

# JOIN THE DOTS!

## A CURRENT AFFAIRS SERIES FOR UPSC EXAMINATION

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### Compendium – December 2018

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Dear Students,

With the present examination pattern of UPSC Civil Services Examination, General Studies papers require a lot of specialization with 'Current Affairs'. Moreover, following the recent trend of UPSC, almost all the questions are based on news as well as issues. CL IAS has now come up with '**Join the dots! A current affairs series for UPSC Examination**' series which will help you pick up relevant news items of the day from various national dailies such as The Hindu, Indian Express, Business Standard, LiveMint, PIB and other important sources.

'**Join the dots! A current affairs series for UPSC Examination**' series will be helpful for prelims as well as Mains Examination. We are covering every issue in a holistic manner and covered every dimension with detailed facts. This edition covers all important issues that were in news in the month of December 2018. Also, we have introduced Prelim base question for Test Your Knowledge which shall guide you for better revision. In addition, it would benefit all those who are preparing for other competitive examinations.

We have prepared this series of documents after some rigorous deliberations with Toppers and also with aspirants who have wide experience of preparations in the Civil Services Examination.

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**“Set your goals high, and don't stop till you get there”**

**All the best!!**

**Team CL**



# Join the dots!

## A current affairs series for UPSC Examination

### Environment, Forest and Climate Change/Disaster Management/ Biodiversity COP-24

#### What

- The 24th meeting of Conference of Parties (COP-24) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) will be held at Katowice, Poland from 2nd December 2018 to 14th December 2018.
- COP-24 is very significant as it is expected to finalise guidelines for implementation of the Paris Agreement adopted in 2016.

#### India's delegation

- Union Environment Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan will be leading the 17 member Indian delegation
- India strongly supports the objective of the Paris Agreement to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change by keeping the global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5 degrees Celsius.
- During the COP-24, India would like to emphasise its concern for climate change and reaffirm its commitments to finalisation of the Paris Agreement Work Programme (PAWP).
- India would like to ensure that Common but Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), in the light of different national circumstances, are operationalised in all elements of the PAWP.
- The issue of pre-2020 commitments under Kyoto Protocol, particularly higher mitigation action of developed countries and the need for developed countries to fulfil their climate finance commitments of mobilising USD 100 billion per annum by 2020, will remain a priority for India in COP-24.
- PAWP must have mechanisms to ensure new, adequate and predictable support for developing country parties.
- India will be looking forward to a rich exchange of views during the high-level Talanoa dialogue at COP-24, with consideration of pre-2020 actions and support as a crucial element, and its successful conclusion in 2018 as per the agreed modalities.
- India will be working together with all Parties in an open, transparent, inclusive and Party-driven manner to achieve a balanced and comprehensive outcome in the form of final PAWP at COP-24.



**COP24 • KATOWICE 2018**  
UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE CONFERENCE

#### Role of India towards mitigating the adverse effects of climate change

- India has undertaken ambitious mitigation and adaptation actions in the field of clean energy, especially renewable energy, enhancement of energy efficiency, development of less carbon-intensive and resilient urban centers, promotion of waste to wealth, safe, smart and sustainable green transportation network, abatement of pollution and efforts to enhance carbon sink through creation of forest and tree cover.
- The ambitious goal of generating 175 GW of renewable energy by 2022, and initiatives on smart cities, electric vehicles, energy efficiency initiatives etc. have now made India one of the global leaders in climate action.
- With the achievement of about 72 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2018 out of a targeted 175 GW, India stands at 4th position globally in wind power, 6th position in solar power installed capacity, and overall 5th position in renewable power.
- India made a voluntary pledge in 2009 to reduce the emission intensity of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 20-25 per cent from 2005 levels by 2020 (excluding emissions from agriculture).

- The Prime Minister has set an ambitious goal that India must start generating 40 per cent of its total power from non-fossil fuels by 2030, thereby placing India at a premium position on the international renewable energy map.
- The United Nations' highest environmental honour, UNEP "Champions of the Earth" award was conferred on 3rd October 2018 on the Prime Minister of India in the policy leadership category for his pioneering work in championing the ISA and for his unprecedented pledge to eliminate all single-use plastic in India by 2022.
- On the sidelines of COP-24, India will be setting up a Pavilion to create awareness about India's positive climate actions in various sectors of the economy.
- The theme of this year's India Pavilion is 'One World One Sun One Grid'

## Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation

### *India Water Impact Summit-2018*

#### **What**

- Union Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri Nitin Gadkari will inaugurate India Water Impact Summit 2018, being jointly organized by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) and the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (cGanga)

#### **Connect to the summit**

- The India Water Impact Summit is an annual event where stakeholders get together to discuss, debate and develop model solutions for some of the biggest water related problems in the country.
- The discussions this year will be on rejuvenation of the Ganga River Basin.
- There will be multi-country dialogue on the subject, with showcasing of technological innovations, research, policy frameworks and funding models from India and abroad.
- The efforts may take various forms including (but not limited to): data collection (sensors, LIDAR, modelling etc), hydrology, e-flows, agriculture, waste water and more.

#### **The Summit will focus on these key aspects**

- Spotlight on 5 states: Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Delhi and Bihar. The objective is to showcase the efforts and works going on within the respective states.
- Ganga Financing Forum: The 2018 Summit also introduces the inaugural Ganga Financing Forum that will bring a number of institutions to a common knowledge, information and partnership platform.
- The Hybrid Annuity Model has redefined the economic landscape of water and waste-water treatment in India.
- The Financing Forum will bring together financial institutions and investors interested in Namami Gange programmes.
- Technology and Innovation: Implementation of the pilot/demonstration programme known as the Environment Technology Verification (ETV) process.

#### **Benefits**

- This will provide an opportunity to technology and innovation companies from around the world to showcase their solutions for addressing the problems prevalent in the river basin.
- Nearly 200 domestic and international participants from nearly 15 countries and more than 50 Central, State and Municipal Government representatives are likely to participate in the summit

## Ministry of Finance releases Discussion Paper entitled "3 Essential "S"s of Climate Finance - Scope, Scale and Speed: A Reflection"

### **COP 24 in Katowice, Poland**

#### **What**

- Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, released a Discussion Paper entitled "3 Essential "S"s of Climate Finance - Scope, Scale and Speed: A Reflection" on the sidelines of COP 24 to UNFCCC at Katowice, Poland.

## Connect to the discussion paper

- The Discussion Paper examines analytically the scope, scale and speed required in climate finance.
- While the financial requirements of developing countries run into trillions of Dollars, the commitments made by the developed countries for enhancement and support in relation to climate finance is not clearly translated into reality.
- The Discussion Paper finds serious concerns with the various numbers on climate finance reported by the developed countries.
- Definitions of climate change finance used in various reports were not consistent with the UNFCCC provisions. Methodologies used were also questionable.
- This Paper attempts to identify the essential elements, step by step, for a robust and transparent accounting of climate finance flows from developed to developing countries.
- The Parties at CoP 24 in Katowice in December, 2018 need to address these important questions on climate finance.
- While India will continue to play its constructive role at CoP 24 to UNFCCC at Katowice, it is hoped that this Reflection paper will be of utility to stakeholders during deliberations therein.

## Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation

### *1st International Conference on Sustainable Water Management*

#### What

- The first International Conference under the aegis of National Hydrology Project, Union Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation is being organised by Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) during 10-11 December, 2018 at Indian School of Business (ISB), Mohali on the theme 'Sustainable Water Management'.
- The theme of the Conference deals with promoting integrated and sustainable development and management of Water Resources.

#### Connect to the conference

- A number of Experts & Delegates from reputed organisations from both within India and from other countries like Australia, United Kingdom, USA, Spain, Netherlands, Republic of Korea, Canada, Germany, Sri Lanka etc. will be taking part in the event to deliver their experience and expertise in the use of state of art technology to the stakeholders for sustainable development of water resources.
- The participation in the conference
- is by invitation and more than 400 delegates have been registered.
- About 20 companies and organizations will be putting up stalls in exhibition to show case their activities in the area of sustainable water resources management.
- The aim of the Conference is to foster the participation of and dialogue between various stakeholders, including governments, the scientific and academic communities, so as to promote sustainable policies for water management, to create awareness of water-related problems, motivate commitment at the highest level for their solution and thus promote better management of water resources at local, regional, national and international levels.

## Environment Conservation

### *ECO Niwas Samhita 2018 - an Energy Conservation Building Code for Residential Buildings launched*

#### What

- Giving a further fillip to India's energy conservation efforts, Ministry of Power has launched the ECO Niwas Samhita 2018, an Energy Conservation Building Code for Residential Buildings (ECBC-R).
- The Code was launched on the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day 2018

## Connect to the code

- The implementation of this Code will give a fillip to energy efficiency in residential sector.
- It aims to benefit the occupants and the environment by promoting energy efficiency in design and construction of homes, apartments and townships.
- This Code has been prepared after extensive consultations with all stakeholders, consisting of architects & experts including building material suppliers and developers.
- The parameters listed in the Code have been developed based on large number of parameters using climate and energy related data.
- Initially, Part-I of the Code has been launched which prescribes minimum standards for building envelope designs with the purpose of designing energy efficient residential buildings.
- The Code is expected to assist large number of architects and builders who are involved in design and construction of new residential complexes in different parts of the country.
- Implementation of this Code will have potential for energy savings to the tune of 125 Billion Units of electricity per year by 2030, which is equivalent to about 100 million ton of Co2 emission.
- ECBC for commercial buildings was already in place and revised and updated version of ECBC for commercial buildings was launched in June 2017.
- It is estimated that energy demand in the building sector will rise from around 350 billion units in 2018 to approximately 1000 billion units by year 2030.

## National Energy Conservation Awards:

- National Energy Conservation Day is celebrated every year on 14th December by Ministry of Power in association with Bureau of Energy Efficiency.
- On this Day, Ministry of Power organizes National Energy Conservation Awards event every year.
- On this occasion 26 industrial units from various sectors were given awards for their excellent performance in energy efficiency.

## Connect to BEE

- BEE is a statutory body under Ministry of Power which is mandated to implement policy and programmes in the area of energy efficiency and conservation.
- The objective of such initiatives is to reduce energy intensity in our country by optimizing energy demand and reduce emissions of greenhouse gases (GHG) which are responsible for global warming and climate change. India has committed to reduction of 33-35% GHG emission by 2030 as part of the document submitted to UNFCCC.

## Asiatic Lion Conservation Project



## Implementing agency

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change(MoEFCC).

## Connect to the objective

- The objective of this project is to **work for the conservation** of the world's last ranging free Asiatic Lion population and the ecosystem associated with it.

## Connect to the Scheme

- The project will be funded under the '**Development of Wildlife Habitat (CSS-DWH)**' scheme which is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- The cost will be borne in the **60:40** ratio by the Central and State government.
- The activities under 'Asiatic Lion Conservation Project' include habitat improvement of the Lions, controlling of diseases among the population, scientific interventions and adequate veterinary care.

## Know all about Asiatic Lion

- They are listed as '**Endangered**' under the IUCN Red List.
- Its population is restricted to the state of Gujarat in India.
- With serious conservation efforts of the State and the Union Government, the population of Asiatic lions have increased to over 500
- As per the 2015 census, there were a total of 523 Asiatic Lions in Gir Protected Area Network

## Disaster Management

### *Relevance in – Prelims and G.S (paper III)*

### Connect to the steps and initiatives taken by India

- India plays an active role in global initiatives on disaster management.
- India is a signatory to the **Sendai Framework** for Disaster Risk Reduction and is committed to achieve the priorities and the objectives through systematic and institutional efforts.
- India is one of the participating countries and works closely with the **United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR)**.

### India had signed bilateral/ multilateral agreements with the several countries for cooperation in the field of disaster management like:

- Agreement between the Republic of India and the Swiss Confederation on Cooperation in the event of Disasters.
- Agreement between India and Russia on cooperation in the field of Emergency Management.
- SAARC Agreement on Rapid Response to Natural Disasters.
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with various nations like Germany Japan Tajikistan and Indonesia on cooperation in the field of Disaster Management.

### Connect to India's partnership with various organisations of disaster management

- Government of India has partnership with various International Agencies in the field of Disaster Management such as United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), The World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (WCDRR), Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR), Asian Ministerial Conference for Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC), International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG), Global Facility for Disaster Reduction and

### Connect to various International Meetings/Exercises in the field of Disaster Management conducted by India

- Government of India organized the **South Asian Annual Disaster Management Exercise (SAADMex)** in New Delhi.
- The Meeting of **BRICS Ministers for Disaster Management** was held on Udaipur, Rajasthan.

- Government of India, in collaboration with the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), hosted the **Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR) 2016** in New Delhi
- The Government of Republic of India hosted the first Annual Disaster Management Exercise for **'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC)** countries (BIMSTEC DMEx-2017) on 10-13 October, 2017 in New Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR).
- National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) in collaboration with United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR), organized **first of its kind International Workshop on Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (IWDRRI)** on 15-16 January, 2018 in New Delhi.
- Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, organized the first India-Japan Workshop on Disaster Risk Reduction
- The Government of India will organize a **Joint Urban Earthquake Search and Rescue exercise of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** member states to improve collective preparedness in March, 2019.
- Connect to Sendai Framework
- The Sendai Framework for **Disaster Risk Reduction (2015-2030)** is an international document which was adopted by UN member states between 14th and 18th of March 2015 at the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan and endorsed by the UN General Assembly in June 2015.
- It is the successor agreement to the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005–2015), which had been the most encompassing international accord to date on disaster risk reduction.

## Disaster Management

*Relevance in – Prelims( facts) , Mains G.S paper III (disaster and disaster management)*

*Indonesia's volcano trigger tsunami*

*Anak Krakatoa eruption likely to have set off underwater landslide*

*Relevance in – Prelims and Mains GS Paper I and III ( Important geophysical phenomena and Disaster Management)*

### What's the NEWS

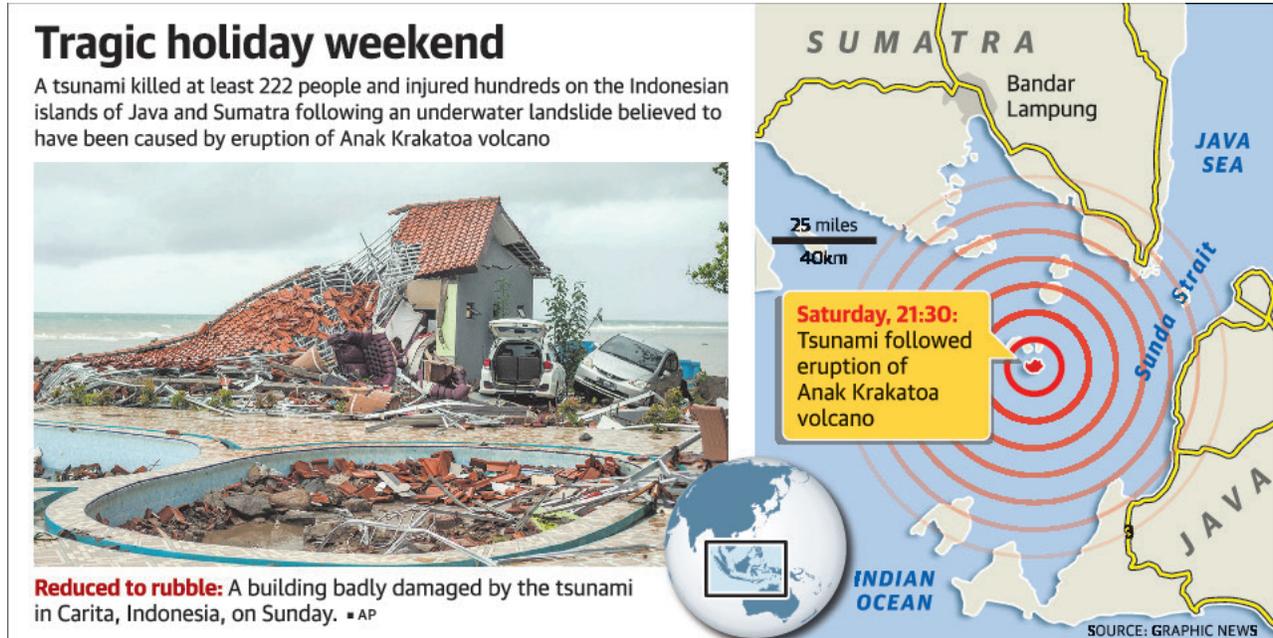
- At least 222 people were killed and several hundreds injured when a tsunami struck the Indonesian islands of Java and Sumatra following an underwater landslide, believed to have been **caused by the erupting Anak Krakatoa volcano**. The tsunami struck, almost without warning,

### Know about Anak Krakatoa

- **Anak Krakatoa, an active volcano roughly halfway between Java and Sumatra**, has been spewing ash and lava for months. It erupted again after and the tsunami struck



- Unlike those caused by earthquakes, which usually trigger alert systems, volcano-triggered tsunamis give authorities very little time to warn residents.
- The disaster was most likely caused by a moderate eruption of the Anak Krakatoa volcano in the Sunda Strait that triggered either a large and very fast moving flow of molten rock into the sea or a sudden and massive submarine landslide — both would displace large amounts of water, resulting in a tsunami.
- Evidence suggested that a section of the volcano collapsed and slid into the ocean, triggering a tsunami
- The country is among the most disaster-hit nations as it straddles the ‘Pacific Ring of Fire’, where tectonic plates collide.



### Reason why the tsunami struck, almost without warning

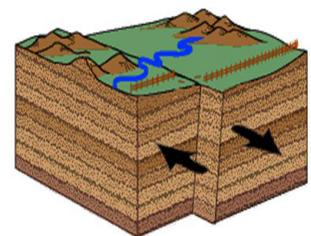
- Neither scientists at the **Hyderabad-based Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS)**, which runs the state-of-the-art **Indian Tsunami Early Warning System (ITEWS)**, nor the alert systems available at Indonesia could provide an early warning to prevent the disaster at islands of Java and Sumatra in the absence of any warnings from the oceanic buoys, tide gauges or quake sensors.
- It was a **localised tsunami, which occurred due to a volcanic eruption**, leading to mudslide on the ocean bed.
- As there was no earthquake, the sensors could not catch anything. There is no technology available to detect tsunamis occurring due to mudslides closer to the shore
- It is very difficult to handle localised tsunamis and far more easier to detect one which affects the entire ocean basin on a larger area.

### What is ‘Strike slip’ quake

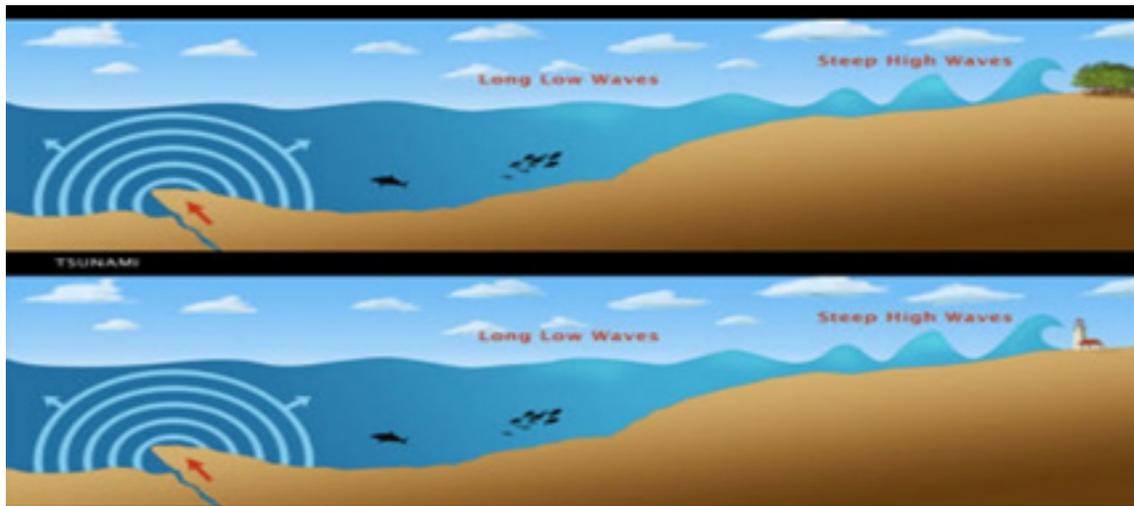
- “It was a **‘strike slip’ earthquake** where two land masses move one against the other parallelly which usually do not cause much displacement of water in the sea and hence, the tsunami too will not be of that much force.
- However, due to one portion of the island dipping into the sea and being an enclosed bay area, the tsunami impact was greater

### Strike-Slip Faults

- Blocks of rock move sideways or horizontally on either side of the fault plane.
- Stresses that push blocks of rock horizontally cause earthquakes along strike-slip faults.
- The San Andreas Fault is a strike-slip fault.



