agreed to such merger.
2. If a member, after being elected as the presiding officer of the House, voluntarily

gives up the membership of his party or rejoins it after he ceases to hold that office. This exemption has been provided in view of the dignity and impartiality of this office.

It must be noted here that the provision of the Tenth Schedule pertaining to exemption from disqualification in case of split by one-third members of legislature party has been deleted by the **91st Amendment Act of 2003**. It means that the defectors have no more protection on grounds of splits.

**Rule-Making Power**

The presiding officer of a House is empowered to make rules to give effect to the provisions of the Tenth Schedule. **All such rules must be placed before the House for 30 days.** The House may approve or modify or disapprove them. Further, he may direct that any wilful contravention by any member of such rules may be dealt with in the same manner as a breach of privilege of the House.

**Decision of the Presiding Officer is subject to judicial review:**

The law initially stated that the decision of the Presiding Officer is not subject to judicial review. This condition was struck down by the Supreme Court in 1992, thereby allowing appeals against the Presiding Officer’s decision in the High Court and Supreme Court. However, it held that there may not be any judicial intervention until the Presiding Officer gives his order.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Article 102, Art 191

**CARA**

**In News**

Three years after the Missionaries of Charity (MoC) decided to stop giving children in its homes up for adoption, it has agreed to join hands with the country’s nodal agency for adoption.

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**Background**

- In October 2015, soon after the Central government announced new rules for adoption and made it mandatory for all homes to be linked to the Child Adoption Resource Authority (CARA), which would be the only body in the country authorised to process adoptions, the Missionaries of Charity sought de-recognition of its homes.
- Recently after the decision, CARA sated “Children in various homes of the Missionaries of Charity will now be linked to a Specialised Adoption Agency (SAA) and details of children would be available on our website.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
JJ act, Child Welfare Committees, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

**About CARA**

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India.
- It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions.
- CARA is designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993, ratified by Government of India in 2003.
- CARA primarily deals with adoption of orphan, abandoned and surrendered children through its associated /recognised adoption agencies.

**Sabarimala temple opens to women of all age**

**In News**

The Supreme Court lifted the centuries-old practice of prohibiting women from the age of menarche to menopause to enter the Lord Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala in Kerala.

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**Issues**

- The Sabarimala Temple restricted the entry of women between the ages of **10 to 50 years** on the grounds that they were menstruating and were thus “impure”. This was because the deity Ayyappa is believed to be eternally celibate and so, the ban was thought to be important for not disturbing celibacy of deity Ayyappa.
- Whether the practice to exclude women based on a biological factors amounts to "discrimination", and thereby violates **Articles 14, 15 and 17** of the Constitution?
- Is the presiding deity of Sabarimala Temple, Lord Ayyappa protected by 'morality' as used in Articles 25 and 26 of the Constitution guaranteeing freedom of religion?
- Whether Sabarimala Temple qualifies to be recognised as a separate religious denomination when it is financed out of the Consolidated Fund of Kerala and Tamil Nadu?
- Is excluding women from Sabarimala Temple constitute an essential part of religion, if it is recognised as a separate religious denomination?
- Whether Rule 3(b) of Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules violates the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Act, 1965?

**Verdict**

1. Exclusion on grounds of biological and physiological features like menstruation was therefore unconstitutional as it is violative of the right to equality and dignity of women.
2. Justice Nariman said the Sabarimala temple custom barring women of 10-50 age is not backed by Article 25 and 26 of the Constitution.
3. Custom of barring women is violative of **Article 25** (Clause 1) and Rule 3(b) of **Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (authorisation of entry) Rules, 1965** is struck down by SC.
4. Rule 3(b) of the **Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Act** of 1965, which mandates the prohibition in Sabarimala temple is declared as ultra vires of the Constitution. The Rule violated the fundamental right of a Hindu woman to offer worship at a place of her choice. Right to worship is equally available to men and women.
5. "Patriarchal rules have to change. Patriarchy in religion cannot be allowed to trump right to pray and practise religion"
6. Morality in its very nature includes constitutional morality. Validity of impugned rule needs to be tested on constitutional morality.
7. Devotees of Ayyappa do not constitute a separate religious denomination. Lord Ayyappa is not a separate denomination. The law and society are tasked with the task to act as levellers

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Art 14, Art 15m Art 17, Art 25, Assam Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Bill 2015

**Dissenting views**

- The freedom to practice their beliefs was enshrined in Article 25 of the Constitution. Harmonisation of fundamental rights with religion included providing freedom for diverse sects to practise their customs and beliefs.
- Justice Indu Malhotra dissented from the majority opinion. She held that the determination of what constituted an essential practice in a religion should not be decided by judges on the basis of their personal viewpoints.
- She held that essentiality of a religious practice or custom had to be decided within the religion. It was a matter of personal faith. Constitutional morality in a pluralistic society gave freedom to practice even irrational or illogical customs and usages.

**Significance**

1. Religion, it must be remembered, has been used far too long as a tool to deny women an equal footing in society. Menstrual cycles have been treated as a taboo by attaching a stigma to it. Years of institutionalisation of biases against menstruating women have gone on to deny them the constitutionally guaranteed right to equality.
2. Balance needs to be struck between religious beliefs on one hand and cherished principles of non-discrimination and equality laid down by Constitution on the other.
3. Devotion cannot be subjected to the stereotypes of gender. Stigma built around traditional notions of impurity has no place in the constitutional order, and exclusion based on the notion of impurity is a form of untouchability. Any rule based on segregation of women pertaining to biological characteristics is indefensible and unconstitutional.

**Aadhar verdict**

**In News**

The Supreme Court has upheld the Aadhaar scheme as constitutionally valid. The court also upheld the passage of the Aadhaar Act as a Money Bill.

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**Issues raised**

- ❖ Is the Aadhaar Act, 2016, constitutionally valid given that it was passed in Parliament as a Money Bill?
- ❖ Why does every citizen need one identity proof — a unique identification number — to acquire government benefits? Can't this be done using other documents, like ration card or passport?
- ❖ Does Aadhaar take away our right to privacy — upheld as a fundamental right by a nine-judge Constitution bench of the court in August last year.
- ❖ What happens if Aadhaar data becomes a tool for mass surveillance by the state, as the movement and activities of users can be tracked by collecting metadata?

**Key Highlights of Verdict**

1. The Supreme Court upheld the validity of Aadhaar saying sufficient security measures are taken to protect data and it is difficult to launch surveillance on citizens on the basis of Aadhaar.
2. The SC asked the Centre to bring a robust law for data protection as soon as possible.
3. The apex court struck down the provision in Aadhaar law allowing sharing of data on the ground of national security.
4. The SC said there is a fundamental difference between Aadhaar and other identity proof as Aadhaar cannot be duplicated and it is a unique identification. It added that Aadhaar is to empower the marginalised sections of the society, and it gives them an identity.
5. Section 57 of the Aadhaar Act struck down: It was used by the government to compel private companies to demand Aadhaar verification for services.
6. Justice Chandrachud ordered service providers to delete any information collected by them after linking Aadhaar with SIMs

**Where Aadhaar is not needed?**

- The SC said Aadhaar cannot be made mandatory for openings of a bank account and for getting mobile connections.
- The SC said that Aadhaar must not be made compulsory for school admission and the administration cannot make it mandatory.
- CBSE, NEET, UGC cannot make Aadhaar mandatory to appear in entrance examinations.
- No private entity can avail Aadhaar data which includes telecom companies and mobile wallets.

**Where Aadhaar is mandatory?**

- The SC has made linking of Aadhaar and PAN mandatory.
- The apex court also made Aadhaar mandatory for filing of Income Tax Return (ITR).
- Aadhaar must for availing facilities of welfare schemes and government subsidies.

**The Supreme Court’s Right to Privacy verdict**

A nine-judge Bench ruled that the right to privacy is a fundamental right, a shot in the arm for the petitioners. However, the court had also ruled that “besides national security, the State may have justifiable reasons for the collection and storage of data. In a social welfare state, the government embarks upon programmes which provide benefits to impoverished and marginalised sections of society. There is a vital State interest in ensuring that scarce public resources are not dissipated by the diversion of resources to persons who do not qualify as recipients.”

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Right to Privacy, Data  
 Localisation, National Digital  
 Communications Policy 2018

**Justice B N Srikrishna report**

The Justice B N Srikrishna panel was appointed to recommend a data protection framework to the government. It submitted its recommendations in July this year. The Srikrishna data protection report highlighted individuals’ constitutional rights over their data and said efforts need to be made to protect data at any cost. It recommended steps for protection of personal information, defining obligations of data processors as also rights of individuals, and mooting penalties for violation.

**Way Forward**

- ✓ The linking of Aadhaar with social programmes has helped to reduce leakage and improve targeting of benefits. Aadhaar is many times called “example of using modern technology to leapfrog” and a programme that has saved the government crores of rupees in fraud and wastage.
- ✓ Detractors argue that savings are minimal and that such linking has increased the exclusion of genuine beneficiaries—for instance, through failures to read the fingerprints of elderly recipients or manual labourers or through power and connectivity failures that prevent authentication. Theoretically, both arguments are plausible, which makes this essentially an empirical question.
- ✓ The fundamental problem for service delivery in India is not Aadhaar or no Aadhaar, but the lack of systematic focus on the beneficiary experience. Aadhaar is a tool with the potential to reduce leakages and improve service delivery. But using this tool to improve the beneficiary experience requires continuous effort and democratic oversight.

**#MeToo**

**Why in News?**

The series of allegations against Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein prompted a social media campaign where thousands of women are sharing personal stories of sexual harassment under the **hashtag or title ‘MeToo**. ‘Actress Alyssa Milano sparked a huge outpouring with a simple Twitter request that women respond “me too” if they have been sexually assaulted or harassed.

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In less than 24 hours, #MeToo became one of largest trending topics on Twitter with over half a million tweets and a large number of shares on Facebook too. It provided space for people to be vulnerable about experiences across a spectrum, without having to be specific. Though the movement started off as a women-centric movement, it grew to include queer and cis-male experiences.

**MeToo in India**

- Following the global outrage over the Harvey Weinstein incident in the West, where the noted Hollywood producer was accused of sexual harassment by over 70 women, the #MeToo movement has finally arrived in India, engulfing the whole media and entertainment industry. Several women have bravely come out with stories about

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harassment and sexual abuse at workplace at the hands of the powerful and higher-ups.

- Unlike its American counterpart, **it has not been spurred by investigative journalism**. Rather, it has been a spontaneous outpouring, amplified by journalists themselves. And it has hit Indian media the hardest. Women journalists have perhaps played the biggest role so far, "outing" reporters, senior editors, authors and even a high court judge.
- India's film industry has hovered on the edges of #MeToo for some time. But, for the first time, it attracted the attention of several people in the film industry.
- This is not the first time alleged harassers have been publicly named and shamed in India - in 2017, a law student published a controversial crowd sourced list on Facebook accusing more than 50 professors. But this time, most of the accusers are not anonymous. And those that have chosen to remain anonymous are not alone in their accusations.

**E-mail ID For Sexual Harassment**

- The National Commission for Women (NCW) has come out with a dedicated e-mail address to report instances of sexual harassment at workplace after several such complaints were made to the body by women under the **#Metoo movement** on social media.
- The Commission urges women who have come forward on social media and other platforms about their alleged harassers to send their formal written complaints to **metoo@gmail.com**.

**Way Forward**

The strength of the latest #MeToo movement will ultimately be tested by where it travels from here - and if the past is any indication, there's not much to be optimistic about, for earlier attempts at an Indian #MeToo did not have any lasting impact.

A list of alleged predators in academia died a quick death in the Twitter bubble; and calls to name and shame the sleazy in Bollywood did not find many takers. Also, it's not going to be easy for those who choose to speak out, especially for those who have no evidence to back up their allegations. Some of the women have provided screen shots of private text messages they were sent by their alleged harassers, making the allegations hard to deny. But in cases where it boils down to "**your word against mine**", many of the women who spoke out are already being threatened with legal action for defamation and some of the tweets, naming names, have already been taken down.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

Pam Rajput Committee, National Commission For Women, Mihir Shah Committee, Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, Nirbhaya Act, Vishakha Committee

**National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET)**

**In News**

The Union Cabinet has approved the merger of the existing regulatory institutions in the skills space - National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) and the National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) into NCVET.

**About NCVET**

NCVET is envisaged as an institution which will perform the regulatory functions so far vested in NCVT and NSDA. Regulatory functions currently being carried out by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) through the **Sector Skill Councils (SSCs)** will also be housed in the NCVET.

**Composition**

The Council would be headed by a Chairperson and will have **Executive and Non-Executive** Members. Since NCVET is proposed to be set up through merger of two existing bodies, the existing infrastructure and resources will be utilized for the most part.

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**Functions**

NCVET will regulate the functioning of entities engaged in vocational education and training, both **long-term and short-term** and establish minimum standards for the functioning of such entities. The primary functions of NCVET will include -

1. recognition and regulation of awarding bodies, assessment bodies and skill related information providers;
2. approval of qualifications developed by awarding bodies and SSCs;
3. indirect regulation of vocational training institutes through awarding bodies and assessment agencies;
4. research and information dissemination;
5. Grievance redressal.

**World's most innovative universities**  
 For the fourth year running, Stanford University tops Reuters' ranking of the World's Most Innovative Universities, a list that identifies and ranks the educational institutions **doing the most to advance science, invent new technologies and power new markets and industries.**

**Benefits**

- This institutional reform will lead to improvement in quality and market relevance of skill development programs lending credibility to vocational education and training encouraging greater private investment and employer participation in the skills space.
- This will help achieve the twin objectives of **enhancing aspirational value of vocational education and of increasing skilled manpower** furthering the Prime Minister's agenda of making India the skill capital of the world.
- Being a regulator of India's skill ecosystem, NCVET will have a positive impact on each individual who is a part of vocational education and training in the country. The idea of skill-based education will be seen in a more inspirational manner which would further encourage students to apply for skill-based educational courses.
- This is also expected to facilitate the ease of doing business by providing a steady supply of skilled workforce to the industry and services.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 NSDC, NSDA, NSQF,  
 National council of vocational educational board

**Need of NCVET**

In an effort to realize India's demographic dividend, its workforce needs to be equipped with employable skills and knowledge so that they can contribute to economic growth in a substantive manner. In the past, most of the country's skill training needs were met through courses offered by the Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and under the Modular Employable Scheme (MES), regulated by NCVT. Since this infrastructure was not enough to meet the increasing skill requirements of the country NCVET was envisaged.

**Competition Law Review Committee**

**In News**

In pursuance of its objective of ensuring that Legislation is in sync with the needs of strong economic fundamentals, the Government has constituted a Competition Law Review Committee to review the Competition Act.

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**Terms of References of the Committee**

1. To review the Competition Act/ Rules/ Regulations, in view of changing business environment and bring necessary changes, if required;
2. To look into international best practices in the competition fields, especially anti-trust laws, merger guidelines and handling cross border competition issues;
3. To study other regulatory regimes/ institutional mechanisms/ government policies which overlap with the Competition Act;
4. Any other matters related to competition issue and considered necessary by the Committee.

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The **nine-member committee** chaired by Corporate Affairs Secretary **Injeti Srinivas** includes Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) Chairperson and Competition Commission of India Chairperson.

**Competition Act 2002**

The Act prohibits **anti-competitive agreements**, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and M&A), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.

In line with the international trend and to cope up with the changing realities India, consequently, **enacted the Competition Act, 2002 to supersede and replace the MRTP Act.**

- Objectives of Act**
1. To check anti-competitive practices
  2. To prohibit abuse of dominance
  3. Regulation of combinations.
  4. To provide for the establishment of CCI, a quasi-judicial body to perform below mentioned duties

**Competition Commission of India**

CCI is a **statutory body** of India entrusted with enforcing **Competition Act 2002** and **regulating anti-competitive practices** in the country to prevent activities that have an adverse effect on competition in India.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
TOP scheme, National Sports University Bill, 2018

**Composition**

One Chairperson and Six Members.

**Task Force for Closing the Skills Gap in India**

**In News**

The GoI has launched a task force for closing the skills gap in India, in collaboration with the World Economic Forum.

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**About Task Force in India**

- The goal of the Task Force is to develop an action plan to address skills gaps in India and make the Indian workforce ready for jobs of future.
- The task force, launched in collaboration with the World Economic Forum, will be co-chaired by **Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Minister along with Infosys MD and CEO.**
- The Task Force in India is the second country-led **public-private collaboration** of the World Economic Forum’s Closing the Skills Gap Project after South Africa.
- The task force will bring together leaders from business, Government, civil society, and the education and training sectors to accelerate the future-proofing of education and training systems in the country.
- By 2022, over half of workers in India will require re-skilling to meet the talent demands of the future. Indian workers will require an average 100 days of learning, according to the **Future of Jobs Report 2018.**

**About Closing the Skills Gap Project by WEF**

This project is part of the World Economic Forum’s **Shaping the Future of Education, Gender and Work System Initiative.**

The Closing the Skills Gap Project aims to create global and national platforms to address current skills gaps and to reshape education and training for the future. It works at three levels:

1. **Country implementation deep-dives:** At the national level, the Closing the Skills Gap Task Forces provides a platform for multi-stakeholder collaboration to close the skills gap and prepare for the future of work. Each Closing the Skills Gap Task Force brings together leaders from business, government, civil society, and education and training sectors to accelerate reskilling and up skilling efforts in the current workforce and the future-proofing of national education and training systems.

2. **Global and regional knowledge exchange:** At the global level, an informal Global Alliance for Closing the Skills Gap provides an exclusive global platform for leaders and experts from business, government, civil society, and the education and training sectors to build consensus, share ideas, and identify preferred models and best practices.

3. **Global business commitments:** With skilling, reskilling and up skilling becoming a clear “no-regret” move for addressing the flux in labour markets, there is a rapid movement of multinational businesses towards such efforts for their employees, communities and wider audience. Managed strategically, this can be impactful and a win-win for companies and workers alike. As a first step, the Forum is consolidating global business commitments with the goal to reach 10 million people by January 2020.

**1st Global Skill Park**

- ✓ Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$150 million Loan Agreement to establish a Global Skills Park (GSP) in Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh).
- ✓ The **First Multi-Skills Park in India**, to enhance the quality of Technical and Vocational Education And Training (TVET) System in the State and create a more skilled workforce.
- ✓ The Project will help improve the quality and relevance of the State’s TVET programs and will help impart advanced job-ready skills training of international standards that can meet the employment needs of the State’s emerging sectors.
- ✓ The Project will engage international TVET partners to support advanced training at the GSP who will bring global best practices in TVET management, training infrastructure, industry cooperation, and quality assurance.

**Significance**

The GoI aims to build dynamic and inclusive economies and systems in an era of accelerated technological and political change, providing leaders with a platform to understand and anticipate emerging economic and social trends and to adapt policies and practices to our rapidly evolving context. It integrates the System Initiative on the Future of Economic Progress and the System Initiative on the Future of Education, Gender and Work, and serves as a hub for the most relevant insights and pioneering actions in these domains.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Youth India and Work survey,  
Future of Work in India Report,

**National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC)**

**In News**

Department of Consumer Affairs & NCDRC organized conference to **review functioning of State Commissions and District Fora.**

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**Key highlights**

- To discuss the issues relating to the functioning of the Consumer Fora such as pendency of case and filling up of vacancies in the post of President and Members of the Commissions.
- The attention was also drawn to the alternate ways of redressal of consumer complaints, computerization of consumer fora and notification of Model Rules by the States.
- The conference also welcomed the introduction of Mediation in the Consumer Protection Bill and mentioned that this will also help in reducing the pendency of cases.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
IPAB, Consumer welfare fund, Agmark, Trademark

**About NCDRC**

➤ The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC), India is a **quasi-judicial commission** in India which was set up in 1988 under the Consumer Protection Act of 1986.

- The commission is **headed by a sitting or retired judge of the Supreme Court of India.**
- **Section 21** of Consumer Protection Act, 1986 posits that NCDRC shall have jurisdiction to entertain complaint valued more than Rs. 1 crore and also have appellate and revision jurisdiction from orders of state commissions or district fora as case may be.
- **Section 23** of Act provides that any person aggrieved by order of NCDRC, may appeal against such order to Supreme Court within period of 30 days.

### Appellate Tribunals against Benami Transactions

#### In News

The Union Cabinet has approved setting up of Appellate Tribunal and Adjudicating Authority for speedy disposal of cases related to benami transactions.

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#### About Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988 (PBPT Act)

- The PBPT Act defines benami transactions, prohibits them and further provides that violation of the PBPT Act is punishable with imprisonment and fine. The PBPT Act prohibits recovery of the property held benami from benamidar by the real owner. Properties held benami are liable for confiscation by the Government without payment of compensation.
- An appellate mechanism has been provided under the PBPT Act in the form of Adjudicating Authority and Appellate Tribunal. The Adjudicating Authority referred to in section 6(1) of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002 (PMLA) and the Appellate Tribunal referred to in section 25 of the PMLA have been notified as the Adjudicating Authority and Appellate Tribunal, respectively, for the purposes of the PBPT Act.
- A Joint / Additional Commissioner of Income-tax, an Assistant / Deputy Commissioner of Income-tax and a Tax Recovery Officer in each Pr. CCIT Region have been notified to perform the functions and exercise the powers of the Approving Authority, Initiating Officer and Administrator, respectively under the PBPT Act.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Benami Act, Fugitive Economic offender Bill 2018

#### Salient Features of Appellate

1. Appointment of an Adjudicating Authority, along with the three additional Benches and to establish the Appellate Tribunal under the PBPT Act;
2. To provide the officers and employees to Adjudicating Authority, Benches of the Adjudicating Authority and Appellate Tribunal by diverting the existing posts at the same level/rank from the Income Tax Deptt./Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT);
3. The Adjudicating Authority and Appellate Tribunal shall sit in the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD). Benches of Adjudicating Authority may sit in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai, and the necessary notification in this regard shall be issued after making consultation with the Chairperson of the proposed Adjudicating Authority.

- The Union Government has issued a notification stating that sessions courts in 34 states and union territories, will act as special courts for the trial of offences under the benami transaction law.
- The session courts were notified after consultation with Chief Justices of High Courts under the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988 for the trial of offences punishable under the provision of the Act.

#### Benefits:

- The approval will result in effective and better administration of cases referred to the Adjudicating Authority and speedy disposal of appeals filed against the order of the Adjudicating Authority before the Appellate Tribunal.
- Appointment of the Adjudicating Authority would provide first stage review of administrative action under the PBPT Act. Establishment of the proposed Appellate

Tribunal would provide an appellate mechanism for the order passed by the Adjudicating Authority under the PBPT Act.

## Assam's Wage Compensation Scheme

### In News

Assam govt. recently launched the **Wage Compensation Scheme for Pregnant Women in tea gardens of the state.**

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### Concerns

- The high Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) among pregnant women in the tea garden areas due to anaemia and other diseases has been a major cause of worry and as the pregnant women labourers in the tea gardens have to work through their pregnancy till the time of delivery, the mortality rate is on the higher side.
- Also, almost **50% of the pregnant women** aged between 15 and 49 years in the state were recorded to be **anaemic**, which is a leading contributor to maternal mortality. The bulk of the workforce in Assam's tea gardens is women.
- The Annual Health Survey of 2012-13 puts MMR at in the tea gardens, whereas the state's average is 301. **The national average during 2014-16 was 130.**

### Objective of Scheme

The scheme is aimed at providing better health and nutrition to the pregnant women and to bring down the mortality rate among pregnant women in tea garden areas of the state.

### Key Highlights

1. Under scheme pregnant women will get **Rs 12,000 for maternal care** so that she can take better care of herself and her unborn baby without compromising the livelihood of her family.
2. As per the scheme, the first instalment of **Rs 2,000** will be provided during the Ante-Natal Check-up (ANC) registration **within the first trimester**, second instalment of Rs 4000 during the sixth month of the pregnancy, the third instalment of **Rs 3000** during delivery at a government-approved health institution and the fourth instalment of Rs 3,000 during the sixth week post-delivery.
3. In addition, they will get assistance for ante-natal care and the first cycle of immunization of the child.
4. All temporary, permanent or non-workers living within the tea garden areas will be eligible for the scheme.
5. An amount of more than **Rs 55 crore has been allotted** in the State Health Budget for the financial year 2018-19 for this scheme which will benefit nearly 48,000 pregnant women every year.
6. The state government will provide mobile phones to 'line sardars' (chiefs of labourers) for effectively giving feedback about various issues in their gardens.
7. At least 500 girls from the tea community will be given **free training on nursing** in the coming year.

### Global Future Policy Awards

- ✓ **Sikkim has been awarded** the prestigious gold prize at global Future Policy Awards (**Oscar for best policies**) for **promoting agro-ecology** through policies and laws that have made it a "100 per cent organic farming" state. Gold Prize winner Sikkim is the first organic state in the world. All of its farmland is certified organic.
- ✓ Policies from Brazil, Denmark and Quito (Ecuador) were awarded silver.
- ✓ The award is **co-organised** by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the World Future Council (WFC) and IFOAM Organics International.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
NEDFi, North East  
Venture Fund

## Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)

### In News

A Distribution camp for free of cost distribution of Aids and Assistive Living devices under RVY, a scheme of Social Justice & Empowerment Department for Senior Citizen under BPL category, was organized by Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India (ALIMCO)

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### About Scheme

1. "Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana", a 'Scheme for providing Physical Aids and Assisted-living Devices for Senior citizens belonging to BPL category'
2. This is a **Central Sector Scheme** with expenditure for implementation of the scheme derived from the "Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund".
3. The Scheme is being implemented through the implementing agency - ALIMCO. The devices will be distributed in Camp mode.
4. **Eligibility:** Senior Citizens, belonging to BPL category and suffering from any of the age related disability/infirmity viz. Low vision, Hearing impairment, Loss of teeth and Locomotor disability will be provided with such assisted-living devices.

As per the Census figures of 2011, the population of senior citizens in India is 10.38 crore. More than 70% of the population of senior citizens live in rural areas of the country. A sizeable percentage (5.2%) of the senior citizens suffers from some sort of disabilities related to old age. Projections indicate that the number of elderly population will increase to around 173 million by 2026.

### Salient features

- Free of cost distribution of the devices, commensurate with the extent of disability/infirmity that is manifested among the eligible senior citizens.
- In case of multiple disabilities/infirmities manifested in the same person, the assistive devices will be given in respect of each disability/impairment.
- ALIMCO will undertake one year free maintenance of the aids & assisted living devices.
- Beneficiaries in each district will be identified by the State Governments/UT Administrations **through a Committee** chaired by the Deputy Commissioner/District Collector.
- As far as possible, 30% of the beneficiaries in each district shall be women.
- The State Government/UT Administration/District Level Committee can also utilize the data of BPL beneficiaries receiving Old Age Pension under the NSAP or any other Scheme of the State/UT for identification of senior citizens belonging to BPL category.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
PMFBY, APY, NSDL, NPS

## Digi Yatra

### In News

The Ministry of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation released the policy on **biometric based digital processing of passengers at airports called "Digi Yatra"**. With this initiative, the civil aviation ministry is looking to make ticket booking, airport entry and boarding pass security check-in digital.

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### About Scheme

- Digi Yatra will facilitate paperless travel and avoid identity check at multiple points promoting hassle-free air travel.
- Under the Digi Yatra, passenger can get a Digi Yatra ID by sharing minimum details like Name, e-mail ID, Mobile number and details of one approved Identity proof where **Aadhar ID is not mandatory**.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Hyperloop, Rail Madad

- The passenger who has created the Digi Yatra ID has to undergo a onetime verification at the departure airport during his/her first travel. “In case a passenger opted for Aadhar based verification, the identity will be verified online.
- Digi Yatra Central platform will be operational by end of February, 2019. Bangalore and Hyderabad will be ready with pilot implementation by end of Feb 2019.
- Other services are E-Gate, Self Bag Drop Counter, Digi Yatra ID.

**Benefits**

- Pax need not show boarding pass or ID at multiple check points.
- Minimum human intervention. Less queuing time.
- The security is enhanced as the system will map the passenger with the PNR. Only bona fide passenger will be allowed entry at every check point.
- Airport operator will have real time information on Passenger load and resource planning becomes better.
- Airlines will be benefitted by knowing the passenger position in the airport.
- Airport throughput will be enhanced.

**Saubhagya scheme**

**In News**

Ministry of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy announced an award scheme under Saubhagya to felicitate the DISCOMs / Power Department of the States and their employees for achieving 100 per cent household electrification in their area of operations.

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**Categories of Award**

- (i) DISCOMs / Power Departments of Special Category States (which includes seven North Eastern States, Sikkim, J&K and Uttarakhand)
- (ii) DISCOMs / Power Departments of other than Special Category States (which includes Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telengana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal)having more than 5 Lakh un-electrified households
- (iii) DISCOMs / Power Departments of other than Special Category States having less than 5 Lakh un-electrified households

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
National Digital Communications Policy-2018, IOT, M2M

**Criteria**

Awards would be provided for **achieving 100 per cent household electrification** at DISCOM/Power Department level of the States. Eight States which have already achieved more than 99 per cent household electrification prior to launch of Saubhagya (Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu), are ineligible for participation under the award scheme. All the remaining States and their Discoms are eligible for the award.