## Know all about tsunami



- Tsunami are waves caused by a sudden movement of the ocean due to earthquakes, landslides on the sea floor, land slumping into the ocean, major volcanic eruptions or large meteorite impacts.
- Most tsunami are caused by large earthquakes at the sea floor, when large slabs of rock are forced to move past each other suddenly causing the overlying water to move.
- The resulting wave moves outwards and away from this event.
- **Underwater landslides too can cause tsunami, and so can land which slumps into the ocean.**
- Landslides happen when slopes become too steep to withstand gravity. Large meteorite impacts that occur at sea can trigger tsunami too.
- Less common are tsunamis initiated by volcanic eruptions.
- These occur in several ways: **If an underwater volcano erupts, the hot lava may heat the surrounding water quickly and explosively.**
- Massive flows of volcanic debris such as ash can travel down the side of a volcano and into the ocean, pushing water outwards.
- The top of an underwater volcano may collapse downwards, so that the overlying water also drops.
- Indonesia was struck by a volcanic tsunami on Dec. 22, 2018
- **It was triggered by the continued volcanic eruptions of Anak Krakatau.**

## Environment Conservation

**Odisha government added another olive ridley mass nesting site Bahuda Rookery at beach on Bahuda river mouth in Ganjam district: Beach at Bahuda river mouth in Odisha being developed to lure the turtles as their nesting site**

*Relevance in – Prelims and Mains ( GS paper III - Environment Conservation)*

### What's the NEWS

- The Odisha forest department is all set to add another olive ridley mass nesting site to its wildlife map.
- It has started preparing the beach at the Bahuda river mouth in Ganjam district to lure the endangered turtles to come over for mass nesting next year.

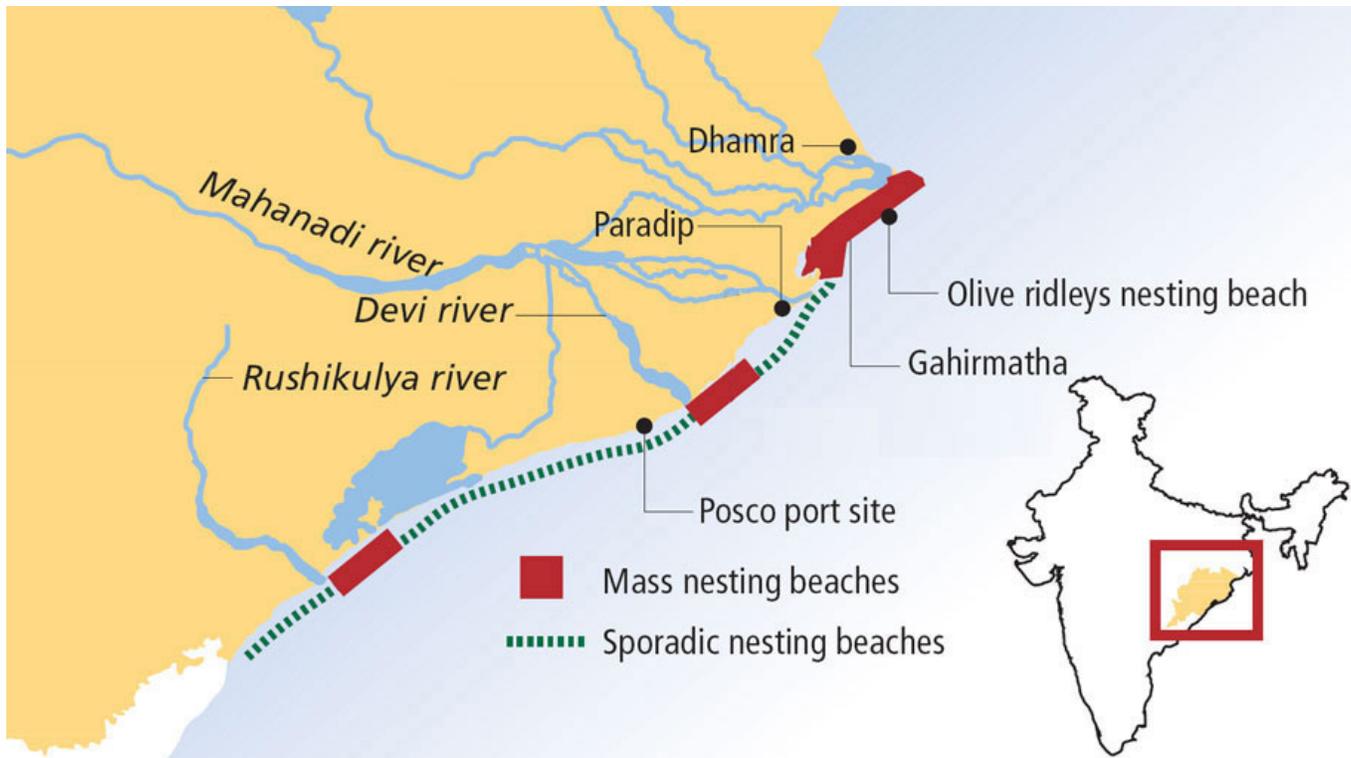


## Know about Bahuda rookery

- The Bahuda rookery is located around 20 km to the south of Rushikulya rookery coast, a major mass nesting site of olive ridleys on the Indian coastline.
- This year, a few hundred olive ridleys had nested at Bahuda river mouth in February. This encouraged the forest department to develop it as a second mass nesting site for the turtles on the Ganjam coast.
- At present, mating olive ridleys are being sighted near the Bahuda rookery. It is being hoped that the turtles will find the beach conducive and their mass nesting number at Bahuda will increase in 2019.

## Know about Olive Ridely Nesting sites

- **Gahirmatha marine sanctuary and Rushikulya rookery coast in Ganjam district are main Olive Ridley Nesting sites in Odisha.**
- Of these sites, **Gahirmatha marine sanctuary** is largest rookery (mass nesting site) of Olive Ridley turtles.



## Know all about Olive Ridley Olive Ridley turtle (*Lepidochelys olivacea*)

- It is smallest and most abundant of all sea turtle found in world.
- It gets its name from its olive coloured carapace, which is heart-shaped and rounded.
- It is best known for their unique mass nesting called Arribada, where thousands of females come together on the same beach each year to lay eggs.
- It is found in warm waters of Pacific and Indian oceans. They are found along both-eastern and western coasts of India.

## Know about the mass nesting

- Olive Ridley turtles commence their journey from Indian Ocean towards Bay of Bengal during their mating season in October and November every year.
- A single female can lay upto 100 to 150 eggs in a pit dug on beaches.
- Six weeks later these eggs hatches and newly hatched turtles start journey to their Indian Ocean habitat.

## What's the protection status

- It is included in Vulnerable category by the IUCN Red list. In India, it is protected under Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and the trading in its products are banned under CITES

# Environment Conservation: The national aquatic animal RIVER DOLPHINS are under threat as water salinity rises

Relevance in – Prelims and Mains ( GS Paper – III Environment Conservation)

## Needed, Breathing Space

The study indicates that the encounter rate of dolphins was consistent in less saline waters (<1 part per thousand) and in moderate salinity (1-10 ppt), which occurs close to the estuarine mouth of the Ganges



**Missing in action:** The Ganges River Dolphin seen in a section of the Hooghly in West Bengal. ■ R. CHAKRABORTY

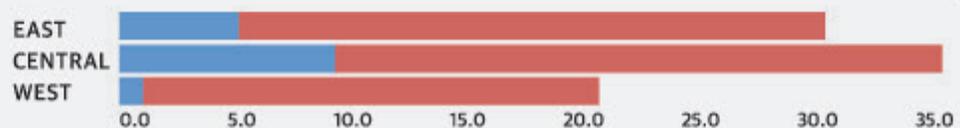
### Boat-based surveys in selected water channels in Sunderbans to sight the mammals

Section	River channel	Survey length (km)	Sighting	Salinity range
Western	Hooghly	38	Yes	<1.0-19 ppt
	Muriganga	14	Yes	<1.0-19 ppt
Central	Matla	15	No	9.0-24.6 ppt
Eastern	Gomor	17	No	5.0-24 pp
	Bidya	12.3	No	5.0-24 pp



Average salinity in the Sunderbans

■ MIN. ■ MAX.



## Highlights

- National aquatic animal no longer sighted in the central and eastern parts of the archipelago, according to a recent study

## What's the NEWS

- Rise in salinity in the water system that makes the Indian Sunderbans has resulted in a decrease in population of the Ganges River Dolphins in the region.

## What the study says

- A recent study covering 100 km of rivers and channels around the Sunderbans has revealed that the national aquatic animal is no longer sighted in the central and eastern parts of the archipelago.
- Only in the western part of Sunderbans, where the salinity is lower, could researchers find some evidence of the species.
- The study reveals that the distribution of GRD (Ganges River Dolphin) is influenced by the salinity level of the waterways.
- The study is indicative of how natural changes, including the phenomenon of climate change, and human interventions in the Indian Sunderbans are having an adverse impact on the habitat of the species.

- Due to its unique body shape, it becomes difficult for the dolphin to remain submerged in waters with high salinity.
- Freshwater flow to the Sunderbans is crucial for the subsistence of these species.
- The rise in sea level, triggered by climate change, is one of the reasons for the increase in salinity of waters of rivers and channels.
- Hydrological modifications like water diversion and commission of large barrages upstream have had a great impact on the salinity profile of the rivers downstream in the Sunderbans

### Protection status

- Classified as **endangered** by the IUCN Red List, the species was once found in tributaries of the Ganga in West Bengal.

### Know about the River Dolphin

- The Gange River Dolphin is a rare species of dolphins found only in Indian and neighbor countries.

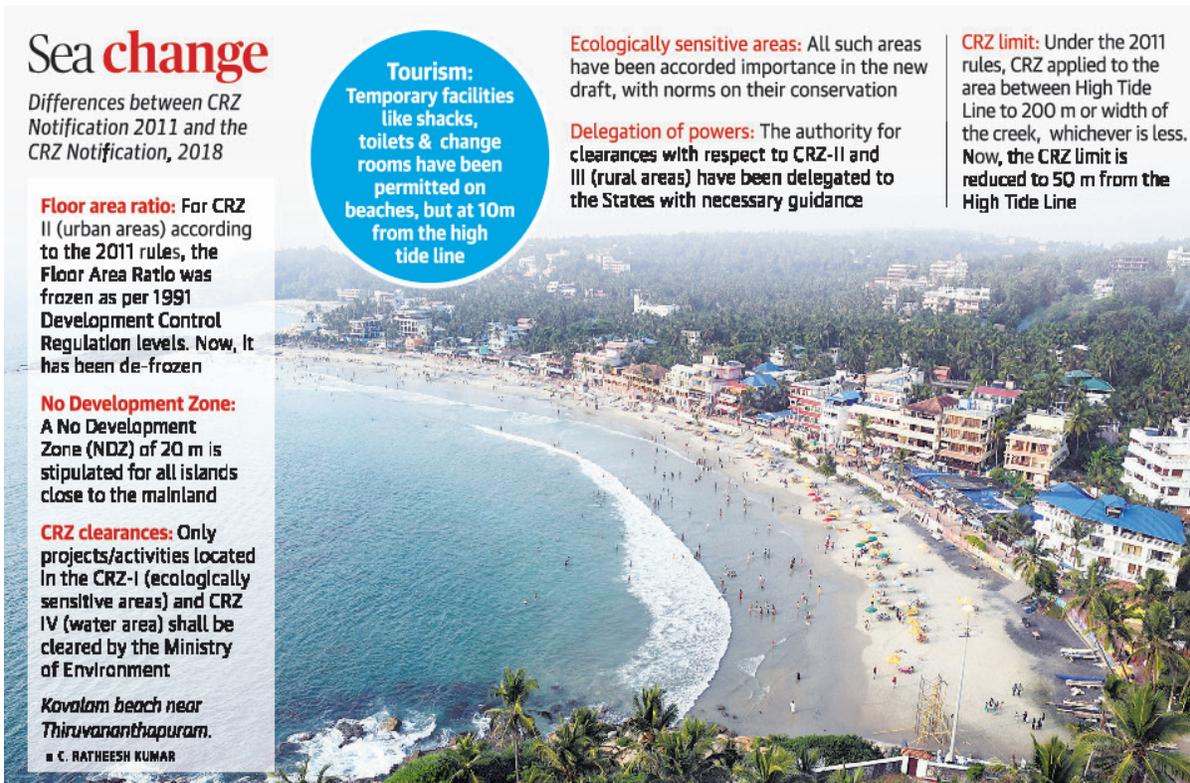


- Dolphins are amongst one of the oldest creatures in the world along with some species of turtles, crocodiles and sharks.
- Dolphin inhabited rivers are The Sacred river Ganga, Chambal, Gandak and the Brahmaputra River from the Assam-Arunachal Pradesh border to India-Bangladesh border.
- These fresh water cetacean mostly distributed in gange and brahmaputra river. River dolphins have the long, pointed nose, river dolphins are nearly blind, They rely on sound and echolocation to navigate and communicate.
- There are various conservation works going on the Sanctuary Areas to protect the National Aquatic Animal of India.
- Vikramshila Gangetic dolphin sanctuary is the only the only protected area for the endangered Gangetic dolphins in Asia.
- It is located in Bhagalpur District of Bihar, India. Only a few hundred dolphins remain in India, of which half are found here

**Sources – PIB, The Hindu and Indian express articles**

### Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ): Cabinet nod for easing CRZ norms

*Relevance in – Prelims ( changes regarding the CRZ norms) + Mains ( GS Ppaer III – Environment Conservation )*



**Sea change**  
Differences between CRZ Notification 2011 and the CRZ Notification, 2018

**Floor area ratio:** For CRZ II (urban areas) according to the 2011 rules, the Floor Area Ratio was frozen as per 1991 Development Control Regulation levels. Now, it has been de-frozen

**No Development Zone:** A No Development Zone (NDZ) of 20 m is stipulated for all islands close to the mainland

**CRZ clearances:** Only projects/activities located in the CRZ-I (ecologically sensitive areas) and CRZ IV (water area) shall be cleared by the Ministry of Environment

*Kovalam beach near Thiruvananthapuram.*  
■ C. RATHEESH KUMAR

**Tourism:** Temporary facilities like shacks, toilets & change rooms have been permitted on beaches, but at 10m from the high tide line

**Ecologically sensitive areas:** All such areas have been accorded importance in the new draft, with norms on their conservation

**Delegation of powers:** The authority for clearances with respect to CRZ-II and III (rural areas) have been delegated to the States with necessary guidance

**CRZ limit:** Under the 2011 rules, CRZ applied to the area between High Tide Line to 200 m or width of the creek, whichever is less. Now, the CRZ limit is reduced to 50 m from the High Tide Line

#### What's the NEWS

- The Union Cabinet approved relaxation in various norms including the clearance of projects or activities falling in the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ), allowing for greater use of coastal areas for tourism and industrial growth

#### The CRZ Notification 2018

- It aimed at streamlining of Coastal Regulation Zone clearances, enhancing activities in the coastal regions and promoting economic growth while keeping in mind conservation principles of coastal regions.
- It is a comprehensive review of the provisions of the CRZ Notification, 2011.

#### Know about the new notification

- According to the new notification, only such projects which are located in **CRZ-I (Ecologically Sensitive Areas) and IV (area covered between Low Tide Line and 12 nautical miles seaward)** will require the necessary clearance from the Union Ministry.
- The powers for clearances with respect to **CRZ-II (the areas that have been developed up to or close to the shoreline) and III (areas that are relatively undisturbed) have been delegated to the State level.**
- The construction norms on **Floor Space Index (FSI)** or the Floor Area Ratio (FAR), which was frozen at 1991 Development Control Regulation (DCR) levels, **have been relaxed** and will now be based on laws which are in vogue.
- The new notification also relaxed the **No Development Zone (NDZ)** criteria.
- Densely populated rural areas with a **population density of 2,161 per square kilometre**, falling under CRZ-III A, now have NDZ of **50 metres** from the High Tide Line (HTL) as **against 200 metres** stipulated in the CRZ Notification, 2011.

- For islands close to the mainland coast and for all backwater islands in the mainland, the new norms stipulate an **NDZ of 20 metres**.

### Tourism facilities

- The temporary tourism facilities like toilets and changing room at beaches are also now permissible in NDZ of the CRZ-III areas.
- To address pollution in coastal areas, setting up of treatment facilities have been made permissible activities in CRZ—I B area subject to necessary safeguards.

### Know all about the classifications of CRZ Zones

<b>COAST CUTTER</b>	
<p><b>CLASSIFICATION</b></p> <p><b>CRZ I</b>   Ecologically sensitive areas like sanctuaries, reserve forests, mangroves, coral reefs, turtle-nesting grounds, which could be inundated due to rise in sea level</p> <p><b>CRZ II</b>   Areas which have already been developed up to the shoreline within municipal or corpn limits</p> <p><b>CRZ III A</b>   CRZ III areas with a population of more than 2,161 per sqkm. Here, 50m from high tide will be no-development zone (NDZ)</p> <p><b>CRZ III B</b>   Other CRZ III areas with less population. Here area up to 200m from the HTL on the landward side will be earmarked as NDZ</p>	
<p><b>BOOST FOR TOURISM</b></p> <p>➤ With the freeze on constructions along the coastal zone more or less lifted, the tourism sector will be the biggest beneficiary</p>	<p>➤ Toilets, changing rooms, drinking water facility and temporary shacks can be constructed even on beaches</p> <p>➤ Existing residential buildings can be converted into homestays without increasing the plinth area</p> <p>➤ CRZ will not be a bar for public utilities like roads even if it passes through mangrove forests</p> <p>➤ Introduction of CRZ-III into A and B clauses will address state's main concern of issuing permission to dwelling units as well</p>
	<p><b>BACKGROUND</b></p> <p>➤ Under Environment Protection Act, 1986 a notification was issued in February 1991 for regulation of activities in coastal area by the ministry of environment and forests</p> <p>➤ Coastal land up to 500m from the high tide line (HTL) and area of 100m along banks of estuaries, backwater, creeks and rivers which are subject to tidal fluctuations are called coastal regulation zone (CRZ)</p>

## Shahpurkandi Dam (National Project) on river Ravi in Punjab

### What

- The Union Cabinet has approved implementation of Shahpurkandi Dam Project, Punjab on river Ravi.
- For this, Central Assistance of Rs. 485.38 cr (for irrigation component) would be provided over five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23.

### Benefits

- Implementation of this project would help minimising some of the water of the River Ravi which at present is going waste through the Madhopur Headworks downstream to Pakistan.

### Connect to the project

- On completion of the project an Irrigation Potential of 5,000 ha in Punjab State and 32,173 ha in J&K State would be created.
- Funding for Central Assistance to Shahpurkandi Dam project shall be made through NABARD under existing system for funding of 99 PMKSY-AIBP projects under LTIF.

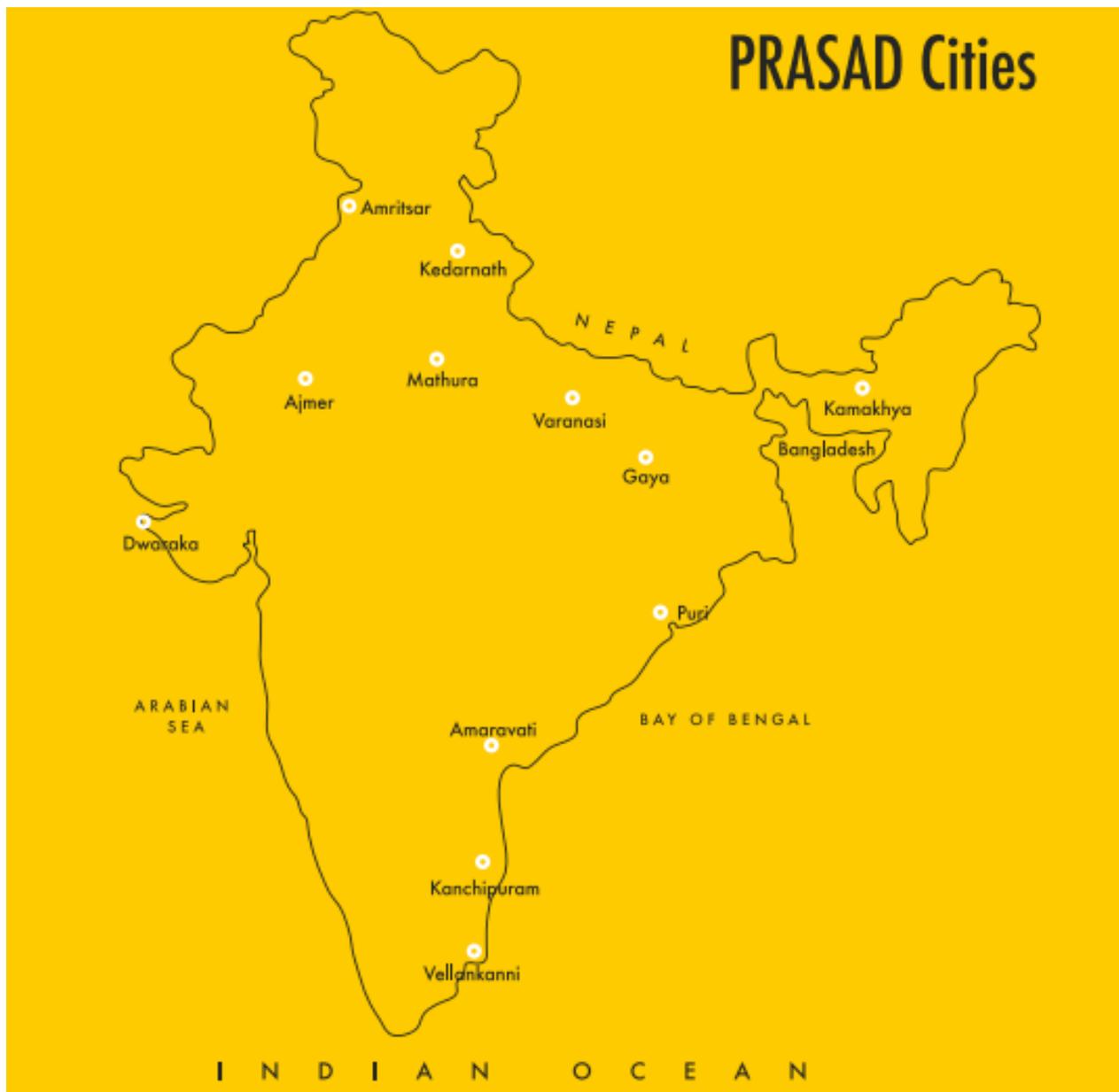
- Some of the water of the River Ravi at present is going waste through the Madhopur Headworks downstream to Pakistan whereas there is requirement for the same for use in Punjab and J&K. Implementation of the project would minimise such wastage of water.
- Irrigation in 5000 ha of land in Punjab and 32172 ha in J&K would be provided.