**About Saubhagya**

- Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana – ‘Saubhagya’ a new scheme was launched by the PM in 2017. **Under Saubhagya free electricity connections to all households (both APL and poor families) in rural areas and poor families in urban areas will be provided.**
- Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) has been designated as nodal agency for the Saubhagya scheme.
- There are around 4 Crore un-electrified households in the country and they are targeted for providing electricity connections by December 2018.
- The prospective beneficiary households for free electricity connections under the scheme

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would be **identified using SECC 2011 data**. However, un-electrified households not covered under SECC data would also be provided electricity connections under the scheme on payment of Rs. 500 which shall be recovered by DISCOMs in 10 instalments through electricity bill.

### Nirman Kusuma

#### In News

Odisha government has launched the 'Nirman Kusuma' programme.

#### About

- The Scheme will help the children of construction workers get trained in Industrial Training Institutes and polytechnics. A total of 1878 students will get benefit from the programme.
- The children of construction workers would get financial assistance for their education in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and polytechnics. While an ITI student will be entitled to get financial assistance of Rs 23,600, a diploma student to get Rs 26,300 per annum.
- While the construction workers' family was getting Rs one lakh as compensation, now they will get Rs two lakh.
- The State government has also doubled the compensation given in case of an accident of a construction worker from rupees two lakh to four lakh.

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#### Udyam Abhilasha

On the occasion of Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) launched a National Level Entrepreneurship Awareness Campaign, Udyam Abhilasha in 115 Aspirational Districts identified by NITI Aayog in 28 States. The campaign was ran to create and strengthen cadre of more than 800 trainers to provide entrepreneurship training to the aspiring youths across these districts thus encouraging them to enter the admired segment of entrepreneurs.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
CARA, JJ Act, Child Labour

### Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration

#### In News

The Ministry of Human Resource Development launched the web portal of the Scheme "Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)".

#### About Initiative

1. SPARC scheme aims at improving the research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in the world.
2. IIT Kharagpur is the National Coordinating Institute to implement the SPARC programme.
3. This scheme will improve research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions in NIRF **(including such Private Institutions which are recognized under 12(B) of UGC Act)** and the best institutions in the world in QS World University Ranking.
4. A set of 5 Thrust Areas (Fundamental Research, Emergent Areas of Impact, Convergence, Action-Oriented Research and Innovation-Driven) and sub-theme areas in each thrust area has been identified for collaboration under SPARC based on emergent relevance and importance for the nation.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
ASHE survey, NIRF, HEEFA

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#### Significance

This Scheme is expected to have a major impact in providing the best international expertise to address major national problems, expose Indian academicians to the best

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collaborators abroad, enable international faculty to stay in India for a longer duration, provide Indian students an opportunity to work in the world class laboratories, to develop strong bilateral relationships in research, and improve the international ranking of Indian Institutes.

### Samruddhi scheme

#### In News

Karnataka launches Samruddhi **scheme for aspiring SC/ST rural entrepreneurs.**

#### About

- The Social Welfare Department of Karnataka launched Samruddhi, a ₹800-crore entrepreneurship and skill development scheme, for economically and socially underprivileged youth of small towns.
- It aims to train youth from SC and ST communities in rural areas of Karnataka through private organisations in retail management and franchise opportunities.
- The government has also set up a seed grant of up to Rs 10 lakh to help the beneficiaries set up their own franchises or retail outlets. It hopes to create 10,000 SC/ST rural entrepreneurs over the next three years.
- The government hopes that this scheme will ultimately benefit aspiring, young citizens from rural and tier II cities and ensure sustainable and all-round development.

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### Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP)

#### In News

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses.

#### About Scheme

- PMBJP is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Govt. Of India, to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through special kendras known as Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra.
- PMBJK have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.
- Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI) is the implementing agency of PMBJP.

Generic medicines are unbranded medicines which are equally safe and having the same efficacy as that of branded medicines in terms of their therapeutic value. The prices of generic medicines are much cheaper than their branded equivalent.

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#### Mission

- Create awareness among the public regarding generic medicines.
- Create demand for generic medicines through medical practitioners.
- Create awareness through education and awareness program that high price need not be synonymous with high quality.
- Provide all the commonly used generic medicines covering all the therapeutic groups.
- Provide all the related health care products too under the scheme.

#### Way Ahead

The endeavor of BPPI is to make available at Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendras all the commonly used generic drugs covering all the therapeutic groups. In the

coming years, PMBJP scheme shall provide the complete spectrum of Health care products and services, starting from making available all the generic drugs covering all the therapeutic groups. Product basket is to contain 700 Drugs and 154 Surgical items by March 2018 and to include stents and replacements.

### IMPRESS Scheme

#### In News

Impactful Policy Research in Social Science (IMPRESS) aims to encourage social science research in policy relevant areas so as to provide vital inputs in policy-formulation, implementation and evaluation.

The IMPRESS is an initiative of the Ministry of **Human Resource Development, Government of India** and is being implemented by the Indian Council of Social Science Research. It would entail ₹414 crore funding of 1500 projects on policy themes in the social sciences at the cost of ₹20-25 lakh per project.

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#### Objectives

- To identify and fund research proposals in social sciences with maximum impact on the governance and society.
- To ensure selection of projects through a transparent, competitive process on online mode.
- To provide opportunity for social science researchers in any institution in the country, including all Universities (Central and State), private institutions with 12(B) status conferred by UGC.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

Indian Council of Social Science Research, UGC 12(b) status, Atal Innovation Mission, Perform Achieve Trade (PAT) scheme, Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan

#### Eligibility

- ❖ All Government funded institutions including Universities (central and state ), private institutions **with UGC 12(b) status and ICSSR Research Institutes are eligible to apply.**
- ❖ The Project Director should be a regular employee, possessing Ph.D. degree and have an interest in high quality research which may be evidenced by past studies, publications and academic background. In case the project has co-Director(s), they should have proven research interest.
- ❖ Retired faculties with proven research interests can also apply under the scheme but they would be required to get themselves affiliated to any of the research institutions mentioned in clause Point 1.
- ❖ Individual scholars can apply for maximum two projects at a time. However, in case both projects are selected, the applicant can choose only one project at level 3. Institutes having good research infrastructure and resources may apply for a number of proposals.

### India's first container movement on inland waterways

#### In News

Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) will transport container cargo belonging to the food and beverage giant PepsiCo (India) from Kolkata to Varanasi on river Ganga (National Waterway-1).

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#### About

- This would be the country's first container movement on inland vessel post-independence.
- The government is developing NW-1 (River Ganga) under JMVP from Haldia to Varanasi (1390 Km) with the technical and financial assistance of the World Bank at an estimated cost of Rs 5369 crore. The project would enable commercial navigation of vessels with capacity of 1500-2,000 DWT.
- **NW-1 States:** Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

NW-2, Signature bridge

- Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is the statutory authority in charge of the waterways in India.

### Asian Development Bank (ADB)

#### Why in News?

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$150 Million Loan to finance continued improvements to road connectivity and efficiency of the **International Trade Corridor in West Bengal and North-Eastern Region of India**.

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It is Tranche 2 of loan Agreement of \$500 million for South Asia Sub-regional Economic Cooperation Road Connectivity Investment Program.

#### Details

Approved in 2014, the Program aims to expand about 500 kilometers of roads in India's North Bengal and North-Eastern Region that will enable efficient and safe transport within India and regionally with other SASEC member countries.

The Tranche 2 Project will upgrade about 65 kilometers of Imphal-Moreh Section of National Highway in Manipur, construction of about 1.5 km of an international **bridge between India and Nepal**, and completion of about 103 km of a State Highway in Manipur between Imphal and Tamenglong under Project-I. The Project will reduce transaction costs along the targeted cross-border corridors substantially, creating economies of scale and commercial prosperity.

**South Asian Sub-Regional Economic Cooperation (SASEC) Road Connectivity Investment Program** aims at upgradation of road infrastructure in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and India (BBIN) in order to improve the regional connectivity among BBIN nations. The project corridor is also a part of the **Asian Highway No. 01 (AH01)** and acts as India's Gateway to the East. Thus trade, commerce and tourism in the region will get a boost.

#### Significance

- The Program is an important initiative in Regional Connectivity aimed at increasing domestic and regional trade through North Bengal-North East Region International Trade corridor by upgrading key roads. It will give a boost to India's efforts to promote regional connectivity in the South Asia.
- The new loan will help up-gradation of key national and state highways in Manipur and construct an important **international bridge for crucial last-mile connectivity** between in-country trunk road network and neighbouring countries.
- For fulfilling India's "Look East" Policy and to promote and enhance trade link with South East Asia, the Government of India has notified an **Integrated Custom Post (ICP) at Moreh**. The development of this project is essential in order to support the increased traffic volume due to coming up of ICP.
- Manipur being a landlocked state with almost 90% of the area under difficult terrain presently has only road transport as a means of mass transport system within the state. Hence development of the road infrastructure is of paramount importance to improve connectivity and progress of the State and to ensure that the administrative set up reaches the isolated and remote habitats.

#### PEPPER IT WITH

Karnataka State Highway Improvement III project, Lining project of Son Canal, Asian Development Outlook 2018

#### ADB

- The Asian Development Bank was conceived in the early 1960s as a financial institution that would be Asian in character and foster economic growth and cooperation in one of the poorest regions in the world. Manila (Philippines) was chosen to host the new institution, which opened in 1966.
- It envisions a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty in the region.
- From 31 members at its establishment, ADB has grown to encompass 67 members—of which 48 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.

## International Court of Justice

### Why in News?

The United Nations’ highest court ordered the United States to lift sanctions on Iran that affect imports of humanitarian goods and products and services linked to the safety of civil aviation. **The ruling by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) is legally binding**, but it remains to be seen if the administration of U.S. will comply.

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- While imposing the so-called “**provisional measures**,” court stressed that the ruling does not prejudice the ultimate outcome of the case or establish that the court has jurisdiction.
- U.S. moved to restore tough U.S. sanctions in May after withdrawing from Tehran’s nuclear accord with world powers. Iran challenged the sanctions in a case filed at the ICJ.
- In its decision, the court said that the U.S. sanctions “**have the potential to endanger civil aviation safety**” in Iran and that sanctions limiting sales of goods required for humanitarian needs such as food, medicines and medical devices “may have a serious detrimental impact on the health and lives of individuals on the territory of Iran.”

### Treaty of Amity

- ✓ Iran alleges that the sanctions breach a **1955 bilateral agreement known as the Treaty of Amity** that regulates and promotes economic and consular ties between the two countries.
- ✓ The treaty was signed when the U.S. and Iran were still allies following the 1953 revolution fomented by Britain and the U.S. that ultimately cemented the rule of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.
- ✓ Diplomatic relations were severed following the 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran and takeover of the U.S. Embassy and the ensuing hostage crisis. However, the treaty remains in force.

### ICJ

- The International Court of Justice is the **principal judicial organ of the United Nations**. It was established in 1945 by the Charter of the United Nations and began work in 1946.
- The seat of the Court is at the **Peace Palace in The Hague** (Netherlands). Of the six principal organs of the United Nations, **it is the only one not located in New York** (United States of America).
- The Court’s role is to settle, in accordance with international law, legal disputes submitted to it by States and to give advisory opinions on legal questions referred to it by authorized United Nations organs and specialized agencies.
- The Court is composed of 15 judges, who are elected for terms of office of nine years by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. It is assisted by a Registry, its administrative organ. Its official languages are English and French.

### PEPPER IT WITH

Permanent Court of Arbitration, Dalveer Bhandari, ICC, IRAN Action group, Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action

## Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy

### In News

21 countries in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) adopted the **Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy** in the Indian Ocean Region, post the 2nd IORA Renewable Energy Ministerial Meeting **held at the 2nd Global Re-Invest India-ISA Partnership Renewable Energy Investor’s Meet & Expo** in Greater Noida.

The Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy in the Indian Ocean Region calls for collaboration among IORA member states in meeting the growing demand for renewable energy in the Indian Ocean littorals, development of a common renewable energy agenda for the Indian Ocean region and promote regional capacity building.

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**Highlights**

- The declaration also calls for promotion of technology development and transfer, strengthening of public private partnerships in renewable energy and collaboration among IORA member states and the member nations of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). IORA member countries also resolved to collaborate with the IRENA.
- As per the declaration adopted, **IORA member nations will collaborate with the ISA member nations** to exchange knowledge and share views and potential interests in the renewable energy sector; paved by the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between IORA and ISA on 3 October 2018, with a focus on joint capacity-building programs, research & development activities in solar energy and exchange of best practices.
- Additionally, IORA member nations and IRENA will undertake the expansion of the **Global Renewable Energy Atlas**, the world’s largest-ever joint renewable resource data project, coordinated by IRENA, thereby creating the Indian Ocean region's first and most comprehensive map and database which can then be used to tap the sizable renewable energy potential of the region; and to collaborate on opportunities available under the International Renewable Energy Learning Platform (IRELP).

The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) is an **intergovernmental organisation** that supports countries in their transition to a sustainable energy future, and serves as the principal platform for international cooperation, a centre of excellence, and a repository of policy, technology, resource and financial knowledge on renewable energy. The agency is headquartered in Abu Dhabi. IRENA is an official United Nations observer.

development activities in solar energy and

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Global wind summit, National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy, Global Wind Power Installed Capacity Index, CCEA

**IORA**

The Indian Ocean Rim Association was set up with the objective of strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean Region with 21 Member States and 7 Dialogue Partners.

India, Australia, Iran IR, Indonesia Thailand, Malaysia, South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Singapore, Mauritius, Madagascar, UAE, Yemen, Seychelles, Somalia, Comoros and Oman are members of IORA.

**U.S.-Mexico-Canada pact**

**Why in News?**

Negotiators from Canada and the United States went down to the wire but were able to reach an agreement on a new free trade pact that will include Mexico.

The **United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) updates and replaces the nearly 25-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA)**, which U.S. had labeled a disaster and promised to cancel.

**Some of the key changes in the deal:**

- **Review clause:** The USMCA includes a **16-year expiration date** and a provision that requires a review of the deal every six years, when it can be extended.
- **Dispute settlement:** NAFTA’s dispute-settlement system, which allows member countries to bring grievances against other members over allegations of unfair trading practices, will remain the same, a key win for the Canadians. The investor-state dispute-settlement system, which allows investors to bring grievances against member-country governments, will be phased out for the US and Canada, while certain industries such as energy will be able to bring cases against Mexico.
- **Dairy access:** The US will be able to export the equivalent of 3.6% of Canada’s dairy market, up from the existing level of about 1%. This is slightly above the 3.25% market

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access Canada would have given the US as part of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which Trump pulled the US out of last year. In addition, Canada will get rid of the **“Class 7” pricing system that was seen as disadvantaging US farmers.**

- **Auto rules:** Members must produce 75% of a car for it to pass through the countries duty-free, up from 62.5%. Additionally, 40% of each car must be produced by workers making \$US16 an hour or more to avoid duties.
- **Commitment to not mess with currency levels:** While the US, Mexico, and Canada do not actively intervene to strengthen or weaken their currencies, the pact to **“achieve and maintain a market-determined exchange rate regime”** could be a model for future agreements with countries that are more active in currency markets.
- **Increased protections for intellectual property:** The deal increases the copyright period in Canada to 70 years after the creator’s death, up from 50 years, bringing the country in line with the US. Additionally, exclusivity for biologic drugs before generics can be produced will be increased to 10 years in Canada from eight years, a win for the pharma industry.
- **Increase in the de minimis levels:** The de minimis level is the amount of a good a person can take across the border without being hit with duties.
- **Trade Unions:** USMCA also has provisions for strengthening trade unions. This may inconvenience Mexico.
- **Steel and Aluminium:** Despite the new pact, US duties on steel and aluminium, levied on ‘national security’ grounds, remain on Canada and Mexico.

**Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism**

The CCIT was proposed by India in 1996. **It provides a legal framework which makes it binding on all signatories to deny funds and safe havens to terrorist groups.**

**Major objectives:**

- To have a **universal definition of terrorism** that all 193-members of the UNGA will adopt into their own criminal law
- To ban all terror groups and shut down terror camps
- To prosecute all terrorists under special laws
- To **make cross-border terrorism an extraditable offence worldwide.**

Despite India’s efforts to push a global intergovernmental convention to tackle terrorism, the conclusion and ratification of the CCIT remains deadlocked, mainly due to opposition from three main blocs – **the US, the Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), and the Latin American countries.**

All three have objections over the **“definition of terrorism”** (the most divisive of the issues) and seek exclusions to safeguard their strategic interests. For example, the OIC wants exclusion of national liberation movements, especially in the context of Israel-Palestinian conflict. The US wanted the draft to exclude acts committed by military forces of states during peacetime.

**Analysis**

- Not all the amendments, however, are congenial to the prospects of free trade. Many are simply hard compromises that Canada and Mexico may have made just to defuse trade tensions with the U.S.
- The new labour regulations and rules of origin **will add to the cost of production of goods** such as cars, thus making them uncompetitive in the global market. The USMCA mandates a minimum wage that is above the market wage on labour employed in Mexico, yet another move that will make North America a tough place to do business.
- **Foreign investors may now have fewer protections** from unfriendly local laws as the accord does away with resolutions through multilateral dispute panels for certain sectors. But it is its potential to end up as a double-edged sword for the U.S.’s major

**FEC 2018**

The 27th Fusion Energy Conference (FEC 2018) was held in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. It was organised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and hosted by Department of Atomic Energy and Gandhinagar-based Institute of Plasma Research.

trading partners that Indian policymakers may find instructive.

**Effects on India**

- India has long opposed the introduction of labour and environmental standards in trade negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Alas, these are prominent in USMCA, and show the direction in which the US will push India.
- India is much poorer than Mexico and can plead against the imposition of a **minimum wage of \$16 an hour on Indian factories exporting to the US**. But India must prepare for a day when the US demands for some minimum wage stipulations. That can only make Indian exports even less competitive than they are today.
- The US has complained bitterly about high Indian protection for dairy products. It has threatened to abolish preferential tariffs it gives India under the **Generalised Scheme of Preferences (GSP)**, unless India lowers its import barriers on US dairy products. India's main barrier is religion-related. It argues that US dairy farmers feed animal products to their cows, that milk produced in this manner offends Indian religious sensibilities, and so must not be imported.
- India is currently negotiating to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a free-trade agreement. The naysayers can now cite USMCA provisions as reason to avoid RCEP. Membership of a free-trade pact that includes China may leave India exposed to adverse action by the US.
- WTO rules give members like India the right to make their own rules on price control and compulsory licensing of drugs. Trump has strengthened rules for intellectual property rights (IPR) in USMCA, to improve the profitability of his drug and entertainment industries. This suggests that he may demand tighter IPR requirements from India too. US producers have complained bitterly about India's price control on medical stents.
- USMCA provides for renegotiation (and possible scrapping) every six years. This will create much uncertainty among investors, who invest on a much longer-term horizon. India stands warned that any deals it makes with the US will have a limited life. It will periodically be pressed to give up the special and differential treatment it enjoys under WTO rules.
- Announcing the USMCA, U.S. signalled he would now extend his **'all or nothing' approach to resetting trade ties with the European Union, China, Japan and India**. **Terming India "the tariff king"**, U.S. said it had sought to start negotiations immediately, a move it reckoned as a bow to the power of tariffs that a protectionist U.S. could wield. In dealing with an emboldened administration, India's trade negotiators will now have their task cut out if they want to protect exporters' access to one of the country's largest markets for its services and merchandise.

**14th Amendment to the United States Constitution**  
 14th Amendment to the United States Constitution plays a critical role in supporting some of our closest-held notions of American freedom and equality. **It states that American citizenship is a birthright for all people who are born on American soil** -- something that U.S President has announced he wants to end. If ended, it will unravel 150 years of American law and, it would loosen a significant cornerstone of the Constitution's interpretation of American identity.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 NAFTA, RCEP, TPP, ASEAN, Economic Union, Customs Union, Common Market,

**Global hunger index**

**Why in News?**

The 2018 Global Hunger Index report was released recently. It is designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger globally and by country and region.

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### About GHI

The GHI, now in its 12th year, **ranks countries based on four key indicators** — undernourishment, child mortality, child wasting and child stunting. **The report ranked 119 countries in the developing world**, nearly half of which have ‘extremely alarming,’ ‘alarming’ or ‘serious’ hunger levels.

**Calculated each year by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)**, the GHI highlights successes and failures in hunger reduction and provides insights into the drivers of hunger. By raising awareness and understanding of regional and country differences in hunger, the GHI aims to trigger actions to reduce hunger.

In Malaysia, the cabinet decided to abolish the death penalty. The government decided to scrap capital punishment following strong domestic opposition to the practice.

**Capital punishment in Malaysia is currently mandatory** for murder, kidnapping, possession of firearms and drug trafficking, among other crimes.

### India

- India has a **“serious” hunger problem and ranks 100th out of 119 countries** on the GHI, behind North Korea, Bangladesh and Iraq but ahead of Pakistan. India stood at 97th position in last year’s rankings.
- India has the third highest score in all of Asia — only Afghanistan and Pakistan are ranked worse. As per the report, India ranks below many of its neighbouring countries such as China (29th rank), Nepal (72), Myanmar (77), Sri Lank (84) and Bangladesh (88). The country’s serious hunger level is driven by high child malnutrition and underlines need for stronger commitment to the social sector.
- India’s 2017 GHI (Global Hunger Index) score is at the high end of the ‘serious’ category, and is one of the main factors pushing South Asia to the category of worst performing region on the GHI this year, followed closely by Africa South of the Sahara.
- IFPRI pointed out that **more than one-fifth of Indian children under five weigh too little for their height** and over a third are too short for their age.
- Even with the massive scale up of national nutrition-focused programmes in India, drought and structural deficiencies have left large number of poor in India at risk of malnourishment in 2017. However, the on-going efforts are expected to make significant changes in improving the existing situation.
- India has developed and launched an action plan on **‘undernourishment free India’ by 2022**. The plan shows stronger commitment and greater investments in tackling malnutrition in the coming years. The step is appreciated by IFRI.
- Only three other countries in this year’s GHI — Djibouti, Sri Lanka and South Sudan — show child wasting above 20%. **India’s child wasting rate has not shown any substantial improvement over the past 25 years.**
- India has made considerable improvement in reducing its child stunting rate, down 29% since 2000, but even that progress leaves India with a relatively high stunting rate of 38.4.

#### GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT 2018

- ✓ **11th Global Agriculture Leadership Summit & Awards** was organised by Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) with Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare; Ministry of Food Processing Industries and Ministry of Commerce.
- ✓ The Summit aims to provide the platform towards facilitating farmers connect with the technologies, markets, industry, institutions and the Governmental programs.
- ✓ On this occasion, ICFA and Agriculture released the **Agriculture Year Book 2018** for an exhaustive appraisal of activities in food and agriculture round the year.
- ✓ For its innovation and technological advancement in farming, the **Gujarat state received ‘Best Agriculture Award’** by ICFA at Summit.

### Way Forward

The report notes that in South Asia, maternal BMI (Body Mass Index) and access to improved water and sanitation are more closely associated with rates of child wasting than household wealth, suggesting that **a reduction in poverty alone may not be sufficient to correct the problem. Factors that could reduce child stunting in South Asia include increased consumption of non-staple foods**, access to sanitation, women’s education, access to safe water, gender equality, and national food availability.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Technical Cooperation Report, Nuclear Technology Review, Global Financial Stability, World Economic Outlook, Global Innovation Index, World Energy Outlook (WEO), World Oil Outlook

Globally, the level of hunger still falls into the “serious” category, despite improvement over the last two decades. The Index projects that at the current rate of progress, **50 countries will fail to reach the “low” hunger category by 2030**. This puts the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 2, which aims to end hunger by 2030, in jeopardy.

### Human capital index

#### In News

The World Bank released Human Capital Index (HCI) **as part of the World Development Report 2019**. The HCI has been constructed for 157 countries.

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#### About HCI

**It claims to seek to measure the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18.** The HCI index values are contended to convey the productivity of the next generation of workers, compared to a benchmark of complete standard education and full health.

Broader theme of the World Development Report (WDR) this year is **“The Changing Nature of Work”**. As part of this report, the World Bank has launched a Human Capital Project (HCP). The HCP programme is claimed to be a program of advocacy, measurement, and analytical work to raise awareness and increase demand for interventions to build human capital.

#### The HCI has three components:

- Survival, as measured by under-5 mortality rates
- Expected years of Quality-Adjusted School which combines information on the quantity and quality of education
- Health environment using two proxies of (a) adult survival rates and (b) the rate of stunting for children under age 5.

**There are three components of HCP-** a cross-country human capital measurement metric called the Human Capital Index (HCI), a programme of measurement and research to inform policy action, and a programme of support for country strategies to accelerate investment in human capital.

The HCI measures the Index outcomes for each country as a fraction of maximum value of 1. As expected the advanced economies such as North America and Europe mostly have HCI value of above 0.75, while South Asia and Sub Saharan Africa have the lowest HCI among the regions. The HCI for India has been estimated at 0.44. **The quality adjusted**

**UNDP constructs Human Development Index (HDI) for several years.** The HCI uses survival rates and stunting rate instead of life expectancy as measure of health, and quality-adjusted learning instead of merely years of schooling as measure of education. HCI also excludes per capita income whereas the HDI uses it. **Two significant changes from HDI are exclusion of income component and introduction of quality adjustment in learning.** Exclusion of income element and introduction of quality adjustment makes HCI far less representative of Human Capital Development than the Index claims it to be.

learning has been measured in case of India by using the data as old as 2009.

**Key observations regarding HCI for India**

- **Human Capital Index:** A child born in India today will be only 44 per cent as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health.
- **Probability of Survival to Age 5:** 96 out of 100 children born in India survive to age 5.
- **Expected Years of School:** In India, a child who starts school at age 4 can expect to complete 10.2 years of school by her 18th birthday.
- **Harmonized Test Scores:** Students in India score 355 on a scale where 625 represents advanced attainment and 300 represents minimum attainment.
- **Learning-adjusted Years of School:** Factoring in what children actually learn, expected years of school is only 5.8 years.
- **Adult Survival Rate:** Across India, 83 per cent of 15-year olds will survive until age 60.
- **Healthy Growth (Not Stunted Rate):** 62 out of 100 children are not stunted. 38 out of 100 children are stunted, and so at risk of cognitive and physical limitations that can last a lifetime.
- **Gender Differences:** In India, HCI for girls is marginally higher than for boys.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 World Happiness Report, Global Corruption Report, Global Information Technology Report, Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report, Global Competitiveness Report (GCR)

**India rejected HCI**

- The government has raised “serious reservations” over the first Human Capital Index (HCI) compiled by the World Bank as part of the World Development Report 2019.
- India is ranked at 115 position in the index with its score of 0.44 on a scale of 0 to 1 coming even below the average score for South Asia. In a strongly worded statement the finance ministry has questioned HCI that ranked Singapore on top with a score of 0.88.
- The government has rejected the findings, saying it does not reflect the key initiatives that are being taken for developing human capital in the country, such as Samagra Shiksha, Ayushman Bharat Programme, Swachh Bharat Mission, Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jandhan Yojana and the Aadhaar identification system-enabled direct cash transfer, that have improved governance and social protection.
- The qualitative aspects of improved governance that have a strong correlation with human capital development cannot be and have not been captured by the way the HCI has been constructed. The Government of India, therefore, has decided to ignore the HCI.

**S-400 missile systems from Russia**

**In News**

India signed the much-anticipated deal worth \$5.43-billion to buy five Russian S-400 Triumf missile shield systems at the **19th India-Russia annual bilateral summit**. Though the United States has warned any such agreement between India and Russia could attract sanctions under the US law, the Indian government has still decided to go ahead with the deal.

Neighbouring China had also bought many combat missiles, including S-400 Triumf, from Russia this year. Apart from the S-400 missile deal, India and Russia also signed an agreement on space cooperation. An Indian monitoring station will be built near the Russian city of Novosibirsk in Siberia.

**Significance**

The Triumf missile deal with Russia will give India's military a much-needed boost, which would act as a deterrent against China's growing presence in the region and a superior edge over Pakistan. **The S-400 Triumf missiles are extremely efficient to track and hunt down combat aircraft, even stealth planes, at unprecedented ranges.**

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**CAATSA**

- United States has warned countries trading with Russia's defence and intelligence sectors they would face automatic sanctions under a sweeping legislation called Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) that Donald Trump signed into law last August. **The law is designed to punish Russia for the 2014 annexation of Crimea from Ukraine**, "involvement" in the Syrian civil war and alleged "meddling" in the 2016 US presidential election.
- But Defence Ministry of India has stated that, negotiation on S-400 air defence systems has been on for a long while and it is at a stage where it can be finalised.
- Though Russia was the major supplier (around 80 per cent) of arms and ammunition to India during the Cold War, greater ties with the US shifted the focus towards the West. Now India has imported around \$15 billion of arms from the US in the past 10 years. However, the improving ties between India and Russia could hit its relation with the US.