### Connect to IWT

- Indus Waters Treaty was signed between India and Pakistan in 1960 for sharing of Indus waters. According to the Treaty, India got the full rights for utilization of waters of the three Eastern Rivers namely Ravi, Beas and Satluj.
- Some of the water of the River Ravi at present is going waste through the Madhopur Headworks downstream to Pakistan. Implementation of the project would minimise such wastage of water.
- A Bilateral agreement was signed between Punjab and J&K in Jan, 1979. As per the agreement, construction of RanjitSagar Dam (Thein Dam) and Shahpurkandi Dam was to be taken up by Punjab Govt.

## Government Schemes

### *Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASAD)*



## Why

- Union Government has included Gangotri and Yamunotri in Uttrakhand, Amarkantak in Madhya Pradesh and Parasnath in Jharkhand under Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive (PRASAD)

## What

- To develop pilgrimage and heritage destinations in the country.
- The number of sites under PRASAD has now reached to 41 in 25 states.

## Connect to PRASAD Scheme

- It was launched in 2014-15 by Union Ministry of Tourism.
- It aims at integrated development of pilgrimage destinations in planned, prioritised and sustainable manner to provide complete religious tourism experience.
- It focuses on the development and beautification of the identified pilgrimage destinations with an objective to harness pilgrimage tourism for its direct and multiplier effect upon employment generation economic development and enhance tourist attractiveness in sustainable manner by developing world class infrastructure in the religious destinations.
- This scheme also seeks to promote local art, culture, handicraft, cuisine, etc.
- Infrastructure development under this scheme includes Development of entry points (road, rail and water transport), last mile connectivity, basic tourism facilities like Information/interpretation centers, ATM/ money exchange.
- Development of eco-friendly modes of transport, lighting and illumination with renewable energy sources, drinking water, parking, toilets, waiting rooms, first aid centers, craft bazars/haats/souvenir shops/cafeteria, rain shelters, telecom facilities, internet connectivity etc.
- Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to State Governments for promoting tourism at identified destinations.

## Tourism

### *Fifteen destinations identified for development under the Ramayana Circuit*

## What

- Ramayana Circuit is one of the fifteen thematic circuits identified for development under the Swadesh Darshan scheme of Ministry of Tourism.

## Connect to Ramayan circuit

- The Ministry has initially identified fifteen destinations for development under the Ramayana Circuit theme namely Ayodhya, Nandigram, Shringverpur & Chitrakoot (Uttar Pradesh), Sitamarhi, Buxar & Darbhanga (Bihar), Chitrakoot (Madhya Pradesh), Mahendragiri (Odisha), Jagdalpur (Chattisgarh), Nashik & Nagpur (Maharashtra), Bhadrachalam (Telangana), Hampi (Karnataka) and Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu).



## Tribal Circuit

- For the state of Chhattisgarh, the Ministry has sanctioned the project for Development of Tribal Tourism Circuit in Jashpur- Kunkuri- Mainpat- Ambikapur- Maheshpur -Ratanpur- Kurdar-Sarodadadar- Gangrel-Kondagaon– Nathiya Nawagaon- Jagdalpur- Chitrakoot- Tirthgarh in the year 2015-16 with a total sanction amount of Rs.99.21 crore.

## Connect to the Scheme

- The Swadesh Darshan Scheme is a continuous process. The projects for development under the scheme are identified in consultation with the State Governments/UT Administrations and are sanctioned subject to availability of funds, submission of suitable detailed project reports, adherence to scheme guidelines and utilization of funds released earlier.
- Under the scheme ‘Swadesh Darshan’, the Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance (CFA) to State Governments/Union Territory Administrations for infrastructure development of circuits.
- Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, 13 thematic circuits have been identified, for development namely: North-East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit and Heritage Circuit.
- In Union Budget 2017-18, 959.91 crore has been allocated for the Integrated Development of Tourist Circuits around specific themes under Swadesh Darshan scheme.

## National

### *Vijay Diwas 16th December 2018*

#### What

- The 47th anniversary of its victory over Pakistan in the 1971 war.

#### Connect to Vijay Diwas

- Vijay Diwas, is celebrated on every 16th December in India.
- This day marks the victory of Indian armed forces over Pakistan in the war of Independence of Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971.
- At the end of the 1971 war, the Pakistani Army unilaterally and unconditionally surrendered resulting in the independence of East Pakistan, which was called as Bangladesh.
- On this day in 1971, the chief of the Pakistani forces along with 93,000 troops, surrendered to the allied forces consists of Indian Army and Mukti Bahini in Dhaka after they got defeated in the war.

## Government Policies

### *Centre drafts child protection policy*

#### What

- A code of conduct for employees of all organisations and a declaration signed by them agreeing to ensure the safety of children are some of the provisions included in the Centre’s draft national child protection policy, prepared on the prodding of the Supreme Court in the wake of the Muzaffarpur shelter abuse case.

#### Connect to the draft

- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has placed the draft policy on its website and invited comments from stakeholders until January 4.
- This will be the first policy dedicated to the protection of children, an area that until now was only a part of the broader National Child Policy, 2013.
- As per the draft, the policy will apply to “all institutions, and organisations (including corporate and media houses), government or private sector”.
- The draft policy recommends that all organisations must have a code of conduct based on “zero tolerance of child abuse and exploitation”.

- It requires organisations to lay down that employees don't use language or behaviour that is "inappropriate, harassing, abusive, sexually provocative, demeaning or culturally inappropriate".
- Institutions should also designate a staff member to ensure that procedures are in place to ensure the protection of children as well as to report any abuse.
- Any individual who suspects physical, sexual or emotional abuse must report it to the helpline number 1098, police or a child welfare committee.

## Tribal Affairs

### *Restricted Area Permit regime*

#### What

- National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has written to Union Home Minister seeking re-imposition of Restricted Area Permit regime in six Islands in Andaman and Nicobar inhabited by Andamanese, Jarawas, Sentinelese, Onges and Sompens.

#### Connect to NCST Concerns

- The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has regretted that inspite of reservations expressed by the Commission for excluding 29 inhabited islands in Andaman and Nicobar from Restricted Area Permit regime, the Ministry of Home Affairs on 17th September, 2018 have further relaxed the provisions by deleting the requirement of mandatory registration by foreigners visiting A&N Islands with FRO and added Viper Island to the list of islands already exempted by its circular dated 29th June, 2018.
- The Commission is of the view that the above directives of the Ministry of Home Affairs are not in consonance with the spirit of Article 338A (9) of the Constitution of India which mandates that "Union and every State Government should consult the Commission on all major policy matters affecting Scheduled Tribes."

#### Recommendations suggested by NCST

- The Commission, after careful consideration, recommends the following steps to be taken by the Government of India and Andaman Administration for protection of five Particularly Vulnerable Tribes (PVTGs) living in Andaman and Nicobar Islands on urgent basis:
- The names of Strait Island (Andamanese), Middle and South Andaman (Jarawas), North Sentinal Island (Sentinelese), Little Andaman (Onges) and Great Nicobar (Shompens) inhabited by PVTGs should be removed from the list of 29 islands mentioned in Annexure to the Circular No.506 dated 29th June, 2018 of the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- Air space above the North Sentinel Island should be declared as "NO FLY ZONE" for any type of civil aircraft.
- A comprehensive outreach programme should be launched by Andaman and Nicobar Administration to sensitize fishermen, tourist guides, tour operators, hotel industry and other stake holders on the "EYES ON" and "HANDS OFF" policy for Sentinelese so that they can be eyes and ears of the Administration.

#### Connect to Protected areas and Restricted areas

- The Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order 1958 states that a Protected Area Permit (PAP) is required for non-Indian citizens to visit certain areas in India (mainly in the North-East).
- Certain requirements have to be fulfilled in order to get this permit.
- Indian citizens who are not resident in these areas need an Inner Line Permit (ILP) to enter these places. The Inner Line Permit is significantly easier to get.
- In addition, the Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order 1963 states that a Restricted Area Permit (RAP) is required for non-Indians to visit certain areas in India. As of 2009, RAP are required for all visits to the Union Territory of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and parts of the state of Sikkim
- Under Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958, all areas falling between Inner line and International Border of some states have been declared as protected areas.
- The protected areas currently include whole of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Sikkim, besides parts of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir.
- Some parts of Sikkim fall under protected area regime while others under restricted area regime.

## Parliamentary Affairs

### National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) Project

- The status of implementation of National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) Project.

#### What it is

- Paperless Assembly or e-Assembly is a concept involving of electronic means to facilitate the work of Assembly.
- It enables automation of entire law making process, tracking of decisions and documents, sharing of information.

#### Connect to NeVA

- NeVA aims to bring all the legislatures of the country together, in one platform thereby creating a massive data depository without having the complexity of multiple applications, the Minister said.
- NeVA is a device neutral and member centric application created to equip them to handle diverse House Business smartly by putting entire information regarding member contact details, rules of procedure, list of business, notices, bulletins, bills, starred/unstarred questions and answers, papers laid, committee reports etc. in their hand held devices/ tablets and equip all Legislatures/ Departments to handle it efficiently. Citizens would also gain access to this information at their fingertips.
- NeVA will completely eliminate the process of sending out a notice/request for collection of data. Through the cloud technology (Meghraj), data deployed can be accessed anywhere at any time.
- The total project cost of the project is over 738 crores and funding of NeVA is on the pattern of Central Sponsored Scheme i.e. 60:40; and 90:10 for North East & hilly States and 100% for UTs.
- The funding for e-Vidhan is provided by the MoPA and technical support by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY). In order to promote the rolling out NeVA, the MoPA has consulted all State Governments.

## NITI Aayog

### *NITI Aayog releases Strategy for New India @ 75*

### *Seeking to make development a Jan Andolan, details key recommendations across growth drivers, infrastructure, inclusion and governance*

#### What

- The NITI Aayog unveiled its comprehensive national Strategy for New India, which defines clear objectives for 2022-23.
- It is a detailed exposition across forty-one crucial areas, that recognizes the progress already made, identifies binding constraints, and suggests the way forward for achieving the clearly stated objectives.
- The Strategy for New India @75 put together by NITI Aayog is an attempt to bring innovation, technology, enterprise and efficient management together, at the core of policy formulation and implementation.
- It will encourage discussion and debate, and invite feedback for further refining our policy approach.

#### Connect to the strategy

- NITI Aayog followed an extremely participative approach in preparing the strategy.
- Each area vertical in NITI Aayog had in-depth consultations with all three groups of stakeholders, viz., business persons, academics including scientists, and government officials.

#### Participation of all concerned stakeholder

- This was followed by consultations at the level of the Vice Chairman with a diverse group of eminent persons from seven sets of stakeholders that included scientists and innovators, farmers, civil society organizations, think-tanks, labor representatives and trade unions, and industry representatives.
- Central Ministries were brought on board for inputs, suggestions and comments, with each draft of individual chapters being circulated for consultations.
- The draft document was also circulated to all the States and Union Territories from whom valuable suggestions were received and incorporated.

- Over 800 stakeholders from within the government – central, state and district levels – and about 550 external experts were consulted during the preparation of the document.
- The overarching focus of the Strategy document is to further improve the policy environment in which private investors and other stakeholders can contribute their fullest towards achieving the goals set out for New India 2022 and propel India towards a USD 5 trillion economy by 2030.

### **Connect to the four sections**

- The forty-one chapters in the document have been disaggregated under four sections: Drivers, Infrastructure, Inclusion and Governance.
- The first section on Drivers focuses on the engines of economic performance with chapters on growth and employment, doubling of farmers’ incomes; upgrading the science, technology and innovation eco-system; and promoting sunrise sectors like fintech and tourism.

### **Some of the key recommendations in the section on drivers include:**

- Steadily accelerate the economy to achieve a GDP growth rate of about 8% on average during 2018-23. This will raise the economy’s size in real terms from USD 2.7trillion in 2017-18 to nearly USD 4 trillion by 2022-23. Increase the investment rate as measured by gross fixed capital formation (GFCF) from the present 29% to 36% of GDP by 2022.
- In agriculture, shift the emphasis to converting farmers to ‘agripreneurs’ by further expanding-National Agriculture Markets and replacing the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Act with the Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing Act.
- Give a strong push to ‘Zero Budget Natural Farming’ techniques that reduce costs,improve land quality and increase farmers’ incomes. This has emerged as a tested method for putting environment carbon back into the land.
- To ensure maximum employment creation, complete codification of labor laws and a massive effort must be made to upscale and expand apprenticeships.
- Launch a mission “Explore in India” by revamping minerals exploration and licensing policy.

### **The second section on Infrastructure deals with the physical foundations of growth which are crucial to enhancing the competitiveness of Indian business as also ensuring the citizens’ ease of living.**

#### **Some of the key recommendations in the section on infrastructure include:**

- Expedite the establishment of the Rail Development Authority (RDA), which is already approved. RDA will advise or make informed decisions on an integrated, transparent and dynamic pricing mechanism for the railways.
- Double the share of freight transported by coastal shipping and inland waterways. Initially,viability gap funding will be provided until the infrastructure is fully developed. Develop an IT-enabled platform for integrating different modes of transport and promoting multi-modal and digitized mobility.
- With the completion of the Bharat Net programme in 2019, all 2.5 lakh gram panchayats will be digitally connected. Aim to deliver all government services at the state, district, and gram panchayat level digitally by 2022-23.

### **The section on Inclusion deals with the urgent task of investing in the capabilities of all of India’s citizens. The three themes in this section revolve around the dimensions of health, education and mainstreaming of traditionally marginalized sections of the population.**

#### **Some of the key recommendations in the section on inclusion include:**

- Successfully implementing the Ayushman Bharat programme including the establishment of 150,000 health and wellness centres across the country, and rolling out the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan (PM-JAY).
- Create a focal point for public health at the central level with state counterparts. Promote integrative medicine curriculum.
- Upgrade the quality of the school education system and skills, including the creation of a new innovation ecosystem at the ground level by establishing at least 10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs by 2020.
- Conceptualize an electronic national educational registry for tracking each child’s learning outcomes.

- As already done in rural areas, give a huge push to affordable housing in urban areas to improve workers' living conditions and ensure equity while providing a strong impetus to economic growth.

**The final section on Governance delves deep into how the governance structures can be streamlined and processes optimized to achieve better developmental outcomes.**

**Some of the key recommendations in the section on governance include:**

- Implement the recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission as a prelude to appointing a successor for designing reforms in the changing context of emerging technologies and growing complexity of the economy.
- Set up a new autonomous body, viz., the Arbitration Council of India to grade arbitral institutions and accredit arbitrators to make the arbitration process cost effective and speedy, and to preempt the need for court intervention.
- Address the backlog of pending cases - shift part of workload out of regular court system.
- Expand the scope of Swachh Bharat Mission to cover initiatives for landfills, plastic waste and municipal waste and generating wealth from waste.

## Reforms

### *E-Drishti Software*

#### What

- An 'e-Drishti' interface has been unveiled for the Union Railway Minister, Minister of State and Board Members.
- This software includes an interface which provides summary information on punctuality of trains for the previous day.
- There is also an interface which provides information on current train running on the Indian Railway network.
- In addition, there are interfaces providing details of freight earning, freight loading and passenger earnings for the previous day & month and cumulative for the year, in comparison to the corresponding period of the previous year.
- Punctuality of passenger carrying trains is being also monitored rigorously to improve punctuality performance on a daily basis
- To ensure running of trains right time when pairing trains are running late, scratch rakes are inducted and rakes are standardized to the extent operationally feasible.

## Government Policies/Reforms

*Lok Sabha clears Consumer Protection Bill: Covers online shopping, e-commerce*

# Consumer Protection Bill 2018



#### Connect to the current context

- The Consumer Protection Bill, 2018, which seeks to replace the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 has been passed by the lok sabha

- The Consumer Protection Bill will become law once it goes through the Rajya Sabha. It is meant to protect those **who use new technologies such as e-commerce and online shopping.**

### **Connect to the new provisions of Consumer Protection Bill, 2018**

- The financial jurisdiction of the District Consumers Courts has been increased: they can deal with complaints involving Rs. 1 crore as against the Rs. 20 lakh earlier.
- Under the clause of product liability, a manufacturer will be liable to give compensation for products with defects.
- To tackle the challenges posed by online transactions, and tele-, multi-level, and digital marketing.
- The Bill seeks to set up a **central consumer protection authority (CCPA)** to “promote, protect and enforce the rights of the consumers.”
- The CCPA can act on complaints of unfair trade practices, issue safety guidelines, order product recall or discontinuation of services, refer complaints to other regulators, and has punitive powers such as imposing penalties.”
- The Bill also seeks to provide **Consumer Disputes Redressal** Commissions at national, State and district-levels to look into consumer complaints.
- **Consumer Protection Councils** will also be set up at the district, State, and national level, as advisory bodies. Consumer mediation cells will be set-up on the same lines.
- The case can be filed from anywhere, unlike the existing law which allows the consumer to register the complaint only from the same place of purchase of the product or where the service is availed.
- The CCPA has the **authority to direct the removal of a misleading advertisement, take punitive action** such as imprisonment or imposing penalties on the advertiser and seller, and even barring a person from endorsing the product or service for up to a year

### **Comparison of the Consumer Protection Act, 1986 with the Consumer Protection Bill, 2018**

#### **Ambit of law**

- 1986 Act: All goods and services for consideration, while free and personal services are excluded
- 2018 Bill: All goods and services, including telecom and housing construction, and all modes of transactions (online, teleshopping, etc.) for consideration. Free and personal services are excluded.

#### **Unfair trade practices (Defined as deceptive practices to promote the sale, use or supply of a good or service.)**

- 1986 Act: Includes six types of such practices, like false representation, misleading advertisements.
- 2018 Bill: The new Bill adds three types of practices to the list, namely: (i) failure to issue a bill or receipt; (ii) refusal to accept a good returned within 30 days; and (iii) disclosure of personal information given in confidence, unless required by law or in public interest. Contests/ lotteries may be notified as not falling under the ambit of unfair trade practices.

#### **Product liability**

- 1986 Act: **No provision.**
- 2018 Bill: Claim for product liability can be made against manufacturer, service provider, and seller. Compensation can be obtained by proving one of the several specified conditions in the Bill.

#### **Unfair contracts**

- 1986 Act: No provision.
- 2018 Bill: Defined as contracts that cause significant change in consumer rights. Lists six contract terms which may be held as unfair.

#### **Central Protection Councils (CPCs)**

- 1986 Act: CPCs promote and protect the rights of consumers. They are established at the district, state, and national level.
- 2018 Bill: The new Bill makes CPCs advisory bodies for promotion and protection of consumer rights. Establishes CPCs at the district, State and national level.

## Regulator

- 1986 Act: No provision.
- 2018 Bill: Establishes the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to promote, protect, and enforce the rights of consumers as a class.
- CCPA may: (i) issue safety notices; (ii) pass orders to recall goods, prevent unfair practices, and reimburse purchase price paid; and (iii) impose penalties for false and misleading advertisements.

## Pecuniary jurisdiction of Commissions

- 1986 Act: District: Up to Rs 20 lakh; State: Between Rs 20 lakh and up to Rs one crore; National: Above Rs one crore.
- 2018 Bill: District: Up to Rs one crore; State: Between Rs one crore and up to Rs 10 crore; National: above Rs 10 crore.

## Composition of Commissions

- 1986 Act:
  - District: Headed by current or former District Judge and two members.
  - State: Headed by a current or former High Court Judge and at least two members.
  - National: Headed by a current or former Supreme Court Judge and at least four members.
- 2018 Bill:
  - District: Headed by a president and at least two members.
  - State: Headed by a president and at least four members.
  - National: Headed by a president and at least four members.

## Appointment

- 1986 Act: Selection Committee (comprising a judicial member and other officials) will recommend members on the Commissions.
- 2018 Bill: **No provision for Selection Committee.** Central government will appoint through notification.

## Alternate dispute redressal mechanism

- 1986 Act: **No provision.**
- 2018 Bill: **Mediation cells** will be attached to the District, State, and National Commissions.

## Penalties

- 1986 Act: If a person does not comply with orders of the Commissions, he may face imprisonment between one month and three years or fine between Rs 2,000 to Rs 10,000, or both.
- 2018 Bill: If a person does not comply with orders of the Commissions, he may face imprisonment up to three years, or a fine not less than Rs 25,000 extendable to Rs one lakh, or both.

## E-commerce

- 1986 Act: **No provision.**
- 2018 Bill: **Defines direct selling, e-commerce and electronic service provider.** The central government may prescribe rules for preventing unfair trade practices in e-commerce and direct selling.

## Relevance in – Prelims and G.S (Paper II and III)

## Government Schemes

### Development of North-East Region: Government Initiatives in North Eastern region

Connect to the highlights of the initiatives taken by Government for the development of North Eastern Region round the year

### NITI Forum for North East: Focussed attention for development of NER

- The Government issued orders to create an exclusive forum at the NITI AAYOG to prepare plans for the development of the North East Region, co-chaired by the Vice-Chairman of the Niti Aayog and Secretary of DoNER.