External Affairs Ministry launched '**India for Humanity**' initiative to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. With its focus on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of compassion, caring and service to humanity, **the initiative will feature a year-long series of artificial limb fitment camps in a number of countries spanning** the globe, for which the MEA is collaborating with the renowned charitable organisation -- "Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti" (BMVSS).

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
INS Vikramditya, INDRA, Brahmos missiles, National Crisis Response Centre, Free port of Vladivostok

**UN Conference on Disarmament**

**Why in News?**

**Pankaj Sharma has been appointed as the ambassador** and India's permanent representative to the United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

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**United Nations Conference on Disarmament**

- The Conference on Disarmament (CD), **was recognized by the first Special Session on Disarmament of the United Nations General Assembly (SSOD-I) (1978)** as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community.
- The current Director-General of UNOG is the Secretary-General of the Conference on Disarmament as well as the Personal Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the CD. It reports to the General Assembly annually, or more frequently, as appropriate.
- The terms of reference of the CD include practically all multilateral arms control and disarmament problems.
- **Currently the CD primarily focuses its attention on the following issues:** cessation of the nuclear arms race and nuclear disarmament; prevention of nuclear war, including all related matters; prevention of an arms race in outer space; effective international arrangements to assure non-nuclear-weapon States against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons; new types of weapons of mass destruction and new systems of such weapons including radiological weapons; comprehensive programme of disarmament and transparency in armaments.

**Migingoo Island**  
Migingoo Island on Lake Victoria is a fishing hub teeming with Nile perch, a profitable export to the European Union. Ownership of the island has overlapped, as well, causing a dispute between Kenya and Uganda over who owns the valuable fishing waters.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, CTBT, UNGA Disarmament Committee, IAEA, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre

## World Conference on Access to Medical Products

### In News

To enable a holistic view on access to medical products, the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India **with the support of World Health Organization organized the ‘2nd World Conference on Access to Medical Products - Achieving the SDGs 2030’ at New Delhi.**

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### Details

The specific objectives are to promote an enabling ecosystem in the context of **WHO’s 13th Global Programme of Work for access to medical products**; foster new approaches in innovation landscape for medical products and health technologies for accelerating research and innovation; and identify knowledge, information and policy options on the interface of international trade and health to achieve SDG 2030 goals.

The ‘1st World Conference on Access to Medical Products and International Laws for Trade and Health in the Context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’ was organized in 2017 by MoHFW, Government of India.

### Significance

Reliable access to effective, safe, quality-assured and affordable medical products (medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, devices) is key to progressing towards Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and the SDGs. UHC includes appropriate access to affordable and quality-assured medical products supporting countries in achieving the targets of the health SDGs. India’s contribution towards access to medical products worldwide is well recognized.

### SEARN

On the occasion, Information Sharing Platform Gateway for South-East Asia Regulatory Network (SEARN) developed by Centre for Development of Advanced Computing was launched. **It will promote regulatory and health collaboration among the countries of the South-East Asia Region.** India is actively contributing and providing support for the South-East Asia Regulatory Network (SEARN) to guarantee access to high-quality medical products.

The South East Asia Research Network (SEARN), based at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, is a platform to facilitate research collaboration. It provides a forum to support the communication and dissemination of research findings, highlight research areas and a network connecting people in LSHTM and collaborators outside with an interest in South East Asia. SEARN includes all ASEAN countries: Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei, Singapore, Timor-Leste (East Timor) and the Philippines.

**World's longest sea crossing: Hong Kong-Zhuhai bridge opens**  
 Chinese President Xi Jinping has officially opened the **world's longest sea crossing bridge, nine years after construction first began.** Including its access roads, the bridge spans 55km (34 miles) and connects Hong Kong to Macau and the mainland Chinese city of Zhuhai.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 e-Pharmacy, PETA, Indian Pharmacopoeia Commission, NPPA, Essential Medicines

## United Nations Human Rights Council

### Why in News?

India was elected to the United Nations' top human rights body for a period of **three years beginning January 1, 2019 in the Asia-Pacific category.** Along with India, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Fiji and Philippines had also staked a claim in the same regional group.

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UN General Assembly held elections for new members to the UN Human Rights Council. The 18 new members were elected by absolute majority through a secret ballot. Countries needed a minimum of 97 votes to get elected to the Council.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Universal declaration on Human Rights, National Human Rights Commission, ICC, Paris Principles

**Background**

India had previously been elected to the Council for the 2011-2014 and 2014-2017 term. Its last tenure had ended on December 31, 2017 and in accordance with the rules, **it was not eligible for immediate re-election since it had already served two consecutive terms.**

**About UNHRC**

- **Created by the Assembly in March 2006** as the principal United Nations body dealing with human rights, the Human Rights Council comprises 47 elected Member States. **The Human Rights Council replaced the former United Nations Commission on Human Rights.**
- On the basis of equitable geographical distribution, **Council seats are allocated to the five regional groups as follows:** African States, 13 seats; Asia-Pacific States, 13 seats; Eastern European States, 6 seats; Latin American and Caribbean States, 8 seats; and Western European and other States, 7 seats.
- The Council is an **inter-governmental body within the United Nations system** responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them.
- It has the ability to discuss all thematic human rights issues and situations that require its attention throughout the year. It meets at the UN Office at Geneva.

**12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit**

**In News**

Vice President of India, led the Indian delegation to attend the 12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit in Brussels, Belgium. **The bi-annual event is considered the highest platform for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe in the areas of trade, investment, security and tourism.**

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The theme of this years' ASEM Summit was "**Global Partners for Global Challenges**". The 2018 Summit, hosted by the European Union was chaired by the President of the European Council. ASEM Agenda for 2018 prioritized issues related to connectivity, trade and investment, sustainable development, climate change terrorism, migration, maritime security and cyberspace.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 SAARC, SACEP, SCO, African Development Bank (AfDB), Asian Development Bank

**ASEM**

- It is a platform for the countries in Asia and Europe to exchange views on regional and global issues and strengthen cooperation on a wide range of areas emanating from its three pillars – political and security, economic and financial and socio-cultural.
- The ASEM grouping comprises of 51 member-countries and 2 regional organizations – **European Union and ASEAN**. Countries in the grouping represent 55% of global trade, 60% global population, 65% of global GDP and 75% of global tourism.

**Sittwe Port**

**Why in News?**

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India and Myanmar signed an important MoU for the appointment of a **private Port Operator for the Operation and Maintenance of Sittwe Port**, Paletwa Inland Water Terminal and associated facilities included in the Kaladan Multi Model Transit Transport Project in implementation of India’s Act East Policy.

**World's highest railway line**  
Indian railways plans to connect New Delhi with Ladakh region through the world's highest railway line that will run along the India-China border. The national transporter plans to build a strategically-important Bilaspur-Manali- Leh line along the Indo-China border. The rail line will have a highest road point of 5,360 metres above mean sea level that is comparable only to the Qinghai-Tibet Railway Line in China, which is at a height of around 2,000 metres.

Following this MoU the process of identifying bidders to maintain these facilities will be initiated by floating an RFP. Subsequent to the commencement of operations at this port, it would offer new infrastructure for trade including between India and Myanmar, thereby contributing to job creation and development in the whole region, particularly in the Rakhine and Chin States of Myanmar.

**Sittwe port**

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) is helping to develop Sittwe Port, **located at the estuary of Kaladan river in the troubled Rakhine province of Myanmar**, for improving connectivity with Mizoram in the North East.
- The Sittwe project is crucial as Mizoram often faces shortage of supplies due to highway blockages (**chicken's neck**) for days altogether, which also results in rationing of petrol and diesel at the fuel stations.
- Strategically, Sittwe Port is around 500 km by road from the Kyaukphyu Port and Special Economic Zone set up by China in Myanmar and even closer by sea route.

August 8 marks the 30th anniversary of the people’s uprising in Myanmar. **The ‘8888’ uprising (or the eighth day of August 1988)** is one of Myanmar’s most important historic days in the context of the pro-democracy movement.

**Kaladan Multi Model Transit Transport Project**

The Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project was jointly identified by the India and Myanmar **to create a multi-modal mode of transport for shipment of cargo from the eastern ports of India to Myanmar** as well as to the North-Eastern part of India through Myanmar.

This project, which will connect Sittwe Port in Myanmar to the India-Myanmar border, is expected to contribute to the economic development of the North-Eastern States of India, by opening up the sea route for the products. **It also provides a strategic link to the North-East, thereby reducing pressure on the Siliguri Corridor.** In the absence of an alternate route, the development of this project not only serves the economic, commercial and strategic interests of India, but also contributes to the development of Myanmar, and its economic integration with India.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Paletwa Inland Water Terminal and associated facilities, India’s Act East Policy, Indian Ports Global Ltd

**Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty**

**Why in News?**

U.S President revealed that United States intends to withdraw from a 31-year-old nuclear weapons agreement with Russia, delivering a severe blow to the arms control regime that helped preserve peace since the Cold War.

**Background**

U.S. intelligence first recognized Moscow’s potential violation of the agreement several years ago when the missile, the **Novator 9M729**, was still in its test phase. The Trump Administration, directly confronted the violation by funding development of its own missile. Russia, for its part, has repeatedly denied it ever violated the INF. The Kremlin has instead

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insisted that the U.S. is the one that's in defiance of the agreement, saying certain interceptors on American missile defense systems have offensive capabilities.

**Concerns**

Arms control experts worry about the second- and third-order consequences of tearing up a long-standing nuclear treaty. U.S. has nothing to gain by walking away. The real risk will be borne by European allies. This removes all constraints on the production and fielding of Russia's illegal missile, thereby increasing the threat to allies in range of the missiles

**INF treaty**

The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, **first signed by President Ronald Reagan and Soviet Union leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1987, was the first and only nuclear arms control agreement that ever eliminated an entire class of nuclear weapons.** The treaty forced the superpowers to scrap more than 2,600 missiles with ranges 310 to 3,420 miles — weapons considered destabilizing to the European continent because of their capability to launch a nuclear strike from anywhere without early warning. The research is allowed under the INF, and only breaches the deal if that missile is ever tested or deployed.

**Seoul Peace Prize**

The Seoul Peace Prize Committee has decided to confer the **2018 Seoul Peace Prize on Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi**, in recognition of his dedication to improving international cooperation, raising global economic growth, accelerating the Human Development of the people of India by fostering economic growth in the world's fastest growing large economy and furthering the development of democracy through anti-corruption and social integration efforts.

The Seoul Peace Prize has been **awarded biennially** to those individuals who have made their mark through contributions to the harmony of mankind, reconciliation between nations and to world peace.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
NSG, Convention on Nuclear Safety, Rarotonga Treaty, NPT, PTBT

**Chabahar port**

**In News**

India, Afghanistan and Iran held their **first trilateral meeting on Chabahar port project during which they reviewed its implementation.** The meeting assumes significance as the strategically-located port on the energy-rich Iran's southern coast was coming under the ambit of US sanctions on Tehran.

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**Details of the meeting**

- Detailed discussions were held between the three sides on full operationalisation of the trilateral Agreement for international transit and transport through Chabahar port.
- The meeting decided to **constitute a follow-up committee** that would hold its first meeting within two months in Chabahar port. The committee would discuss and aim to finalise protocol to harmonise transit, roads, customs and consular matters for making the route attractive and decrease logistic costs.
- It was decided to hold the **next meeting of the coordination council in the first half of 2019 in India.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
International North-South Transport Corridor, Gwadar port, CPEC, B&R initiative

**Chabahar port**

- The port of Chabahar is located in **southeastern Iran in the Gulf of Oman.** It is the only Iranian port with direct access to the ocean.
- The port will make way for India to bypass Pakistan in transporting goods to Afghanistan using a sea-land route. At present, Pakistan does not allow India to



transport through its territory to Afghanistan.

- This will also give momentum to the International North-South Transport Corridor of which both are initial signatories along with Russia. Iran is the key gateway in this project.
- It would counter Chinese presence in the Arabian sea through the support to Pakistan in developing Gwadar port. It can be used to station security vessels for merchant ships off the African coast apart from giving the country a foothold in the western Arabian Sea, which is important as many of its energy imports pass through the route.

### Cooperation in the social and labour sphere - BRICS

#### why in News?

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval for the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) among Brazil, Russian Federation, India, China, South Africa, regarding Cooperation in the Social and Labour Sphere. The MoU was signed during **BRICS Labour and Employment Ministers (LEM) Meeting**.

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#### Particulars of the MoU

- In the MoU, the parties including India have agreed to cooperate and hold mutual events in the prominent areas viz. labour legislation and enforcement, protection of workers' rights with focus on vulnerable groups, Employment and labour market policies, Professional education, skills and training and Social protection.
- The member countries may utilize the BRICS Network of Labour Research Institutes and BRICS Social Security Cooperation Framework for cooperation on Social Security and other labour issues.
- **The Memorandum is not an International Treaty and does not create rights and obligations for the parties governed by international law.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 BRICS film festival, Regional aviation partnership, Interbank local currency credit line agreement, BRICS rating agency

#### Significance

- The MoU provides a mechanism for cooperation, collaboration and maximum synergy amongst BRICS member countries with the **common objective of inclusive growth and shared prosperity in the new industrial revolution**. This would facilitate member countries to share knowledge and also implement joint programmes on .matter of Labour and Employment, Social Security and Social dialogue.
- This would also ensure networking of international Training Centre of International Labour Organisation (ILO) with the BRICS Network of Labour Institutes which includes V.V. Giri National Labour Institute of India. This network would specifically focus on the theme of youth employment and research on new forms of employment.
- The BRICS Social Security cooperation framework will deepen social security cooperation among BRICS nations and would facilitate cooperation for improvement of social security systems and social security agreements among member countries.

### National Monitoring Framework on Sustainable Development Goals

#### In News

The Union Cabinet has approved the constitution of a **High Level Steering Committee for periodically reviewing and refining the National Indicator Framework (NIF)** for monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with associated targets.

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The High Level Steering Committee will be chaired by Chief Statistician of India and Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), with the Secretaries of data source Ministries and NITI Aayogas members and Secretaries of other related Ministries as special invitees, **with function of reviewing of National Indicator**

**Framework including refinement of the indicators from time to time.**

**Targets**

- Measures to mainstream SDGs into on-going national policies, programmes and strategic action plans to address the developmental challenges.
- Statistical indicators of NIF will be the backbone of monitoring of SDGs at the national and state level and will scientifically measure the outcomes of the policies to achieve the targets under different SDGs.
- Based on statistical indicator, the MoSPI will **bring out national reports on implementation of SDGs**. The Report will facilitate assessment of progress, identify challenges and give recommendations for follow up at the national level.
- High Level Steering Committee will review the National Indicator Framework on regular basis for its improvement.
- Data source Ministries / Departments will be responsible for providing regular information to MoSPI on these indicators at required intervals and disaggregation for national and sub-national reporting of SDGs.

**UN Human Rights Prize**

- ✓ Pakistan's iconic human rights activist and lawyer **Asma Jahangir** was posthumously awarded the 2018 UN Human Rights Prize. She was one of the four winners of the award which was announced by the United Nations.
- ✓ Jahangir, was known for her outspoken nature and unrelenting pursuit of human rights as well as for remaining undaunted in the face of extreme pressure and opposition.
- ✓ The "**United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights**" is an honorary award given for outstanding achievement in human rights.

**Significance**

- SDGs integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. It intends eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world with **basic motto of 'Sabka Saath Sabka Vikash'**.
- NIF will help in outcome-based monitoring & reporting on progress on SDGs at National level.
- SDGs are expected to bring change in the lives of people and the monitoring of progress of implementation of SDGs will benefit the entire nation.

**INDIA MOBILE CONGRESS 2018**

- ✓ After debuting successfully in 2017, India is going to host its **second India Mobile Congress (IMC)** at the national capital.
- ✓ The India Mobile Congress 2018, hosted by the **Department of telecommunications and the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI)**, is an excellent platform for policy makers, industry and regulators to engage in meaningful deliberations to drive the future direction of this important sector.
- ✓ India Mobile Congress platform will be instrumental in driving this, by bringing together all stakeholders in the Telecommunications and IT ecosystem and providing the right forum for deliberations on the way forward in connectivity solutions.

**Background**

At the Millennium Summit held in 2000 at the UN Headquarters in New York, **eight development goals known as the 'Millennium Development Goals'** (MDGs) were adopted, which formed the blueprint for countries to pursue their national development strategies from **2000 to 2015**. The MDGs targets were unevenly achieved across the countries and a need was felt to start fresh discussions to assess the usefulness of the MDGs and to explore possible successor to guide development cooperation in the world beyond 2015.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

FAO, Indian Green Building Council, pt. deen dayal upadhyay vigyan gram sankul pariyojana, BRICS-ARP

The UN General Assembly in its **70th Session considered and adopted the Sustainable**

**Development Goals (SDGs) for the next 15 years.** The 17 SDGs came into force with effect from 1st January, 2016. Though not legally binding, the SDGs have become de facto international obligations and have potential to reorient domestic spending priorities of the countries during the next fifteen years.

**Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management Award**

**Why in News?**

India has won the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management Award, 2018. CAPAM has been announcing its International Innovations Awards (IIA) Programme bi-annually, since 1998.

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The initiative entitled **Unnayan Banka- Reinventing Education Using Technology of Banka District**, State of Bihar has been awarded under the Category “Innovation Incubation”.

- “Unnayan Banka” is an initiative which envisages **“Quality education for all’ especially for those at the bottom of the Pyramid**, using latest technologies. It’s a holistic model of overall development of youths from Education to Employability.
- Another initiative entitled **“Unified**

The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions is an **institutional member of Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM)**.

**Agriculture Markets” of Co-operation Department of Government of Karnataka** has also been selected under the Category **‘Innovation in Public Service Management’**. This initiative has also been awarded the overall Gold Award for CAPAM Awards, 2018.

**CAPAM**

- ❖ CAPAM which is a **non-profit association representing an international network** of over 1100 senior public servants, Heads of Government, leading academics and researchers located in over 50 different countries across the Commonwealth.
- ❖ The association is guided by international leaders who believe in the value of networking, knowledge exchange and the promotion of good governance for the betterment of citizens in the Commonwealth countries.
- ❖ The CAPAM Awards celebrate the spirit of innovation in the public service by recognizing organizations **that have made significant contributions to improve governance and services in the public sector.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Commonwealth Association, ASEAN, G20, QUADRILATERAL Meeting, Wassenaar Agreement, MTCR, Australian Group

**International Air Transport Association (IATA)**

**Why in News?**

India will be the third largest aviation market globally a year sooner than was earlier predicted. It is now expected to be among the top three countries by 2024 from its current seventh position, according to global aviation body IATA.

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**Highlights**

- In its latest 20-year forecast for the aviation industry, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) says that air passenger numbers worldwide could double to 8.2 billion in 2037.
- The biggest contribution in this growth will come from the Asia-Pacific region, which will account for half the total number of new passengers over the next 20 years.
- While China will climb up one spot to displace US as the world’s largest aviation market in the mid-2020s, India will take the third place by surpassing the U.K. around 2024.
- By 2037, India is expected to add 414 million passengers to its existing 572 million passengers.
- In fact, the Asia-Pacific region is expected to see the fastest growth at the rate of 4.8%, followed by Africa (4.6%) and west Asia (4.4%).
- The other south-east Asian countries predicted to grow rapidly include Indonesia, likely to be the fourth largest by 2030 from its current ranking of 10th largest aviation market. Thailand, too, is expected to enter the top 10 markets in 2030.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Aviation biofuels, Regional aviation partnership, AAI, Civil Aviation Research Organization, UDAN Scheme

**IATA**

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) is the trade association for the world’s airlines, representing some 290 airlines or 82% of total air traffic. It supports many areas of aviation activity and helps formulate industry policy on critical aviation issues. It is headquartered in Montreal, Quebec, Canada with Executive Offices in Geneva, Switzerland.

**India and Bangladesh Sign Agreements for Enhancing Inland and Coastal Waterways Connectivity**

**In News**

India and Bangladesh signed several milestone agreements, for enhancing inland and coastal waterways connectivity between the two countries for trade and cruise movements. The two countries have signed an agreement to use Chattogram and Mongla Ports in Bangladesh for movement of goods to and from India. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has also been signed for movement of passenger and cruise services.

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**Highlights**

- In addition to this, an addendum to ‘Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade’ (PIWTT) between India and Bangladesh has been signed for inclusion of **Dhubriin India and Pangaonin Bangladesh as new Ports of Call**.
- The two sides agreed to consider inclusion of Rupnarayanriver (National Waterway-86) from Geonkhali to Kolaghat in the protocol route and to declare **Kolaghatin West Bengal as new Port of Call**. Chilmari was agreed to as a port of call in Bangladesh.
- Further, both sides agreed to declare Badarpur on river Barak (NW 16) as an Extended Port of Call of Karimganj in Assam and Ghorasal of Ashuganj in Bangladesh on reciprocal basis.

**Mount Etna**

The southeast flank of Mount Etna in Sicily **is sliding towards the sea at a rate of several centimetres a year**. The stress that this movement creates inside volcanoes can cause devastating landslides. If, one day, Etna’s movement significantly increases then it could have serious consequences. It’s likely caused by gravity pulling on Etna’s lower underwater slopes, far from the summit.

Mount Etna is the highest and most active volcano in Europe (Italy). It has been growing for about 500,000 years and is in the midst of a series of eruptions that **began in 2001**. More than 25% of Sicily’s population lives on Etna’s slopes, and it is the main source of income for the island, both from agriculture (due to its rich volcanic soil) and tourism.

- In another important understanding reached at between the two countries, the

**KSG – (DELHI VN) 9717380832, (DELHI RN), (JAIPUR) 8290800441, (BHOPAL)7509975361, (PATNA) 7463950774, (INDORE) 7314977441, (BENGALURU) 7619166663, www.ksgindia.com**

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for movement of passengers and cruise vessels on Inland Protocol route and coastal shipping routes has been finalised.

- It was also agreed that a Joint Technical Committee will explore the technical feasibility of operationalisation of **Dhulian-Rajshahi protocol route** upto Aricha and the reconstruction and opening up of Jangipur navigational lock on river Bhagirathi subject to the provisions of the Treaty between India and Bangladesh on Sharing of Ganga Waters at Farakka, 1996. This move has the potential to reduce the distance to Assam by more than 450 kms on the protocol routes.
- It was also decided that a Project Management Consultant for supervision and monitoring of dredging of Ashuganj-Zakiganj and Sirajganj-Daikhowa stretches of Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route in Bangladesh will be engaged with 80 % financial contribution from India and rest by Bangladesh.
- Both sides have also agreed for development of Jogighopa as a hub/trans-shipment terminal for movement of cargo to Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Bhutan and notifying **Munsiganj River terminal** by Bangladesh Customs for routing third party Exim cargo through Kolkata Port.
- Discussions were also held to make Nakugaon Land Port in Bangladesh and Dalu ICP (India) operational and to connect Gelephu (Bhutan) as tripartite cross-border route.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, Border haats, CORPAT, Bangladesh Bhavan, Operation Insaniyat

**Significance**

- These agreements will facilitate easier movement **of goods and passengers between the two countries**, giving an impetus to trade and tourism.
- The new arrangement will facilitate movement of flyash, cement, construction materials etc from India to Bangladesh through IWT on Rupnarayanriver.
- The North Eastern states would get connected to directly to the ports of Kolkata and Haldia in India and Mongla in Bangladesh through waterways which would facilitate movement EXIM cargo and would also reduce the logistic costs.

**UN's Champions of the Earth Award**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the United Nation’s highest environmental honour, the **‘Champions of the Earth Award’, at a ceremony in Delhi**. He is among the six winners who got the award. **The award was announced for his “unprecedented pledge to eliminate all single-use plastic in India by 2022.”**
- Indian Prime Minister and French President Emmanuel Macron were recognised in the ‘Policy Leadership Category’ for their **“pioneering work in championing”** the International Solar Alliance and “new areas of levels of cooperation on environmental action”.
- The other winners include environmental and indigenous rights defender Joan Carling and the **‘Beyond Meat and Impossible Food’** in the Science and Innovation category for their popular, plant-based alternative to beef and “their efforts to educate consumers about environmentally conscious alternatives.”
- China’s Zhejiang’s Green Rural Revival Programme was awarded for the Inspiration and Action for the “transformation of a once heavily polluted area of rivers and streams in East China’s Zhejiang province.”

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The Cochin International Airport took home the **‘Entrepreneurial Vision’** Award for its leadership in the use of sustainable energy.

**Champions of the Earth**

Champions of the Earth, the UN's highest environmental honour, celebrates outstanding figures from the public and private sectors and from civil society whose actions have had a transformative positive impact on the environment.

Launched in 2005, Champions of the Earth has recognized dozens of exemplary individuals and organizations. Through their extraordinary achievements – whether through political leadership, grassroots action, scientific innovation, or entrepreneurial vision – each of these Champions has inspired critical action on behalf of the global environment.

**Champions of the Earth recognizes laureates in the following categories:**

1. Lifetime Achievement
2. Policy Leadership
3. Action and Inspiration
4. Entrepreneurial Vision
5. Science and Innovation

**Vayoshreshtha Samman – 2018**

“Vayoshreshtha Samman-2018” was conferred on the eminent senior citizens and institutions in recognition of their services towards the cause of the elderly persons on the occasion of ‘International Day of older Persons’ by the Vice President of India.

Vayoshreshtha Samman is a Scheme of National Awards instituted by the Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment (D/o Social Justice & Empowerment) initially in 2005 and upgraded to the status of National Awards in 2013, for institutions involved in rendering distinguished service for the cause of elderly persons especially indigent senior citizens and to eminent citizens in recognition of their service/achievements.

United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution to observe 1st October, 1999 as the International Year of Older Persons and to promote the theme "A society for All Ages". Ever since every year, 1st October is celebrated as International Day of Older Persons.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

Montreal Protocol, Vienna convention, Lippa-Asra Wildlife Sanctuary, Gaj Yatra,

**Soil moisture map**

**In News**

A joint exercise by IIT Gandhinagar and the India Meteorological Department (IMD), for the first time, provided a country-wide soil moisture forecast at **seven and 30-day lead times**. The team used the **‘Variable Infiltration Capacity’** model to provide the soil moisture prediction. The product, termed ‘Experimental Forecasts Land Surface Products’, is available on the IMD website and has been developed using the hydrological model that takes into consideration soil, vegetation, land use and land cover among other parameters.

With the rabi season around the corner, a countrywide forecast prepared at the end of the monsoon season suggests deficit soil moisture conditions are likely in Gujarat, Bihar, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu and southern Andhra Pradesh.

**Significance**

Soil moisture is crucial for agriculture since it directly affects crop growth and how much irrigation is required for the area.

**Forecasting of soil moisture holds significance for the rabi season.** As per official data, the total area sown under rabi crops is around 625 lakh hectares of which wheat takes up 300 lakh hectares. Timely soil moisture forecasts will help target interventions, in terms of seed varieties for better planning in agriculture.

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**PEPPER IT WITH**

Soil health card, Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), National Agriculture Market (e-NAM), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Interest Subvention Scheme

## First assembly of the International Solar Alliance

### Why in News?

Indian Prime Minister **inaugurated the first Assembly of the International Solar Alliance at Vigyan Bhawan**. The same event also marked the inauguration of the second IORA Renewable Energy Ministerial Meeting, and the 2nd Global RE-Invest (Renewable Energy Investors' Meet and Expo). The Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres, was present on the occasion.

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### INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE

- International Solar Alliance (ISA) is an alliance of 121 solar resource rich countries lying fully or partially **between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn**. ISA was jointly launched by the Indian Prime Minister, and the then President of France, Mr. François Hollande, in 2015 in Paris, France on the side-lines of the **21st Conference of Parties (CoP 21) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change**.
- In conformity with the ISA Framework Agreement, 30 days after ratification by the 15th country, on December 6, 2017, **ISA became the first full-fledged treaty based international intergovernmental organization headquartered in India**.

The membership of International Solar Alliance (ISA) could be extended to countries **beyond the inter-tropical zone**, as a means to expand the scope of harnessing solar energy across the

### International Day for Disaster Reduction

The International Day for Disaster Reduction was started in 1989, after a call by the United Nations General Assembly for a day to promote a global culture of risk-awareness and disaster reduction. **Held every 13 October**, the day celebrates how people and communities around the world are reducing their exposure to disasters and raising awareness about the importance of reining in the risks that they face.

The 2018 theme continues as part of the **"Sendai Seven" campaign, centred on the seven targets of the Sendai Framework**. This year focuses on Target C of the Sendai Framework, reducing disaster economic losses in relation to global GDP by 2030.

- Through this initiative, the countries, inter alia, share the collective ambition: **(i)** to address obstacles that stand in the way of rapid and massive scale-up of solar energy; **(ii)** to undertake innovative and concerted efforts for reducing the cost of finance and cost of technology for immediate deployment of competitive solar generation; and **(iii)** to mobilise more than 1000 Billion US Dollars of investments by 2030.
- The Delhi Solar Agenda, adopted in the Founding Conference of the ISA, states that the ISA member States inter-alia have agreed to pursue an increased share of solar energy in the final energy consumption in respective national energy mix, as a means of tackling global challenges of climate change and as a cost-effective solution by supporting and implementing policy initiatives and participation of all relevant stakeholders, as applicable, in respective States.
- Till date, out of 121 prospective member countries that lie either fully or partially between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn, 70 countries have signed the Framework Agreement of the ISA. 44 of these countries have ratified the ISA treaty.
- The first Assembly, in a way, **will lay the foundation for global Solar Agenda**. The Assembly, as supreme decision making body of the ISA, will steer the process to significantly harness solar energy for achieving universal energy access at affordable rates.

### THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION

The Indian Ocean Rim Association was set up with the objective of strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the **Indian Ocean Region with 11 Member States and 7 Dialogue Partners**. India hosted 2nd IORA Renewable Energy Ministerial meet.

**2ND RE-INVESTMENT**

- The 2nd RE-INVEST aims at **accelerating the worldwide effort to scale up renewable energy and connect the global investment community with Indian energy stakeholders.**
- It provided a great opportunity to various countries, states, business houses & organisations to showcase their business strategies, achievements and expectations. It facilitated collaboration and cooperation with key stakeholders in India, which has today emerged as one of the world’s largest renewable energy markets.
- Globally, India stands 5th in renewable power, 4th in wind power and 5th in solar power installed capacity. **India is one of the world’s largest green energy markets,** with exponential increase in demand and supply. Renewable energy development and deployment has received proactive policy support, including 100% foreign investment. **The Government of India is aiming to exceed the set target of 175 GW renewable energy capacity by 2022.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Delhi Solar Agenda, Solar City Scheme, KUSUM Scheme, Solar development fund

**‘Minimum river flows’ for the Ganga**

**In News**

In a first, the Union government has mandated the **minimum quantity of water — or ecological flow as it’s called in scientific circles — that various stretches of the Ganga must necessarily have all through the year.** The new norms would require hydropower projects located along the river to modify their operations so as to ensure they are in compliance.

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- ❖ Power projects that don’t meet these norms as yet would be given three years to comply and **“mini and micro projects”** would be exempt from these requirements. The Central Water Commission would be the designated authority to collect relevant data and submit flow monitoring-cum-compliance reports on a quarterly basis to the NMCG, according to the notification.
- ❖ The government, however, hasn’t disclosed the existing ecological flows at these stretches while setting the minimum levels, an omission that an expert involved in the framing of these rules attributed to “strategic reasons”. “Flow data isn’t made public by the CWC because it can be used by neighbouring countries to put pressure regarding hydro-electric projects.

**NMCG**

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

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

- 🏗️ National Ganga Council **under chairmanship of Hon’ble Prime Minister of India.**
- 🏗️ Empowered Task Force (ETF) on river Ganga

**World Habitat Day**  
 The United Nations designated the **first Monday of October of every year** as World Habitat Day to reflect on the state of our towns and cities, and on the basic right of all to adequate shelter. The Day is also intended to remind the world that we all have the power and the responsibility to shape the future of our cities and towns.  
**2018 theme:** Municipal Solid Waste Management.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Namami Gange, Ganga Hariteema Yojana, Namami Ganga Program, National green tribunal, Arsenic contamination in water



under chairmanship of Hon'ble Union Minister of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.

- ✚ National Mission for Clean Ganga(NMCG).
- ✚ State Ganga Committees and
- ✚ District Ganga Committees in every specified district abutting river Ganga and its tributaries in the states.

NMCG has a **two tier management structure** and comprises of Governing Council and Executive Committee. Both of them are headed by Director General, NMCG. Executive Committee has been authorized to accord approval for all projects up to Rs.1000 crore. Similar to structure at national level, State Programme Management Groups (SPMGs) acts as implementing arm of State Ganga Committees. Thus the newly created structure attempts to bring all stakeholders on one platform to take a holistic approach towards the task of Ganga cleaning and rejuvenation.

The Director General(DG) of NMCG is a Additional Secretary in Government of India. For effective implementation of the projects under the overall supervision of NMCG, the State Level Program Management Groups (SPMGs) are, also headed by senior officers of the concerned States.

**Economic Losses, Poverty and Disasters 1998-2017**

**Why in News?**

India suffered a whopping \$79.5 billion economic loss due to **climate-related disasters** in the last 20 years, according to a UN report which highlights the impact of extreme weather events on the global economy. The economies of US, China, Japan, India and Puerto Rico have been the worst affected.

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The report titled '**Economic Losses, Poverty and Disasters 1998-2017**' was compiled by the **UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction**. It states that the years between 1998 to 2017 have seen a dramatic rise of 151 per cent in direct economic losses from climate-related disasters.

**Highlights**

- The last twenty years have seen a dramatic rise of 151% in direct economic losses from climate-related disasters.
- In the period 1998-2017, disaster-hit countries reported direct economic losses of US\$2,908 billion of which climate-related disasters accounted for US\$2,245 billion or 77% of the total. This compares with total reported losses for the period 1978-1997 of US\$1,313 billion of which climate-related disasters accounted for US\$895 billion or 68%.
- In terms of occurrences, climate-related disasters also dominate the picture, accounting for 91% of all 7,255 major recorded events between 1998 and 2017. **Floods, 43.4%, and storms, 28.2%, are the two most frequently occurring disasters.**
- Storms, floods and earthquakes place three European countries in the top ten for economic losses: France, Germany and Italy,

**Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority**

The Centre has reconstituted the **Supreme Court-empowered Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority** or the EPCA, which is tasked with taking various measures to tackle air pollution in the National Capital Region. The tenure of the last EPCA expired on October 3.

The EPCA was constituted with the objective of protecting and improving the quality of the environment and preventing and controlling the environmental pollution **in the National Capital Region**. It is also mandated to enforce **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** in the city as per the pollution levels.

- During this period, 1.3 million people lost their lives and 4.4 billion people were injured, rendered homeless, displaced or in need of emergency assistance. 563 earthquakes, including related tsunamis, accounted for 56% of total deaths or 747,234 lives lost.
- A key target of the global plan to reduce disaster losses, the **Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction**, is to reduce economic losses from disasters and the report highlights the fact that 63% of disaster reports contain no economic data.
- Another key highlight is the disproportionate impact of disaster events on low and middle-income countries even if high-income countries bear the brunt of absolute economic losses.
- Only one high-income territory ranked among the “top ten” in terms of annual average percentage losses relative to GDP, Puerto Rico, 12.2%.
- Integrating disaster risk reduction into investment decisions is the most cost-effective way to reduce these risks; investing in disaster risk reduction is therefore a pre-condition for developing sustainable in a changing climate.

**National Disaster Management Authority**

The Prime Minister, chaired the sixth meeting of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). He reviewed the activities of NDMA to effectively manage and respond to disasters affecting the country. He also reviewed ongoing projects undertaken by NDMA.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

UNISDR, Environmental Information System Scheme, Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Economic Losses, Poverty & Disasters 1998-2017, United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, Cyclone, Heat Wave, Tsunami, Volcano

**Significance**

- This report highlights key trends over the last 40 years. Much needs to be done to address the high number of deaths in seismic zones. The death and suffering caused by this month’s earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia brings home the need to raise public awareness and to apply high standards for construction in seismic zones.
- The report’s analysis makes it clear that economic losses from extreme weather events are unsustainable and a major brake on eradicating poverty in hazard exposed parts of the world.
- It highlights the **protection gap between rich and poor**. Those who are suffering the most from climate change are those who are contributing least to greenhouse gas emissions. The economic losses suffered by low and lower-middle income countries have drastic consequences for their future development.
- The report concludes that climate change is increasing the frequency and severity of extreme weather events, and that disasters will continue to be major impediments to sustainable development so long as the economic incentives to build and develop hazard-prone locations outweigh the perceived disaster risks.

**Methanol Cooking Fuel Program of India**

**Why in News?**

Northeast and Assam Petro-chemicals, a state-owned company launched Asia's first cannisters based and **India's first "Methanol Cooking Fuel Program"**.

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**Details**

- 500 households inside the Assam Petro Complex will be the first pilot project, scaling it to 40,000 households in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana, Goa and Karnataka.
- The project is a natural extension of India's **vision of reducing import of crude and an effort to provide clean, import substitute, cost effective and pollution free cooking medium**.

- Assam Petrochemicals Limited has been manufacturing methanol for the last 30 years and is in the process of upgrading their 100 TPD methanol plant to 600 TPD by Dec 2019.
- The safe handling cannister based cooking stoves are from **Swedish Technology** and through a Technology transfer a large-scale cooking stove manufacturing plant will come up in India in the next 18 months producing 10 lakh Cookstoves and 1 Crore Cannisters per year.
- This technology is very unique **as it handles methanol extremely safely and does not need regulator or any piping system.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Ethanol Blending Program, Urga Ganga, IORA, IREDA, Global wind power capacity index

**Significance**

The cooking medium can directly substitute LPG, Kerosene, Wood, Charcoal and any other fuel for cooking. The gaseous form, Methanol - DME, can be blended in 20% ratio with LPG. **LPG-DME blending program is expected to kickstart in the country by next year.**

1.2 litres cannisters can last for full five hours on twin burners and 8 such Cannisters as rack can last for one month for a family of three. The cost of energy equivalent of one cylinder of LPG for Methanol is Rs. 650, compared to Rs. 850 per cylinder resulting in a minimum of 20% Savings. This provides for an excellent alternative as household fuel and commercial, institutional and fuel for restaurants. China uses 4 MMTA of Methanol as Cooking Fuel annually.

**Asia’s First Dolphin Research Centre**

**In News**

With the population of the endangered Gangetic river dolphin decreasing and its habitat changing, the much-awaited National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC), India and Asia's first, would be a reality soon. **The NDRC is likely to be set up next month on the banks of the Ganga river in the Patna University premises.** It will play an important role in strengthening conservation efforts and research to save the endangered mammal.

Gangetic river dolphin is **India's national aquatic animal** but frequently falls prey to poachers and is sometimes killed inadvertently after being trapped in plastic fishing nets and hit by mechanised boats.

**About Gangetic river dolphin**

- Dolphins prefer water that is at least 5-8 feet deep. They are usually found in turbulent waters where there is enough fish for them to feed on. **Gangetic dolphins prefer deep water with adjoining shallow water.** They live in a zone where there is little or no current that helps them save energy. If they sense danger, they can go into deep waters. The dolphins swim from the no-current zone to the edges to hunt for fish and return.

- The **Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary**, India's only dolphin sanctuary, spread over 50 km along the Ganges and is located in Bihar's Bhagalpur district.
- Bihar is home to around half of the country's estimated 3,000 dolphin population. The state government has decided to conduct a study-cum-survey of the Gangetic dolphin in 2018 in the 525-km stretch of the Ganga river between Chausa (Buxar) in the west and

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**Ghost gear**

- ✓ Ghost gear is any fishing equipment that has been lost, discarded or abandoned in water bodies, and has grown from a fishing fallout.
- ✓ In March 2018, fishermen hauled 400 kg of fishing nets out of the sea in a few locations off Kerala’s south coast. There are many such reports of divers regularly making underwater trips just to extract nets that have sunk to the ocean floor off India’s coasts, ranging from Tamil Nadu to Maharashtra.
- ✓ **It is found in every sea and ocean on the planet**, and is a major contributor to ocean plastics. It traps, injures, mutilates and kills hundreds of thousands of whales, seals, turtles and other sea animals every year.

Manihari (Katihar) in the east. The Wildlife Institute of India will help the government in this. The last survey was conducted in 2012.

- The Gangetic river species -- **found in India, Bangladesh and Nepal -- is almost completely blind.** It finds its way and prey using echoes -- with sound being everything for them to navigate, feed, escape danger, find mates, breed, nurse babies and play.

•Gangetic river dolphins fall **under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act** and have been declared an endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN). It is one of the four freshwater dolphin species in the world. The other three are found in the **Yangtze river, the Indus river in Pakistan and the Amazon river.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Environmental Information System (ENVIS) Scheme, Animal Welfare Board Of India, IUCN, CITES, Irrawaddy Dolphins, Olive Ridley Turtles, Hope Island

### Eurasian otter

#### In News

Researchers have confirmed the presence of Eurasian Otter one of the least-known of India's three Otter species in the Western Ghats after more than 70 years.

There are two more species of **otters are known to be present in India**

— the smooth-coated otter ( Lutrogale perspicillata) and Asian small-clawed otter ( Aonyx cinerea) — said officials.

#### Otter

- Three species of otters are reported from India; Common Otter Lutra lutra, Smooth Coated Otter Lutra perspicillata and Clawless Otter Aonyx cinerea.
- All three species of otters are protected in India under the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 (WPA) and are **listed under CITES Appendices.**
- The animal features in trade in India principally for its skin. Most seizures of big cat products are accompanied by otter skins.
- **IUCN Status: Near Threatened.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 WCCB, Snow Leopard, Elephant census, Secure Himalaya Project,

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### Strengthening Forest Fire Management in the Country

#### In News

A report titled "**Strengthening Forest Fire Management in India**" was released recently. **The report has been jointly prepared by MoEFCC and World Bank.**

Forest fires have distinct regional patterns, with 20 districts (not the same ones) account for 47% of fire distribution. **Forest fires are caused by a combination of natural and social factors.** The report discusses policies on forest fire prevention and management and underscores the need to put more emphasis on better fire prevention practices and a well-equipped and trained workforce to fight fires.

#### Recommendations

- Developing a National Forest Fire Prevention Management Plan as an open, consultative and a time-bound process, institute standard management practices, adapt technology to local conditions, as well as scale up the best practices and increase engagement with local communities to ensure that big fire is used in a responsible way and at the same time, give communities a greater say in decision-making process.
- The Report suggests that the **National FFPM Action Plan** should delineate the roles and responsibilities of the MoEFCC, state forest departments, communities and disaster agencies.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Draft Forest Policy, Compensatory Afforestation Fund, ICFRE, Nationally Determined Contribution, REDD, REDD+

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- There is a need to support forest fire management through improved data, and research to fill critical knowledge gaps. A national forest fire information database, bringing together satellite-based remote sensing data, and field-reported data, will be instrumental for assessing longer-term trends across states and regions and for planning fire prevention and response.
- In addition, defining a national research agenda for fire management and provision of funding opportunities for scientific research would help to establish formal cooperation between members of the research community and the forest department.
- The report adds that there is an urgent need to fill vacancies for field staff, particularly in fire-prone areas, and to make adequate and reliable funding available.

**Way Forward**

Forest fire management is **part of our long-term vision for Sustainable Forest Management and the recommendations suggested in the report must be implemented effectively.**

Recommendations in the study report will be worth, only if they are followed up by a proactive and aggressive strategy. Forest fire is one of the causes of emission of carbon dioxide that leads to global warming. Hence, the report is a timely action guided by the vision of meeting India’s climate goals defined under the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDCs) set under the Paris Agreement”.

**Air Quality Early Warning System**

**In News**

Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi was launched in Delhi. The System is designed to predict extreme air pollution events and give alerts to take necessary steps as per **Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP)** of the Government of India.

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**Details**

- The air pollution system has been developed jointly by the scientists at Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, India Meteorological Department and National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF).
- The warning system consists of **a)** real time observations of air quality over Delhi region and details about natural aerosols like dust (from dust storms) and particulate matter using different satellite data sets **b)** Predictions of air pollutants from two different air quality prediction systems based on state-of-the-art atmospheric chemistry transport models and c) Warning Messages and Alerts and Bulletins.
- The early warning system will help in proactively forewarning, 3-4 days in advance, any large scale air pollution events which may occur over the Delhi region.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Graded Response Action Plan for Delhi and NCR, Western peripheral expressway, CPCB, Air Quality Index

**Other steps by govt. to combat air pollution**

- Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has constituted a 41 member team which will continuously monitor the air pollution levels in Delhi and NCR region and will report to the board.
- Badarpur thermal power plant has been closed.
- Western peripheral expressway is likely to become operational in the first week of November
- Government has released nearly 600 crores to concerned states for in-situ management of crop-residue and a slew of mitigation measures have been taken by the government.

**Mega emission inventory**

A mega emission inventory of Delhi which was made by scientists at IITM Pune who carried out a mega emission inventory campaign involving around 140 students mapping all possible local sources of air pollution with around 37,500 hours of work was also launched.

The final product with 400 m x 400m high-resolution emission inventory of Delhi and fringe area of all eight important air pollutants (like PM2.5, PM10, NOx, CO, SO2, BC, OC and VOCs) was released. Ground level activity data about emissions from as many as 23 different sources of pollution were also collected. The emission inventory suggests that **there is a substantial increase of emissions from transport and industrial sector**, while the contributions from residences have shown a substantial decline.

**ICFRE**

**In News**

Two Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) were signed by Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun, with Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) and Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS).

**ICFRE is an autonomous Council under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.**

**Details**

- The MoUs have been signed to launch the programme “**PRAKRITI**” with the objective to promote awareness about forests and environment, to stimulate interest among the students of NVS and KVS in maintaining a balanced environment and for acquiring skills that reflect care and protection towards forests, environment and society.
- Another objective is to provide a platform to school children to learn practical skills towards judicious use of our resources and to mobilize a cadre of youth for raising a peoples’ movement committed to conservation of forest and environment.
- Through this collaboration, knowledge will be imparted to students/teachers of NVS and KVS on environment, forest, environmental services and contemporary areas of forestry research by way of lectures and interactive sessions by scientists of ICFRE institutes.
- The MoUs, **signed for a period of 10 years** are expected to make the youth of the country sensitive about national and global issues of environment and forests and help them to become responsible citizens.

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**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 i-Hariyali app, Aldabra giant tortoise, GEF, Nilgiri Tahr, Earth overshoot day, Humboldt penguin, Cheetah reintroduction program

**ICFRE**

ICFRE, through its nine Institutes and five Centres located across the country, is guiding, promoting and coordinating forestry research, extension and education **at the national level**. Currently ICFRE is focusing on contemporary issues of national and international importance particularly in the areas of climate change, forest productivity, biodiversity conservation and skill development.

**Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti**

It was established with the primary objective to **provide modern quality education** to talented children, predominantly from the rural areas, without regard to their family’s socio-economic condition. At present, it has 660 functional residential schools. Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan was **established in 1963** to provide uninterrupted education to wards of the transferable Central Government employees. KVS established Kendriya Vidyalayas all over the country to impart quality education, promotion of national integration, adventure activities, physical education etc.

**Green climate fund**

**Why in News?**

Officials overseeing a UN-backed fund to help poor countries tackle climate change have approved more than USD 1 billion in new investments in Bahrain. The Green Climate Fund meeting approved 19 new projects, including a program to protect freshwater resources in Bahrain.

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**GCF**

- The Green Climate Fund (GCF) is a new global fund created to support the efforts of developing countries to respond to the challenge of climate change.
- GCF **helps developing countries limit or reduce their greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** and adapt to climate change. The South Korea-based fund is considered a key vehicle for climate-related development programs.
- It was set up by the 194 countries who are parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in **2010**, as part of the Convention’s financial mechanism.
- It aims to deliver equal amounts of funding to mitigation and adaptation, while being guided by the Convention’s principles and provisions.
- When the Paris Agreement was reached in 2015, the Green Climate Fund was given an important role in serving the agreement and supporting the goal of keeping climate change well below 2 degrees Celsius.

President Donald Trump's decision to withhold USD 2 billion of the USD 3 billion pledged by predecessor Barack Obama has contributed to a shortfall in its projected assets.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
UNFCCC, Carbon taxes and cess, Clean Development Mechanism, Joint Implementation, Perform Achieve Trade, Climate Bond Initiative, Green Bond

**SC bans sale of BS-IV vehicles from 2020**

**In News**

The Supreme Court banned the sale and registration of motor vehicles conforming to the emission standard **Bharat Stage-IV in the entire country from April 1, 2020**. It said there was sufficient time for manufacturers to make BS-VI compliant vehicles.

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**Bharat Stage (BS) emission norms**

- Bharat Stage (BS) emission norms are standards instituted by the government to **regulate output of air pollutants from motor vehicles**.
- The BS-IV norms have been enforced across the country since April 2017. In 2016, the Centre had announced the **country would skip the BS-V norms altogether and adopt BS-VI norms by 2020**.
- These emission standards were **set by the central government** to keep a check on the pollutant levels emitted by vehicles that use combustion engines. To bring them into force, the Central Pollution Control Board sets timelines and standards which have to be followed by automakers.
- The BS norms are based on European emission norms which, for example, are referred to in a similar manner like **‘Euro 4’ and ‘Euro 6’**. These norms are followed largely by all automakers across the globe and act as a good reference point as to how much does a vehicle pollute.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Flue gas desulphurization, ASH TRACK, Fly ash, Harit Diwali : Swasth Diwali Campaign, Energy architecture performance index

**3rd Decadal International year of Reefs-2018**

**In News**

The International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (**STAPCOR - 2018**) with the theme **“Reef for Life”** was held at Bangaram coral Island of Union Territory of Lakshadweep.

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**Background**

Climate change and global warming along with Elnino on the corals lead to heavy bleaching internationally during the year 1998, this lead to the foundation of STAPCOR with a decision to **have a international conference in every 10 years to review the status and progress of coral reefs all over the world.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Hard and Soft corals, coral bleaching, great barrier reef, hotspots of the world, mangrove in India

The Department of Environment and Forest, Union Territory of Lakshadweep Administration organised this mega conference with the technical support of Zoological Survey of India and in association with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, IUCN, ENVIS in consonance with declaration of the year 2018 as 3rd decadal International year of Reefs.

**Coral reefs**

- Coral reefs have existed for close to **500 million years, making them one of the earth’s oldest, largest and most diverse ecosystems.** The number of species, representing nearly every group of organism, found on them rivals that of the tropical forests. They are also a very **fragile ecosystem** gravely endangered by our carelessness and ignorance.
- Coral reefs **are often compared with tropical rainforests** in terms of their importance as a habitat and the biological diversity they harbour. **Coral reefs are a colony of tiny animals called coral polyps.** When the animals die, they leave limestone “skeletons” that form the foundations of coral reefs. The creation of a reef can take centuries. **Coral islands or atolls develop from reefs that grow up around volcanic islands.**
- Reefs grow in warm seas in temperatures **between 20°C and 30°C, in clear, shallow, saline waters where a lot of sunlight filters through.**

**In India, corals are found in**

- Gulf of Kutch, off the western mainland coast
- Mandapam group of islands in Gulf of Mannar near Rameswaram
- Andaman and Nicobar islands
- Lakshadweep Islands

**Uses of coral reefs**

- ❖ Remove and recycle CO2 a greenhouse gas
- ❖ Protect the shore from erosion by storms and floods
- ❖ Are home to over 4,000 species of fish, 800 species of coral and thousands of other forms of plant and animal life, all of which will not survive without the reefs
- ❖ Account for 12% of the marine fish catch
- ❖ Could provide important medicines including anti-cancer drugs and a compound that blocks ultraviolet rays
- ❖ Coral skeletons are being used as bone substitutes in reconstructive bone surgery

**Threats to cotals**

- Destructive fishing practices, such as dynamite or cyanide fishing and trawling in deeper waters, cause direct physical damage to corals.
- Widespread over fishing leads to very low levels of herbivorous fish, which check coral killing algae.
- Nutrient-laden sewage released near the shore causes algal blooms which block sunlight, stunting coral growth and interfering with reproduction.
- Shoreline construction disturbs sediments, which smother corals.
- Tourism and tourists cause physical damage to reefs by construction activities, trampling, boat abrasion and the removal of corals “souvenirs”.

**Living Planet Report 2018**

**Why in News?**

The Living Planet Report documents the state of the planet—including biodiversity, ecosystems, and demand on natural resources—and what it means for humans and wildlife. **Published by WWF every two years,** the report brings together a variety of research to provide a comprehensive view of the health of the Earth.

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**Highlights**

- Global wildlife populations have fallen by 60% in just over four decades, thanks to accelerating pollution, deforestation, climate change and other man-made factors. More than 4,000 species of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles and amphibians declined rapidly between 1970 and 2014.
- The report also found that 90% of seabirds have plastics in their stomachs, compared with 5% in 1960.
- **Animal life dwindled the most rapidly in the tropical areas of Latin America and the Caribbean**, with an 89% fall in populations since 1970, while species that rely on freshwater habitats, like frogs and river fish, declined in population by 83%.
- The report presents a sobering picture of the impact human activity has on the world’s wildlife, forests, oceans, rivers, and climate. World is facing a rapidly closing window for action and the urgent need for everyone—everyone—to collectively rethink and redefine how we value, protect, and restore nature.
- Natural systems essential to our survival—forests, oceans, and rivers—remain in decline. Wildlife around the world continues to dwindle. It’s time to balance our consumption with the needs of nature, and to protect the only planet that is our home.

- ✓ **60%** - Populations of mammals, birds, fish, reptiles, and amphibians have, on average, declined by 60% between 1970 and 2014, the most recent year with available data.
- ✓ **50%** - The Earth is estimated to have lost about half of its shallow water corals in the past 30 years.
- ✓ **20%** - A fifth of the Amazon has disappeared in just 50 years.
- ✓ **\$125 trillion** - Globally, nature provides services worth around \$125 trillion a year, while also helping ensure the supply of fresh air, clean water, food, energy, medicines, and much more.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Zoological Society of London, Living Planet Index, WWF, World Wide Fund for Nature, IUCN, Birdlife

**Way forward**

The **WWF has called for an international treaty, modelled on the Paris climate agreement**, to be drafted to protect wildlife and reverse human impacts on nature. To ensure a sustainable future for all living things, we need to urgently curb the loss of nature. The biggest challenge—and biggest opportunity—lies in changing our approach to development and remember that protecting nature also helps protect people.

This trend will continue unless human beings learn to minimise the use of resources and internalise the benefits of recycling/reuse. The nature conservation agenda is not only about securing the future of tigers, pandas, whales and all the amazing diversity of life. It’s bigger than that. There cannot be a healthy, happy and prosperous planet with a destabilised climate, depleted oceans and rivers, degraded land and empty forests, all stripped of biodiversity, the web of life that sustains us all.

**CSIR develops Less Polluting Firecrackers**

**Why in News?**

CSIR scientists have developed Less Polluting Firecrackers which are not only environment friendly but 15-20 % cheaper than the conventional ones. These crackers have been named as **safe water releaser (SWAS), safe minimal aluminium (SAFAL) and safe thermite cracker (STAR)**.

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**Towards a greener Diwali**

- First time in India, an **Emission testing Facility has been established at CSIR-NEERI** and extensive testing is in progress for conventional and green crackers for monitoring the emissions and sound. This facility uses all sophisticated instruments for measurement and sampling when firecrackers are used.

- A raw material characterization facility is also coming up as it has been found that many times the poor quality raw materials used in fire crackers are the major sources of particulate matter pollution. CSIR would be detailing further strengthening by installation of additional facilities for raw materials testing at Sivakasi.
- **E-crackers-** CSIR-CEERI, being an electronics laboratory, is developing safe and pollution free technology of electronic crackers (E-crackers) to meet latent social aspiration of enjoying fireworks. It includes various products like E-Ladi, E-Anar, system for E-cracker show etc. At present CSIR-CEERI is ready with the laboratory level prototype of E-Ladi.

**Fireworks Industry**

Indian Fireworks industry is over 6000-crore worth of annual turnover and provides employment opportunities to over 5 lakh families directly or indirectly, **this endeavour of CSIR aims at addressing the pollution concerns at the same time protecting the livelihoods of those involved in this trade.** Firecracker manufactures took keen interest with laboratories throughout the process and the new crackers would not require changes in their manufacturing facilities.

- ✓ **SWAS crackers** eliminates usage of (KNO3) Potassium nitrate and Sulphur with consequent reduction in particulate matter (30-35%) SO2 and NOx.
- ✓ **STAR eliminates** usage of KNO3 and S with consequent reduction in particulate matter (35-40%), SO2 and NOx.
- ✓ **SAFAL has minimal usage of aluminium** (only in flash powder for initiation) with consequent significant reduction in particulate matter (35-40 %) compared to commercial crackers.

**CSIR**

The Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) under Ministry of Science and Technology **is an autonomous body**, known for its cutting edge R&D knowledgebase in diverse S&T areas, is a contemporary R&D organization. Having pan-India presence, CSIR has a dynamic network of 38 national laboratories, 39 outreach centres, 3 Innovation Complexes and 5 units. CSIR's R&D expertise and experience is embodied in about 4600 active scientists supported by about 8000 scientific and technical personnel.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Wind Augmentation Purifying Unit, Time Space Time Space Network, IISER, CCRT, NISER

**WHO Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health**

**In News**

The **first Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health was held at the World Health Organisation's headquarters** in Geneva.

The conference was held in collaboration with the UN Environment, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

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**Significance**

- The event responded to a World Health Assembly mandate to combat one of the world's most significant causes of premature death, causing some 7 million deaths annually.
- Air pollution in most cities exceeds recommended WHO Air Quality levels **and household air pollution is a leading killer in poor rural and urban homes.** Up to one-third of deaths from stroke, lung cancer and heart disease are due to air pollution.
- Affordable strategies exist to reduce key pollution emissions from the transport, energy, agriculture, waste and housing sectors. Health-conscious strategies can reduce climate change and support Sustainable Development Goals for health, energy and cities.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
WMO, UNFCCC, CCAC, UNECE

## Repository of Indian mammals

### In News

Scientists and researchers from the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) in Bangalore have come up with a **new citizen-science repository on Indian mammals, called Mammals of India (MaOI), which is an online, peer-reviewed, freely-accessible portal.**

As per current estimates, 426 species of mammals are found in India; of them **47 species are endemic to the Indian subcontinent.** Along with well known species, there are mammals of 100 species of rats and 126 species of bats and 24 species of whales of dolphins.