- The forum examines various proposals both at the Central and the State levels and prepare plans for the speedy development of the North Eastern Region.
- The first meeting of the newly constituted 'NITI Forum for North East' was held in Agartala, Tripura on 10th April. The meeting was organized by the NITI Aayog, Ministry of DoNER and the NEC.
- The Forum proposed that the development projects in the NER would be based on the concept of "HIRA" (Highways, Inland Waterways, Railways and Airways)
- To focus on bamboo industry in a big way, since this is a sector which has not received the deserved attention inspite of the fact that over 60% of India's bamboo is grown in this region.

### **National Bamboo Mission**

- Union Finance Ministry in February this year announced the "National Bamboo Mission" in the Annual Budget presented with an allocation of Rs.1,290 crore for it

### **Sikkim arrives on India's air link map**

- Pakyong Airport in Sikkim has been inaugurated . This is the first airport in the Himalayan State, and the 100th airport in the country. In order to ensure that Pakyong Airport is affordable to the common man, this airport is part of the UDAN scheme.

### **Digital North East Vision 2022 released**

- The Vision Document emphasizes leveraging digital technologies to transform lives of people of the north east and enhance the ease of living.
- The Vision Document identifies eight digital thrust areas - Digital Infrastructure, Digital services, Digital empowerment, Promotion of Electronics Manufacturing, Promotion of IT and ITes including BPOs, Digital Payments, Innovation & Startups and Cyber security.
- As part of the Digital North East Vision 2022, a cloud hub for North East will be set up in Guwahati.

### **PM lays foundation stone of India's first National Sports University**

- The Prime Minister launched development projects worth Rs. 750 crore in Manipur. He laid the foundation stone of the National Sports University, 1,000 Anganwadi Centres and several other important development projects.
- Union Government's vision for the North East has been "Transformation by Transportation."

### **Other Initiatives taken by the government**

- The inaugural session of Advantage Assam - Global Investors Summit 2018, held in Guwahati
- The Act East Policy envisions increased people to people contact, trade ties and other relations with ASEAN countries.
- The Union Cabinet approved the proposal of DoNER Ministry for the nomination of **the Union Home Minister as ex-officio Chairman of North Eastern Council (NEC)** - a statutory body with Governors and Chief Ministers of all the eight North Eastern States as its Member.
- The Union Cabinet approved the North East Industrial Development Scheme (NEIDS), 2017 with financial outlay of Rs.3,000 crores upto March, 2020
- The newly introduced scheme shall promote industrialization in the States of the North Eastern Region and will boost employment and income generation.
- Ministry of Road, Transport and Highways is implementing the Special Accelerated Road Development programme for North East (SARDP-NE) under Bharatmala Pariyojana Phase-I, spanning over a period of five years (2017-18 to 2021-22)
- Government announced the approval of setting up of an exclusive "Brahmaputra Study Centre" at Guwahati University, Guwahati

### **Connect to North East Council (NEC) and the DoNER Ministry**

- The **North Eastern Council** is the nodal agency for the economic and social development of the North Eastern Region which consists of the eight States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.

- The North Eastern Council was constituted in 1971 by an Act of Parliament.
- The constitution of the Council has marked the beginning of a new chapter of concerted and planned endeavour for the rapid development of the Region.
- Over the last thirty five years, NEC has been instrumental in setting in motion a new economic endeavour aimed at removing the basic handicaps that stood in the way of normal development of the region and has ushered in an era of new hope in this backward area full of great potentialities.
- The Union Home Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of North Eastern Council (NEC) - a statutory body with Governors and Chief Ministers of all the eight North Eastern States as its Member.
- Minister of State (Independent Charge), Ministry of DoNER would serve as Vice Chairman of the Council.
- NEC implements various projects through the State and Central agencies. Under the new arrangement with Home Minister as Chairman and Minister of DoNER as Vice Chairman, NEC and all the Governors and Chief Ministers of North Eastern States as Member would provide a forum for discussing inter-state matters more comprehensively and also consider common approaches to be taken in future.

### **Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region**

- The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region is a Government of India ministry, established in September 2001, which functions as the nodal Department of the Central Government to deal with matters related to the socio-economic development of the eight States of Northeast India, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim.
- It acts as a facilitator between the Central Ministries/ Departments and the State Governments of the North Eastern Region in the economic development including removal of infrastructural bottlenecks, provision of basic minimum services, creating an environment for private investment and to remove impediments to lasting peace and security in the North Eastern Region.

### **Relevance in – Prelims and Mains ( G.S paper II and III)**

## **Government Initiatives**

### ***States Startup Ranking 2018***

#### **Concerned Ministry**

- The **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion** under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry released the first ever States' Startup Ranking 2018

#### **Connect to the Startup Ranking 2018**

- The state of **Gujarat** is the best-performing state for the Startups.
- Total 27 States and 3 UTs took part in this exercise.
- The states have been ranked across various categories in the ranking which includes categories like Start-up policy leaders, incubation hubs, seeding innovation, scaling innovation, regulatory change champions, procurement leaders, communication champions, North-Eastern leader, and hill state leader.
- Gujarat was ranked as the Best Performer
- Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha, and Rajasthan were judged as **Top Performers**.
- Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana were ranked as **Leaders**.
- Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal were ranked as **Aspiring Leaders**.
- Assam, Delhi, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand were judged as **Emerging States**.
- Chandigarh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry, Sikkim, and Tripura were ranked as **Beginners**.

#### **Connect to the objective**

- The primary objective of this ranking is to encourage States and UTS to work towards strengthening of Startup ecosystems in their region. Also, it seeks to create a healthy competition among States and will result in the promotion of Startup culture

## Economy

### ***Cabinet approves strategic sale of the Rural Electrification Corporation to Power Finance Corporation along with transfer of management control***

#### **What**

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister has given its 'In Principle' approval for strategic sale of the Government of India's existing 52.63% of total paid up equity shareholding in Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) to Power Finance Corporation (PFC) along with transfer of management control.

#### **Connect to the acquisition**

- The acquisition intends to achieve integration across the Power Chain, obtain better synergies, create economies of scale and have enhanced capability to support energy access and energy efficiency by improved capability to finance power sector.
- It may also allow for cheaper fund raising with increase in bargaining power for the combined entity.
- Both REC and PFC are Central Public Sector Enterprises under the Ministry of Power.

## Appointments

### ***Appointment committee of cabinet approved Shaktikanta Das appointment as RBI governor***

#### **What**

- Shaktikanta Das - India's former economic affairs secretary and current member of the Finance Commission Shaktikanta Das is to be appointed as next RBI Governor.

#### **Connect to Shaktikanta Das**

- He will be the 25<sup>th</sup> Governor of RBI
- Shaktikanta Das is a 1980 batch IAS officer of Tamil Nadu Cadre and a very prominent bureaucrat who served under both NDA and UPA governments.
- He served as economic affairs secretary from 2015 to 2017; and was key official in both big economic moves of the government viz. demonetisation and implementation of GST.
- He will serve as governor for the term of three years.
- Urjit Patel resigned due to personal reasons. His tenure as RBI governor was about to complete in September 2019

## Agreements

### ***The Government of India and ADB sign a \$31 Million Loan Agreement to develop Tourism and boost Jobs in Tamil Nadu***

#### **What**

- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a Loan Agreement for \$31 million to build-up the State Tourism Industry and boost visitor arrivals.

#### **Connect to the project**

- The Project is expected to improve the tourism infrastructure in Tamil Nadu and also help the State in preserving the natural and cultural heritage.
- The activities under the project would also boost economic opportunities for the local people
- The increased tourism traffic generated by this Project will generate extra jobs in Tamil Nadu, especially through skills training and community-based activities targeting the poor and women.
- Approved in September 2010, the \$250 million IDIPT aims to build opportunities for local communities and boost local economy by enhancing tourism in three other states – Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand-besides Tamil Nadu.

- This will be achieved through developing and preserving sites of natural and cultural heritage, and building connectivity, capacity, and infrastructure around State tourist sites.
- The Government of India's recent Three-Year Action Agenda (2017–2018 to 2019–2020) envisages the hospitality, travel, and tourism sector as a major driver of growth and employment.
- The Project will support the conservation and restoration of eight heritage monuments, one museum, three temples, and a pond.
- It will build various facilities at the sites, including information centers, rest centers, and toilet blocks, with facilities served by solar-powered lighting and energy efficient lighting.
- The total cost of the Project is \$44.04 million, of which the Government will provide \$13.04 million. The estimated completion date is June 2020.

Sources – PIB , The Hindu , Indianexpress

## Economy/Ease of doing business

### *Indian Ports Association Launches 'PCS 1x' to Increase Ease of Doing Business*

#### What

- Indian Ports Association (IPA), under the guidance of Ministry of Shipping launched the Port Community System 'PCS1x'.
- The url [www.indianpcs.gov.in](http://www.indianpcs.gov.in) was launched. It was attended by all Major Port Chairmen through video conference.

#### Connect to PCS 1x

- 'PCS 1x' is a cloud based new generation technology, with user-friendly interface.
- This system seamlessly integrates 8 new stakeholders besides the 19 existing stakeholders from the maritime trade on a single platform.
- The platform offers value added services such as notification engine, workflow, mobile application, track and trace, better user interface, better security features, improved inclusion by offering dashboard for those with no IT capability.
- A unique feature of 'PCS1x' is that it can latch on to third party software which provides services to the maritime industry thereby enabling the stakeholders to access wide network of services.
- The system enables single sign on facility to provide one stop interface to all the functionalities across all stakeholders.
- Another major feature is the deployment of a world class state of the art payment aggregator solution which removes dependency on bank specific payment eco system.
- This system will enable trade to have an improved communication with the customs as they have also embarked on an Application Programming Interface (API) based architecture, thereby enabling real time interaction.
- This System offers a database that acts as a single data point to all transactions.
- It captures and stores data on its first occurrence thereby reducing manual intervention, the need to enter transaction data at various points and thereby reducing errors in the process.
- The platform has the potential to revolutionize maritime trade in India and bring it at par with global best practices and pave the way to improve the Ease of Doing Business world ranking and Logistics Performance Index (LPI) ranks.

## Agreements

### *The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) sign a \$60 Million Loan Agreement to reduce floods and the riverbank erosion in Assam*

#### What

- The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$60 Million Loan Agreement to continue financing riverbank protection works, renovation of flood embankments, and community-based flood risk management activities in critically flood-prone areas along the Brahmaputra River in Assam.

## Connect to the agreement

- The Tranche 2 loan is part of the \$120 million multi-tranche financing facility (MFF) for the Assam Integrated Flood and Riverbank Erosion Risk Management Investment Program approved by the ADB Board in October 2010.
- The Program is aimed at increasing the reliability and effectiveness of flood and riverbank erosion risk management systems in flood-prone areas of Assam, strengthening the disaster preparedness of the communities, and developing institutional capacity and knowledge base for flood forecasting.
- The Project 2 under the Program will fund a combination of structural and non structural measures in the three subproject areas of Palasbari-Gumi, Kaziranga, and Dibrugarh along the Brahmaputra river which include 20 km of riverbank protection works and upgrading of 13 km of flood embankments.
- The non-structural measures will cover community involvement and community-based flood risk management activities through establishing and training disaster management committees for strengthening local disaster preparedness and emergency response.

## Round the year developments: Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises

### *MSME Support and Outreach Programme*

- The Prime Minister last month has launched a support and outreach programme for the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector.
- The 12 key initiatives which will help in the growth, expansion and facilitation of MSMEs across the country:
  1. Loans upto 1 crore within 59 minutes through an online portal.
  2. Interest subvention of 2% for all GST registered MSMEs on fresh or incremental loans.
  3. All companies with a turnover of more than 500 crores to be mandatorily on TReDS platform to enable entrepreneurs to access credit from banks, based on their upcoming receivables, thus, solving the problems of cash cycle.
  4. All PSUs to compulsorily procure 25 percent from MSMEs instead of 20 percent of their total purchases.
  5. Out of the 25 percent procurement mandated from MSMEs, 3 percent reserved for women entrepreneurs.
  6. All CPSUs to compulsorily procure through GeM portal.
  7. 100 Technology Centres to be established at the cost of Rs 6000 crore.
  8. Govt. of India to bear 70 percent of the cost for establishing Pharma clusters.
  9. Returns under 8 labour laws and 10 Union regulations to be filed once in a year.
  10. Establishments to be visited by an Inspector will be decided through a computerised random allotment.
  11. Single consent under air and water pollution laws. Returns will be accepted through self-certification and only 10 percent MSME units to be inspected.
  12. For minor violations under the Companies Act, entrepreneurs no longer have to approach court but can correct them through simple procedures.
- There are five key aspects for facilitating the MSME sector:
  - access to credit
  - access to market
  - technology upgradation
  - ease of doing business
  - sense of security for employees.

### **Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme –To Continue till 2019-20**

- Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) is a major credit-linked subsidy programme being implemented by the Ministry of MSME since 2008-09.
- The Scheme is aimed at generating self-employment opportunities through establishment of micro-enterprises in the non-farm sector by helping traditional artisans and unemployed youth in rural as well as urban areas.

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs on 28 FEB 2018 approved the continuation of (PMEGP) beyond 12th Plan for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20 with a total outlay of Rs.5,500 crore.
- Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)Scheme will create sustainable estimated employment opportunities for 15 lakh persons in three financial years.
- An online portal has been introduced from 1st July 2016 for those who wish to avail benefits under the PMEGP scheme.
- Entire process is real time and online. The applicant has to apply on the portal and can track the status of the application on the PMEGP-e-portal. There is an online feedback mechanism for providing feedback by the beneficiaries.
- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) is the nodal implementation agency at the national level. At the State/district level, State offices of KVIC, Khadi and Village Industries Boards (KVIBs) and District Industry Centres (DIC) are the implementing agencies.
- Under the PMEGP scheme women entrepreneurs are provided 25% and 35% subsidies for the project set up in urban and rural areas respectively.

### **UNITED NATIONS WOMEN'S DAY- 2018**

- On the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8th 2018, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) launched a portal for women entrepreneurs of India: [www.udyamsakhi.org](http://www.udyamsakhi.org).
- Around 8 million women have set up and are running their own businesses in India and the Ministry of MSME is committed to ensure that women in India continue to play a vital role in the growth of the Indian economy.
- The portal is a network for nurturing entrepreneurship and creating business models for low cost products and services in order to empower women and make them self-reliant and self-sufficient.
- The portal provides assistance through its platform for entrepreneurship learning tools, incubation facility, training programs for fund raising, providing mentors, one-on-one investor meet, provide market survey facility and technical assistance.
- MSME Ministry is creating a vibrant MSME sector by promoting growth and development of this sector including Khadi, Village and Coir industries, in cooperation with the concerned ministries and departments, state governments and other stake holders.



### **KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES COMMISSION: Solar Charkha Mission**

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind launched the Solar Charkha Mission
- This Mission cover 50 clusters across the country with a budget of Rs.550 crore for the year 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- The scheme will generate direct employment to nearly one lakh persons in rural areas and will also contribute to the green economy.
- Solar Charkha Units have been classified as village industries. The scheme of Solar Charkha Mission was proposed in the Union Budget 2018-19 to harness non-conventional solar energy to further employment generation.

## **KVIC Sets World Record in ‘Sweet Revolution’**

- In order to increase the production of honey KVIC has launched the honey mission. Beekeeping is suited to rural areas and available local resources and KVIC is playing a vital role in utilizing these resources for the benefit of villagers.
- KVIC established a separate department called the Directorate of Beekeeping in Mumbai and Central Bee Research and Training Institute at Pune and started beekeeping in modern and scientific methods.
- Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) distributed 1,000 bee-boxes among 100 Mishing Assamese tribe in the Kaziranga forest area on May 21 this year on the occasion of World Honey Bee Day.
- KVIC also distributed bee boxes in the Zangalee Army area at Kupwara, Kashmir in June this year. Two thousand three hundred thirty bee-boxes were distributed among 233 beneficiaries in the Zangalee Army area.

## **MSME CONVENTIONS: Udyam Sangam-2018**

- To mark the UN SME Day on 27th June, 2018, the M/o MSME organized the Convention- Udyam Sangam-2018 for the MSME sector in the country
- ‘Sampark’ portal of the Ministry of MSME was also unveiled by the President. This portal is a bridge between the talent pool and enterprises seeking trained man power.
- Nearly three thousand delegates from Ministries and Departments of Central Government, State and Union Territories, Autonomous Bodies, MSME Associations, Non-Banking Financial Corporations, Private Sector and Public Sector Banks, Venture Capitalists, Entrepreneurs and Self Help Groups participated in the day long convention.
- “UdyamSangam2018” is a step forward towards consolidating the convergence and synergy of all the government initiatives relating to the MSME sector.
- The UN General Assembly in its 74th Plenary held on the 6th April, 2017 declared 27th June as Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises Day, recognizing the importance of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises in achieving sustainable development goals and in promoting innovation, creativity and sustainable work for all.

## **UdyamSamvad**

- A two-days’ Conference of Development Institutes, Technology Centres and Tool Rooms titled UdyamSamvad was organized by the Ministry of MSME on 16<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup> April, 2018 in New Delhi.
- The aim of the conference was to give wide publicity to the successful ventures of the MSME Ministry like clusters and tool rooms so that many more could be set-up in the country.
- The aim of the conference was greater dissemination of information about schemes for MSMEs in different Ministries and through the conference the Ministry worked to reach the village level for which Development Institutes were urged to coordinate with district functionaries.

## **MSME Ministry launched a monthly e-newsletter called MSME Insider**

- The e-newsletter gives information about the activities undertaken by the Ministry and also connects the Ministry with the millions of MSME units spread out across the country.

## **E- Initiatives**

- A portal of the Ministry of MSME called “Sampark” was unveiled by the President of India, Ram Nath Kovind on the occasion of UN SME Day, in New Delhi. The portal acts as a bridge between the talent pool and those enterprises seeking trained man power.

## **Economy: Recapitalisation of banks**

### **Connect to the current context**

- The government moved a proposal in Parliament for an additional Rs. 41,000 crore to recapitalize public sector banks, over and above the already budgeted Rs. 65,000 crore

- If approved by the House, this would take the total recapitalisation package for the current financial year to ₹1,06,000 crore, of which the government plans to utilise ₹83,000 crore over the remaining portion of the year.

### Connect to the statics

- At the beginning of this year, a total amount of ₹65,000 crore was still remaining to be used “As of today, of that ₹65,000 crore, ₹42,000 crore is still remaining. And therefore, with this additional ₹41,000 crore, this year’s recapitalisation will be ₹1,06,000 crore.”

### What are the benefits of additional capital

- The additional capital could help as many as five such state-run banks exit the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework that mandates them to pare lending to companies and cut concentration of loans to certain sectors.
- Eleven banks were put under the PCA framework by the Reserve Bank of India between February 2014 and January 2018.

### Connect to prompt corrective action (PCA)

- The PCA framework kicks in when banks breach any of the three key regulatory trigger points, namely capital-to-risk weighted assets ratio, net non-performing assets (NPAs) and return on assets.
- The government had budgeted Rs. 65,000 crore for infusion into public sector banks (PSBs) through recapitalization bonds this fiscal, of which Rs. 42,000 crore is still to be allotted.
- With the additional Rs. 41,000 crore of capital infusion by 31 March, the government will be infusing a total Rs. 83,000 crore into public sector banks this year.
- The capital infusion will be utilized to ensure that the better-performing banks under the PCA framework meet their regulatory capital norms and non-PCA banks do not breach the threshold.
- It is also expected to provide regulatory and growth capital to the entity formed by the merger of Bank of Baroda, Dena Bank and Vijaya Bank.

### Connect to the current statics of NPA

- The recognition of NPAs, a process that started in 2015, is almost complete. The last quarter has already shown that there is improved performance.
- Gross NPAs of state-run banks have started declining after peaking in March 2018, registering a drop of Rs. 23,860 crore in the first half of the current fiscal while they made a recovery of Rs. 60,726 crore during the same period, which is more than double the amount recovered from a year earlier.

### Conditions to get additional fund for banks

- Whichever PCA banks have shown better performance in terms of reduction in NPAs and improvements in return on assets will be provided additional funds. Under this assessment, the government decided to provide capital to four-five PCA banks, which will help them get out of the PCA category

### Funding the banks

Govt. has sought approval to give ₹41,000 cr. more to PSU banks

▪ Demand will take the recap amount to ₹1,06,000 cr. this year



▪ They will also be used to prevent borderline banks from slipping into PCA framework

▪ Of this, govt. plans to spend ₹83,000 cr. over next few months

▪ Non-performing assets are declining and recoveries in the first half of this year were at ₹60,726 cr.

▪ Funds will be used to help banks meet capital requirements, come out of PCA\* framework and merged banks to grow

▪ Most PSU banks will get funds, except stronger ones such as SBI

▪ Govt. had announced ₹2.11 lakh cr. capitalisation plan in October 2017, of which ₹1.35 lakh crore was to be raised through recapitalisation bonds

▪ The rest was to be raised by banks from the market or via sale of non-core assets

\*Prompt corrective action

### Connect to the concept of recapitalization of banks

- The Government is the majority shareholder in the public sector banks, it has to provide equity capital, if the banks are struggling. This injection of capital is also known as the recapitalisation of banks.
- The Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) in the banking sector have been rising.
- The high NPA has limited the capacity of banks to lend. So recapitalisation was deemed as necessary to clean up the balance sheet of the banks.

The recapitalisation of banks worth 2.11 lakh crores has been proposed to be done in three ways:

- Budgetary allocations
- Raised from the market through the issue of equity shares by banks
- Issue of Recapitalisation bonds by the Government

The massive recapitalisation will strengthen the capital base of the banks. It will help banks to write-off its bad loans and subsequently increase its lending capacity.

### Way forward

- Recapitalisation is only a first step to address the rot in the banking sector.
- The Government need to follow it up with structural reforms to reduce its role in the public sector banks and move towards privatisation. This will bring in efficiency and accountability.
- The capital infusion will address the problem of stock of NPAs by cleaning up the balance sheet. It is equally important to ensure that the cycle of piling up of NPAs is not repeated.
- The capital will help the banks to comply with Basel 3 norms that will come into force in 2018. Some analysts have estimated that banks need an even larger infusion to comply with BASEL 3.

### Connect to Bond

- A bond is an instrument issued to borrow money. Hence, a yearly interest has to be paid on the face value of the bond and the face value is itself repaid after the maturity of the bond. In this particular case, the Government is the issuer (borrower) and the bank is the buyer (lender).

### Connect to BASEL -3

- BASEL-3 norms are the international banking regulations that have to be followed by the banks in all countries. According to it, the banks have to maintain a capital-adequacy ratio of at least 8 %.
- The capital-adequacy ratio is the ratio of capital to the risk-weighted assets (loans etc) . Hence, more capital is required to be able to give more loans.

**Relevance in – Prelims, G.S (paper III ), Essay**

## Economy/ Centre State Relations

### 31st Meeting of the GST Council

- The tax rates on 23 goods and services has been reduced by the GST Council which includes goods **include movie tickets, TV and monitor screens, power banks and others.**
- NOW 28 goods are there in the highest tax bracket of 28 percent and **includes cement, sin goods (tobacco, alcohol), auto parts and luxury goods such as Air Conditioner and dishwasher.**
- The new GST rates will be applicable from 1st of January 2019.

### Connect to the outcomes of the 31<sup>st</sup> meeting

- The renewable energy devices and their parts will be taxed at 5%.
- The GST on the accessories for carriages for specially-abled persons has been reduced to 5 per cent.
- No tax will be applied to the services provided by the banks to Jan-Dhan account holders.
- Frozen and preserved vegetables will not be taxed.
- The tax has been reduced to 12% from the previous rate of 18% for the cinema tickets costing up to 100 rupees and to 18% from 28% for tickets priced above Rs 100.
- The rate of tax for Digital cameras, Power banks, 32 inches monitors and TV up to 32 and video game consoles has also been reduced to 18%.
- Constitution of a **seven Member Group of Ministers** has been proposed by the GST Council **to study the revenue trend** and to analyse the reasons for structural patterns influencing the revenue collection in some states.

## **The GST Council in its 31st meeting gave in principle approval to the following amendments in the GST Acts**

- Creation of a **Centralised Appellate Authority for Advance Ruling (AAAR)** to deal with cases of conflicting decisions by two or more State Appellate Advance Ruling Authorities on the same issue.
- Amendment of section 50 of the CGST Act to provide that interest should be charged only on the net tax liability of the taxpayer, after taking into account the admissible input tax credit, i.e. interest would be leviable only on the amount payable through the electronic cash ledger

### **Relevance in – Prelims, Mains G.S paper II and III**

## **Economic Developments**

### **National IPR Policy**

#### ***Relevance in Mains GS Paper -III (Economic development , ease of doing business)***

#### **Know about The National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy 2016**

- National IPR Policy was adopted on as a vision document to guide future development of IPRs in the country.

#### ***This has led to the following achievements***

##### **Strengthening of Institutional Mechanism**

- The administration of Copyright Act, 1957 and Semiconductor Integrated Circuits Layout-Design Act, 2000 has been transferred to Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion.
- This has enabled an integrated approach and synergy between different IP offices and Acts.
- Under the Finance Act 2017, the Copyright Board has also been merged with the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB).

##### **Clearing Backlog/ Reducing Pendency**

- Various steps undertaken by the Government, including augmentation of technical manpower, have resulted in drastic reduction in pendency in IP applications.
- Automatic issuance of electronically generated patent and trademark certificates has been introduced.

##### **Increase in Filings**

- Patent filings have increased by nearly 7% in the first 8 months of 2018-19 vis-à-vis the corresponding period of 2017-18.
- Trademark filings have increased by nearly 28% in this duration.

##### **IP Process Re-engineering**

- Patent Rules, 2003 has been amended to streamline processes and make them more user friendly.
- Expedited Examination of patents is now permitted on certain grounds. In fact, the shortest time taken to grant a patent recently has been just 81 days from the filing of the request for examination.
- India has acceded to the WIPO Copyright Treaty (WCT) and WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT), which extend coverage of copyright to the internet and digital environment.

##### **Technology and Innovation Support Centres (TISCs)**

- In conjunction with WIPO, 6 TISCs have been established in various institutions across different states.

##### **Global Innovation Index (GII)**

- India's rank in the GII Report issued by WIPO has improved from 81st in 2015 to 57th place in 2018.

##### **IPR Enforcement Toolkit for Police**

- A IPR Enforcement Toolkit have been prepared to assist police officials in dealing with IP crimes, in particular, Trademark counterfeiting and Copyright piracy.

## Establishment of IPR Cell

- IPR Cells have been established in 41 universities across different States. In addition, 'Institution Innovation Councils' (IICs) have been set up in more than 1000 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) through the Innovation Cell at AICTE under the Ministry of HRD.

## Know what is IPR

- Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) are private rights which are applied for, and enforced, by the owner of the concerned IP.
- IP professionals from the relevant fields, including legal field, assist them in this regard.
- In particular, 2240 Patent agents and 702 Trademark agents have been registered under the relevant provisions of the Patents Act, 1970 and Trade Marks Act, 1999 respectively by the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks.

## Economy: New norms for the foreign direct investment (FDI) in e-commerce

### Relevance in – Prelims and Mains GS Paper – III Economic developments

#### What's the NEWS

- From February 1, 2019, e-commerce companies running marketplace platforms — such as Amazon and Flipkart — **cannot sell products through companies, and of companies, in which they hold equity stake.**
- The government announces new e-commerce rules restricting players from selling the products of companies in which they have a stake, and capping the percentage of inventory that a vendor can sell through a marketplace entity (IT platform of an e-commerce entity) or its group companies.

#### What has changed

- While **foreign direct investment is not permitted in the inventory-based model of e-commerce**, the clarification **put a cap of 25%** on the inventory that a marketplace entity or its group companies can buy from a vendor.
- Inventory of a vendor will be deemed to be controlled by e-commerce marketplace entity if more than 25% of purchases of such vendor are from the marketplace entity or its group companies

#### Why the new norms

##### The government wants to rectify some loopholes like

- To bypass the rules which restricted large sellers on platforms such as Flipkart and Amazon from contributing more than a quarter of sales, online retailers had set up structures to get around those loopholes by **mandating other sellers to buy from those large sellers** and then, in turn, sell those products on e marketplaces.
- Large sellers formed multiple entities, which sold their products separately on online marketplaces.
- The small traders were complaining that deep discounts offered by the likes of Amazon and Flipkart are driving them out of business.
- The new norms aim to tackle the anti-competitive behaviour by e-commerce entities and to ensure that there is no wrong subsidization and the marketplace remains neutral to all vendors.

**More Than a Tweak**  
**NEW RULES FOR ONLINE SELLERS**

<b>Related entity</b> can no longer sell on a platform	<b>Ecomm portal</b> can't discriminate among vendors	<b>Single vendor</b> can't sell more than <b>25%</b> to one portal
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**THIS COULD IMPACT...**

<b>Exclusive launches</b> or sale of products	<b>Amazon Fulfilled</b> or Flipkart Assured programmes
<b>Amazon Prime</b> benefits such as faster delivery, higher discounts	<b>Cashbacks by sites</b>

**Affiliated sellers like Cloudtail and Appario Retail on Amazon, and RetailNet, SuperComNet, OmniTech Retail on Flipkart-Mvnta**

**WHAT IT MEANS FOR CUSTOMERS**

- Deep discounts may disappear
- Big online sales may lose allure

**WHO GAINS**

- Brick-and-mortar retail gets a level playing field
- Smaller sellers on ecomm platforms
- Smaller ecomm players can compete with Big Boys

## Know how the new norms will affect e-commerce companies

- The e-commerce companies like Amazon and Flipkart would be adversely affected because Amazon has several such joint ventures, including Cloudtail and Appario.
- Even Flipkart has exclusive partnerships with top smartphone brands such as Xiaomi and Oppo.
- The new norms will adversely impact their business models.
- The new norms are welcomed by stating that the new norms will enable a level- playing field for all sellers especially MSMEs and help them leverage the reach of e-commerce.

## Infrastructure Development: Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18

### *Relevance in – Prelims and Mains (GS Paper III Economic developments)*

#### Know about the highlights of the survey

- The Public Enterprises Survey 2017-18 was tabled in the Parliament.
- The Survey highlights the performance of the various **central public sector units**.

#### Publishing Ministry

- The Department of Public Enterprises, Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises.

#### Highlights of the Survey

##### Performance of CPSEs

- **Indian Oil Corporation, ONGC and NTPC** were the top three most profitable PSUs in 2017-18.
- They contributed 13.37 per cent, 12.49 per cent and 6.48 per cent, respectively to the total profit earned by CPSEs (Central Public Sector Enterprises) during 2017-18.
- **Coal India and Power Grid Corporation** ranked 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> position respectively
- **BSNL, Air India and MTNL** incurred the highest losses for the second consecutive year.
- The survey states that there were 339 Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE) in 2017-18, out of which 257 was in operation. Remaining 82 of the CPSEs were under construction

## Cultural : Hornbill Festival inaugurated in Kohima



#### What

- The Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh inaugurated the hugely popular Hornbill Festival 2018 in Kohima coinciding with the Formation Day of Nagaland.
- Hornbill Festival is a spectacular event showcasing the rich ancient culture and civilization of the people of Nagaland.
- It powerfully demonstrates the cultural diversity and civilizational unity of the people.

## Connect to the festival

- The Hornbill Festival is a celebration held every year from 1 - 10 December, in Nagaland, Northeast India. It is also called the 'Festival of Festivals'.
- The state of Nagaland is home to several tribes, which have their own distinct festivals. More than 60% of the population of Nagaland depends on agriculture and therefore most of their festivals revolve around agriculture.
- The Nagas consider their festivals sacred, so participation in these festivals is essential.
- To encourage inter-tribal interaction and to promote cultural heritage of Nagaland, the Government of Nagaland organizes the Hornbill Festival every year in the first week of December.
- The first festival was held in 2000.
- The festival is named after the Indian hornbill, the large and colourful forest bird which is displayed in the folklore of most of the state's tribes.

## Factoids

### *MoU between India and Armenia on joint issue of postage stamp*

#### What

- The Union Cabinet was apprised of a Memorandum of Understanding signed between India and Armenia on joint issue of postage stamp.
- As per the MoU, Department of Posts, Ministry of Communications and the National Postal Operator of Armenia ("HayPost" CJSC) mutually agreed to jointly issue Postage Stamps on India-Armenia: Joint Issue on the theme "Dance"
- The Commemorative Postage Stamps depict "Manipuri Dance" of India and "HovArek Dance" of Armenia.

## Cultural

### *Cabinet approves Amendment of the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951*

#### What

- The decision aims to suitably amend the Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951 so as to secure representation as Trustees, "the Leader of Opposition recognized as such in the House of the People, or where there is no such Leader of Opposition, then the Leader of the single largest Opposition Party in the House".

#### Connect to the benefits

- In the existing Act, there is a provision for representation of a single national political party. Deletion of the party specific member from the Trust will make it apolitical.
- The proposed amendment ensures representation of the Opposition Party in the Trust.
- The proposed Amendment will empower the Government to terminate and replace a Trustee to participate in functioning of the Trust or for any other reason.

## National

### *National Integration tour*

#### What

- A group of 26 students of different age groups accompanied by seven teachers from the states of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram and Tripura on National Integration Tour visited Delhi and interacted with Lieutenant General Devraj Anbu

#### Connect to the tour

- The National Integration Tours are educational and motivational tours for youth of Jammu & Kashmir and North Eastern States, with an aim to provide an insight into the rich heritage of the country as well as various developmental and industry initiatives that are underway.

- This initiative will expose them to various career options and enable them to interact with renowned personalities.
- The National Integration Tour has been initiated as part of the Indian Army's ongoing outreach programme to foster the spirit of National Integration across the entire swathe of the country.

## Awards

### ***Indian Railway employee conferred with prestigious Sahitya Akademi Award for his novel "Marom" in Santhali language***

#### **What**

- Shri Shyam Sundar Besra, Chief Inspector of Ticket working in Asansol Division of Eastern Railway has been conferred the coveted Sahitya Akademi Award.
- He has been awarded for his novel "Marom" in Santhali language which is primarily based upon natural, social, economic and political conditions of Santhal Pargana.
- The novel highlights the situation emerged after the two main industrial development of the Santhal area after Independence i.e Masanjore Dam at Dumka and Railway locomotive workshop at Chittaranjan.

#### **Connect to Sahitya Akademi award**

- The Sahitya Akademi, India's National Academy of Letters, is an organisation dedicated to the promotion of literature in the languages of India.
- Founded on 12 March 1954, it is supported by, though independent of, the Indian government. It is in Rabindra Bhavan near Mandi House in Delhi.
- The Sahitya Akademi organises national and regional workshops and seminars; provides research and travel grants to authors; publishes books and journals, including the Encyclopaedia of Indian Literature; and presents the annual Sahitya Akademi Award of Rs. 100,000 (approx. USD 1,500 (in year 2013)) in each of the 24 languages it supports, as well as the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship for lifetime achievement.
- The Sahitya Akademi Library is one of the largest multi-lingual libraries in India, with a rich collection of books on literature and allied subjects.
- It publishes two bimonthly literary journals: Indian Literature in English and Samkaleen Bharatiya Sahitya in Hindi.

## Minority Affairs

### ***Bilateral Annual Haj 2019 Agreement between India and Saudi Arabia Signed at Jeddah***

#### **What**

- Union Minister for Minority Affairs Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, and Haj and Umrah Minister of Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dr Mohammad Saleh bin Taher Benteen signed bilateral annual Haj 2019 agreement between India and Saudi Arabia at Jeddah
- It is a part of strengthened bilateral relations of the two countries.

#### **Connect to HAJ 2019**

- A large number of Muslim women are likely to go to Haj 2019 without "Mehram" (male companion).
- More than 2100 women have applied to go to Haj 2019 without "Mehram".
- For the first time, the Centre's Modi Government had lifted ban on women going to Haj without Mehram last year, which resulted into about 1300 Indian Muslim women went on Haj 2018 without any male companion.
- They had been exempted from the lottery system. For the first time, more than 100 women Haj Coordinators and Haj Assistants had been deployed to assist Indian women Haj pilgrims in 2018.



- The Haj Committee of India has received more than 2 lakh 47 thousand applications yet for Haj 2019. This includes about 47 per cent women. For the first time after the Independence, a record number of Muslims from India performed Haj 2018 and that too without any subsidy.

### Connect to Hajj

- The Hajj is an annual Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia the holiest city for Muslims, and a mandatory religious duty for Muslims that must be carried out at least once in their lifetime by all adult Muslims who are physically and financially capable of undertaking the journey, and can support their family during their absence.
- Hajj means heading to a place for the sake of visiting. In Islamic terminology, Hajj is a pilgrimage made to Kaaba, the 'House of God', in the sacred city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia.
- The rites of Hajj, which according to Islam go back to the time of Prophet Abraham who re-built Kaaba after it had been first built by Prophet Adam,[citation needed] are performed over five or six days, beginning on the eighth and ending on the thirteenth day of Dhu al-Hijjah, the last month of the Islamic calendar
- It is one of the five pillars of Islam, alongside Shahadah, Salat, Zakat and Sawm.
- The Hajj is the second largest annual gathering of Muslims in the world, after the Arba'een Pilgrimage in Karbala, Iraq.
- The state of being physically and financially capable of performing the Hajj is called istita'ah, and a Muslim who fulfils this condition is called a mustati. The Hajj is a demonstration of the solidarity of the Muslim people, and their submission to God (Allah).
- The word Hajj means "to attend a journey", which connotes both the outward act of a journey and the inward act of intentions

## Culture

***The dossier on 'Monuments Forts of Deccan Sultanate' has been submitted to UNESCO for 2019-20***

### What

- At present, India has 42 sites listed under tentative list which is pre-requisite condition for inscription as World Heritage Sites.
- In this year, 'The Walled city of Jaipur' is under process for nomination of World Heritage Site. The dossier on 'Monuments Forts of Deccan Sultanate' has been submitted to UNESCO for 2019-20 initiative.
- Augmentation of sites on the World Heritage List/Tentative List is a continuous process and sites are selected on the basis of their potential for fulfilling criteria under Operational Guidelines and demonstration of Outstanding Universal Value.
- At present, India has 37 World Heritage Sites as follows:

### Connect to World Heritage Sites in India

#### Cultural Sites

S. No	Name of Site	State
<b>Under Protection of Archaeological Survey of India</b>		
1.	Agra Fort (1983)	Uttar Pradesh
2.	Ajanta Caves (1983)	Maharashtra
3.	Ellora Caves (1983)	Maharashtra
4.	Taj Mahal (1983)	Uttar Pradesh
5.	Group of Monuments at Mahabalipuram (1984)	Tamil Nadu
6.	Sun Temple, Konarak (1984)	Odisha
7.	Churches and Convents of Goa (1986)	Goa
8.	Fatehpur Sikri (1986)	Uttar Pradesh

9.	Group of Monuments at Hampi (1986)	Karnataka
10.	Khajuraho, Group of Temples (1986)	Madhya Pradesh
11.	Elephanta Caves ( 1987)	Maharashtra
12.	Great Living Chola Temples at Thanjavur, Gangaikondacholapuram and Darasuram (1987 & 2004)	Tamil Nadu
13.	Group of Monuments at Pattadakal (1987)	Karnataka
14.	Buddhist Monuments at Sanchi (1989)	Madhya Pradesh
15.	Humayun's Tomb, Delhi (1993)	Delhi
16.	Qutb Minar and its Monuments, Delhi (1993)	Delhi
17.	Rock Shelters of Bhimbetka (2003)	Madhya Pradesh
18.	Champaner-Pavagarh Archaeological Park (2004)	Gujarat
19.	Red Fort Complex, Delhi (2007)	Delhi
20.	Hill Forts of Rajasthan (Chittaurgarh, Kumbhalgarh, Jaisalmer and Ranthambhore, Amber and Gagron Forts) (2013) (Amber and Gagron Forts are under protection of Rajasthan State Archaeology and Museums)	Rajasthan
21.	Rani-ki-Vav (The Queen's Stepwell) at Patan (2014)	Gujarat
22.	Archaeological Site of Nalanda Mahavihara (Nalanda University at Nalanda (2016)	Bihar
<b>Under Protection of Ministry of Railways</b>		
23.	Mountain Railways of India ( Darjeeling,1999), Nilgiri (2005), Kalka-Shimla(2008)	West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Himachal Pradesh
24.	Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (formerly Victoria Terminus) (2004)	Maharashtra
<b>Under Protection of Bodhgaya Temple Management Committee</b>		
25.	Mahabodhi Temple Complex at Bodh Gaya, (2002)	Bihar
<b>Under Protection of Rajasthan State Archaeology and Museums</b>		
26.	The Jantar Mantar, Jaipur (2010)	Rajasthan
<b>Under Protection of Chandigarh Administration</b>		
27.	The Architectural Work of Le Corbusier, an Outstanding Contribution to the Modern Movement (2016)	Chandigarh
<b>Under Protection of Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation</b>		
28.	Historic City of Ahmedabad (2017)	Gujarat
<b>Under Protection of Bombay Municipal Corporation</b>		
29.	Victorian and Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai (2018)	Govt of Maharashtra

### Natural Sites

<b>Under Protection of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Changes</b>		
30.	Kaziranga National Park (1985)	Assam
31.	Keoladeo National Park (1985)	Rajasthan
32.	Manas Wildlife Sanctuary (1985)	Assam
33.	Sunderbans National Park (1987)	West Bengal
34.	Nanda Devi and Valley of Flowers National Parks (1988, 2005)	Uttarakhand
35.	Western Ghats (2012)	Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu

36	Great Himalayan National Park (2014)	Himachal Pradesh
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**Mixed Site**

Under Protection of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Changes		
37.	Khangchendzonga National Park (2016)	Sikkim

**10 monuments adopted under the ‘Adopt A Heritage’ project**

**What**

- The ‘Adopt A Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan’, scheme launched on 27th September, 2017 is a collaborative effort by Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Culture and Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), State/ UTs Governments

**Objective**

- Development and maintenance of tourist amenities at heritage sites and making them tourist friendly, to enhance tourism potential and cultural importance in a planned and phased manner.

**OCEAN'S ONUS**

CHINA, IRAN, IRAQ, PAKISTAN, BANGLADESH, INDIA, MALAYSIA, THAILAND, SINGAPORE, SRILANKA, OMAN, UAE, EGYPT, LEBANON, KENYA

**₹15 CRORE**  
HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FOR THE PROJECT, WHICH WILL REESTABLISH TIES BETWEEN COUNTRIES IN THE INDIAN OCEAN

Project Mausam Involves the Archaeological Survey of India, Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and National Museum. Countries include Bangladesh, Iran, China, Pakistan, Iraq, Egypt, Kenya, Lebanon, Malaysia, the Maldives, Pakistan, Oman, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Thailand and the UAE.