### Significance

- So far, there was no portal exclusively for mammals. These photographic records will help us in having distribution map of mammals in the country.
- The photographs will not only help gather information on the distribution of the various species but also interactions between different species of mammals, like predation and mutualism.
- The website, [www.mammalsofindia.org](http://www.mammalsofindia.org), aims to develop individual species pages for all Indian mammals with information on identification, variation, distribution, breeding and non-breeding ecology and species conservation.
- Researchers said that this initiative will also make more information available about lesser known mammals of the country. **The website provides an opportunity to any person to upload geotagged photographic observations** about mammals with information on habitat age of the observed individual.

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### PEPPER IT WITH

Kashmir Red Stag, Snow Leopard, CAMPA, Great Indian Bustard, Gangetic Dolphins, NTCA

## World's first full-scale passenger Hyperloop capsule

### In News

HyperloopTT revealed their **first full-scale Hyperloop capsule, which promises to carry passengers at speeds of 700mph, in Spain.**

The capsule, "**Quintero One**" is constructed almost completely out of

HyperloopTT's Vibranium™, a specially made dual-layer smart composite material. It was built at the Southern Spain aerospace facilities of HyperloopTT's partner Airtificial, a new company formed by the merger of composite expert Carbures and engineering company Inypsa that manufactures for many leading companies including Airbus and Boeing.

### HyperloopTT

Founded in 2013, Hyperloop Transportation Technologies (HyperloopTT) is an innovative transportation and technology company focused on realizing the Hyperloop, a system that moves people and goods at unprecedented speeds safely, efficiently, and sustainably.

Through the use of unique, patented technology and an advanced business model of lean collaboration, open innovation and integrated partnership, HyperloopTT is creating and licensing technologies.

### Hyperloop Technology

- The idea of using low pressure or vacuum tubes as part of a transport system has a long heritage. It is entrepreneur Elon Musk who really reignited interest in the concept

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### Airtificial

Airtificial is a new Spanish technological company specialized in applying artificial intelligence, through collaborative robotics and sensorial structures, and specialized engineering within the civil works, aerospace and automotive industries.

### PriestmanGoode

PriestmanGoode is the **world's leading transport design consultancy.** Based in London and China, the studio works on a vast range of projects across rail and aviation, developing designs for high speed trains, metros, airlines and commercial spacecraft all over the world.

with his **'Hyperloop Alpha' paper in August 2013**, which set out how a modern system would work -- and how much it would cost.

- The basic idea of Hyperloop is that the passenger pods or capsules travel through a tube, either above or below ground. **To reduce friction, most - but not all** - of the air is removed from the tubes by pumps. Overcoming air resistance is one of the biggest uses of energy in high speed travel.
- Airliners climb to high altitudes to travel through less dense air; in order to create a similar effect at ground level, **Hyperloop encloses the capsules in a reduced-pressure tube**, effectively allowing the trains to travel at airplane speeds but on the ground.
- The Hyperloop capsules in Musk's model float above the tube's surface on a set of 28 air-bearing skis, similar to the way that the puck floats just above the table on an air hockey game. One major difference is that it is the pod, not the track, that generates the air cushion in order to keep the tube as simple and cheap as possible. **Other versions of Hyperloop use magnetic levitation rather than air skis to keep the passenger pods off the tracks.**
- Critics argue that lots of pods will be required to achieve the same passenger numbers as more traditional rail which uses much bigger carriages. And there are many engineering hurdles to overcome, like building the tubes strong enough to deal with the stresses of carrying the high-speed pods, and finding energy and cost efficient ways to keep them operating at low pressure.
- Moving from a successful test to a full commercial deployment is a big jump, and passenger trials are still to come, too. Right now Hyperloop is at an experimental stage even if the companies involved are very keen to talk about the potential.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Dataset Search, The internet society, Call for Code initiative, Project Navlekha,

### Mobile Asteroid Surface Scout (MASCOT)

#### In News

The Hayabusa2 probe launched the **French-German Mobile Asteroid Surface Scout, or MASCOT**, towards the Ryugu asteroid's surface.

#### About MASCOT

- The 10-kg box-shaped MASCOT is loaded with sensors. It can take images at multiple wavelengths, investigate minerals with a microscope, gauge surface temperatures and measure magnetic fields.
- MASCOT will be largely immobile — **it will “jump” just once on its mission**, and it can turn on its sides. MASCOT has a maximum battery life of just 16 hours, and will transmit the data it collects to the Hayabusa2 before running out of juice.
- MASCOT's launch comes 10 days after the Hayabusa2 dropped a pair of MINERVA-II micro-rovers on the **Ryugu asteroid**. It was the first time that moving, robotic observation device have been successfully landed on an asteroid. The rovers will survey the asteroid's physical features with cameras and sensors.

#### Hayabusa2

- Hayabusa2 is a **Japanese asteroid-sampling spacecraft** which was launched in 2014. It successfully rendezvoused with asteroid Ryugu on June 27, 2018, according to the **Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA)**.
- For 18 months, the probe will poke, prod and impact the asteroid, deploying a small lander and three rovers. It will then blast an artificial crater to analyze material below the asteroid's surface. After that, the probe will head back to Earth, arriving near the end of 2020 with samples in tow.

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**Chandra Telescope**  
 Another NASA space telescope is out of commission, at least for the time being. The Chandra X-ray Observatory, which has been observing the universe in high-energy light since 1999, entered a protective "safe mode."

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Parker Solar Probe, Space Elevator, TDRSS, VENUS Satellite, Vampire Star, ASTROSAT

- The mission is a follow-up of Hayabusa, **which returned samples of asteroid Itokawa to Earth in 2010** despite numerous technical difficulties.

**WHO launches first global guidelines on sanitation, health**

**In News**

Four years after India rolled out the ambitious Swachhh Bharat Mission (SBM), aiming to have a toilet in each household besides making the country open defecation free by next year, the World Health Organisation

(WHO) initiated an almost similar move.

It launched the **first global guidelines on sanitation and health** even as it pitched for higher investments and policy shifts to achieve the goal of universal sanitation coverage by 2032.

- By adopting WHO’s new guidelines, countries can significantly reduce the 829, 000 annual diarrhoeal deaths due to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene. For every US \$1 invested in sanitation, WHO estimates a nearly six-fold return as measured by lower health costs, increased productivity and fewer premature deaths.
- The new **WHO guidelines set out four principal recommendations** including sanitation interventions to ensure entire communities have access to toilets that safely contain excreta. The full sanitation system should be undergo local health risk assessments to protect individuals and communities from exposure to excreta — whether this be from unsafe toilets, leaking storage or inadequate treatment.

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**PEPPER IT WITH**

Rotavac, Ebola virus disease, Swachhh Bharat Mission, Antibiotic resistance, WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control

**Nobel Prize**

**Chemistry**

Scientists **Frances Arnold, George Smith and Gregory Winter** won the 2018 Nobel Prize for Chemistry for research using directed evolution to produce enzymes for new chemicals and pharmaceuticals. Nobel Laureates in Chemistry have been **inspired by the power of evolution and used the same principles genetic change and selection to develop proteins that solve mankind's chemical problems.**

**Physics**

- American scientist **Arthur Ashkin, French engineer Gérard Mourou and Canadian professor Donna Strickland** have been awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics **for their work in the field of laser physics.**
- **Dr. Ashkin** has been awarded the Prize “for the optical tweezers and their application to biological systems.”
- **Dr. Mourou and Dr. Strickland** have been awarded “for their method of generating high-intensity, ultra-short optical pulses.”
- The inventions being honoured this year have revolutionised laser physics. Extremely small objects and incredibly rapid processes are now being seen in a new light.
- Advanced precision instruments are opening up unexplored areas of research and a multitude of industrial and medical applications.

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**Oneer™**

Council of Scientific and Industrial Research ,Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (CSIR-IITR), Lucknow has developed an **innovative technology for “Drinking Water Disinfection System” with Trade name “Oneer™”**. It is useful for continuous treatment of water and eliminates all disease causing pathogens such as virus, bacteria, fungi, protozoa and cyst to provide safe drinking water to domestic and communities settings as per National and International standards prescribed for potable water (BIS, WHO etc.).

**Medicine**

**James P. Allison** of MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and **Tasuku Honjo** of Kyoto University in Japan have won the Nobel Prize in physiology or medicine **for advances in harnessing the immune system to fight cancer.**

All previous types of cancer therapy were directed at the tumor cell, but Allison’s and Honjo’s approach was to remove brakes that keep the immune system in check, unleashing it against tumor cells. These “checkpoint inhibitor” therapies have greatly increased survival of cancer patients and may produce even greater results when combined with traditional therapies.

**About Nobel Prize**

- On 27 November 1895, Alfred Nobel signed his last will and testament, giving the largest share of his fortune - more than SEK 31 million to be converted into a fund and invested in "safe securities."
- The income from the investments was to be "distributed annually in the form of prizes to those who during the preceding year have **conferred the greatest benefit to mankind.**" **The first Nobel prize was awarded in 1901.**
- The Nobel Prizes were initially given in the areas of Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature and Peace. In 1968, Sveriges Riksbank (Sweden's central bank) established The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel.
- On 10 December, the anniversary of Alfred Nobel's death, **they receive their prizes from the Swedish King – a Nobel diploma, a medal, and 10 million Swedish crowns per prize.** All Nobel Prizes are awarded in Stockholm, Sweden, except for the Nobel Peace Prize, which is awarded in Oslo, Norway.

**National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation**

Union Cabinet approved, the establishment of National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation(NIMHR) in Sehore District (Bhopal-Sehore highway) in **Madhya Pradesh.**

**NIMHR will be the first of its kind in the country in the area of mental health rehabilitation.** It will serve as an institution of excellence for capacity building in human resource and research in the area of mental health rehabilitation, and also recommending body suggesting models/protocols for effective rehabilitation of persons with mental illness.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

Ramon Magsaysay Award, Mahatma Gandhi Peace Prize, Alfred Nobel, Pulitzer Award, Kalinga Awards

**ISRO & ROSCOSMOS to come up for first Indian manned mission**

**Why in News?**

The Roscosmos State Corporation for Space Activities and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) **will be working together on the first manned space mission.** A MoU was inked between ISRO and the Federal Space Agency of Russia ‘ROSCOSMOS’ for joint activities in the field of Human Spaceflight Programme. **India hopes to send its first manned mission Gaganyaan in 2022.**

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**Details**

- The Russian side has offered a ride to Indian astronaut a short visit to International Space Station (ISS) on board a **Soyuz spacecraft** for a short training mission in 2022. **The ISS is a**

**India’s first engine-less train**

**Train 18**, the country’s first engine-less train which is being regarded as a successor to the 30-year-old Shatabdi Express, hit the tracks for trials. The swanky 16-coach prototype without a locomotive (engine) will cut travel time by 15 per cent compared to the Shatabdi. Developed by the city-based Integral Coach Factory in 18 months, the full AC train is designed in such a way that passengers can have a look at the driver’s cabin.

**Shatabdi was introduced in 1988** and is presently running on over 20 routes connecting metros with other important cities.

**habitable artificial satellite in low Earth orbit. If successful, India would be the fourth nation to send a human in space after the US, Russia and China.**

- It was also decided to set up measurement data collection ground stations of the Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System **NavIC** and the Russian Navigation Satellite System **GLONASS** in both countries.
- As India is part of the BRICS grouping along with Russia, it was decided that cooperation on BRICS remote sensing satellite constellation will continue as well as to further work together in various space related programmes.

**Background**

Historically, India-Russia space cooperation was very strong, with the Soviet Union being one of the three partners who helped India get off the ground with its space programme. While this continued for several decades included for sending an Indian cosmonaut in a **Soviet Soyuz mission in 1982**, this relationship has begun to slow down in the last decade.

**Gaganyaan**

Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is on its way to progress with the new Gaganyaan Plan which is reportedly Rs. **10000 crore plan**. With this new space mission, ISRO will be sending one Indian to the Moon by 2022.

The **Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III (GSLV Mk III), which is considered to be ISRO’s biggest rocket will carry the spacecraft** that will be used in the Ganyagan mission and will send it to the orbit. Gaganyaan is the third biggest space mission after Chandrayaan and Mangalayaan.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
NASA’s New Horizon Probe, Parker solar probe, Mangalyaan, PSLV, Tiangong, Yaogan-30 Project

**India International Science Festival (IISF-2018)**

**In News**

President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the **fourth "India International Science Festival (IISF)." It is a four day science festival held in Lucknow** including Young Scientists’ Conference, Global Indian Science & Technology Stakeholders’ Meet (GIST) and the Mega Science, Technology & Industry Expo. IISF-2018 with its focal theme “Science for Transformation” had 23 special events in its 4th edition.

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**Significance**

- IISF is conceivably the biggest platform in India that brings together students, researchers, artists and general public to celebrate our nation’s achievements in science and technology.
- It is a medium to encourage the young minds towards the field of science and to promote the networking of stakeholders working towards the propagation of science.
- Through this festival, the largest of its kind in the country and in this region, it is expected that the message of excitement of Science and scientific temper will be spread to the students and will be inspiring for the youth. All stakeholders assembled to collectively work towards “**Vigyan se Vikas**”- **contributing to the Making of a New India.**
- Major attention were two World record attempts in IISF 2018, one of which is a World Record attempt to “isolate DNA” by 500 students from class 8th to 10th standard.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Dataset Search, RISECREEK, World first thermal battery plant, Gaofen project, Meghalayan age

**Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)**

**In News**

The Gujarat Forest Department started vaccinating lions in the **Gir sanctuary** to protect them from a deadly virus blamed for the death of some of the big cats. Twenty-three lions have died in the Gir sanctuary, the last abode of the lions in the country, less than a month. Most of

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them succumbed to the **Canine Distemper Virus (CDV) and protozoan infection.**

**CDV**

- CDV is considered a dangerous virus and is blamed for wiping out 30 per cent of lions in East African forests.
- It is mainly found in wild dogs, jackals and wolves. **The disease can be contracted by lions if they eat any animal infected by it.**
- It is a highly contagious virus that attacks the **immune system and other vital organs.** In most cases, the infection is fatal.
- According to the last census conducted in 2015, the number of lions in the Gir sanctuary stood at 523.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Zika Virus, Nipah virus, Trachoma, trans fat, ICMR, CSIR, Kochon prize, DASTAK Campaign

**Sequencing genes of Indians planned**

**In News**

India is planning a major mission **to sequence the genes of a “large” group of Indians** — akin to projects in the United Kingdom, China, Japan and Australia — and use this to improve health as well as buck a global trend of designing ‘personalised medicine.’ This was among the key decisions taken at the **1st Prime Minister’s Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (STIAC)** in its first meeting. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Biotechnology would be closely associated with the project.

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A group of Indian scientists and companies are involved with a **100k GenomeAsia project**, led out of the Nanyang Technological University (NTU), Singapore, to sequence the whole genomes of 100k Asians, including 50,000 Indians.

**Carnot prize**  
 Union Minister for Railways, Coal and Corporate Affairs Piyush Goyal will, receive the prestigious **Carnot prize for his contribution towards sustainable energy solutions.** The Carnot Prize is the Kleinman Center’s annual recognition of distinguished contributions to energy policy through scholarship or practice. **The award in the energy sector is named after French physicist Nicolas Sadi Carnot** who recognised that the power of the steam engine would “produce a great revolution“ in human development.

**100k Asians**

- It is an ambitious plan of GenomeAsia 100K (non-profit consortium), **to sequence 100,000 individuals.** It is intended to **initially include populations from 12 South Asian countries and at least 7 of North and East Asian countries.**
- In the first phase, the project focused on creating phased reference genomes for all major Asian ethnic groups representing a major step forward in understanding the population history and population substructure of the region.
- Key goal of the consortium is to accelerate precision medicine applications for Asian patients. It will also build advanced analytical capabilities to parse 'big-data' sets, leveraging advances in data science and artificial intelligence.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Deep Ocean Mission, Artificial Intelligence, Quantum Computing, STIAC, CRISPR-Cas9

**Two time zones for India**

**Context**

Over the years, various citizens and political leaders have debated whether India should have two separate time zones. **The demand is based on the huge difference in daylight times between the country’s longitudinal extremes, and the costs associated with**

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**following the same time zone.** Those arguing against the idea, on the other hand, cite impracticability — particularly the risk of railway accidents, given the need to reset times at every crossing from one time zone into another.

Now, **a proposal for two time zones has come from India’s national timekeeper itself.** Scientists at the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research’s National Physical Laboratory (**CSIR-NPL**), **which maintains Indian Standard Time**, have published a research article describing the necessity of two time zones, with the new one an hour ahead of the existing time zone.

**The debate**

**India extends from 68°7'E to 97°25'E**, with the spread of 29° representing almost two hours from the geographic perspective. This has led to the argument that early sunrise in the easternmost parts — **the Northeast — causes the loss of many daylight hours by the time offices** or educational institutions open, and that early sunset, for its part, leads to higher consumption of electricity.

**The new research findings**

- The research paper proposes to call the two time zones IST-I (UTC + 5.30 h) and IST-II (UTC + 6.30 h).
- **The proposed line of demarcation is at 89°52'E**, the narrow border between Assam and West Bengal. States west of the line would continue to follow IST (to be called IST-I). States east of the line — Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Andaman & Nicobar Islands —would follow IST-II.
- The paper explains the choice of the line: “As the railway signals have not yet been fully automated in the country, the border between the two time zones should have a very narrow spatial-width with minimum number of train stations so that the train timings while crossing the border can be managed manually without any untoward incidents.”
- The researchers estimated energy savings at 20 million kWh a year based on a formula explained in the article. They also analysed the importance of synchronising office hours — as well as biological activities — to sunrise and sunset timings.
- To make the idea possible, CSIR-NPL would need a second laboratory in the new time zone. This would consist of **‘Primary Time Ensemble-II’, traceable to the UTC at BIPM in France.**
- While the article asserts that CSIR-NPL already has the technical expertise to duplicate its existing facility, it also acknowledges that the move would require legislative sanction.

- ✓ **Russia has nine time zones.** Both Canada and U.S.A. have five time zones.
- ✓ The International Date Line (IDL) is an **imaginary line on Earth's surface defining the boundary between one day and the next.**
- ✓ IDL is located halfway around the world from the **prime meridian (0° longitude) or about 180° east (or west) of Greenwich**, London, UK, the reference point of time zones. It is also known as the line of demarcation.
- ✓ When you cross the International Date Line from west to east, **you subtract a day, and if you cross the line from east to west, you add a day.**

**Toluene**

University of Delhi and Indian Institute of Technology (BHU), Varanasi, **have successfully degraded toluene into less-toxic byproducts using bacteria Acinetobacter junii.**

Toluene is one of the petrochemical wastes that get released without treatment from industries such as refineries, paint, textile, paper and rubber. **It has been reported to cause serious health problems to aquatic life**, and studies point that it has genotoxic and carcinogenic effects on human beings.

**How time is maintained**

- Lines of longitude divides the Earth into 360 zones. **Because the Earth spins 360° in 24 hours, a longitudinal distance of 15° represents a time separation of 1 hour, and 1° represents 4 minutes.** Theoretically, the time zone followed by any place should relate to its longitudinal distance from any other place. Political boundaries, however,

mean that time zones are often demarcated by bent lines rather than straight lines of longitude.

- The geographic “zero line” runs through Greenwich, London. It identifies GMT, now known as Universal Coordinated Time (UTC), which is maintained by the Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) in France.
- Indian Standard Time is based on a line of longitude that runs through Mirzapur in UP. At 82°33'E, the line is 82.5° east of Greenwich, or 5.5 hours (5 hours 30 minutes) ahead of UCT.

**India’s longest river bridge**

- ✓ India’s longest river bridge of 19.3 kilometers length will be built on Brahmaputra river in Assam.
- ✓ This bridge will connect Dhubri of Assam to Fulbarani of Meghalaya. Japanese Finance Agency (JICA) has approved the loan for this project.
- ✓ At present, India’s largest river bridge is **Dhola-Sadia bridge**, its length is 9.15 kilometers.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

Geoid, Royal Astronomical Observatory at Greenwich, Polynesia, Melanesia, Micronesia, Horse latitude

**Hyperion**

- A team of scientists at the European Southern Observatory (ESO) **have sited the most massive structure in the early universe known to date.**
- The astronomers, found this **galaxy proto-supercluster - Hyperion** - using new measurements made by the visible multi-object spectrograph of ESO's Very Large Telescope and pouring over vast arrays of archive data.
- This is the first time that such a large structure has been identified at such a high redshift, just over two billion years after the Big Bang.
- Hyperion's unimaginably enormous mass is estimated to be a million billion times that of our own Sun (which is approximately 1,048 Jupiters, or 333,000 Earths). **In Ancient Greek mythology, Hyperion was a colossal titan who fathered Helios, the Sun.**
- Understanding Hyperion and how it compares to similar recent structures can give insights into how the universe developed in the past and will evolve into the future, and allows us the opportunity to challenge some models of supercluster formation. Unearthing this cosmic titan helps uncover the history of these large-scale structures.

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**PEPPER IT WITH**

China's artificial moon project, Dawn Mission, TESS, International Space Station, GSLV

**VIMOS**

The **VIMOS, an instrument that measures objects at a distance of billions of light years away**, in practice allows experts to see what the early universe was like in the distant cosmic past.

**Earth's inner core is solid, softer than thought**

**In News**

The **inner core of the Earth is solid and softer than previously thought, according to a study** which could improve our understanding of how the planet was formed.

When charged particles from the solar wind collide with air molecules above Earth's magnetic poles, **it causes the air molecules to glow, causing the auroras - the northern and southern lights**

**Finding**

Researchers at The Australian National University (ANU) came up with a way to detect shear waves, or "**J waves**" in the **inner core - a type of wave which can**

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**only travel through solid objects.** They found the inner core is indeed solid, **but also found that it's softer than previously thought.**

**Core**

**Radius:** 1,220 kilometres (760 miles) i.e. 70 per cent of the Moon's radius

**Composed of:** Nickel-iron alloy

**Temperature:** 5,700 K (5,430 °C) or 9806 °F, which is almost the temperature of Sun

The inner core is made up of two layers outer and inner.

- Outer core is 1,355 miles (2,180 km) thick.
- There is no estimated radius of the inner core; however, it plays a distinct role in making Earth's magnetic field. **The inner core is measured by shear waves, a seismology term, which is so tiny and feeble that it can't be observed directly.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 J-waves, P and S waves,  
 Seismic zone, Ring of fire,  
 Volcanoes, Mantle

**Global Competitiveness Index 2018**

**Why in News?**

India ranks 58<sup>th</sup> out of 140 countries on the World Economic Forum's (WEF's) global competitiveness rankings, 2018. India ranks behind other emerging economies such as Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. The United States leads the latest rankings, followed by Singapore, Germany, Switzerland and Japan.

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**About the Ranking**

The global competitiveness rankings are **based on a country's performance on four sub-indices, namely enabling environment, human capital, markets and the innovation ecosystem it offers.** Performance on each of these sub-indices is in turn measured through select indicators.

**Stats for India**

- India fares poorly on human capital, ranking 108th and 96th on health and skills, respectively. It ranks 63rd on infrastructure and 49th on macro-economic stability.
- On business dynamism and innovation capability, India does relatively well, ranking 58th and 31st, respectively. But on product and labour markets, India fares poorly, ranking 110th and 75th, respectively.
- As per the report, India leads the region in all other areas of competitiveness **except for health, education and skills**, where Sri Lanka boasts the highest healthy life expectancy (67.8 years) and the workforce with the highest amount of schooling (9.8 years).
- As per the report, India's greatest competitive advantages include its market size, innovation (in particular the quality of its research establishments and business dynamism (including the number of disruptive businesses). While **the areas that the country needs to improve include**, labour market (in particular workers rights), product market (in particular trade tariffs) and skills (in particular pupil-teacher ratio).

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 IMD World Competitiveness Center,  
 Global Slavery Index, World Investment Report,  
 Corruption Perception Index, Global Hunger Index

**GCI 4.0**

The World Economic Forum's Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 is a **composite indicator that assesses the set of factors that determine an economy's level of productivity - widely considered as the most important determinant of long-term growth.** The GCI 4.0 framework is built around 12 main drivers of productivity -- Institutions, Infrastructure; Technological readiness; Macroeconomic context; Health; Education and skills; Product market; Labour market; Financial system; Market size; Business dynamism; and Innovation.

## Ease of Doing Business Index

### In News

India jumped 23 ranks in the **World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index 2018** to 77. It ranked 100 in the 2017 report. The Index ranks 190 countries across **10 indicators ranged across the lifecycle of a business from 'starting a business' to 'resolving insolvency'**.

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### Reason for improvement

- India's strong reform agenda to improve the business climate for small and medium enterprises is bearing fruit. It is also reflected in the government's strong commitment to broaden the business reforms agenda at the state and now even at the district level. Going forward, a continuation of this effort will help India maintain its goal of strong and sustained economic growth and we look forward to recording these successes in the years ahead.



- During the past year, India made **Starting a Business easier by fully integrating multiple application forms into a general incorporation form.**

- India also replaced the value added tax with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) for which the registration process is faster **in both Delhi and Mumbai, the two cities measured by the Doing Business report.** In addition, Mumbai abolished the practice of site inspections for registering companies under the Shops and Establishments Act. As a result, the time to start a business has been halved to 16 days, from 30 days.



- Since the World Bank sets May 1 as the deadline for measurement, **there are several initiatives taken by the government that will only reflect in next year's rankings** including the effects of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and the full effect of the Goods and Services Tax.

### Ease of doing business index

Ease of doing business is an **index published by the World Bank.** It is an aggregate figure that includes different parameters which define the ease of doing business in a country. **It is computed by aggregating the distance to frontier scores of different economies.** The distance to frontier score uses the 'regulatory best practices' for doing business as the parameter and benchmark economies according to that parameter.

Indicators for which distance to frontier is computed include **construction permits, registration, getting credit, tax payment mechanism etc.** Countries are ranked as per the index.

### Way Forward

Despite the sharp improvement India has made in several of the categories in the Index, there were others such as registering a property, starting a business, taxation, insolvency, and enforcing a contract **where a lot of work still needs to be done.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Ease of doing business rankings for states, GST data analytics, Bankruptcy Code, Logistics Performance Index

The country is on the right track in adopting technology and innovations in business processes. Government efforts to this end are laudable. Government’s thrust on infrastructure development to promote trade and business, especially logistics and supply chain centred initiatives, as also overall fiscal reforms including bankruptcy code, are showing results.

### Data Localisation

#### Why in News?

Recently, companies around the world scrambled to try and meet a RBI-mandated deadline to store Indian users’ **financial data in India**, reigniting conversation about “data localisation”.

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#### What is data localization?

Data localization is the practice of **storing data on any device that is physically present within the borders of the country where the data is generated.** Free flow of digital data especially that which can impact government or regional operations, is restricted by some governments. Many try to protect and promote security across borders and, thus, encourage data localization. While there is enough reason to support data localization, misguided policies can have harmful consequences for citizens and economies alike.

#### Background

In April, RBI had issued a circular which mandated “All system providers shall ensure that the **entire data relating to payment systems operated by them are stored in a system only in India.** This data should include the full end-to-end transaction details/information collected/carried/processed as part of the message/payment instruction.” It added that for the overseas leg of a transaction, the data may be stored in the foreign country. The central bank has rejected a proposal by overseas service providers to allow **data mirroring, which allows them to retain a copy of the data on their overseas servers as well.**

In July, a data protection draft law by a committee headed by retired Justice B N Srikrishna recommended that all personal data of **Indians have at least one copy in India.** A subset of that data, labelled critical personal data, must be stored and processed only in India.

#### Issues

- US-India Business Council (USIBC) cautioned that policies restricting flow of data **can act as "barriers" to expansion of services in India**, impacting not only consumers but also growth of Indian payments market. Industry bodies, especially those with significant ties to the US, have slung heavy backlash.
- There is also concern about a **fractured Internet (or a “splinternet”), where the domino effect of protectionist policy will lead to other countries following suit.** Much of this sentiment harkens to the values of a globalised, competitive internet marketplace, **where costs and speeds, rather than nationalistic borders, determine information flows.**

### The debate over data

- ▶ RBI has set **15 October** as the deadline for payments system operators to store data in India
- ▶ It has instructed payment companies to submit **fortnightly updates** on the progress made by them on storing data in the country
- ▶ Global digital payments companies such as Visa, American Express, Facebook, PayPal, Mastercard, and Google are likely to be impacted by the regulations
- ▶ The government has said that Google agreed to comply with the norms, but sought an extension of deadline till **December-end**

- Opponents say that this, in turn, may backfire on India’s own young start-ups that are attempting global growth, or on larger firms that process foreign data in India, such as Tata Consulting Services and Wipro.
- Critics not only caution against state misuse and surveillance of personal data, but also argue that security and government access is not achieved by localisation. Even if the data is stored in the country, **the encryption keys may still remain out of the reach of national agencies.**
- The **possible rise in prices** or unavailability of foreign cloud computing services in case of a data localisation mandate, and its impact on medium small and micro enterprises (MSMEs) as well as start-ups relying on these services must also be counted for.