**39 COUNTRIES**  
HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED TO BE BROUGHT ON BOARD FOR TRANS-NATIONAL NOMINATION FOR WORLD HERITAGE

The project started in April 2015. The deadline is March 2017, which will be extended.

The focus is on understanding national cultures in their regional maritime milieu

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

## Connect to the Scheme

- The project primarily focuses on providing basic amenities that include cleanliness, public conveniences, safe drinking water, ease of access for tourists, signages, illumination, Wi-fi etc.
- No fund is given by Ministry of Tourism. The Project envisages involvement of Private/Public Companies / Organizations and Individuals to adopt Monuments, Natural Heritage Sites and other Tourist Sites in the country, primarily under CSR.
- Providing basic facilities/amenities (e.g. drinking water, toilet blocks, facilities for physically challenged, pathways, cultural notice boards/signage, vehicle parking, cloak rooms, etc.) to tourists visiting centrally protected monuments and sites are the regular activities which the Archaeological Survey of India undertakes.
- Improvement and upgradation of these public facilities/amenities is a continuous process.
- Archaeological Survey of India has identified 100 monuments as “Adarsh Smarak” for upgradation of existing facilities/amenities like Wi-Fi, cafeteria, interpretation centre, brail signage, modern toilets etc. on the basis of actual requirement and feasibility on case to case basis.

## *Project ‘Mausam’ extended up to 2020*

### What

- Project ‘Mausam’ is the initiative of Ministry of Culture to be implemented by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) as the nodal agency with research support of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and National Museum as associate bodies.

### Objective

- This project aims to explore the multi-faceted Indian Ocean ‘world’ – collating archaeological and historical research in order to document the diversity of cultural, commercial and religious interactions in the Indian Ocean.
- The main objective of the project is to inscribe places and sites identified under Project Mausam as trans-national nomination for inscription on UNESCO’s World Heritage List.
- There are 39 Indian Ocean countries identified under Project Mausam

## Centre – State Relations

### *Regional Conference on Good Governance- Focus on Aspirational Districts*

### What

- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Government of India in association with Government of Kerala is organizing a Regional Conference on December 10- 11, 2018 at Thiruvananthapuram on ‘Good Governance - Focus on Aspirational Districts

### Connect to the regional conference

- Delegates from 9 states and 5 U.T.s from Western and Southern India will participate in the Conference.
- There will be 5 Technical sessions in the 2-day Conference. On the Day 1, eight Presentations will be made on Effective Governance and Transformation of Aspirational Districts which will be followed by Panel Discussions.
- The Department has organized 30 Regional Conferences till date.
- This Conference is an effort to create a common platform to share experiences in the formulation and implementation of best practices in citizen centric governance, improved public service delivery through e-Governance, transparent, accountable and citizen-friendly effective administration.

### Connect to the aspirational district programme

- The ‘Transformation of Aspirational Districts’ programme aims to quickly and effectively transform these districts.
- The broad contours of the programme are Convergence (of Central & State Schemes), Collaboration (of Central, State level ‘Prabhari’ Officers & District Collectors), and Competition among districts driven by a mass Movement.

- With States as the main drivers, this program will focus on the strength of each district, identify low-hanging fruits for immediate improvement, measure progress, and rank districts.
- The Government is committed to raising the living standards of its citizens and ensuring inclusive growth for all – “Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas”.
- To enable optimum utilization of their potential, this program focusses closely on improving people’s ability to participate fully in the burgeoning economy.
- Health & Nutrition, Education, Agriculture & Water Resources, Financial Inclusion & Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure are this programme’s core areas of focus.
- After several rounds of consultations with various stakeholders, 49 key performance indicators have been chosen to measure progress of the districts.
- Districts are prodded and encouraged to first catch-up with the best district within their state, and subsequently aspire to become one of the best in the country, by competing with, and learning from others in the spirit of competitive & cooperative federalism.
- NITI Aayog in partnership with the Government of Andhra Pradesh has created a dashboard for monitoring the real-time progress of the districts.

## Centre – State Relation: Central government’s State startup Ranking Report, 2018

*Relevance in – Prelims and Mains (G.S Paper II ) Government Policies and intervention*

**Know about the state ranking**

The State-wise story		
	States	Percentile
<b>Best performer</b>	<b>Gujarat</b>	<b>100</b>
Top performers	Karnataka, Kerala, Odisha and Rajasthan	85 to 100
Leaders	Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana	70 to 85
Aspiring leaders	Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal	50 to 70
Emerging states	Assam, Delhi, Goa, Jammu & Kashmir, <b>Maharashtra</b> , Punjab, Tamil Nadu and Uttarakhand	25 to 50
Beginners	Chandigarh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Puducherry, Sikkim and Tripura	More or less equal to 25

SOURCE: STATE STARTUP RANKING REPORT, 2018 RELEASED BY DIPP

- The report says that **Gujarat, which claimed the top spot**, should mentor Maharashtra.
- The report released by the **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)**
- Andhra Pradesh was the first State in the country to announce a startup policy in 2014, following directions from the Centre to all States. While other States followed suit subsequently, Maharashtra announced its startup policy only in 2018.

# NITI Aayog: NITI Aayog Releases Second Delta Ranking of the Aspirational Districts

*Relevance in – Prelims and Mains (GS Paper II -Government policies and intervention)*



## Highlights

- Aspirational Districts were ranked on improved performance over the months of June – October 2018
- Ranking includes, for the first time, validated data from Household Surveys

## What's the NEWS

- The NITI Aayog today released the Second Delta ranking for the Aspirational Districts which measures the incremental progress made by them between **June 1, 2018 and October 31, 2018**, across six developmental areas of **Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion, Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure.**

## Know all about the ranking

- The ranking factors in validated data from Household Surveys conducted by NITI Aayog's knowledge partners, namely, TATA Trusts and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (IDInsight).
- The Surveys were carried out in all Aspirational Districts during the month of June 2018 covering more than 1,00,000 households.
- These surveys were used to validate critical data-points and provide inputs for nine further data-points for which district-level data is not readily available at regular intervals.
- The delta ranking is computed in a transparent manner for combined improvements made during June and October 2018.

**In the overall ranking, the most improved districts are as follows:**

Rank	District	State
1	<b>Virudhunagar</b>	<b>Tamil Nadu</b>
2	Nuapada	Odisha
3	Siddharthnagar	Uttar Pradesh
4	Aurangabad	Bihar
5	Koraput	Odisha

The Second Delta ranking also details the following districts as **Least Improved** over the period of June – October 2018:

Rank	District	State
107	Kiphire	Nagaland
108	Giridih	Jharkhand
109	Chatra	Jharkhand
110	Hailakandi	Assam
111	Pakur	Jharkhand

The districts which have shown great initiative and displayed a qualitative jump in their scores between June and October 2018, have been dubbed as **‘Fast Movers’**:

District, State	June 2018	October 2018
Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir	108	7
Ranchi, Jharkhand	106	10
Siddharthnagar, Uttar Pradesh	103	3
Jamui, Bihar	99	9
Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh	82	25

### Know about Delta ranking

- The delta ranking of the Aspirational Districts combines the innovative use of data science with pragmatic administration, keeping the district at the locus of inclusive development.
- This positioning is expected to aid the District Magistrates/Collectors to focus more on these sectors and improve their ranking in future.

### About ‘Transformation of Aspirational Districts’ programme

- Aims to quickly and effectively transform some of the most underdeveloped districts of the country.
- The broad contours of the programme are **Convergence (of Central & State Schemes), Collaboration (of Central, State level ‘Prabhari’ Officers & District Collectors)**, and Competition among districts driven by a Mass Movement or a *Jan Andolan*.
- With States as the main drivers, this program will focus on the strength of each district, identify low-hanging fruits for immediate improvement, measure progress, and rank districts.
- The Government is committed to raising the living standards of its citizens and ensuring inclusive growth for all – *SabkaSaath, SabkaVikas*.
- Districts are prodded and encouraged to first catch-up with the best district within their state, and subsequently aspire to become one of the best in the country, by competing with, and learning from others in the spirit of competitive & cooperative federalism.

## Emotional intelligence/ G.S paper IV

### Ministry of Railways organizes “Leading with Emotional Intelligence” Workshops

#### What

- Ministry of Railways organized three workshops with the main focus on module of ‘Leading with emotional Intelligence’
- Workshops were arranged for top level leaderships — General Managers and Divisional Railway Managers using MHS EQI 2.0 as the anchor instrument for driving emotionally intelligent leadership in measurable and replicable way.

## What's the need

- For a qualitative impact on productivity and well being of the large workforce that Indian Railways have with an intention to improve the overall work environment.
- Indian Railways also plans to train its trainers for conducting similar courses for the young officers joining Railways and at various levels of career development.
- Indian Railways may be a trailblazer in the Government of India to launch the initiative of Emotional Intelligence for sustainable success of the organization with the aim of efficient service delivery.

## Connect to MHS EQI 2.0

- MHS EQI 2.0 has been developed by Multi Health Systems, Canada based on rigorous research and validation.
- World's first scientifically validated Emotional Intelligence assessment test was created by Dr. Renven Bar-on and has been in use since 1997.
- Indian Railways also plans to train its trainers for conducting similar courses for the young officers joining Railways and at various levels of career development.
- EQI as a tool, helps in change management for helping mitigate stress, increase learning agility, promote employee recognition, make better decisions, take proactive actions and recover from adversity.
- Given the context of Railways, the challenges surrounding its leaders are managing people below them, managing conflict, maintaining relationships, influencing various other stake holders with or without authority making impactful decisions.

## Emotional intelligence

- Emotional Intelligence refers to the capability of a person to manage his or her emotions and possess the capability to control the emotions of others as well.
- Leaders with higher Emotional Intelligence are more effective in their work. This has five major components — self perception, self expression, intra-personal, problem solving and stress management.
- The Workshop on Emotional Intelligence allowed participants to deepen their understanding in areas like empathy, flexibility, assertiveness, stress tolerance and impulse control and gave them an opportunity for further development.
- A culture of Emotional Intelligence is the most productive and positive culture and is the corner stone of innovation, efficiency and effectiveness. This is one of the major initiatives taken by Ministry of Railways.

## Agriculture Sector: Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

***To connect with Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT), an online portal "ENSURE" has been launched***

### What

- Ministry of agriculture has launched a portal ENSURE- National Livestock Mission-EDEG developed by NABARD and operated under the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries
- The National Livestock Mission has been conceived by the centre government for the sustainable development of the livestock sector.
- Under the Mission's component called Entrepreneurship Development and Employment Generation (EDEG), subsidy payment for activities related to poultry, small ruminants, pigs etc. through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) goes directly to the beneficiary's account.

### Connect to Ensure

- In order to make it better, simpler and transparent, the NABARD has developed an online portal "ENSURE" (<https://ensure.nabard.org>) so that the information related to beneficiary and processing of application can be made readily available.
- Under the new process, controlling officer/branch manager of the bank, after scrutinizing & sanctioning of proposal, uploads the subsidy claims in the portal.
- The subsidy will be approved within 30 days from the date of sanction of loan. Earlier, even after the loan approval, subsidy took a long time to reach the beneficiary's account.

- Through this process, the flow of information/funds will also be quicker and more accountable.
- The burden of extra interest due to delay in the disbursement of the subsidy would now be reduced after the launch of the portal. Access from the portal will also be on real-time basis and list of beneficiaries can be easily prepared.

### ***13th Edition Of CII Agro Tech India – 2018***



## **India's Premier Biennial Agro Technology & Business Fair**

**1-4 December 2018, Chandigarh, India**

### **What**

- The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, inaugurated the 13th edition of CII Agro Tech India-2018 in Chandigarh.
- Agro Tech India-2018 will promote specific partnerships that will benefit India's farmers.

### **Connect to the fair**

- The Government of India, in its Budget 2015-16, announced several steps for sustainable development of agriculture, including signing up agreements with as many as 63 countries.
- India is a global agricultural powerhouse with immense opportunities for foreign and domestic investors.
- CII Agro Tech, India's Premier Biennial & Agro Technology Business Fair, has been working in partnership with Ministries of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare; Food Processing Industries and Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India to provide better agricultural facilities and also enhance bilateral trade between India and the world.
- The event provides, not only deep insight into the India's food & agriculture market but also acknowledges a meaningful business interaction with & to the overseas participants.
- It has been the single event to congregate the largest strength of decision makers to agitate and evolve with, practical solutions to the challenges faced by the Indian agriculture today.
- It works as an ideal interaction platform between the Farm Producers and the Agro Industry.
- By creating linkages for value creation and value addition, the event offers varied business opportunities to the technology holders as well as practical learning to the technology users.

## **Civil Aviation**

### ***Digital Sky Platform launched – India to start registration of drones, pilots, and operators Registration portal for online permission***

#### **RPAS**

- Remotely Piloted Aerial Systems (RPAS), popularly referred to as drones, are a technology platform with wide-ranging applications.

- In August 2018, India had announced the release of its Civil Aviation Regulations (CAR) to enable safe flying of RPAS in India.
- The CAR detailed the obligations of operators, remote pilots/ users and manufacturers/ OEM for safe operations of RPAS and co-operative use of airspace.

### **Connect to the Digital Sky Platform**

- It also announced Digital Sky Platform, a first of its kind that implements ‘no permission, no take-off’ (NPNT) – a novel system of software-based self-enforcement to minimize deviations from the CAR.
- The regulations were to come in effect from December 1, allowing the industry time to ready themselves for the launch.
- Nano drones in India can start flying legally from today.
- For micro and above categories, operators and pilots are required to register on the Digital Sky Portal.
- To get permissions to fly, RPAS operators or remote pilots will have to file a flight plan. Flying in the ‘green zones’ will require only intimation of the time and location of the flights via the portal or the app.
- Permissions will be required for flying in ‘yellow zones’ and flights will not be allowed in the ‘red zones’. The location of these zones will be announced soon. Permission, if granted, will be available digitally on the portal.
- If an RPAS does not have permission to fly, it will not be allowed to take-off under the policy of NoPermission-No-Takeoff (NPNT).
- The Digital Sky Platform is built to evolve with the evolving needs of this rapidly changing industry. In the coming months, new features will be developed to ease the process of flying for users, and provide oversight to security agencies.
- The Minister for Civil Aviation has constituted a task-force on the recommendation of Drone Policy 2.0 under the chairmanship of the Minister of State.
- This task-force which is expected to release their final report by the end of this year. Drone 2.0 framework for RPAS are expected to include regulatory architecture for autonomous flying, delivery via drones and beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) flights.

## **Agreements**

### ***Government of India and Asian Development Bank Sign \$85 Million Loan to Support Odisha Skill Development Project***

#### **What**

- The Government of India and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) signed a \$85 million loan to improve the skill development eco-system in Odisha and establish an advanced skill training center, the World Skill Center (WSC), in the state capital Bhubaneswar.

#### **Connect to the agreement**

- The project will improve the quality of the State’s TVET programs by making them relevant to industry and demand driven, and will impart advanced occupation-ready skills training aligned with international standards.
- It would also complement the efforts to target the employment needs of the emerging sectors in India and globally
- The project will engage Institute of Technical Education Services (ITEES), Singapore, to support Odisha Skill Development Authority in setting-up and operationalizing WSC which would offer internationally bench marked advanced training programs for the working age population of Odisha
- The project will help over 150,000 people learn skills in priority sectors, including manufacturing, construction and services for formal employment. WSC will deliver eight training courses for 13,000 full-time students, provide training for 5,000 teachers, and train 1,000 assessors.
- It will improve the overall eco-system of skill development in Odisha by providing integrated services through an entrepreneurship incubation center, a career counseling and placement center, a curriculum design and development center, and education technology deployment center.

- These important functions of WSC will support a network of Government ITIs and develop skills and capacity of polytechnics, college of engineering, and other private skilling centers.
- ADB will also administer a \$2 million technical assistance grant from the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, financed by the Government of Japan that will support capacity development activities under the project

## Infrastructure Development

### Train 18

#### What

- India's first indigenously designed engine less train known as Train 18, crossed the 180 kmph speed limit during test run in Kota-Sawai Madhopur section.
- It will become the country's fastest train when this train is made official

# Fast forward

Train 18 – India's first engine-less train – breached the 180 kmph speed threshold on Sunday during a test run in the Kota – Sawai Madhopur section, becoming the country's fastest train. If trials go well it may replace the Shatabdi Express soon

### FEATURES AND FACILITIES

- Aerodynamically designed driver cabins at both ends for quicker turn-around at destinations
- Alternate coaches are motorised to ensure even distribution of power and faster acceleration or deceleration
- Regenerative braking system to save power
- Inter-connected, fully sealed gangways
- Automatic doors with retractable footsteps
- Onboard Wi-Fi and infotainment
- GPS-based passenger information system
- Modular toilets with bio-vacuum systems
- Rotational seats which can be aligned in the direction of travel (executive class)
- Roller blinds and diffused LED lighting
- Disabled-friendly toilets
- Emergency talk-back units to contact train crew
- CCTVs in all coaches for safe and secure travel

**₹100 crore**  
Approximate cost of train

**200 kmph**  
Possible peak speed

**Jan. 2019**  
Expected commencement of commercial run

**5 more**  
Train 18s in the pipeline

**16** Number of coaches (same as Shatabdi)

**18 months**  
The time reportedly taken to conceive, design and develop the train



**Train 18 exceeds 180 kmph...**

The stability of water bottles (inside the train) at this speed is testament to the quality of workmanship and design of our engineers

PIYUSH GOYAL  
Minister of Railways



- Train 18 was rolled out in October 2018 at Chennai's Integral Coach Factory (ICF).
- Earlier in November 2018, Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) had announced its trial run successfully.

### **Connect to train 18**

- During this trail on tracks in Moradabad division of Northern Railway, this train had ran up to 115 km per hour.
- The trials proved that train has defined track geometry parameters, curved alignments of specific radius and station yard zones.
- Once Train 18 becomes operational, it will commence its commercial operations from January 2019.
- Train 18 It is capable of touching 200 kmph provided the rest of Indian Railways' system such as tracks and signals permit.
- It will replacing current 30-year-old Shatabdi Express – a day train. Thus it is touted as next generation Shatabdi Express.
- It will be First long distance train without separate locomotive (engine).
- It has been indigenously developed by Chennai-based Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in just short time span of 18 months.
- It took investment of nearly Rs 100 crore to build this prototype and subsequent bulk production will bring down the cost.
- Train 18 has has aerodynamically designed driver cabins at both ends for quicker turn-around at destinations. It sports advanced regenerative braking system which saves power

## **Intellectual Property rights**

### ***World Intellectual Property Indicators 2018 report: Rise in number of patent granted by India***

#### **What**

- Report has been released by United Nation's World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)

#### **Connect to the report**

- The number of patents granted by India has been increased by 50% in 2017.
- The patents granted by India increased from 8,248 in 2016 to 12,387 in 2017, thus keeping up trend of steep increases.
- Patents granted in 2017 in India were more than double 6,022 patents granted in 2015. Of the patents granted in 2017, 1,712 went to entities and individuals based in India, and 10,675 to foreigners.
- The steep increase in number was driven by patents granted to foreigners, which accounted for 85% of total increase.
- The number of patents given to domestic entities also has shown increasing trend.
- Globally, 1.4 million patents were granted in 2017. China led world with 4,20,144 granted patents and was followed by US with 3,18,829.

#### **World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)**

- It is the global body for promotion and protection of intellectual property rights (IPR).
- It is one of the 15 specialized agencies of United Nations (UN).
- India is a member of WIPO and party to several treaties administered by WIPO
- It was established in 1967 and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- Its mandate is to encourage creative activity, to promote the protection of intellectual property throughout the world.
- It encourages and provides assistance to all its 188 member countries in formulating national IPR policy however it does not dictate or prescribe any mandatory measures.

## Environment

### ***Cabinet approves MoC between India and Japan in the field of Environment cooperation***

#### **Connect to the benefits**

- The MoC will enable establishment and promotion of closer and long-term cooperation between India and Japan in the field of environment protection and management of natural resources on the basis of equity, reciprocity and mutual benefits, taking into account the applicable laws and legal provisions in each country.

#### **The need of the hour**

- Environmental degradation falls on the socially and economically disadvantaged, more heavily than better-off sections of the society.
- Any effort at thwarting environmental degradation would lead to environmental equity in the sense of availability of sound environmental resources to all sections of the society.
- The MoC is expected to bring in the latest technologies and best practices suited for bringing about better environment protection, better conservation, better management of climate change and bio-diversity conservation.

## Farmer's Welfare Schemes

### ***Agriculture Export Policy, 2018***

#### **What**

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Agriculture Export Policy, 2018.
- The Cabinet has also approved the proposal for establishment of Monitoring Framework at Centre with Commerce as the nodal Department with representation from various line Ministries/Departments and Agencies and representatives of concerned State Governments, to oversee the implementation of Agriculture Export Policy.