Today, one can start business by incorporating a company through an on-line process without visiting any Government office. This was achieved in January, 2016 by establishing **Central Registry Centre (CRC) for on-line incorporation of the company and reserving its unique name.** Ministry of Corporate Affairs has launched another process re-engineering by making incorporation of Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) through a complete online system. Through a web service titled **“RUN-LLP (Reserve Unique Name – Limited Liability Partnership)”**. Name can also be allotted to LLP through an e-form titled “FiLiP (Form for incorporation of Limited Liability Partnership).

Reports suggest that cross-border data flows contributed \$2.8 trillion to the global economy in 2014, which is expected to touch \$11 trillion by 2025. Data has often been referred to as the new oil, an economic resource that is fuelling the **fourth industrial revolution.**

**Why is Data Localisation being Favoured?**

- ❖ A common argument of government officials is that localisation will help Indian law enforcement access data. **To ensure better monitoring, it is important to have unfettered supervisory access to data stored with these system providers.**
- ❖ This especially gained prominence earlier this year, when a spate of lynchings across the country was linked to WhatsApp rumours. WhatsApp’s firm stance on encrypted content frustrated government officials.
- ❖ Proponents highlight security against foreign attacks and surveillance, which opponents consider a weak argument in cases of **data mirroring.** Concerns also rose when Facebook declared that its **Cambridge Analytica controversy** had affected Indian users as well.
- ❖ Data regulation for privacy and security will have little teeth without localisation, citing models in China and Russia.
- ❖ Many companies which are domestic rivals of many big US giants especially condemn the **large tax differences between international companies operating in India and those with a permanent establishment in the country.** Many argue that localisation would lead to a larger presence in India overall, such as local offices, and increase tax liability.
- ❖ **“Data is the new oil”** also provides a backbone to much of the localisation drive. In the home of the largest open Internet market in the world, many companies claim that national wealth creation relies on in-house data storage. The e-commerce policy took on a similar stance, championing domestic innovation, and the data protection report also mentioned harnessing India’s digital economy.

**Regulations Around the World**

- As of now, much of cross-border data transfer is governed by individual bilateral **“mutual legal assistance treaties”** (MLATs).
- Russia has the most restrictive regulation for data flow with strict localisation and high penalties.
- The European Union’s **General Data Protection Regulation** (GDPR) does not mandate

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Single Global Data Privacy Law, Cloud Computing Policy, Cambridge Analytica controversy, Draft National Digital Communications Policy 2018

all data to be localised, but rather restricts flow to countries with a strong data protection framework.

- The **China government** mandates localisation for all “important data” held by “critical information infrastructure” and any cross border personal data transfer must undergo a security assessment.
- The United States leaves regulation up to the state and sector. Earlier this year, President Donald Trump signed the **Clarifying Lawful Overseas Use of Data Act (CLOUD Act) which established data sharing with certain countries.**

**Way forward**

The vision of a sound payments infrastructure in India is a long-term objective requiring the on-going commitment of both stakeholders and policymakers to enact the most effective reforms. Payment firms have to abide by the laws framed by the government and RBI. They may seek some relaxations related to payments.

Enhanced cooperation between all stakeholders in the global arena, through prolific debates may pave the way ahead for deciding the fate of cross-border data flows, without compromising on data privacy, security and sovereignty.

**UPI for Prepaid payment Partners**

**Why in News?**

RBI has released the **guidelines for interoperability between prepaid payment instruments** (PPIs) such as wallets and cards that will effectively allow users of popular payment wallets to transfer money from one wallet to another.

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Further, **it also allowed PPIs to issue cards using authorised card networks such as Mastercard, Visa or Rupay.** PPI issuers shall adhere to all the requirements of card networks/UPI, including membership type and criteria, merchant on-boarding, adherence to various standards, rules and regulations applicable to the specific payment system such as technical requirements, certifications and audit requirements, governance, etc.

**Significance of the Move**

The guidelines, while boosting the e-wallet industry, **would also ensure the safety and accuracy** of the transfer of money by individuals from one wallet to another. It will ensure that when the transition happens from one e-wallet app to another, **it reflects utmost speed and accuracy for the interoperability to be effective and efficient.**

**About UPI**

- Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is an instant payment system **developed by the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI)**, an RBI regulated entity and is controlled by RBI and IBA (Indian Bank Association).
- UPI is built over the IMPS infrastructure and **allows to instantly transferring money between any two parties' bank accounts.**
- The interface is based on **two factor** authentication with a seamless single click payment. This feature of UPI is aligned with the regulatory guidelines that make it the fastest.
- 2 factor authentication is quite similar to OTP. Here MPIN (Mobile Banking Personal

**RTGS and NEFT**

- ✓ Under RTGS (real time gross settlement), the fund transfer takes place on a real time basis. The beneficiary bank has to credit the recipient's account **within 30 minutes** of receiving the funds transfer message. The RTGS window is available from 8 am to 16.30 pm on working days.
- ✓ NEFT operates on a **deferred settlement basis.** Fund transfer under NEFT is settled in batches. There are twelve settlements from 8 am to 7 pm.
- ✓ RTGS facility is meant for large value transactions. For retail customers, the minimum amount remitted **through RTGS is Rs. 2 lakh.** There is no minimum amount for funds remitted via NEFT. **Both are maintained by RBI.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**

Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007, Bharat Interface for money, Bharat QR code, Aadhar Enabled Payment System

Identification Number) is used instead of OTP.

- It **was launched in 2016**. All payments are instant and 24/7 and is faster than NEFT. Various bank accounts can be accessed through this single application.
- Balance and transaction history can also be viewed through UPI. The different channels for transferring funds using UPI are: **Send/Collect through Virtual ID, Account Number + IFSC and Aadhaar Number**.

## International Monetary Fund and World Economic Outlook

### Why in News?

IMF recently forecasted that India's growth is expected to increase to 7.3% in 2018 and to 7.4% in 2019 [slightly lower than in the April 2018 World Economic Outlook (WEO) for 2019, given the recent increase in oil prices and the tightening of global financial conditions], up from 6.7% in 2017. The forecast was made in the latest World Economic Outlook report.

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### World Economic Outlook Report 2018 (Oct)

- The report is published twice a year in April and October.
- India's medium-term growth prospects remain strong at 7.75%, benefiting from ongoing structural reform, but have been marked down by just under 5percentage point relative to the April 2018 WEO.
- If prediction goes right then India will regain the tag of the world's fastest-growing major economy this year, crossing China with more than 0.7 percentage points.
- The report also mentioned that this acceleration reflected a rebound from transitory shocks (the currency exchange initiative and implementation of the GST), with strengthening investment and robust private consumption.
- According to report, In India, important reforms have been implemented in the recent years, including the GST, the inflation-targeting framework, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, and steps to liberalise foreign investment and make it easier to do business.

### IMF and Quota

- ❖ 15th General Review of Quotas for IMF was recently held in Bali. **Quota agenda of IMF is urgent as there is a deadline fixed for its conclusion next year**. India has regularly been pitching for this reform so that share of emerging nations increases in line with their growing economic position.
- ❖ Both, enhancement in the Quantum of Quota Resources and Realignment of Voting Shares should take place so that Quota (Shares of Emerging Market and Developing Countries) increase in line with its growing relative economic position in the world.
- ❖ The IMF is a quota-based institution. **Quotas are the building blocks of the IMF's financial and governance structure**. An individual member country's quota broadly reflects its relative position in the world economy. **Quotas are denominated in Special Drawing Rights (SDRs)**, the IMF's unit of account.
- ❖ The IMF's Board of Governors conducts general quota reviews at regular intervals (**no more than five years**). Any changes in quotas must be approved by an 85 percent majority of the total voting power, and a member's own quota cannot be changed without its consent.
- ❖ Two main issues addressed in a general quota review are the size of an overall quota increase and the distribution of the increase among the members.
- ❖ The Board of Governors, the highest decision-making body of the IMF, consists of one governor and one alternate governor for each member country.
- ❖ Finance Minister is the **ex-officio Governor on the Board of Governors** and the RBI Governor is the Alternate Governor at the IMF. India is represented at the IMF by an Executive Director who also represents three other countries as well, viz. **Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan**.

#### PEPPER IT WITH

Global Financial Safety Net, Emerging Market and Developing Countries, Gita Gopinath



## Centre for 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution

### In News

The World Economic Forum recently announced its **new Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution in India**, which would aim to bring together the government and business leaders to pilot emerging technology policies. WEF, a not for profit organisation is based in Geneva and is an international organisation for public-private cooperation.

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### About the centre

- It would be based in **Maharashtra and it has selected drones, artificial intelligence and blockchain as the first three project areas.**
- The new centre will work in collaboration with the government on a national level to co-design new policy frameworks and protocols for emerging technology alongside leaders from business, academia, start-ups and international organizations.
- **NITI Aayog will coordinate the partnership on behalf of the government** and the work of the centre among multiple ministries.
- The WEF has also entered into partnerships with the Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh governments for the new initiative and more states would be roped in going forward.
- **Projects will be scaled across India and globally.** As part of the WEF's global network, the new centre in India will work closely with project teams in San Francisco, Tokyo and Beijing, where such Centres are already present.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Internet of Things, connected robots, Cloud, digital twins, Smart Manufacturing Summit, Wheebox Employability Test

### What is 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution?

The Fourth Industrial Revolution will change how we produce, how we consume, how we communicate and even how we live. It will make the technological progress more human centred and will ensure that technology is used with the full potential for better lives.

### Global network of Centres for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

The global network of Centres for the Fourth Industrial Revolution brings together governments, leading companies, civil society and experts from around the world to co-design and pilot innovative approaches to the policy and governance of technology. Its vision is to **shape the development and use of technology in ways that maximize the benefits and minimize the risks.** The network will develop, implement and scale up agile and human-centred pilot projects that can be adopted by policy-makers, legislators and regulators worldwide.

### Background

**1<sup>st</sup> Industrial Revolution (18<sup>th</sup> century):** Following a slow period of proto-industrialization, first revolution spans from the end of the 18th century to the beginning of the 19th century. It witnessed the **emergence of mechanization**, a process that replaced agriculture with industry as the foundations of the economic structure of society. Mass extraction of coal along with the invention of the steam engine created a new type of energy that thrust forward all processes thanks to the development of railroads and the acceleration of economic, human and material exchanges.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> Industrial Revolution (2<sup>nd</sup> half of 19<sup>th</sup> century):** New technological advancements initiated the **emergence of a new source of energy:** electricity, gas and oil. As a result, the development of the combustion engine set out to use these new resources to their full potential. Furthermore, the steel industry began to develop and grow alongside the exponential demands for steel. Chemical synthesis also developed to bring us synthetic fabric, dyes and fertilizer. Methods of communication were also revolutionized with the invention of the telegraph and the telephone and so were transportation methods with the emergence of the automobile and the plane at the beginning of the 20th century.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Industrial Revolution (2<sup>nd</sup> half of 20<sup>th</sup> century)

Third industrial revolution appeared **with the emergence of a new type of energy whose**

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**potential surpassed its predecessors: nuclear energy.** This revolution witnessed the rise of electronics—with the transistor and microprocessor—but also the rise of telecommunications and computers. This new technology led to the production of miniaturized material which would open doors, most notably to space research and biotechnology.

**WEF study report, ‘Future of Work in India’**

The WEF “Future of Work in India” report prepared with the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) outlines findings **from the Future of Work, Education and Skills Enterprise Survey.** Data was collected from 774 companies in India, from micro-sized firms to those employing more than 25,000 workers. It presents findings on the pace of technological adoption and digitization among Indian companies, and its impact on job creation, displacement and the nature of work.

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**Key insights from the research**

- Among the surveyed companies, 25 percent identified technological adoption as the trend most likely to positively impact their business in the next five years.
- Despite widespread concern that machines and technology are displacing human workers, the research finds that among the surveyed companies, **33% needed to hire additional workers owing to the adoption of industrial technologies and machinery in the last five years**, compared to 19% that reduced their staff as a result, which is to continue in the medium term.
- Companies recognise the potential of the Internet of Things (IoT) and big data. Quality improvements, new markets, and government regulations drive technology adoption. **Cutting costs was a less important reason for introducing new technologies.**
- **Skills gaps and financial constraints are the main barriers to technology adoption.** 34 percent of the surveyed companies report a lack of know-how among their employees as the most important barrier to technology adoption, while almost 1/4<sup>th</sup> attributes this to a lack of investment capital.
- 33 percent of companies report changes in the skill sets required of their staff due to the introduction of new technologies and machinery. 84 percent of companies plan to address such gaps in knowledge and skills internally through retraining existing workers in new capabilities, or having employees learn new requisite skills on the job.
- Among the surveyed firms, **71 percent currently employ fewer than 10 percent female workers, with 30 percent having no female workers at all.** 37 percent of firms said that they prefer to hire men, while 11 percent report that they are looking to bring on more women.
- The research reveals **communication misalignment between companies looking to hire and job seekers, especially youth.** Only 14 percent companies use online modes of recruitment for filling vacancies, while 81 percent of youth reported looking for jobs online.

**India recently launched a task force in collaboration with WEF to develop an action plan to address skills gaps** in India and make the country's workforce ready for jobs of the future. The task force will bring together leaders from business, Government, civil society, and the education and training sectors to accelerate the future-proofing of education and training systems in the country. The task force is the **second country-led public-private collaboration of the World Economic Forum's Closing the Skills Gap Project after South Africa.**

The country's female workforce participation – **at a mere 27 per cent – stands 23 percentage points lower than the global average.** Incidentally, the recent All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) shows that more women now go to college than men and there are as many women as there are men in undergraduate science programmes.

## Currency Manipulator Tag

### Why in News?

The US treasury has kept India, China, Japan, South Korea, Germany and Switzerland on the monitoring list. It said that India's circumstances have shifted markedly, as the central bank's net sales of forex over the first six months of 2018 led net purchases over the four quarters through June 2018 to fall to \$4 billion, or 0.2% of GDP. The rupee has depreciated by 13.05% this fiscal. India was for the first time, in April, placed by the US in its currency monitoring list of countries.

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### What is currency manipulation?

The US Department of the Treasury publishes a semi-annual report in which the developments in global economic and exchange rate policies are reviewed. If a US trade partner meets three assessment criteria, the US labels it a currency manipulator. The US then tries to solve it via bilateral talks.

### Assessment criteria for currency manipulation list

The US Treasury has established thresholds for the three criteria. First, a significant bilateral trade surplus with the US is one that is at least \$20 billion; second, a material current account surplus is one that is at least 3% of GDP; and third, persistent, one-sided intervention reflected in repeated net purchases of foreign currency and total at least 2% of an economy's GDP over a year. The Treasury's goal is to focus attention on those nations whose bilateral trade is most significant to the US economy and whose policies are the most material for the global economy.

### Liquidity Boost

#### How Does It Help

**WHAT IS CURRENCY SWAP:** One country exchanges its national currency for that of another or even a third one

**INDIA-JAPAN SWAP:** India can acquire yen or dollars from Japan up to \$75 billion in exchange for rupees. The exchange has to be reversed after an agreed period

**TERMS OF AGREEMENT:** The facility is entered into between central banks of two countries. The terms of the swap and its cost are also included. The exchange rate is typically fixed for a transaction. The borrowing bank pays interest for use of funds

RBI's \$393-billion chest gets a one-shot \$75 billion boost

There is no immediate cost; only when an amount is drawn

Short-term liquidity mismatches can be met quickly

It improves market sentiment, curbs speculative pressure on the rupee

Foreign investors will draw comfort from the arrangement

### History

Treasury has labelled three countries as currency manipulators in the past: Japan in 1988, Taiwan in 1988 and again in 1992, and China from 1992 until 1994. All three countries made substantial reforms to their foreign exchange regimes after the negotiations, and were removed from the list after their currencies appreciated and external trade balances declined significantly.

### How Central Banks intervene?

- Central banks intervene in the foreign exchange market to reduce volatility in the exchange rate and often to build foreign exchange reserves or to manage these reserves.
- They intervene to ensure that their currencies are neither overvalued or undervalued. If the currency is overvalued, it can hurt a country's competitiveness in exports while an undervalued currency will have an impact on inflation.
- For instance, when the currency is appreciating, a central bank intervenes in the market by buying foreign exchange like the USD or Euro or any other currency which leads to an increase in the supply of the local currency and in turn lowers its value.
- To combat depreciation of the currency, the central bank sells foreign exchange. It is also done to manage expectations in the forex market.
- India's central bank — the RBI has intervened in the market to build the country's reserves especially after 2013 when the rupee came under attack. Since then reserves have risen.
- 

#### PEPPER IT WITH

Floating exchange, Fixed exchange, Pegged float exchange, FATF watch list

## Insolvency Law Committee

### Why in News?

Insolvency Law Committee (ILC) has recommended to **adopt the UNCITRAL Model Law of Cross Border Insolvency, 1997** for its cross border insolvency framework as it provides for a comprehensive framework to deal with cross border insolvency issues. The Committee has also recommended a few carve outs to ensure that there is no inconsistency between the domestic insolvency framework and the proposed Cross Border Insolvency Framework. This recommendation formed part of the second report of the Insolvency Law Committee, headed by Corporate Affairs Secretary Injeti Srinivas.

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### Background

ILC was constituted by the **Ministry of Corporate Affairs in 2017** to take stock of the functioning and implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (“Code”) and identify issues that affect the efficiency of the corporate insolvency resolution and liquidation framework under the Code. In its last Report dated March 2018, the Committee discussed that there was a need to re-evaluate the current cross-border insolvency framework in India as it was fragmented, complicated and not at par with global standards.

### Rationale behind the recommendations

The necessity of having Cross Border Insolvency Framework under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code arises from the fact that many Indian companies have a global footprint and many foreign companies have presence in multiple countries including India. In the backdrop of below provisions, the Committee has recommended that the Model Law be adopted with necessary modifications:

- **Sections 234 and 235** of the Code which envisage entering into bilateral agreements and issuance of letters of request to foreign courts by Adjudicating Authorities under the Code resulted in an ad-hoc framework that was susceptible to delay and uncertainty for creditors and debtors as well as for courts.
- Moreover, the mechanism for enforcement of foreign judgments under **the Civil Procedure Code, 1908** is not broad enough to include all insolvency orders such as orders regarding reorganization processes, administrative and interim orders, etc., rendering many judgments and orders in the insolvency process unenforceable in India.

### UNCITRAL Model Law

- The United Nations Commission on International Trade and Law is the **core legal body of the United Nations system in the field of international trade law**. It was established in 1966. UNCITRAL's business is the modernization and harmonization of rules on international business.
- The UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency, 1997 (“Model Law”) was identified as a framework which was globally recognised and accepted and forms part of international best practices in dealing with cross border insolvency issues.
- The Model Law was approved by UNCITRAL by consensus in 1997 and since then it has been implemented by 44 countries.
- **The advantages of the model law are:**
  - The **precedence given to domestic proceedings** and protection of public interest.
  - **Greater confidence generation among foreign investors**, adequate flexibility for seamless integration with the domestic Insolvency Law and a robust mechanism for international cooperation.
- The model law deals with **four major principles of cross-border insolvency:**
  1. Direct access to foreign insolvency professionals and foreign creditors to participate in or commence domestic insolvency proceedings against a defaulting debtor,

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Centre of main interest, Debt Recovery Tribunal, SARFAESI Act, Restructuring of Banks, SWIFT

- 2. Recognition of foreign proceedings & provision of remedies,
  - 3. Cooperation between domestic and foreign courts & domestic and foreign insolvency practitioners and
  - 4. Coordination between two or more concurrent insolvency proceedings in different countries.
- The main proceeding is determined by the concept of **centre of main interest** (COMI).

**Conclusion**

- ❖ The inclusion of the Cross Border Insolvency Chapter in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code of India, 2016, will be a major step forward and **will bring Indian Insolvency Law on a par with that of matured jurisdictions.**
- ❖ Although the proposed Framework for Cross Border Insolvency will enable the country to deal with Indian companies having foreign assets and vice versa, **it still does not provide for a framework for dealing with enterprise groups**, which is still work in progress with UNCITRAL and other international bodies.

**Open Market Operations (OMO)**

**What is OMO?**

- Open market operations are **conducted by the RBI by way of sale or purchase of government securities (g-secs) to adjust money supply conditions.**
- The central bank sells g-secs to suck out liquidity from the system and buys back g-secs to infuse liquidity into the system.
- These operations are often conducted on a day-to-day basis in a manner that balances inflation while helping banks continue to lend.
- The **RBI uses OMO along with other monetary policy tools** such as repo rate, cash reserve ratio and statutory liquidity ratio to adjust the quantum and price of money in the system.
- The objective of **OMO is to regulate the money supply in the economy.** RBI carries out the OMO through commercial banks and does not directly deal with the public.

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For better coordination among financial sector regulators and to ensure better efficiency as well as for avoiding overlapping of functions, government has formed the **Financial Stability and Development Council in 2010**, with the Finance Minister as the Chairman. The immediate impulse for the establishment of the FSDC was the tussle between SEBI and IRDA on the regulation of ULIPs. An important wing of the FSDC, in terms of functional responsibility is the **Sub committee chaired by the Governor of the RBI.**

**Present Relevance**

In India, liquidity conditions usually tighten during the second half of the financial year (mid-October onwards) because the pace of government expenditure usually slows down, even as the **onset of the festival season leads to a seasonal spike in currency demand.** Moreover, activities of foreign institutional investors, advance tax payments, etc. also cause an ebb and flow of liquidity. However, the RBI smoothens the availability of money through the year to make sure that liquidity conditions don't impact the ideal level of interest rates it would like to maintain in the economy.

**What is Monetary Policy**

Monetary policy is the **macroeconomic policy laid down by the central bank.** It involves management of money supply and interest rate and is the **demand side economic policy used by the government of a country to achieve macroeconomic objectives like inflation, consumption, growth and liquidity.**

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Neutral Liquidity Stance, Monetary Policy Committee, Fiscal Policy

- The **RBI implements the monetary policy** through open market operations, bank

rate policy, reserve system, credit control policy, moral persuasion and through many other instruments.

- Monetary policy can be **expansionary and contractionary in nature**. Increasing money supply and reducing interest rates indicate an expansionary policy. The reverse of this is a contractionary monetary policy.

**What is Fiscal Policy**

Fiscal policy is the **means by which a government adjusts its spending levels and tax rates to monitor and influence a nation's economy**. It is based on the theories of JM Keynes. The government uses its expenditure and taxation programmes to generate the desirable effects or eliminate the undesirable effects on the **production, employment and national income of the economy**. The Fiscal Policy aims at ensuring a long-run stability of the economy, could be achieved only by controlling the short-run economic fluctuations. Thus, the fiscal policy strives to achieve the following objectives:

1. Promotion of employment, i.e. maintaining and achieving the full employment.
2. Maintaining or stabilizing the growth rate of the economy.
3. Maintaining or stabilizing the price levels in the market.
4. Promoting the economic development of underdeveloped countries.
5. Achieving the equilibrium in the Balance of Payments.
6. Economic justice and equity.

**BSE 1<sup>st</sup> Stock Exc. in the country to launch CD contract in gold and silver**

**Why in News?**

India's top two stock exchanges BSE Ltd and National Stock Exchange of India Ltd recently received permission from the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) for commodity derivatives trading.

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**Details**

- The Bombay Stock Exchange became the **first stock exchange in the country to launch commodity derivatives contract in gold and silver**. Till date, commodity derivatives contract are available only on MCX and NCDEX, the two specialised commodity derivatives exchanges in the country.

- The launch of commodity derivatives platform on the BSE will help in efficient price discovery, reduce timeline and make it cost-effective. The bourse also promises a user-friendly platform with robust risk management system and wider market penetration.
- There is a need for **more deliverable contracts in agri-commodities**, which can provide good price discovery platform and help farmers and agri producing

**Purchasing Managers Index (PMI)**

- ✓ It is an indicator of the economic health of the manufacturing sector and is based on **five major indicators**: new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier deliveries and the employment environment.
- ✓ The purpose of the PMI is to provide information about current business conditions to company decision makers, analysts and purchasing managers.
- ✓ It is derived **from monthly surveys of private sector companies**. The data for the index are collected through a survey of 400 purchasing managers in the manufacturing sector on different fields.
- ✓ PMI of **more than 50 represents** expansion of the manufacturing sector while **under 50** represents a contraction, and a reading at 50 indicates no change. There is services PMI as well.
- ✓ For India, the PMI Data is published by Japanese firm **Nikkei but compiled and constructed by Markit Economics** (for the US, it is the ISM).

organisations, who can participate and take the benefit of price discovery and price risk management.

- Despite the presence of about 40-plus contracts, commodities derivatives segment is

still at a very nascent stage. Out of the total exchange-traded derivatives across the globe, the size of commodity derivatives is only 22 per cent, out of which India has a negligible share of 5-6 per cent.

**NCDEX**

- National Commodity & Derivatives Exchange Limited (NCDEX) is a professionally managed on-line multi commodity exchange. The shareholders of NCDEX comprises of large national level institutions, large public sector bank and companies.
- It is a **public limited company incorporated in 2003** under the Companies Act, 1956 and is regulated by SEBI. NCDEX is the only commodity exchange in the country promoted by national level institutions.

**MCX**

- ❖ The Multi Commodity Exchange of India Limited (MCX), **India’s first listed exchange, is a state-of-the-art, commodity derivatives exchange that facilitates online trading**, and clearing and settlement of commodity derivatives transactions, thereby providing a platform for risk management.
- ❖ The Exchange, which **started operations in 2003**, operates under the regulatory framework of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).
- ❖ MCX offers trading in commodity derivative contracts across varied segments including bullion, industrial metals, energy and agricultural commodities. **It is India’s first exchange to offer commodity options contracts.**
- ❖ The Exchange’s flagship index series, **iCOMDEX**, developed jointly with Thomson Reuters, is a series of real-time commodity futures price indices, which give information on market movements in key commodities traded on MCX.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
MCCP certification,  
Commodity derivatives, SEBI

**International Social Security Association (ISSA)**

**In News**

The Employees’ State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has won the **ISSA Good Practice Award’** for Administrative Solution for Coverage Extension at the **“Regional Social Security Forum for Asia and the Pacific”** held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia recently.

The award recognizes the measures taken by ESIC for extension of coverage-**SPREE (Scheme for Promoting Registration of Employers and Employees)**, reduced rate of contribution rates for 24 months in newly implemented areas and raising the wage limit for coverage under the ESI Act, etc.

The **international ‘Vision Zero’ conference** was organised recently by Tamil Nadu in association with DGUV, Germany, and supported by the International Social Security Association (ISSA). The vision of the conference was to **have a world without occupational accidents and work-related diseases.**

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**Regional Social Security Forum for Asia and the Pacific**

It is a triennial Forum, which is the most important social security event in the Region. For the triennial Regional Forum, ISSA invites submissions for the ISSA Good Practices Award for Asia and the Pacific Regions. The Forum provides unique opportunities to CEOs and Managers of ISSA Member Institutions to discuss key social security challenges and share their experiences.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Labour welfare measures,  
Child Labour (Prohibition & Regulation) Act,  
1986, Indian Labour Law

**About ISSA**

Founded in 1927 and headquarters at the International Labour Office, in Geneva, ISSA is the principal international institution bringing together social security agencies and organizations. The ISSA’s aim is to promote dynamic social security as the social dimension in a globalizing world by supporting excellence in social security administration.

### The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences

- The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2018 was divided equally between **William D. Nordhaus** "for integrating climate change into long-run macroeconomic analysis" and **Paul M. Romer** "for integrating technological innovations into long-run macroeconomic analysis."
- They both have designed methods for addressing some of our time's most basic and pressing questions about how we create long-term sustained and sustainable economic growth. They broadened the scope of economic analysis by constructing models that explain **how the market economy interacts with nature and knowledge.**
- Nordhaus' findings deal with interactions between society and nature. In the mid-1990s, he became the first person to create an **integrated assessment model**, i.e. a quantitative model that describes the global interplay between the economy and the climate. The model is now widely spread and is used to simulate how the economy and the climate co-evolve. It is used to examine the consequences of climate policy interventions, for example carbon taxes.
- Romer demonstrates how knowledge can function as a driver of long-term economic growth. He demonstrated how economic forces govern the willingness of firms to produce new ideas and innovations. Romer's solution laid the foundation of what is now called **endogenous growth theory**. It explains how ideas are different to other goods and require specific conditions to thrive in a market.

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### Strategic Policy Group

#### Why in News?

The Strategic Policy Group (SPG), formed to assist the National Security Council (NSC), has been reconstituted with National Security Advisor Ajit Doval as its chief, to strategise on matters dealing with internal and economic security. He replaced the Cabinet Secretary.

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- SPG was **first notified in 1999**. The SPG will assist the NSC and undertake among other tasks a long term strategic Defence review.
- The SPG shall be the principal mechanism for inter-ministerial coordination and integration of relevant inputs in the formulation of national security policies.
- The other members are Vice Chairman of **NITI Ayog**, Cabinet Secretary, **three services chiefs, RBI Governor**, Secretaries of External Affairs, Home, Defence, Finance, Defence Production, Revenue, Atomic Energy, Space and National Security Council Secretariat besides Scientific Advisor to Defence Minister, Secretary (R) in Cabinet Secretariat and the Intelligence Bureau chief.
- The reconstituted policy group also places the National Security Adviser at the top of the country's security strategy set-up as the NSA was also recently appointed, the chairman of the defence planning committee, a new strategic think tank.
- NSA is tasked with regularly advising the PM on internal and external threats and overseeing strategic and sensitive issues on behalf of the Prime Minister.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Defence Planning Committee,  
 Strategic Petroleum Reserve,  
 National Security Council

### Military Exercises

#### IBSAMAR VI

The sixth edition of **IBSAMAR, a joint Multi - National Maritime Exercise between the Indian, Brazilian and South African Navies**, was held at Simons Town, South Africa. The last edition of IBSAMAR (IBSAMAR V) was conducted in Goa. The aim of the exercise is to **undertake collective training for participating navies, building interoperability and**

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mutual understanding as well as sharing of best practices.

**Operation Samudra Maitri**

India has launched 'Operation Samudra Maitri' to assist victims of earthquake and tsunami in Central Sulawesi Province of the Republic of Indonesia.

**IND-INDO CORPAT**

The 32nd edition of India-Indonesia coordinated patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) is being held in Belawan, Indonesia from 11 – 27 October 2018.

**DHARMA GUARDIAN - 2018**

Exercise DHARMA GUARDIAN - 2018, a joint military exercise between Indian & Japanese Armies, commenced recently in Mizoram.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Guided Missile Frigate Tarkash, Guided Missile Destroyer Kolkata, Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft P8I

**Druzhba-III**

The third joint military drill between Pakistan and Russia under the bilateral training cooperation agreement was held recently in Russia.

**Iron Magic 19**

The joint UAE-US military exercise 'Iron Magic 19' was held started as part of a series of joint military exercises throughout the year between UAE Armed forces and the armed forces of brotherly and friendly countries.

**ADMM**

**Why in News?**

Singapore hosted the 12th ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and the 5th ADMM-Plus. India also attended the two key meetings of the defence ministers of the ASEAN grouping.

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**About ADMM**

- ADMM is the highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN. It aims to promote mutual trust and confidence through greater understanding of defence and security challenges as well as enhancement of transparency and openness.
- ADMM and ADMM-Plus serves as key Ministerial-level platforms in the regional security architecture, promoting strategic dialogue and practical cooperation between ASEAN and its partners.
- This is the second time that Singapore is chairing the ADMM since its establishment in 2006 and the first time to chair the ADMM-Plus since its establishment in 2010.
- The ADMM-Plus is a platform for ASEAN and its Dialogue Partners to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region.

**Objectives**

- To promote regional peace and stability through dialogue and cooperation in defence and security;
- To give guidance to existing senior defence and military officials dialogue and cooperation in the field of defence and security within ASEAN and between ASEAN and dialogue partners;
- To promote mutual trust and confidence through greater understanding of defence and security challenges as well as enhancement of transparency and openness; and
- To contribute to the establishment of an ASEAN Security Community (ASC) as stipulated in the Bali Concord II and to promote the implementation of the Vientiane Action Programme (VAP) on ASC.

**Statue of Unity**

- On 143<sup>rd</sup> anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, statue of unity was inaugurated by prime minister of India.
- The 182 metre statue is the tallest statue (2nd being China's spring temple Buddha statue) and is almost double the size of statue of liberty.

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- It is located on the Sadhu Bet island (Narmada river). Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel Rashtriya Ekta Trust (SVPRET), a special purpose vehicle was set up to arrange iron implements from nearly 100 million farmers across all states to construct the base of the statue in the 'Loha' campaign.
- The artist of the statue was Padma Bhushan - winning sculptor Ram V. Sutar and intricate bronze cladding work was done by a Chinese foundry, the Jiangxi Toqine Company (JTQ).

**Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**

- Born in the Bombay presidency, present day Gujarat in 1875, he was associated to Indian National Congress and became the first home minister and first deputy prime minister of India. He also represented India in the Partition Council.
- A lawyer and a political activist, he played a leading role during the Indian Independence Movement. After independence, he was crucial in the integration of over 500 princely states into the Indian Union and his uncompromising efforts towards consolidation of the country earned him the title 'Iron Man of India'.
- He was deeply influenced by Gandhi's ideology and principles, having worked very closely with leader.
- In 1918, he led a massive "No Tax Campaign" that urged the farmers not to pay taxes after the British insisted on tax after the floods in Kaira. The peaceful movement forced the British authorities to return the land taken away from the farmers.
- His effort to bring together the farmers of his area brought him the title of 'Sardar'. He actively supported the non-cooperation Movement launched by Gandhi.
- In 1928, the farmers of Bardoli again faced a problem of "tax-hike". The agitation due to seizing of land took on for more than six months. After several rounds of negotiations by Patel, the lands were returned to farmers after a deal was struck between the government and farmers' representatives.
- In 1930, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was among the leaders imprisoned for participating in the famous Salt Satyagraha movement. He was freed in 1931, following the Gandhi-Irwin Pact. In the same year he became the president of INC in the Karanchi session.

**Museum on Prime Minister**

The **Union Culture Ministry** will construct a **museum on Prime Ministers** on the Teen Murti Estate. The museum dedicated to all Prime Ministers including incumbent PM will come up within the 25.5-acre estate, but separate from the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library (NMML) buildings.

**NMML**, a memorial to Jawaharlal Nehru, the architect of modern India, is housed in the historic Teen Murti House, New Delhi. It was designed by **Robert Tor Russel** and built in 1929-30 as part of Edwin Lutyens' imperial capital. Teen Murti House was the official residence of the **Commander-in-Chief in India**.

On Jawaharlal Nehru's 75th birth anniversary on November 14, **1964** Dr. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, President of India, formally dedicated the Teen Murti House to the nation and inaugurated the Nehru Memorial Museum.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
 Kheda Satyagraha, Bardoli Satyagraha, Rowlatt act

Statue of Unity	Spring Temple Buddha	Ushiku Daibutsu	Statue of Liberty	The Motherland Calls	Christ The Redeemer
India	China	Japan	USA	Russia	Brazil
182 Metre	153 Metre	120 Metre	93 Metre	85 Metre	38 Metre

**Azad Hind Government**

- India celebrated the **75th anniversary of the formation of Azad Hind Government**. It was founded on 21st October, 1943 and was inspired by Neta ji Subhash Chandra Bose who was the leader of Azad Hind Government and also the Head of State of this Provisional

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Indian Government-in-exile. He was also the minister of war.

- It was a part of the freedom movement, **originating in 1940s outside India with a purpose of allying with Axis powers to free India from British rule.** The existence of the Azad Hind Government gave a greater legitimacy to the independence struggle against the British.
- The role of Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army (INA) had been crucial in bequeathing a much needed impetus to India’s struggle for Independence.
- With the formation of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, mobilisation of the Indian communities for armed struggle was stepped up. Many Indian civilians from Malaya, Thailand and Burma responded enthusiastically.
- **Azad Hind Fauj** or the Indian National Army was formed by Indian nationalists in 1942 in Southeast Asia during World War II to secure Indian independence from British rule. Capt. **Mohan Singh** was the leader of the army. It was revived by Subhas Chandra Bose in 1943.
- He joined the Independence movement and became a member of the Congress party. He, however, **had major ideological differences with leading figures like Mahatma Gandhi and Jawahar Lal Nehru.** A radical leader in Congress, he became the President of the party in 1938 but was ousted after differences with Gandhi and the party’s high command.

**Sir Chhotu Ram** (1881-1945) was a **peasant and Jat leader** from present day Haryana. He was given the titles of Deen-bandhu and Rahbar-e-Azam. The British honoured him with a knighthood in 1937.

**PEPPEER IT WITH**  
Ras Behari Bose,  
Independence League

**UNESCO Global Geopark Network status**

**Why in News?**

In a first, Geological Survey of India has chosen **Lonar Lake in Maharashtra and St. Mary’s Island and Malpe beach in coastal Karnataka** as the candidates for UNESCO Global Geopark Network status.

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- St. Mary’s Island, a hexagonal mosaic of **basaltic rocks** in an island was declared as a national geo-heritage site in 1975 and is estimated to be an 88-million-year-old formation that goes back to a time when Greater India broke away from Madagascar.
- Lonar lake is an ancient circular lake **created by a meteorite strike** in Maharashtra. It became a geo-heritage site in 1979 and is relatively young geologically, at just 50,000 years old. A meteorite slammed into the Earth, creating a 1.83-km diameter crater where the lake formed.

**What is UNESCO Global Geopark**

- UNESCO Global Geoparks are single, unified geographical areas where sites and landscapes of international geological significance are managed with a holistic concept of protection, education and sustainable development.
- **Their bottom-up approach** of combining conservation with sustainable development while involving local communities is becoming increasingly popular. At present, there are 140 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 38 countries.
- In 2015, the 195 Member States of UNESCO ratified the creation of a new label, the **UNESCO Global Geoparks**, during the 38th General Conference of the Organisation.
- UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG) must demonstrate geological heritage of international significance. The purpose of a UGG is to explore, develop and celebrate the links between that geological heritage and all other aspects of the area's (natural, cultural and intangible heritages).

- UGG status **does not imply restrictions on any economic activity** inside a UGG where that activity complies with indigenous, local, regional and/or national legislation.
- A UGG is given this designation **for a period of four years** after which the functioning and quality of each UGG is thoroughly re-examined during a revalidation process.
- If, on the basis of the field evaluation report, the UGG continues to fulfil the criteria the area will continue as a UGG for a further four-year period (**so-called "green card"**).
- If the area no longer fulfils the criteria, the management body will be informed to take appropriate steps within a two-year period (**so-called "yellow card"**) and if it does not fulfil the criteria within two years after receiving a "yellow card", the area will lose its status as a UNESCO Global Geopark (**so-called "red card"**).
- The Global Geoparks Network (GGN), of which membership is obligatory for UNESCO Global Geoparks, is a legally constituted not-for-profit organisation with an annual membership fee. The GGN was founded in 2004.
- An aspiring Global Geopark **must have** a dedicated website, a corporate identity, comprehensive management plan, protection plans, finance, and partnerships for it to be accepted.

**UNESCO Global Geoparks, Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites: a complete picture**

UGG, together with the other two UNESCO site designations Biosphere Reserves and World Heritage Sites, **give a complete picture of celebrating our heritage** while at the same time conserving the world's cultural, biological and geological diversity, and promoting sustainable economic development. While Biosphere Reserves focus on the harmonised management of biological and cultural diversity and World Heritage Sites promote the conservation of natural and cultural sites of outstanding universal value, UGG give international recognition for sites that promote the importance and significance of protecting the Earth's geo-diversity through actively engaging with the local communities.

**In case an aspiring UGG includes a World Heritage Site or Biosphere Reserve**, a clear justification and evidence has to be provided on how UGG status will add value by being both independently branded and in synergy with the other designations.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Geological Survey of India,  
UNESCO, World Heritage Site,  
Greater India

**The Nobel Peace Prize for 2018**

- Nobel Peace Prize for 2018 was awarded to **Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad** for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict. Both laureates have made a crucial contribution to focusing attention on, and combating, such war crimes.
- Denis Mukwege is the helper who has devoted his life to defending these victims. Nadia Murad is the witness who tells of the abuses perpetrated against herself and others. Each of them in their own way has helped to give greater visibility to war-time sexual violence, so that the perpetrators

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**Alternative Nobel prize**

Three jailed Saudi human rights-Abdullah al-Hamid, Mohammad Fahad al-Qahtani and Waleed Abu al-Khair were jointly awarded "**the alternative Nobel prize**" award by the **Right Livelihood Award Foundation** for their visionary and courageous efforts to reform the totalitarian political system in Saudi Arabia."

Created in 1980, the Right Livelihood Award honours efforts that prize founder Jacob von Uexkull felt were being ignored by the Nobel prizes.

can be held accountable for their actions.

- The physician Denis Mukwege has spent large parts of his adult life helping the victims of sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo. He is the foremost, most unifying symbol, both nationally and internationally, of the struggle to end sexual violence in war and armed conflicts. His basic principle is that “justice is everyone’s business”.
- Nadia Murad is a member of the **Yazidi minority in northern Iraq**. She herself is a victim of war crimes. She refused to accept the social codes that require women to remain silent and ashamed of the abuses to which they have been subjected. In 2016, at the age of just 23, she was named the **UN’s first Goodwill Ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking**.
- This year marks a decade since the **UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1820 (2008)**, which determined that the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict constitutes both a war crime and a threat to international peace and security. This is also set out in the **Rome Statute of 1998**, which governs the work of the International Criminal Court. The Statute establishes that sexual violence in war and armed conflict is a grave violation of international law.

**Bihar’s Shahi Litchi gets GI tag**

- Bihar's **famous Shahi litchi has got Geographical Indication (GI) tag**. Muzzafarpur, Vaishali, Samastipur, Champaran, Begusarai districts and adjoining areas of Bihar have favourable climate for this fruit, unique due to attractive appearance and delicious pearly white aril.

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- The fruit is the fourth product from the state, after **Jardalu mango, Katarni rice and Magahi paan**, to receive the status. In addition, some art form from Bihar —Madhubani painting, applique – Khatwa patch work, Sikki grass work, Sujini embroidery work and Bhagalpur silk — have been accorded GI tag under handicraft category.

**PEPPER IT WITH**

Neurological diseases,  
encephalitis,  
Methylenecyclopropylglycine

- Once a product or good gets this tag, any person or company cannot sell a similar item under that name. This tag is **valid for a period of 10 years** following which it can be renewed. GI is covered under a law of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).
- A GI is an indication used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation due to that origin.
- GI products can benefit the rural economy in remote areas, by supplementing the incomes of artisans, farmers, weavers and craftsmen.
- The first product to get a GI tag in India was the **Darjeeling tea in 2004**. There are more than 300 products from India that carry this indication.
- Recently, Alphonso mango from Maharashtra's Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Palghar, Thane and Raigad districts also got Geographical Indication tag.

**Experiencing North East’ festival**

- The 5 day long **‘Experiencing North East’** festival depicting the uniqueness of North Eastern culture was organised at India International Centre (IIC), New Delhi recently.
- The festival, a part of Destination North East series, is being organised by North Eastern Council (NEC), Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) in collaboration with India International Centre.
- **‘Destination North East’** series aims at showcasing the diverse culture and heritage of North East all under one roof.

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**Miscellaneous**

**World Posts Day**

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- World Post Day is observed every year on October 9, the anniversary of the establishment of the Universal Postal Union in 1874 in the Swiss Capital, Bern. It is observed to spread awareness about the postal services and their role in the everyday lives of people and businesses.
- Theme:** “Imagine you are a letter travelling through time. What message do you wish to convey to your readers?”
- Established in 1874, the Universal Postal Union (UPU), with its headquarters in the Swiss capital Berne, is the second oldest international organization worldwide. It is a specialized agency of the United Nations.

**Jal Bachao, Video Banao, Puraskar Pao contest**

Jal Bachao, Video Banao, Puraskar Pao contest was launched by the Ministry in collaboration with the MyGov portal of the Government of India with the objective of spreading awareness about water conservation.

**MedWatch**

- It is an innovative mobile health App launched by the Indian Air Force (IAF) to provide health information to the users, including first-aid and other health and nutritional topics. It is the first mobile health app in the three Armed Services.
- ‘MedWatch’, available on the IAF's AFCEL network, comprises a host of features that will provide authentic health information to all IAF personnel. A Reminder Tool to enable timely immunization for the children of all Air Warriors is an important component of the App. This will directly enable 'Mission Indradhanush' of the Govt of India.

**Youth road safety learners licence programme**

- It is a PPP initiative to be run in collaboration with Diageo India and the Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE).
- It covers varied aspects of responsible driving including defensive driving, ill effects of driving under the influence of alcohol, speeding and wearing of helmets spread over two days.
- The initiative will cover 20 universities with a total of 400 programmes across the country in first phase.
- IRTE has been successfully running its ‘Road to Safety’ initiative to provide capacity building training to traffic police officials and educate commercial drivers such as truckers and bus drivers and university students on the dangers of drunken driving.
- India accounts for 12.5 per cent (over 1.45 lakh fatalities a year) of global road accidents, with one road accident occurring every four minutes. Alarmingly, 72 per cent victims involved in such road mishaps are between the age groups of 15-44 years with speeding, reckless and drunk driving being the top reason.

**Lhotshampa community**

- The Himalayan nation of Bhutan, often described as a “Shangri-La” where happiness is equated to wealth but the Lhotshampa people, brutally driven out of the small kingdom in the 1990s, won't be voting.
- The Nepali-speaking Lhotshampa were branded as immigrants and stripped of citizenship rights when the then-king introduced a “One Nation, One People” policy in 1985.
- Bhutan still describes the Lhotshampa as immigrants, justifying its nationalistic laws as essential for cultural identity and political stability, according to Freedom House.

**Ask Disha**

- Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered chatbot- Ask Disha ((Digital Interaction to Seek Help Anytime) to help its users answer various queries.

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- The chatbot is voice enabled and will support several regional languages in the near future. It will offer greatly improved and intuitive customer support by answering customer queries pertaining to all aspects of the services that IRCTC provides.

### **Self4Society App**

- The Self4Society platform is the premiere workspace for Electronics and IT corporates to organise employee engagements (Initiatives) for social work. The organisation can create their own Initiatives under the identified National Causes.
- The app will have incentives, gamification and intra- and inter-company competitions, and social networking.
- The Self4Society platform comprises of the following:
  1. **Self4Society Admin portal** for Electronics and IT Industry's Corporate HR or CSR representatives, who will create the organisational profile and upload Initiatives.
  2. **Self4Society App** for employees, who will volunteer for Initiatives and contribute their time to tasks on-the-ground.

### **Railway App**

The North Central Railways (NCR) has launched two mobile apps:

- **NCR RASTA (Railway assets Summerised Tracking Application):** It is for use of railway officers and staff and has exact mapping of all railway assets.
- **Yatri RASTA (Railway Approach to Station Tracking Application):** It will allow general public to locate railway stations easily.

### **Swasth Bharat**

- FSSAI has launched national campaign 'Swasth Bharat Yatra' on occasion of World Food Day (16 October) to sensitise people about eating safe food and be healthy.
- Under it, pan-India cycle rally is being organized to create consumer awareness about eating safe and nutritious food for becoming healthy and combating food adulteration.
- World Food Day is celebrated on **October 16** every year to raise awareness on the issues of poverty and hunger.

### **Kerala first smoke-free state**

- Kerala is now set to become the first smoke-free State in the country with public sector oil companies eyeing 100% LPG penetration.
- Kerala is one of the States with the highest penetration of LPG, which is transforming lifestyles. The target has almost been achieved in most villages, towns and cities in the Kerala.

### **Chai Sahay**

- Tea Board of India is planning to launch an app aimed at guiding small growers, whose share in total tea production is increasing. The proposed name of the app is Chai Sahay (tea help).
- The mobile platform would have user-interface facilities with the targeted user groups (the small tea grower) and the various officials. It would also have information on the various activities of the board officials.

### **Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign**

- This campaign was initiated in **2017-18** wherein large number of school children especially from eco-clubs participated and took pledge to minimize bursting of crackers and also discouraged the neighbourhood and their friends from bursting of crackers.
- Union **Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change** (MoEFCC) has launched Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign.
- During this intensive campaign, the children were advised to celebrate Diwali in an environment-friendly manner by gifting plant sapling to their relatives and friends along with sweets, undertake cleaning of houses, neighbourhoods, schools, collect old books and unused notebooks gift to needy children, donate old warm clothing, blankets to night-shelters and other homeless people.

- The “**Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali**” campaign is now merged with “**Green Good Deed**” movement that has been initiated as a social mobilization for conservation and protection of environment. The MoEFCC encourages all schools and colleges to be part of this campaign.

### **Gaming Garage**

- Andhra Pradesh government has proposed to set up a ‘Gaming Garage’ to generate employment and encourage entrepreneurs and game developers in view of its growing importance. The ‘Gaming Garage’ will be launched in Vijayawada very soon.
- Companies such as the Unity Technologies, Denmark/San Francisco would provide the software. The Kajaani University of Applied Sciences (KAMK) of Finland would be knowledge/operational partner.

### **‘Main Nahin Hum’ portal**

- The portal, which works on the theme ‘Self4Society’, will enable IT professionals and organisations to bring together their efforts towards social causes on one platform. The platform has been developed by MyGov.
- The portal will also help the employees in identifying the volunteering opportunities for social causes and they can also collaborate with other employees on such projects.
- It is also expected to generate wider participation of interested people who are motivated to work for the benefit of society.

### **Krishi Kumbh-2018**

- The government of Uttar Pradesh in association with the Government of India is organizing a mega Agriculture Expo called “Krishi Kumbh-2018”.
- Krishi Kumbh-2018 would comprise of the National level exhibition, technical sessions around the theme of doubling farmers income, Business Meet, and host of other engaging activities.
- The primary objective of Krishi Kumbh 2018 is to provide a common platform to farmers, farmers group, technical experts and entrepreneurs for seamless exchange of knowledge regarding agriculture production food processing and marketing, agriculture mechanization, agro-food processing, high value crops, input and technology management in agriculture etc.

### **Vigilance Awareness Week (29th October)**

- The theme of the vigilance awareness this year is “Eradicate Corruption- Make a New India.”
- During the week-long Vigilance Awareness campaign, various activities like seminars, debates and essay competitions will be organized in the Ministry to sensitize and motivate its officers and staff to remain vigilant and transparent in their work in order to eradicate corruption in all spheres of life.

### **World Peace monument**

- Vice-President India inaugurated the world’s largest dome at the Maharashtra Institute of Technology (MIT)’s World Peace University (MIT-WPU) campus on the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- **‘World Peace Monument’ dome**, a 160 ft. in diameter and 263 ft tall, is larger in area than the dome at St. Peter’s Basilica in Vatican City (which is 136 ft. in diameter and 448 ft. in height). Each of the 24 massive columns in the dome stands 63 feet tall.
- The dome is built atop the MIT World Peace Library and the World Peace Prayer Hall, which are named after the 13th century poet-saint and philosopher **Dnyaneshwar — a pivotal figure of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra.**



### Concept Clearing Assignment

1. India is becoming a big technological global force. What steps can be taken so that we maximize the benefits of science and technology for society?
2. India being one of the countries with the youngest population undergoing skill gap crisis is a thing to worry. With more than half of our population in the working age, skills development will be critical to sustaining inclusive growth and development in India. Discuss.
3. The government has been steadfastly advocating a move to phase out petrol and diesel cars completely and transforming the country into an all-electric market by the year 2030. These ambitions have been formulated as action plans, as opposed to concrete policies. Do you agree?
4. In the context of India, discuss the purpose and relevance of Joint military exercises. Do you think International military training cooperation is an imperative for building India's capabilities to deal with how we contemplate our current and emerging role in the international arena?
5. We are seeing regular cases of Sexual harassment at workplace. Any workplace coming under the grip of this growing evil had cumulative effects on the whole organization. What steps have been taken by the government to handle it and what else should be done?
6. Currency manipulation is an important issue of International economic policy. How does a country manipulate its currency and how do we know a country has manipulated its currency? Do monetary policy and quantitative easing fall under currency manipulation?
7. The Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) has come up with a report titled 'Women in Prisons'. The report aims to build an understanding of the various entitlements of women in prisons, the various issues faced by them and possible methods for resolution of the same. Do you think women in prison face more hardships than their male counterparts? Discuss.
8. According to Global Hunger Index, India is among the countries that have serious levels of hunger. India has made considerable progress in tackling hunger and under-nutrition in the past. How can India achieve zero hunger?
9. Commodity exchanges in India are still at an elementary stage and there are various issues in the growth of commodity exchange market. Suggest measures required in the industry so that it can achieve its full potential.
10. Recently a writ petition was filed by an NGO "We the Citizens" challenging the validity of both Article 35A and Article 370. What is the importance of this article for J&K residents? Should it be scrapped?
11. United States recently dragged India in World Trade Organisation's dispute settlement mechanism over subsidies. Discuss the roles and working procedure of Dispute Settlement Body.
12. An inter-ministerial committee had recently suggested for an independent payment regulatory board in India. Do you think the regulation and supervision of payment and settlement system be retained with the Reserve Bank of India. Discuss.
13. The complexity of governance regime encircling cyberspace becomes clear once we see that the jurisdictional issues surrounding the global clouds of the mega multinational corporations, which are home to data of, and provide services to, citizens around the globe. Considering this, due think it is time to establish new international rules that will avoid legal conflicts and advance privacy rights and law enforcement needs together.
14. Anti-Defection law was carved to enhance the credibility of the country's polity. Due to think it is serving its purpose.
15. Unified Payment Interface is an initiative of National Payments Corporation of India to simplify Mobile Banking and to promote Digital payments in the country. What are the advantages of UPI over IMPS and NEFT? Also discuss NPCI and its functioning.