#### **Why**

- The Government has come out with a policy to double farmers' income by 2022.
- Exports of agricultural products would play a pivotal role in achieving this goal.
- In order to provide an impetus to agricultural exports, the Government has come out with a comprehensive "Agriculture Export Policy" aimed at doubling the agricultural exports and integrating Indian farmers and agricultural products with the global value chains

#### **Connect to the Objectives of the Agriculture Export Policy**

- To double agricultural exports from present ~US\$ 30+ Billion to ~US\$ 60+ Billion by 2022 and reach US\$ 100 Billion in the next few years thereafter, with a stable trade policy regime.
- To diversify our export basket, destinations and boost high value and value added agricultural exports including focus on perishables.
- To promote novel, indigenous, organic, ethnic, traditional and non-traditional Agri products exports.
- To provide an institutional mechanism for pursuing market access, tackling barriers and deal with sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues.
- To strive to double India's share in world agri exports by integrating with global value chain at the earliest.
- Enable farmers to get benefit of export opportunities in overseas market.

### ***Foundation stone of PUSA 'Kisan Haat' in ICAR's Agriculture Technology Information Centre (ATIC)***

#### **What**

- Foundation stone of Pusa Kisan Haat in ICAR's Agricultural Technology Information Centre (ATIC) in New Delhi

## Connect to the benefits of ATIC

- Farmers can sell their agricultural produce and value-added products. At the same time, the technology and value-added products developed by the institutions of the ICAR will be available here for the farmers and visitors.
- Pusa Kisan Haat will also have 'Technology Park' in which farmers can see Live crop technologies of Pusa. Facilities like food plaza, open-air theater with a seating capacity of 100 people, conference hall, museum, Lab and lecture hall. It will also have facility for agricultural consultation services, seeds and literature for farmers.

## Connect to ICAR

- The Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) is an autonomous body responsible for co-ordinating agricultural education and research in India.
- It reports to the Department of Agricultural Research and Education, Ministry of Agriculture.
- The Union Minister of Agriculture serves as its president.
- It is the largest network of agricultural research and education institutes in the world.
- The Committee to Advise on Renovation and Rejuvenation of Higher Education (Yashpal Committee, 2009) has recommended setting up of a constitutional body — the National Commission for Higher Education and Research — which would be a unified supreme body to regulate all branches of higher education including agricultural education.
- Presently, regulation of agricultural education is the mandate of ICAR, Veterinary Council of India (Veterinary sub-discipline) and Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (Forestry sub-discipline).
- The UPA government has included Yashpal Committee recommendations in its '100 days agenda' premier institute of agriculture in India

## Economic Reforms

### *Annual Startup India Venture Capital Summit 2018 to be held in Goa*

#### What

- The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry and the Government of Goa, is hosting the annual Startup India Venture Capital Summit in Goa on December 07, 2018.
- The theme of the Summit is 'Mobilizing Global Capital for Innovation in India.'

#### Connect to the events

- The event will showcase the Indian startup opportunity for funds from around the world.
- The summit aims to attract more global capital into the country.
- The event will enable a dialogue between Government and experienced Venture Capital fund managers on ways to further promote the startup ecosystem in India.
- The key objectives of the Summit will be to showcase the India opportunity, increase capital flow for Indian startups and further promote ease of doing business.

#### Indian's startup statics

- India has the world's third largest startup base with more than 14,000 recognized Startups.
- More than 8,200 startups were recognized by DIPP in 2018 alone, leading to the creation of more than 89,000 new jobs this year, taking the total job creation contribution of recognized Startups to 1,41,775.
- Government of Goa is focused on building a vibrant startup ecosystem in the state. It aims to make the state, one of the most preferred start-up destinations in India, and ensure that Goa features in the top 25 start-up destinations in Asia by 2025.

## Information and Technology

### ***NATIONAL CHALLENGE for Youth-“Ideate for India- Creative Solutions using Technology”***

#### **What**

- National Challenge for Youths, “Ideate for India - Creative Solutions using Technology”, has been launched

#### **Why**

- The aim of this National Challenge is to give school students across the country a platform and opportunity to become solution creators for the problems they see around them and their communities.

#### **Connect to Ideate for India**

- Ideate for India will empower and enable these students to transition from being ‘users’ of technology to become ‘creators’ of new indigenous technologies to solve local problems in their community by re-imagining solutions to work out critical local issues.
- The Challenge has been designed and launched by the National e-Governance Division, Ministry of Electronics & IT in collaboration with Intel India, with support from the Department of School Education and Literacy (DoSE&L), Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- The DoSE&L will help reach out to State Education Departments, NVS, KVS and CBSE authorities to propagate the National Challenge amongst schools across the country.
- The National Challenge is open to students of classes 6 - 12 all across the country - all 29 States and 7 Union Territories and aims to reach out to at least 1 million youth over the next 3 months.

#### **Connect to the process of selection**

- There are 11 core theme areas on which students can share their ideas- healthcare services, education services, digital services, environment, women safety, traffic, infrastructure, agriculture, social welfare, disability and tourism.
- The Challenge requires students to access online videos and understand how to identify problems and share a 90 second video explaining the problem and their proposed solution.
- From the submitted ideas in the form of videos, around 360 students (10 students per State & UT) will be selected by a panel of experts to attend 5 regional Boot Camps organized in North, South, East, West and North Eastern regions of the country ( 1 in each region).
- At the regional boot camps, students will get trained by technology experts and mentors to gain a first level/ basic understanding of skills such as design thinking, ideation - idea generation, making, do-it-yourself concepts, collaboration etc with real time hands-on working sessions on basic electronics, robotics, 3D printing and introduction to IOT/Artificial Intelligence.
- Mentoring will be provided by experts at these camps to ensure that ideas mature as prototypes.
- The experts will select top 50 students who will be invited and felicitated at a National Level Event to showcase their prototypes implemented in communities and will be declared Tech Creation Champions.
- “Ideate for India” National Challenge will help inculcate innovation skills in youth and equip all students to utilise technology for the betterment of their communities and the society at large. Simultaneously, this will prepare them to contribute towards the realization of Digital India goals.

## Infrastructure Development

### ***Kolkata-Patna becomes India’s second container cargo sector on Inland Waterways***

#### **What**

- After the success of container cargo being shipped from Kolkata to Varanasi earlier this year, Bihar’s capital Patna will be witness to a new landmark in India’s Inland Water Transport (IWT) sector with 16 TEUs of container cargo (equivalent to 16 truckloads) belonging to food giants PepsiCo India and Emami Agrotech Ltd from Kolkata reaching the city’s Gaighat IWT terminal on river Ganga next week.

## Connect to the 2<sup>nd</sup> voyage

- Inland Waterways Authority of India's (IWAI) vessel MV RN Tagore sailed from Kolkata's Garden Reach Jetty today with the PepsiCo and Emami Agrotech products.
- It will reach the IWT terminal at Patna in 6-7 days after an 815 kms long voyage on river Ganga (National Waterway-1).
- The cargo will be unloaded at IWAI's inter-modal terminal at Gaighat in Patna from where onward cargo will be loaded.

## Connect to NW 1

- The Ministry of Shipping is developing NW-1 (River Ganga) under Jal Marg Vikas Project (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.
- The movement will give a fillip to the region's growth and employment. According to the World Bank economic analysis, of the 1.5 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities to be created due to interventions under JMVP, 50,000 will be in Bihar alone.

Sources – PIB ,The Hindu , My Gov

## Infrastructure Development

### *Ministry of Shipping approves a Freight Village in Varanasi*

#### What

- The Ministry of Shipping has approved the development of a Rs 156 crore freight village in Varanasi adjoining the Inland Waterways Terminal on River Ganga.
- The Varanasi freight village will be developed by the Inland Waterways Authority of India .
- It will serve as a cargo hub, and a centre for aggregation and value addition.
- It will also provide support to stimulate development of a professional logistics industry in Varanasi.

## Connect to the freight village

- A freight village is a designated area where facilities for various modes of transportation, distribution of goods and other logistics are available in a synchronized manner on a large scale.
- The main function of freight villages is management and utilization of various modes of transport, synergizing them and decongesting the existing mode of transportation.
- Freight villages are basically cargo aggregators which offer various logistic choices to a shipper/ cargo owner; i.e. choice of rail-road; rail-waterway; road-waterway.
- The choice is based on the optimal/ lowest logistic cost that can be derived by the shipper/ cargo owner.
- A World Bank pre-feasibility study has found Varanasi to be a suitable site for the freight village.
- The Varanasi freight village is proposed to be developed over a land area of about 100 acres, which will be acquired in two phases - 70 acres in first phase and 30 acres in second phase at a total estimated cost of Rs 120 crores.

## Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

### *Food and Agriculture organisation (FAO) Council approves India's proposal to observe an International Year of Millets in 2023*

### *FAO Council also approves India's membership to the Executive Board of the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) for 2020 and 2021*

#### What

- The 160th session of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) Council, currently underway in Rome, approved India's proposal to observe an International Year of Millets in 2023.

## Benefits

- This will enhance global awareness to bring back these nutri-cereals to the plate, for food and nutrition security and hence increase production for resilience to challenges posed globally by climate change.
- This international endorsement comes in the backdrop of India celebrating 2018 as the National Year of Millets for promoting cultivation and consumption of these nutri-cereals.
- This is further supported by increase in Minimum Support Prices (MSP) of millets. Millets consists of Jowar, Bajra, Ragi and minor millets together termed as nutri-cereals.
- In addition, the FAO Council also approved India's membership to the Executive Board of the United Nations World Food Program (WFP) for 2020 and 2021 for which the Minister expressed his deepest gratitude to other member countries for their support.

## Connect to FAO

- The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations is a specialized agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.
- Serving both developed and developing countries, FAO acts as a neutral forum where all nations meet as equals to negotiate arguments and debate policy.
- FAO is also a source of knowledge and information, and helps developing countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices, ensuring good nutrition and food security for all.
- The FAO has 197 member states, including the European Union (a "member organization"), Niue and The Cook Islands (States in free-association with New Zealand), and the Faroe Islands and Tokelau, which are associate members.

## New and Renewable Energy

### *Ministry of New and Renewable Energy conferred Skoch Award for National Significance*



## What

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, Government of India has been conferred the Skoch Award for National Significance at an event held recently in New Delhi.
- The award was received by Secretary, Ministry of New Renewable Energy Shri Anand Kumar.

## Connect to the award

- The award has been conferred on the Ministry considering its purpose and critical role played in installing about 73 GW renewable energy capacity in the country.
- With 21 per cent of total installed capacity, within the year renewable energy grossed a magic figure of providing one billion units of electricity in the country.
- Today, India ranks 4 in the world in wind energy capacity and 5th in solar & total renewable energy capacity installed in the world. India has played a critical role in setting up of international solar alliance. Further, India moved a resolution during the first meeting for making it a global initiative.

## Youth Affairs and Sports

*Khelo India Youth Games to be held in Pune from January 9, 2019*

HIMALAI



**Khelo India Youth Games to be held in  
Pune from  
9th of January , 2019**

### What

- After the resounding success of the first edition of the Khelo India School Games last year, the grassroots level hunt for sportspersons from across the country, is back in a bigger, better form.

### Connect to the second edition

- In its second edition, the games which is an initiative of the Central Government, has expanded in its scope, and will allow participants to compete in two categories, (Under 17) and (Under 21), this year.
- In its new form, the games, which will be known as the Khelo India Youth Games, also allows students from colleges and Universities to compete.
- The other highlight of this year's games is that the national-level competition is moving out of the Capital and will be held in Maharashtra, which bid for the games, along with Assam and Jharkhand.
- This time, the games will be held in Pune, known as the city of students, from January 9 - January 20, 2019.

### Connect to Khelo India

- Khelo India School Games (KISG), meaning Play India School Games, held annually beginning from 31 January 2018, are the national level multidisciplinary grassroots games in India for the under-17 years school kids.
- Every year best 1000 kids will be given an annual scholarship of INR500,000 for 8 years to prepare them for the international sporting events.
- Small state of Haryana (102 medals including 38 golds, 26 silvers and 38 bronzes) was the top team in 2018, followed by Maharashtra (111 medals including 36 golds) and Delhi (94 medals including 25 golds)

## Health and Family Welfare

*India Day inaugurated as Partners 'Forum 2018 takes Centre stage*

### What

- Health ministry inaugurated the 'India Day', an official side event organized jointly by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, and the development partners in the run up to the Partners' Forum 2018
- Reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent (RMNCH+A) programme in which states have launched various innovative initiatives under RMNCH+A that encourage people to be partners in their own health and well-being.

### Connect to India day event

- India Day event is aimed to reflect on the journey of the RMNCH+A programme and to share and learn from the good practices and innovations implemented by different States/UTs and organisations to address various health challenges around maternal and child health in order to sustain progress on global goals.

- India Day showcased the key themes through engaging formats such as film and performances to depict the lived realities of key stakeholders.
- Frontline workers, the youth and peer educators expressed their perspectives on the journey so far and the road ahead. The event's sessions—conducted under the broad themes of community-based interventions, services and systems and enablers like use of data—highlighted the interventions that have worked well in states like Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh.
- The RMNCH+A strategy is centred on the continuum of care approach, catering to health needs at every stage of the lifecycle.
- RMNCH+A is aligned with the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health and its key programming tenets articulating well-defined targets to end preventable deaths, ensure health and well-being and expand enabling environments, popularly known as the Survive, Thrive and Transform approach.

### **Connect to the statics**

- In India, maternal, child, neonatal and adolescent health gained tremendous momentum since RMNCH+A was rolled out. India's maternal mortality rate (MMR) has fallen from 556 in the year 1990 to 130 in 2014–16 (SRS data).
- The country's progress can be gauged from the 77% decline in MMR that it achieved during 1990–2015, compared to global decline of 44% during this period. In child health also, India's achievements have been strong.
- Under-five mortality rate (U5MR) in India has fallen significantly, from 126 per 1,000 live births in 1990 to 39 per 1,000 live births in 2016.

### ***Partners Forum 2018***

#### **What**

- The Prime Minister will inaugurate the fourth Partners Forum on 12th December
- The Government of India, in association with the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), is hosting a two-day international conference on 12th and 13th December 2018, bringing together about 1500 participants from across 85 countries to improve the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents.
- The invited countries have been selected from across all regions and income levels and include countries that are currently chairing key global and regional bodies (e.g. G7, G20, BRICS, etc.).

#### **Connect to the forum**

- This is the fourth in a series of global high-level multi-country, multi-stakeholder events aimed at sustaining global momentum for issues related to health of women, children and adolescents.
- Partners' Forum is a global health partnership launched in September 2005 to accelerate efforts to reduce child and maternal mortality, improve adolescent, child, newborn and maternal health.
- This partnership is an alliance of more than 1,000 plus members, across 10 constituencies in 92 countries: academic, research and teaching institutions; donors and foundations; health care professionals; multilateral agencies; non-governmental organizations; partner countries; global financing mechanisms and the private sector.
- The previous chapters were held in Johannesburg, South Africa (2014), New Delhi, India (2010) and Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (2007). This is the second time India is hosting the Partners' Forum.
- The programme of the Partners' Forum will be framed around the objectives of the Global Strategy of Survive – Thrive – Transform.
- The programme will include four high-level plenaries that will focus on political leadership, multi-sectoral action, accountability and power of partnership

## Commerce & Industry

### *National Medical Devices Promotion Council to be set up under DIPP*

#### **What**

- To give a fillip to the medical device sector, which is a sunrise sector, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu, announced setting up of a National Medical Devices Promotion Council under the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.

#### **Event**

- 4th WHO Global Forum on Medical Devices, at Andhra Pradesh Medtech Zone, in Vishakhapatnam

#### **Connect to MDI**

- The Medical Devices Industry (MDI) plays a critical role in the healthcare ecosystem and is indispensable to achieve the goal of health for all citizens of the country.
- The manufacturing and trade in MDI is growing steadily which includes a wide range of products.
- Although the industry has been growing in double digits but is predominantly import-driven with imports accounting for over 65% of the domestic market.
- As Indian manufacturing companies and startups move towards creating innovative products, the setting-up of the Council will spur domestic manufacturing in this sector.

#### **Connect to the Council**

- The Council will be headed by Secretary, DIPP. Apart from the concerned departments of Government of India, it will also have representatives from health care industry and quality control institutions. Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone, Visakhapatnam, will provide technical support to the Council.

## Health and Family Welfare

### *Cabinet approves establishment of two new AIIMS at Tamil Nadu & Telangana under Pradhan MantriSwasthya Suraksha Yojana*

#### **What**

- The Union Cabinet has approved establishment of two new All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at Madurai, Tamil Nadu and Bibinagar, Telangana
- The AIIMS will be set up under Pradhan MantriSwasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).

#### **Connect to the approvals**

- Establishment of new AIIMS involves creation of Hospital, Teaching Block for medical & nursing courses, residential complex and allied facilities/services, broadly on the pattern of AIIMS, New Delhi and other six new AIIMS taken up under Phase-I of PMSSY.
- The objective is to establish the new AIIMS as Institutions of National Importance for providing quality tertiary healthcare, medical education, nursing education and research in the Region.
- The timeframe for establishment of the new AIIMS Tamil Nadu and AIIMS Telangana will be 45 months and running of the new AIIMS would be met by the Central Government under PMSSY.
- Construction of new AIIMS is fully funded by the Central Government. The Operations & Maintenance expenses on new AIIMS are also fully borne by the Central Government.

#### **Connect to PMSSY**

- The Pradhan MantriSwasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY), a Central Sector Scheme, aims at correcting the imbalances in the availability of affordable tertiary healthcare facilities in different parts of the country in general, and augmenting facilities for quality medical education in the under-served States in particular.

- The AIIMS in Tamil Nadu was announced in the Budget Speech of Finance Minister in 2015-16 and Ministry of Finance conveyed its in-principle approval for establishment of AIIMS in Telangana in April, 2018.

## Health and Family Welfare

### *Draft Bill on Indian medicine: Cabinet approves setting up of a national commission*

#### *Relevance in – Prelims and Mains GS Paper II – Issues related to development and management of services relating to Health )*

#### What's the NEWS

- The Union Cabinet has approved the draft National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill, 2018.

#### Know about the draft bill

- The NCIM will promote “availability of affordable healthcare services in all parts of the country
- The draft Bill will enable the constitution of a **National Commission with four autonomous boards** for the purpose of conducting overall education in **Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Sowaigpa**.
- There are two common boards, namely **the board of assessment and rating to assess and grant permission to educational institutions** of Indian systems of medicine, and board of ethics and registration of practitioners of Indian systems of medicine to maintain a National Register and ethical issues relating to practice under the National Commission for Indian Medicine
- To assess the standard of teachers before appointment and promotions, the Bill proposes an **entrance and an exit exam** that all graduates need to clear to get practising licenses.

## Internal Security

### *Cyber Coordination Centre: Institution of a national honour for National Unity*

#### Conference of Director Generals of Police

- It was organized at **Kevadiya in Narmada district of Gujarat**, under the shadow of the Statue of Unity.
- It was Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel who, as the Home Minister of the Country, had inaugurated the first Conference of Inspector Generals of Police in Delhi in 1948.
- For this reason, Sardar Patel's message of National Unity was the underlying theme of this year's Conference.

#### The institution of a new national honour

- Drawing inspiration from Sardar Patel's contribution to National unity, the Prime Minister announced the institution of a new national honour for National Unity on the pattern of Padma Awards.
- This will be awarded once every year. This Award would be open to every Indian who has contributed to national unity in any manner.

#### Cyber Coordination Centre

- The Prime Minister launched the website of the Cyber Coordination Centre.
- This is a one stop shop on all cyber related issues, whether it is cyber crime or cyber security.
- It would also act as bridge between law enforcement agencies on the one hand, and academia and private cyber security professionals on the other.
- The Conference also focused on improving cyber security in the country and on preparing the Police forces to prevent and investigate cyber crimes and financial frauds.

## Information Technology

*Relevance in – G.S paper III*

*Amendments to the Information Technology (IT) Act*

*Relevance in – Prelims and Mains (GS Paper III) Awareness in the field of I.T*

### What's the NEWS

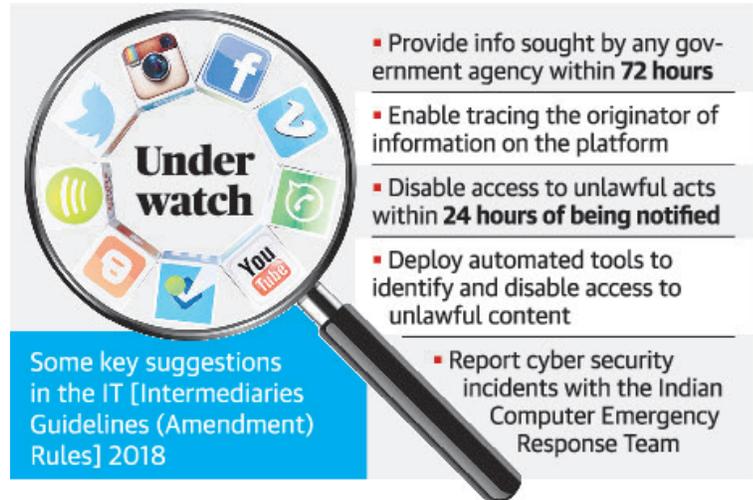
- The government has sought public comments on **the proposed amendments to the Information Technology (IT) Act** that seek to make it mandatory for platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter to trace “originator” of “unlawful” information, while also removing such content within 24 hours after being notified.

### What's the need of bringing that clause

- It pointed out that a number of lynching incidents were reported in 2018 mostly owing to fake news being circulated through WhatsApp and other social media sites.

### Know about the draft

- As per the draft **‘The Information Technology [Intermediaries Guidelines (Amendment) Rules] 2018’ released**, the intermediary after being notified by the appropriate authority should remove or disable access to unlawful content within 24 hours in the “interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency or morality, or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence, on its computer resource without vitiating the evidence in any manner
- The intermediary is also expected to preserve such information and associated records for at least 180 days for investigation purposes as against 90 days now.
- Following fears of “surveillance and censorship” with the proposed norms, the government clarified that it does not regulate content appearing on social network platforms.