**P.T Oriented Questions**

1. Consider the following about Medical Council of India and choose the correct one/s
  1. It is an autonomous body under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
  2. It establishes the uniform and high standards of medical education in India
  3. It monitors and ensures ethics in medical profession.Code:  
(a) 1 and 2                      (b) 1 and 3  
(c) 2 and 3                      (d) All the above
2. Akhaura-Agartala railway link was recently inaugurated by India. It was a joint project of India and  
(a) Bangladesh      (b) Myanmar  
(c) Nepal              (d) China
3. Consider the following about INDIAN POSTAL PAYMENT BANK (IPPB) and choose the correct one/s
  1. It is a public limited company under the Department of Posts
  2. Payments Banks are required to invest minimum 75 per cent of its demand deposit balances in Government securities/treasury bills.Code:  
(a) 1 only                      (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 2                      (d) None
4. Consider the following about Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan (PM-AASHA) and choose the correct one/s
  1. It aims to ensure better prices for farm produce
  2. Under it, National Agricultural Cooperative marketing Federation of India (NAFED) will be the sole authority for procurement of crops.Code:  
(a) 1 only                      (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 2                      (d) None
5. Consider the following about Human Development Index (HDI) and choose the correct one/s
  1. The HDI was developed by the Indian Nobel laureate Amartya Sen
  2. It is composed based on the criterias of GDP, Life Expectancy and Education.
3. It is published every year by IMF  
Code:  
(a) 1 and 2                      (b) 1 and 3  
(c) All the above      (d) None
6. Consider the following about the bird Vorombe titan and choose the correct one/s
  1. It has been conferred as the world's largest bird
  2. It has been classified as critically endangered by IUCNCode:  
(a) 1 only                      (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 2                      (d) None
7. Sabrimala temple is located on the banks of  
(a) Pampa River  
(b) Manimala River  
(c) Periyar River  
(d) Chaliyar River
8. Consider the following about Goods and Service Tax Network (or GSTN) and choose the incorrect one/s
  1. It is a non-profit, non-government organization
  2. The Government of India holds 49% equity in GSTN
  3. Its software has been developed by WIPROCode:  
(a) 1 and 2                      (b) 1 and 3  
(c) 2 and 3                      (d) All the above
9. Consider the following about System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting And Research (SAFAR) and choose the correct one/s
  1. It has been developed by India Meteorological Department (IMD).
  2. It has been launched in NCR region to provide location specific information on air quality in near real time.Code:  
(a) 1 only                      (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 2                      (d) None
10. Global Counter-Terrorism Forum has been launched bt  
(a) U.S and India  
(b) U.S and Morocco  
(c) U.S and France

- (d) India and ASEAN
11. 8888 uprising is related to  
(a) China (b) Myanmar  
(c) Congo (d) Brazil
12. Which of the following UNSC resolution is aimed at providing legal framework for mainstream protection of children in armed conflict  
(a) 2427 (b) 2428  
(c) 1540 (d) 1267
13. Bishkek declaration is related to  
(a) Olive ridley turtles  
(b) Snow Leopard  
(c) Tiger  
(d) Pangolin
14. Consider the following about National Testing Agency and choose the correct one/s  
1. It is a statutory body to conduct various entrance examinations.  
2. It will be headed by HRD Minister.  
Code:  
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 2 (d) None
15. Consider the following about ICC (International Criminal Court) and choose the correct one/s  
1. It has been established by the Rome Statute  
2. India is founding member of ICC  
3. It has jurisdiction to prosecute individual and is independent of the UN  
Code:  
(a) 1 and 2 (b) 1 and 3  
(c) 2 and 3 (d) All the above
16. Consider the following about Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) and choose the correct one/s  
1. It is a six-member committee constituted by the Central Government  
2. Governor of RBI is its ex-officio chairman  
Code:  
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 2 (d) None
17. Living planet report is published by  
(a) Zoological Society of London  
(b) IUCN  
(c) WWF  
(d) UNEP
18. Consider the following about Hangul and choose the correct one/s  
1. It is endemic to Dachigam National Park  
2. It is the state animal of J&K  
3. It is categorized as critically endangered by IUCN  
Code:  
(a) 1 and 2 (b) 1 and 3  
(c) 2 and 3 (d) All the above
19. Consider the following about Green Climate Fund and choose the correct one/s  
1. It is the financial mechanism of UNFCCC  
2. EXIM bank is the National Implementing Entity of Green Climate Fund for India  
Code:  
(a) 1 only (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 2 (d) None
20. Consider the following about Bondi and choose the correct one/s  
1. It is the world's first public Blockchain bond  
2. It is a dollar dominated bond issued by World Bank  
3. Fund raised through this bond will be used in sustainable development activities  
Code:  
(a) 1 and 2 (b) 1 and 3  
(c) 2 and 3 (d) All the above
21. Which of the following states border Bangladesh?  
1. Assam  
2. Tripura  
3. Nagaland  
4. Manipur  
5. Mizoram  
Code:  
(a) 1,2,3 (b) 1,2,3 and 5  
(c) 1,2,5 (d) 2,3,4 and 5
22. Selection Committee for selection of Lokpal consists of  
1. Prime Minister  
2. Leader of Opposition  
3. A judge of Supreme Court  
4. Chairman of NHRC  
Code:  
(a) 1 and 2 (b) 1,2 and 4

- (c) 1,3 and 4            (d) All the above
23. Consider the following about TRAFFIC and choose the correct one/s
1. It is a wildlife trade monitoring network and, is a strategic alliance of UNEP and WWF
  2. It only deals with wild animals and not with plants
- Code:
- (a) 1 only                    (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 2                 (d) None
24. Srinivas high level committee is for
- (a) Competition law
  - (b) India's 5G adoption
  - (c) Corporate Sector Responsibility
  - (d) Women Safety
25. Which of the following rail services are between India and Pakistan
1. Link Express
  2. Samjhauta express
  3. Maitree express
  4. Thar Express
- Code:
- (a) 1,2 and 3                (b) 1,3 and 4  
(c) 2,3 and 4                (d) 1,2 and 4
26. With reference to the Parliament of India, consider the following statements: (CSE 2017)
1. A private member's bill is a bill presented by a Member of Parliament who is not elected but only nominated by the President of India.
  2. Recently, a private member's bill has been passed in the Parliament of India for the first time in its history.
- 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
27. One of the implications of equality in society is the absence of (CSE 2017)
- (a) Privileges  
(b) Restraints  
(c) Competition  
(d) Ideology
28. Who among the following was/were associated with the introduction of Ryotwari Settlement in India during the British rule? (CSE 2017)
1. Lord Cornwallis
  2. Alexander Read
  3. Thomas Munro
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1 only                    (b) 1 and 3 only  
(c) 2 and 3 only            (d) 1, 2 and 3
29. Consider the following statements: (CSE 2017)
1. In tropical regions, Zika virus disease is transmitted by the same mosquito that transmits dengue.
  2. Sexual transmission of Zika virus disease is possible.
- 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
30. What is/are the advantage/advantages of implementing the 'National Agriculture Market' scheme? (CSE 2017)
1. It is a pan-India electronic trading portal for agricultural commodities.
  2. It provides the farmers access to nationwide market, with prices commensurate with the quality of their produce.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- (a) 1 only  
(b) 2 only  
(c) Both 1 and 2  
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

## **CSE MAINS EXAMINATION GS PAPER-I**

### **HELD ON 29 SEPT 2018**

<b>KSG QUESTIONS</b>	<b>UPSC QUESTIONS</b>
<p>1. India's cultural heritage is one of the most ancient, extensive and varied among all cultural heritages of mankind. Do you think the recent rise in incidents of violence possesses threat to the mosaic culture of the country?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 1 QSTN 16)</b></p>	<p>1. Safeguarding the Indian art heritage is the need of the moment. Comment (10)</p>
<p>1. Gandhiji in the Champaran Satyagraha realized that the culmination of a struggle for justice was usually negotiation and settlement rather than surrender by the foe and Complete triumph for one's side. Do you support this ideology of Gandhi? How relevant are his theories in contemporary times? Give arguments to substantiate your points.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(CIWP I 2017-18-Q-3)</b></p>	<p>3. Throw light on the significance of the thoughts of Mahatma Gandhi in the present times. (10)</p>
<p>1. The Indian national satellite system is a multipurpose satellite communications system used for a range of functions. What are the various applications for which satellite data is used? How does space infrastructure benefit the socio-economic development of a nation? Elaborate the recent achievements in this regard.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(CIWP D 2017-18 Q-3)</b></p>	<p>4. Why is Indian Regional Navigational Satellite System (IRNSS) needed? How does it help in navigation? (10)</p>
<p>1. Arctic ice is melting at previously unseen rates. What factors do you think are responsible for this accelerated rate of melting? What could be the possible consequences of this phenomenon?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(KTP 2018 TEST 11,Q-12)</b></p>	<p>5. Why is India taking keen interest in the Arctic region? (10)</p>
<p>1. Discuss in brief about plate tectonic theory vis-a-vis continental drift theory. Also explain how volcanic activities and seismic events provide major evidence for proving the validity of plate tectonics theory.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(KTP 2018 TEST 11,Q-2)</b></p>	<p>6. Define mantle plume and explain its role in plate tectonics. (10)</p>
<p>1. Marine pollution pose a threat to its immediate biodiversity and environment. List out various causes and measures to address the same.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(KTP 2018 TEST 2, Q-5)</b></p>	<p>7. What are the consequences of spreading of 'Dead Zones' on marine ecosystem? (10)</p>
<p>1. Some sections of the society argue that to uproot casteism it is important that we fight the reservation system. Do you agree with this view? In the light of this, examine the effectiveness of reservation policy in India in the upliftment of the downtrodden.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(CIWP 2018 B2-Q1)</b></p> <p>2. "India being a diverse society has its own unique challenges and problems, hence needs sui-generis social innovations to resolve them". Examine this statement in the context of contemporary developments and substantiate your points with the help of relevant examples.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(KTP 2018 TEST 11, Q-15)</b></p>	<p>8. "Caste system is assuming new identities and associational forms. Hence, caste system cannot be eradicated in India." Comment. (10)</p>
<p>1. Poverty deprives people from accessing resources considered basic for human existence, despite many schemes to alleviate poverty the problem persists. In this background analyse Universal Basic Income (UBI) as a tool for poverty alleviation. What are its potential benefits and challenges in implementation?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(KTP 2018 TEST-4 Q-15)</b></p>	<p>9. 'Despite implementation of various programmes for eradication of poverty by the government in India, poverty is still existing'. Explain by giving reasons. (10)</p>
<p>1. 'Secularism is the most misused word in Indian politics'. Do you agree? How is Indian view of secularism different from that practiced in the western countries?</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(KTP-2018 TEST-4 Q-9)</b></p>	<p>10. How the Indian concept of secularism different from the western model of secularism? Discuss. (10)</p>
<p>1. Highlighting the factors leading to the formation of linguistic states in India, briefly discuss the consequences of such divisions.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><b>(KTP-2018 TEST-1 Q-7)</b></p>	<p>12. Discuss whether formation of new states in recent times is beneficial or not for the economy of India. (15)</p>

<p>1. Account for the geographical distribution of groundwater resources of India. How serious is its depletion in recent decades? <b>(KTP 2018 TEST-2 Q-12)</b></p> <p>2. India’s ground water extraction policy and governance is mostly disconnected from global trends and scientific knowledge and unregulated in nature. In the light of this statement analyze how far Ground water Bill 2017 would address the problem? <b>(KSG E-TEST 63)</b></p>	<p>14. “The ideal solution of depleting ground water resources in India is water harvesting system.” How can it be made effective in urban areas? (15)</p>
<p>1. Analyse the nature of women's movement in India and its relationship with political parties and trade unions. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST-1 Q-11)</b></p> <p>2. The woman, whose status and role traditionally was well defined and almost fixed in the society, is now experiencing far-reaching changes. Throw some light on this changing trend. How has globalization affected the status and role of women in Indian society in the recent times? <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST-1 Q-14)</b></p>	<p>18. ‘Women’s movement in India has not addressed the issues of women of lower social strata.’ Substantiate your view. (15)</p>
<p>1. What is Globalisation? Discuss the positive and negative effects of globalization on middle class population in India. <b>(KTP2018 TEST-2 Q-10)</b></p> <p>2. Globalisation has not only affected the economy and material aspects of the society, it has also affected its culture. Discuss. Briefly highlight the impact of globalisation on Indian youth. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST-11 Q-16)</b></p>	<p>19. ‘Globalisation is generally said to promote cultural homogenisation but due to this cultural specificities appear to be strengthened in the Indian society.’ Elucidate.</p>
<p>1. Communalism in India has developed through a long and complex process bearing the burden of history and sectarian politics. What reasons do you attribute to its rise in the contemporary times? In your opinion, what steps should be taken to preserve the secular fabric of Indian society? <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST-11 Q-20)</b></p>	<p>20. ‘Communalism arises either due to power struggle or relative deprivation.’ Argue by giving suitable illustrations. (15)</p>

**CSE MAINS EXAMINATION GS PAPER-II**  
**HELD ON 29 SEPT 2018**

<b>KSG QUESTIONS</b>	<b>UPSC QUESTIONS</b>
<p>1. Although constitution ensures the independence of election commission of India, reforms are needed to make it completely independent from government control. Examine. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 12 Q-15)</b></p>	<p>1. In the light of recent controversy regarding the use of Electronic Voting Machines (EVM), what are the challenges before the Election Commission of India to ensure the trustworthiness of elections in India? (10)</p>
<p>1. The pseudo-federalism of India is unique in various aspects. On one hand there are some issues on which centre overpower the states, while on the other hand there are policies on which states have an influential effect. Examine the asymmetry of Indian federalism. <b>(KSG 7 QUESTION CHALLENGE)</b></p>	<p>3. Under what circumstances can the Financial Emergency be proclaimed by the President of India? What consequences follow when such a declaration remains in force? (10)</p>

<p>1. India's healthcare system is out of reach of millions of Indians owing to high costs and its limited reach across regions. In this context critically analyse the potential of Ayushman Bharat Scheme in transforming healthcare system in India. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 4 Q-17)</b></p> <p>2. Indian public health system is in shambles and India ranks poorly on key health indicators. Augmenting investment in public health care with appropriate utilization management is pivotal to sustaining India's growth. Centre in this process has cleared National Health Policy 2017, in this context critically analyse this policy. <b>(KSG E-TEST 46)</b></p> <p>3. Health is central to human happiness and well-being and makes an important contribution to economic progress. In the light of the above statement analyse the role of 'Ayushman Bharat' as a game-changer for Indian healthcare. <b>(KSG E-TEST 87)</b></p>	<p>7. Appropriate local community level healthcare intervention is a prerequisite to achieve 'Health for All' in India. Explain.</p>
<p>1. Elucidate with examples the issues and challenges to the implementation of ICT in governance. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 3 Q-8)</b></p> <p>2. Examine the role ICTs in combating rural and urban poverty and fostering sustainable development through creating information rich societies and supporting livelihood. <b>(KSG E-TEST 71)</b></p> <p>3. The sustainable application of ICT will be paramount in achieving aim of rural development. Critically analyze. What are the factors affecting the digital-gender divide in India? <b>(KSG 7 QUESTION CHALLENGE)</b></p>	<p>8. E-governance is not only about utilization of the power of new technology, but also much about critical importance of the 'use value' of information. Explain. (10)</p>
<p>1. New Delhi's policies towards Israel and Palestine are shifting from mere symbolism towards one driven by substantial outcomes. Discuss in wake of India's de-hyphenated policy towards both the countries. <b>(KSG WEBSITE QUESTION)</b></p>	<p>9. "India's relations with Israel have, of late, acquired a depth and diversity, which cannot be rolled back." Discuss. (10)</p>
<p>1. The optimal development of India's relations with Central Asian countries has been constrained by lack of overland access. While discussing the significance of energy diplomacy that the Central Asian regions hold for India, highlight the initiatives that help keep India- Central Asian countries' relations intact. <b>(CIWP 2018 F1 Q-3)</b></p>	<p>10. A number of outside powers have entrenched themselves in Central Asia, which is a zone of interest to India. Discuss the implications, in this context, of India's joining the Ashgabat Agreement, 2018. (10)</p>
<p>1. Compare the constitutional relationship of government/ legislature of NCT of Delhi with respect to government of India/ parliament vis a vis similar relationship of other states with the union of India. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 12 Q-19)</b></p>	<p>11. Whether the Supreme Court Judgement (July 2018) can settle the political tussle between the Lt. Governor and elected government of Delhi? Examine. (15)</p>
<p>1. "Separation of power is the part of basic structure of the constitution in India but delegated legislation and administrative tribunals are violative of this principle". Do you agree? Give an account of the significance of delegated legislation and administrative tribunals in Indian administration. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 3 Q-19)</b></p> <p>2. Tribunals are not courts of Natural justice per-se instead they are made for a specific work area. But this "Tribunalization of Justice" is undermining the judicial system in India. Analyse the statement with special reference to National Green Tribunal? <b>(KSG E-TEST 111)</b></p>	<p>12. How far do you agree with the view that tribunals curtail the jurisdiction of ordinary courts? In view of the above, discuss the constitutional validity and competency of the tribunals in India. (15)</p>
<p>1. While US constitution is described as very rigid; Indian constitution is more flexible than rigid. Elucidate making a comparison between the two. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 3 Q-8)</b></p>	<p>13. Indian and USA are two large democracies. Examine the basic tenets on which the two political systems are based.</p>

<p>1. The 14th Finance Commission (FC) has been hailed for its path-breaking recommendations to strengthen the finances of local bodies, especially the Panchayats. In this context, discuss the recommendations of 14th finance commissions and also mention how they will strengthen the finances of local bodies. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 3 Q-14)</b></p>	<p>14. How is the Finance Commission of India constituted? What do you know about the terms of reference of the recently constituted Finance Commission? Discuss. (15)</p>
<p>1. Even decades after the passage of 73rd Constitutional Amendment Act, the promise of financial and administrative decentralization remains unfulfilled. What in your opinion are the possible reasons for this? Also suggest measures to address this issue. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 12 Q-4)</b></p>	<p>15. Assess the importance of the Panchayat system in India as a part of local government. Apart from government grants, what sources the Panchayats can look out for financing developmental projects? (15)</p>
<p>1. National Human Rights Commission is a toothless tiger. Do you agree? Discuss its composition and the powers. Why has it not been able to function effectively? Suggest some measures to improve its functioning. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST-4 Q-2)</b></p>	<p>16. Multiplicity of various commissions for the vulnerable sections of the society leads to problems of overlapping jurisdiction and duplication of functions. Is it better to merge all commissions into an umbrella Human Rights Commission? Argue your case. (15)</p>
<p>1. The political will and economics of market are as important a factor for hunger as are scarcity of food and poverty. Do you agree? Also provide framework to address the double whammy of poverty and hunger in India. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 4 Q-6)</b></p> <p>2. As the country aspires to fulfil its economic and social development goals, malnutrition is one area which requires greater attention. Critically analyse this statement in the context of state of malnutrition in India. How does National Nutrition Strategy propose to overcome this problem? Discuss. <b>(CIWP 2018 Test A 18/19)</b></p>	<p>17. How far do you agree with the view that the focus on lack of availability of food as the main cause of hunger takes the attention away from ineffective human development policies in India? (15)</p>
<p>1. USA's sudden withdrawal from 2015 Nuclear Agreement with Iran is expected to have implications not just for the two countries but the world as a whole. Critically analyse. How would India be impacted from this move? Discuss. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 12 Q-16)</b></p> <p>2. India faces dilemma in choosing between its traditional, strategically important neighbor Iran and key ally in the Indo-Pacific region U.S. What repercussions will India face because of this rift between US and Iran? <b>(KSG E-TEST 95)</b></p>	<p>20. In what ways would the ongoing US-Iran Nuclear Pact Controversy affect the national interest of India? How should India respond to its situation? (15)</p>

**CSE MAINS EXAMINATION GS PAPER III  
HELD ON 30 SEPT 2018**

<b>KSG Questions</b>	<b>UPSC QUESTIONS</b>
<p>1. Renewable energy is seen as the energy of the future. Discuss the potential benefits and challenges in shifting to renewable sources of energy for India, also highlight various initiatives of Government of India to promote renewable energy sector. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 6 Q-1)</b></p> <p>2. India's growing renewable energy sector can serve the dual purpose of making India energy efficient as well as empowering women. Examine. Discuss the scope of renewable energy as a champion sector in Make in India 2.0. <b>(CIWP-G1 2018, Q-4)</b></p> <p>3. India is blessed with an abundance of non-Conventional Sources of Energy like sunlight, water, wind and biomass. Despite this it remains largely dependent on conventional resources like fossil fuels. What is the reason for this dichotomy? What suggestion you have for the required change in the policy framework? <b>(CIWP-C 2017-18, Q-3)</b></p>	<p>1. "Access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy is the <i>sine qua non</i> to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)". Comment on the progress made in India in this regard. (150 Words, 10 Marks)</p>
<p>1. What do you understand by Capital-Gains Tax? Is raising the tax burden on equities, rather than lowering the tax and other barriers to investing in alternative assets, the right way to address the distortionary effect of taxes? <b>(KSG WEBSITE QUESTION)</b></p>	<p>2. Comment on the important changes introduced in respect of the Long term Capital Gains Tax (LCGT) and Dividend Distribution Tax (DDT) in the Union Budget for 2018-2019. (150 Words, 10 Marks)</p>



<p>1. Agriculture is subject to a lot of uncertainties, ranging from rainfall and pest attacks to market prices. In this background do you think that the target of doubling farmer's income by 2022 is too ambitious? Give arguments to support your views. <b>(CIWP-P 2017-18, Q-2)</b></p> <p>2. Recently Government has increased the MSP for kharif crops. What is MSP? How does it help the agriculturists? What changes need to be made in the MSP policy so as to realize its real motive? <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 6 Q-14)</b></p>	<p>3. What do you mean by Minimum Support Price (MSP)? How will MSP rescue the farmers from the low income trap? (150 Words, 10 Marks)</p>
<p>1. How has development of supermarkets impacted the life and livelihood of small farmers and Vendors? Can the two (supermarkets &amp; small vendors) co-exist in harmony? If not, what should be done to safeguard the interests of the small farmers and vendors? <b>(CIWP-G 2017-18, Q-3)</b></p> <p>2. What do you understand by the terms backward and forward linkages in the context of food processing industry? Discuss the importance of both of them and enumerate measures to strengthen the same. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 6 Q-12)</b></p>	<p>4. Examine the role of supermarkets in supply chain management of fruits, vegetables and food items. How do they eliminate number of intermediaries? (150 Words, 10 Marks)</p>
<p>1. The greatest challenge in the sanitation sector is also the biggest opportunity in forging the links between global climate change and positive actions to improve the efficiency in water and sanitation services. Discuss. <b>(KSG 7 QUESTION CHALLENGE)</b></p>	<p>6. What are the impediments in disposing the huge quantities of discarded solid wastes which are continuously being generated? How do we remove safely the toxic wastes that have been accumulating in our habitable environment? (150 Words, 10 Marks)</p>
<p>1. Briefly discuss the important role played by Wetlands. What measures have been taken in India and world over for the conservation of wetlands? <b>(CIWP-P 2017-18, Q-1)</b></p>	<p>7. What is wetland? Explain the Ramsar concept of 'wise use' in the context of wetland conservation. Cite two examples of Ramsar sites from India. (150 Words, 10 Marks)</p>
<p>1. Sikkim has become India's first fully organic state by implementing organic practices on around 75,000 hectares of agricultural land. It seems as if the baton will soon be passed to other states, as they are also thinking of revamping their agricultural model for Organic Farming. Why is Organic Farming so alluring. Discuss. <b>(KSG E-TEST 39)</b></p>	<p>8. Sikkim is the first 'Organic State' in India. What are the ecological and economical benefits of Organic State? (150 Words, 10 Marks)</p>
<p>1. Over the years China has been able to string together a patronage of network of multiple South Asian coastal nations. Why is China expanding its foothold in South-Asia? What options does India have to counter Chinese presence in the region? <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 7 Q-9)</b></p>	<p>9. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is viewed as a cardinal subset of China's larger 'One Belt One Road' initiative. Give a brief description of CPEC and enumerate the reasons why India has distanced itself from the same. (150 Words, 10 Marks)</p>
<p>1. Naxalism has emerged as a major internal security threat in the country. Do you think that the problem of Naxalism is a fallout of the unsuccessful implementation of Land Reforms in India? Discuss. <b>(CIWP B 2017-18, Q-4)</b></p> <p>2. The Naxal problem is much too complex and requires a comprehensive strategy which cannot be capsuled in an acronym. Discuss how far the new formula of SAMADHAN would be successful in addressing the Naxal issue. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 7 Q-10)</b></p>	<p>10. Left Wing Extremism (LWE) is showing a downward trend, but still affects many parts of the country. Briefly explain the Government of India's approach to counter the challenges posed by LWE. (150 Words, 10 Marks)</p>
<p>1. NITI Aayog is a platform for cooperative federalism. How is NITI Aayog different from erstwhile planning commission? In what ways has it brought about the changes in the Centre-states and inter-state relations? <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 3 Q-3)</b></p> <p>2. What are the recent initiatives taken by NITI Aayog to boost Indian Industries' Innovation capacity and R&amp;D. Explain the significance of ATAL Tinkering Labs in boosting India's innovative Capital. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 6 Q-17)</b></p>	<p>11. How are the principles followed by NITI Aayog different from those followed by the erstwhile planning commission in India? (250 Words, 15 Marks)</p>

<p>1. With the US on the offensive and a retaliatory China, the trade war goes beyond just trade and tariffs. A prolonged conflict and the disruption of global supply chains could have a massive ripple effect on the global economy and India is likely to be affected. Elucidate. <b>(CIWP D 2018, Q-4)</b></p> <p>2. Amidst new international fluidity &amp; increased protectionism, India and EU (European Union) should blend their strengths to champion a new narrative for inclusive globalization. Critically analyze the statement in context of lingering BTIA (Broad based Trade &amp; Investment Agreement). <b>(CIWP H2 2018, Q-1)</b></p>	<p>12. How would the recent phenomena of protectionism and currency manipulations in world trade affect macroeconomic stability of India? (250 Words, 15 Marks)</p>
<p>1. Changing nature of monsoon requires change of cropping pattern which could give farmer an assured income and sustainable growth of agriculture. Discuss what are the steps need to be taken for a viable agriculture which will help to achieve both the objectives. <b>(KSG E-TEST 115)</b></p>	<p>14. How has the emphasis on certain crops brought about changes in cropping patterns in recent past? Elaborate the emphasis on millets production and consumption. (250 Words, 15 Marks)</p>
<p>1. Analyze the role of Biotechnology in solving many of the 21st century global problems. Also elaborate what measures India should adopt to become a world class bio-manufacturing hub. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 13 Q-10)</b></p>	<p>15. Why is there so much activity in the field of biotechnology in our country? How has this activity benefitted the field of biopharma? (250 Words, 15 Marks)</p>
<p>1. Energy security for a country as large as India can only be provided by a diversified portfolio and this has to include nuclear power. Comment. <b>(KSG E-TEST 93)</b></p>	<p>16. With growing energy needs should India keep on expanding its nuclear energy programme? Discuss the facts and fears associated with nuclear energy. (250 Words, 15 Marks)</p>
<p>1. What do you understand by "Disaster Management Cycle?" After the Uttarakhand havoc what measures have been taken by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to prepare themselves for disaster in hilly area? How important is the role of coordination among various agencies in this aspect? <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 13 Q-12)</b></p> <p>2. No other region in the world illustrates the chronic nature of displacement caused by extreme weather events and climate change, more than Asia and the Pacific. In this light, critically analyze the significance of Sendai Framework. <b>(KSG 7 QUESTION CHALLENGE)</b></p> <p>3. Indian subcontinent is vulnerable to various natural disasters which are detrimental to human life and property. Suggest measures, including the role of local communities, to minimize the losses incurred by the natural hazards. <b>(KSG E-TEST 19)</b></p>	<p>18. Describe various measures taken in India for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) before and after signing 'Sendai Framework for DRR (2015-2030)'. How is this framework different from 'Hyogo Framework for Action, 2005'? (250 Words, 15 Marks)</p>
<p>1. India remains vulnerable to cyber security threats despite the various efforts made by GOI to secure it's cyberspace. What are the major issues in India's cyber security regime? Suggest some measures to deal with this new generation threat. <b>(CIWP B 2017-18, Q-3)</b></p> <p>2. "Cyber Security needs to be integrated in every aspect of policy and planning". Analyse this statement in the light of Symantec's Internal Security Threat Report of 2017. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 7 Q-15)</b></p> <p>3. Digital India campaign has promoted the digital technologies in governance, economy, commerce and communication; but with increased penetration of digital infrastructure, it is also exposed to various threats. Discuss the various kinds of security threats with examples. Critically analyse the cyber security structure in India. Suggest measures to plug loopholes, if any, in cyber security framework of India. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 7 Q-3)</b></p>	<p>19. Data security has assumed significant importance in the digitized world due to rising cyber-crimes. The Justice B. N. Srikrishna Committee Report addresses issues related to data security. What, in your view, are the strengths and weaknesses of the Report relating to protection of personal data in cyber space? (250 Words, 15 Marks)</p>

<p>1. India is the meeting point of 'Golden Crescent' and the 'Golden Triangle'. In this regard, explain the drug menace in south Asia. While explaining its consequences, provide some measures to combat illicit drug trafficking in the region. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 7 Q-16)</b></p> <p>2. Increased drug trafficking in states with international borders poses challenge to India's national security. Discuss. Suggest some innovative solutions to tackle the issue of drug abuse among Indian youth. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 13 Q-19)</b></p>	<p>20. India's proximity to two of the world's biggest illicit opium-growing states has enhanced her internal security concerns. Explain the linkages between drug trafficking and other illicit activities such as gunrunning, money laundering and human trafficking. What countermeasures should be taken to prevent the same? (250 Words, 15 Marks)</p>
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**CSE MAINS EXAMINATION GS PAPER-IV**  
**HELD ON 30 SEPT 2018**

<b>KSG QUESTIONS</b>	<b>UPSC QUESTIONS</b>
<p>1. Values are important in giving yardsticks and prescribing how goals must be accomplished. In the light of this statement, explain how values play an imperative role in the healthy public administration of the country. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST-9 Q-4a)</b></p>	<p>1(a) State the three basic values, universal in nature, in the context of civil services and bring out their importance. (150 words)</p>
<p>1. What is the importance of law, rules and regulations for a civil servant? Is it an adequate basis for an ethical administration? <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 9 Q-3)</b></p>	<p>1(b) Distinguish between "Code of ethics" and "Code of conduct" with suitable examples. (150 words)</p>
<p>1. There are times in professional life when one comes under temptation and coercion, keeping ethical commitments at altar. What attitude one must possess against such temptations and coercion? <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 8 Q-1)</b></p> <p>2. A civil servant should have commitment to the social cause, empathy for the weaker sections and dedication to public services. Elaborate. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 8 Q-6a)</b></p>	<p>2(a) What is mean by public interest? What are the principles and procedures to be followed by the civil servants in public interest? (150 words)</p>
<p>1. Highlight the significance of transparency for good governance. Critically evaluate the impact of RTI Act in improving the quality of life of the poor and the marginalized in the country. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 9 Q-7b)</b></p> <p>2. The RTI Act 2005 marks a departure from the past by shifting the debate on governance from what should be revealed to public to what must be kept secret from it. In the light of this statement discuss the role played by the Act in strengthening Indian democracy. <b>(KSG CIWP-C 2018)</b></p>	<p>2(b) "The Right to Information Act is not all about citizens' empowerment alone, it essentially redefines the concept of accountability. Discuss. (150 words)</p>
<p>1. "Conflict of interest in performance of public services is one of the cause of administrative ills." Discuss. Also suggest measures to deal with such situations. <b>(KTP 2018 TEST 9 Q-2)</b></p>	<p>3(a) What is mean by conflict of interest? Illustrate with examples, the difference between the actual and potential conflicts of interest. (150 words)</p>
<p>1. "The law condemns and punishes only actions within certain definite and narrow limits; it thereby justifies, in a way, all similar actions that lie outside those imits." Comment. <b>(KSG 7 QUESTION CHALLENGE)</b></p>	<p>4(a) "In doing a good thing, everything is permitted which is not prohibited expressly or by clear implication". Examine the statement with suitable examples in the context of a public servant discharging his/her duties. (150 words)</p>
<p>1. In your opinion, for any action to be called a right action what is more important 'means or ends'? Discuss this in the context of Gandhian and Machiavellian views on the subject. <b>(KTP 2017-18 TEST 14 Q-5)</b></p>	<p>4(b) With regard to the morality of actions, one view is that means is of paramount importance and the other view is that the ends justify the means. Which view do you think is more appropriate? Justify your answer. (150 words)</p>