## International Organisations/ Bilateral relations

*G-20*



## What

- The 2018 G20 Buenos Aires summit, was the thirteenth meeting of Group of Twenty (G20), which was held on 30 November and 1 December 2018 in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina.[1][2] It was the first G20 summit to be hosted in South America.

## Theme

- This year, the theme of the summit is 'Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development',

## Connect to the highlights of the summit

- PM Modi made the announcement of India hosting G20 summit in 2022 at the closing ceremony in Buenos Aires. It will coincide with India's 75th anniversary of Independence.
- Prime minister Narendra Modi made the announcement at the closing ceremony of the 13th G20 summit in Buenos Aires on December 1, 2018.
- He thanked Italy for allowing India to play the host as previously, Italy was to host the international forum of the world's top 20 economies in 2022.
- G20 members comprise Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, the European Union, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the UK, and the US.
- The 14th edition of the G20 summit will be held in Japan while Saudi Arabia will host the 15th.

## JAI

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe met for their first trilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G-20 summit to discuss major issues of global and multilateral interests
- The meeting assumed importance in the wake of China flexing its muscles in the strategic Indo-Pacific region
- The 'JAI' (Japan, America, India) meeting is dedicated to democratic values...'JAI' stands for victory (in Hindi)." asserted by the Indian P.M

Sources – PIB , The Hindu , livemint

## International

### *Qatar has announced its withdrawal from OPEC*

## What

- Qatar has announced that it will withdraw from Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) from January 2019

## Why

- To focus more on natural gas production
- This makes Qatar first Gulf country to leave OPEC bloc of oil-producing countries led by Saudi Arabia.
- Qatar has been member of OPEC since 1961
- Connect to Qatar oil production
- Qatar is the world's largest exporter of liquified natural gas (LPG) and 17th largest producer of crude oil (around 600,000 barrels per day).
- Qatar has taken this decision because it wants to focus its efforts on plans to develop and increase its natural gas production from 77 million tonnes per year to 110 million tonnes in the coming years.
- Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) Bottom of Form
- OPEC is an intergovernmental organization (or cartel) of 15 oil-exporting developing nations that coordinates and unites the petroleum policies of its member countries.
- It was established in 1960 in Baghdad, Iraq by the first five members.
- Its headquarters are in Vienna, Austria.

- Its mission is to coordinate and unify petroleum policies of its member countries and ensure stabilization of oil markets, in order to secure an efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consumers, steady income to producers and fair return on capital for those investing in petroleum industry.
- OPEC member countries accounted for an estimated 43% of global oil production and 73% of the “proven” world’s oil reserves.
- Two-thirds of OPEC’s oil production and reserves are in its six Middle Eastern (west Asian) countries that surround the oil-rich Persian Gulf.
- OPEC Members Asia and Middle East: Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia (de facto leader of OPEC), Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Qatar (to withdraw from January 2019) Africa: Algeria, Angola, Libya, Congo Nigeria, Equatorial Guinea and Gabon

## International Organisations

### *80th Session of the Policy Commission Meeting of the World Customs Organization (WCO)*

#### What

- The 80th Session of the Policy Commission Meeting of the World Customs Organization (WCO) which concluded in Mumbai

#### Why

- The issue of menace of illicit financial flows, including Trade Based Money Laundering and ways to control them were discussed
- Other issues covered during the three-day Session included those related to Small Island Economies and how to bring them in the mainstream of the supply chain and Free Trade Zones.
- The three day 80th Session of the Policy Commission Meeting of the WCO was organised by the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs(CBIC), Government of India in Mumbai,

### *The Government of the Republic of India and the Republic of Peru sign Co-operation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters*

#### **80th Session of the Policy Commission Meeting of the World Customs Organisations (WCO)**

- The three day 80th Session of the Policy Commission Meeting of the WCO is being organised by the Central Board of Customs and Indirect Taxes (CBIC), Government of India in Mumbai, India, from 3rd to 5th December 2018.

#### **Connect to the agreement**

- The Agreement provides a legal framework for sharing of information and intelligence between the Customs authorities of the two countries and will help in the proper application of Customs laws, prevention and investigation of Customs offences.
- The Agreement will also help in the availability of relevant information for the prevention and investigation of Customs offences. The Agreement is expected to facilitate trade and ensure efficient clearance of goods traded between the two countries.

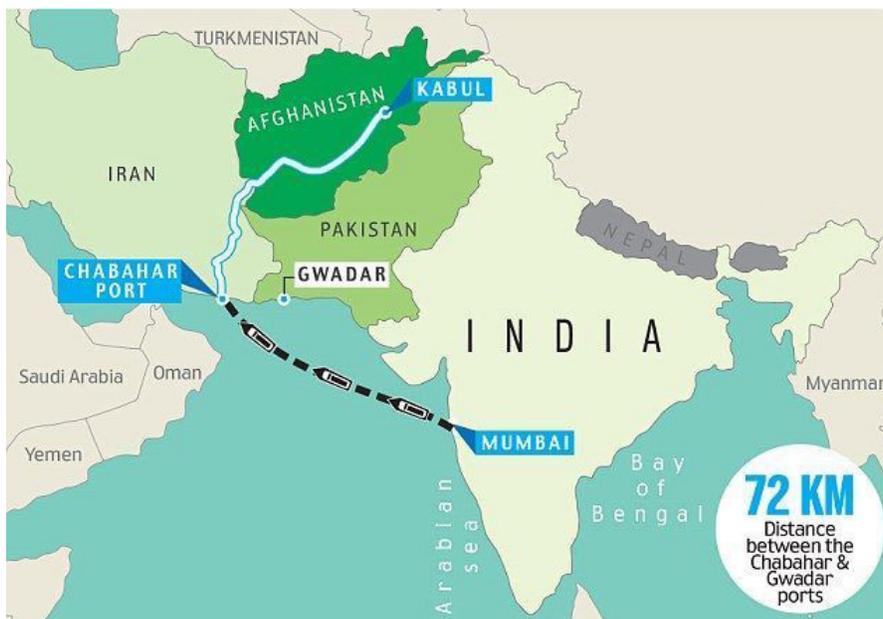
#### **Connect to The World Customs Organization (WCO)**

- It is an intergovernmental organization headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.
- The WCO is noted for its work in areas covering the development of international conventions, instruments, and tools on topics such as commodity classification, valuation, rules of origin, collection of customs revenue, supply chain security, international trade facilitation, customs enforcement activities, combating counterfeiting in support of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), drugs enforcement, illegal weapons trading, integrity promotion, and delivering sustainable capacity building to assist with customs reforms and modernization.
- The WCO maintains the international Harmonized System (HS) goods nomenclature, and administers the technical aspects of the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreements on Customs Valuation and Rules of Origin.

## Bilateral relations

**Chabahar Port: The first meeting of the follow-up committee for implementation of the trilateral Chabahar agreement**

**Relevance in – Prelims, G.S Mains Paper II & III ( bilateral relations, infrastructure development(port))**



### What's the NEWS

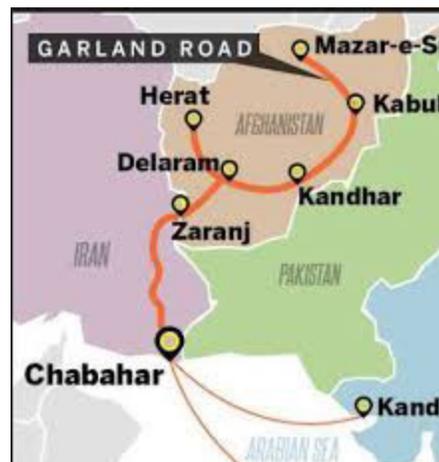
- The first meeting of the **Follow-up Committee for implementation of the Trilateral Chabahar Agreement between India, Afghanistan and Iran** was held in the port city of Chabahar in Iran

### Know about the highlights and outcomes of the trilateral meeting

- India Ports Global Limited company opened its office and took over operations at the at Chabahar on this occasion.
- External Affairs Ministry said in a release that Positive and constructive discussions were held on full operationalization of the Trilateral Transit Agreement.
- They agreed on the routes for the trade and transit corridors between the three countries.
- It was agreed to finalise at the earliest the Protocol to harmonize transit, roads, customs, and consular matters.

### Important outcomes of the meet are

- There was consensus on the routes for the trade and transit corridors between the three countries.
- It was agreed to finalise the protocol to harmonise transit, roads, customs, and consular matters at the earliest.
- It was agreed to allow cargo movement at Chabahar using Transports Internationaux Routiers Convention provisions.



### What is Internationaux Routiers Convention

- It is a multilateral treaty which aims to simplify and harmonise the administrative formalities of international road transport.

- It was concluded in Geneva on 14 November 1975.
- India is a party to the treaty.
- To promote and popularise the potential of Chabahar port
- Constituting a study to determine measures to make the route attractive, decrease logistic costs and pave the way for smooth operationalisation of the Chabahar Agreement.

### **Know about India Ports Global Private Limited**

- India Ports Global Private Limited is a private registered company and classed as Union Government Company. It is involved in Sea and coastal water transport.

## **Bilateral Relations**

### *50 years of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan*

#### **What's the NEWS**

- Prime Minister of Bhutan **Lotay Tshering** arrived in India on 27th December for a three-day visit.
- The visit is significant as it is the Golden Jubilee year of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between the two countries.

#### **India-Bhutan Diplomatic Relations**

- The diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan were established in 1968.
- India established a special office of India in Thimphu in 1968.
- Before this the Indian diplomatic relations with Bhutan were looked after by Indian Political Officer in Sikkim.

#### **Treaty of Friendship**

- The India-Bhutan bilateral relations are governed by the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1949 between the two countries which was revised in 2007
- The Golden Jubilee of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan is being celebrated in the year 2018.

## **Health and Family Welfare**

### *National Commission for Homoeopathy (NCH) Bill, 2018*

#### *Relevance in – Prelims and Mains GS Paper II – Issues related to development and management of services relating to Health )*

#### **What's the NEWS**

- The Union Cabinet has approved the draft National Commission for Homoeopathy, Bill, 2018, which seeks to replace the existing regulator **Central Council for Homoeopathy (CCH)** with a new body to ensure transparency.
- The draft bill provides for the constitution of a **National Commission with three autonomous boards entrusted with conducting overall education of Homoeopathy by Homoeopathy Education Board.**

#### *Know about the features of the bill*

- The Board of assessment and rating to assess and grant permission to educational institutions of Homoeopathy and Board of ethics and registration of practitioners of Homoeopathy to maintain National Register and ethical issues relating to practice are under the National Commission for Homoeopathy.
- It also proposes a common entrance exam and an exit exam which all graduates will have to clear to get practicing licenses.
- Further, a teacher's eligibility test has been proposed to assess the standard of teachers before appointment and promotions.
- It further **aims at bringing reforms in the medical education** of Homoeopathy in lines with the National Medical Commission proposed for setting up for Allopathy system of medicine.

- The CCH had been earlier superseded by Board of Governors through an Ordinance and subsequent amendment of Act.

## National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill, 2018

*Relevance in – Prelims and Mains GS Paper II – Issues related to development and management of services relating to Health )*

### What's the NEWS

- The Cabinet today approved the draft National Commission for Indian Systems of Medicine (NCIM) Bill, 2018, which seeks to replace the **existing regulator Central Council for Indian Medicine (CCIM)** with a new body to ensure transparency.

### Know the Salient features of the bill

- The draft bill provides for the constitution of a National Commission with four autonomous boards entrusted with conducting overall education of Ayurveda, under **Board of Ayurveda and Unani, Siddha & Sowa Rigpa under Board of Unani, Siddha and Sowa Rigpa**.
- There are two common Boards namely, **Board of assessment and rating** to assess and grant permission to educational institutions of Indian systems of Medicine and **Board of ethics and registration** of practitioners of Indian systems of medicine to maintain National Register and ethical issues relating to practice under the National Commission for Indian Medicine.
- It also **proposes a common entrance exam and an exit exam**, which all graduates will have to clear to get practicing licenses. Further, a teacher's eligibility test has been proposed in the Bill to assess the standard of teachers before appointment and promotions.
- The draft bill is aimed at bringing reforms in the medical education of Indian medicine sector in lines with the National Medical Commission proposed for setting up for Allopathy system of medicine.
- The proposed regulatory structure will enable transparency and accountability for protecting the interest of the general public. The NCIM will promote availability of affordable healthcare services in all parts of the country.

## Bilateral Relations

**50 years of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan (follow up article)**

**Rs. 4,500-cr. assistance for Bhutan**

**Prime Minister of Bhutan Lotay Tshering visits to India**



## ***Relevance in – Prelims and Mains ( GS Paper II – India and its neighbourhood)***

### **Know about the outcome of the meeting**

- India will support Bhutan's development needs by providing 4,500 crore
- Prime Minister of the Himalayan country Lotay Tshering indicated his government's commitment to maintain warm ties with India.
- India will **provide 4,500 crore for Bhutan's 12th five-year plan.**
- This contribution will be processed according to Bhutan's preferences and necessities
- Bhutan remains one of the key recipients of development assistance from India.
- According to the Ministry of External Affairs, India provided 4,500 crore for the **11th five year plan that lasted between 2013 and 2018.**
- To share the benefit of the South Asian Satellite, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is moving ahead with plans to set up a **ground station in Bhutan** that will help in telemedicine, disaster relief and climate trends.
- The prime minister of India expressed confidence that the **Mangdechhu hydro power project** would be completed soon.
- The issue of differences in the tariffs preferred by Delhi and Thimphu for the 720-MW Mangdechhu project, being set up with Indian collaboration has also been discussed

## **Polity: Election Commission**

### ***Shri Sunil Arora takes over as new Chief Election Commissioner of India***

#### **What**

- Shri Sunil Arora today assumed charge as the 23rd Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India succeeding Shri O.P.Rawat.
- Shri Rawat who demitted the office on 1st December, 2018 after completing his tenure .
- Prior to assuming charge as Chief Election Commissioner, Shri Arora had been serving as Election Commissioner in Election Commission of India since 1st September 2017.
- During his tenure as CEC, there will be General Election to the 17th Lok Sabha, General Elections besides the elections to State Legislative Assemblies of Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Orissa, Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand, NCT of Delhi, Bihar and Jammu & Kashmir.
- A CEC of the Election Commission can have a tenure of six years or hold office till the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. The convention is to appoint the senior-most election commissioner as chief election commissioner.

#### **Connect to the CEC**

- The Chief Election Commissioner heads the Election Commission of India, a body constitutionally empowered to conduct free and fair elections to the national and state legislatures and of President and Vice-President.
- Chief Election Commissioner of India is usually a member of the Indian Civil Service and mostly from the Indian Administrative Service.
- It is very difficult to remove the authority of the Chief Election Commissioner once appointed by the president, as two-thirds of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha need to vote against him for disorderly conduct or improper actions.

## **Centre – State Relations: NITI Aayog**

### ***NITI Forum for North East***

#### **What**

- The second meeting of the newly constituted 'NITI Forum for North East' will be held in Guwahati on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2018.

- Vice Chairman NITI AAYOG, Dr Rajiv Kumar will chair and Minister of State (IC) for DoNER, Dr Jitendra Singh will co-chair the meeting.

### Connect to the forum

- In February 2018, the 'NITIForum for North East' was constituted to periodically review the development status in North Eastern Region.
- The NITI Forum for Northeast is tasked to identify various constraints on the way of accelerated, inclusive and sustainable economic growth in the North East Region of the country and to recommend suitable interventions for addressing identified constraints.
- Members of the Forum include Secretaries of various Ministries of the Government of India, Chief Secretaries of all the eight North-eastern states and also senior government officials and experts from various fields. The Secretary, North East Council (NEC) is the Member Secretary of the Forum.
- The Forum's first meeting was held on 10th April 2018 at Agartala where a wide ranging spectrum of issues was discussed.
- It emerged that Infrastructure, Horticulture, Bamboo, Tourism, Food Processing, Education, Livelihoods, Health and Made in North Eastern Region were areas critical for the development of the Region.
- Decisions taken at the meeting have since been carried forward by various Government Departments and other stakeholders.
- Deliberations during the meeting will mainly focus on issues pertaining to five critical sectors - Tourism, Bamboo, Dairy, Fisheries and Tea.

## Electoral Reforms: VII Phase of sale of Electoral Bonds

*Relevance in – Prelims and Mains ( GS Paper -II, Salient features of RPA act, electoral reforms)*

### What's the NEWS

- The State Bank of India (SBI), in the **VII Phase** of sale of Electoral Bonds, has been authorized to issue and encash Electoral Bonds through its 29 Authorized Branches w.e.f. 01.01.2019 to 10.01.2019.

### Know the provisions of Electoral bond

- Electoral Bonds shall be valid for fifteen calendar days from the date of issue and no payment shall be made to any payee Political Party if the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period.
- The Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account shall be credited on the same day.

### Know about Electoral bond

- Electoral Bonds may be purchased by a person who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.
- A person being an individual can buy Electoral Bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.
- Only the Political Parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951) and which secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.
- The Electoral Bonds shall be encashed by an eligible Political Party only through a Bank account with the Authorized Bank.

## Prelims perquisites (factoids): National

### Renaming of Andaman Islands

*Relevance – Prelims and Mains ( Mains GS Paper I freedom struggle and important personalities)*

### What's the NEWS

- The Ross, Neil and Havelock islands of Andaman are going to be renamed are to be named as **Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Island, Shaheed Dweep, and Swaraj Dweep**, respectively.



- The announcement about renaming is expected to be made by PM Narendra Modi on 30 December during his visit to the Islands.
- **30<sup>th</sup> December marks the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Netaji's visit to the Andaman Islands** and the announcement about renaming is expected to be made by PM Narendra Modi on 30 December during his visit to the Islands.

### **Know about the connection of Netaji with the island**

- Netaji, landed at the Port Blair aerodrome in Andaman on 29<sup>th</sup> December 1943.
- Netaji had appointed Indian National Army General AD Loganathan as the governor of the islands.
- When Japanese captured the Andaman Island during the time of the Second World War, Netaji had hoisted the flag at Port Blair on December 30, 1943.
- This was because he believed that Port Blair was the first territory to be freed from British rule.

## **Cultural**

### ***Makaravilakku Festival***

#### ***Relevance in - Prelims***

#### **Know about the festival**

- Makaravilakku is an annual festival held on Makar Sankranti in Kerala, India at the shrine of Sabarimala.
- The festival includes the Thiruvabharanam (sacred ornaments of Ayyappan) procession and a congregation at the hill shrine of Sabarimala.
- An estimated half a million devotees flow to Sabarimala every year to have a darshan (vision) of this ritual.

## **Science & tech and Defence: Science and Technology**

### ***GSAT-11 satellite to be launched from French Guiana***

#### **What**

- GSAT-11 would be located at 74 East and is the fore-runner in a series of advanced communications satellite with multi-spot beam antenna coverage over Indian mainland and Islands
- Weighing about 5,854 kg, GSAT-11 would play a vital role in providing broadband services across the country, and also provide a platform to demonstrate new generation applications

#### **Connect to GSAT -11**

- GSAT-11 is the next generation “high throughput” communication satellite configured around ISRO’s I-6K Bus, and its designed lifetime is more than 15 years.
- It was initially planned for launch on May 25 was rescheduled by ISRO, citing the need for additional technical checks.

## 2 LAUNCHES IN EVERY 30 DAYS

**SEPT 15: Novasar & S1-4**  
(UK sats; fully commercial launch of PSLV-C42)

**OCT: HySIS** (Hyperspectral imaging sat) and **Gsat-29** (to be launched by heaviest rocket GSVL Mk II D2)

**NOV: Gsat-7A** (Dedicated sat for IAF) from India & **Gsat-11** (heaviest sat) from French Guiana, Nov30

**DEC: Emisat** from India and **Gsat-31** from French Guiana

**JAN: Chandrayaan-2** mission and **Risat2-B**

**FEB: Cartosat-3** (Remote sensing sat) and **NEMO-AM** (earth monitoring & observation sat)

**MARCH: Risat-2BR1** (reconnaissance sat)

- The satellite would be initially placed in the Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit and subsequently be raised to Geostationary Orbit by firing the Liquid Apogee Motor on-board the satellite.
- GSAT-11 would be located at 74 East and is the fore-runner in a series of advanced communications satellite with multi-spot beam antenna coverage over Indian mainland and Islands
- The heavy-lift Ariane-5 vehicle would carry GEO-KOMPSAT-2A for the Korea Aerospace Research Institute (KARI), along with GSAT-11.
- GEO-KOMPSAT-2A is designed to conduct meteorological and space weather monitoring missions.

## Defence

### *World's fastest anti-ship cruise missile BrahMos to be fitted on 'Project 1135.6' frigates*

#### What

- The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) meeting chaired by defence minister Nirmala Sitharaman gave approval for the procurement of BrahMos Missiles for two of the vessels to be built in Russia.
- The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) in October for the procurement of four Grigorovich-class 'Project 1135.6' frigates, will be equipped with BrahMos Missiles system instead of 3M-54E Klub-N anti-ship missiles and advanced sensors.
- The world's fastest missile has supersonic speed of Mach 2.8, a very low-cruising altitude of 10 metres at terminal phase and pin-point accuracy, and is expected to make the frigates of the Indian Navy more deadly. This missile has been in with the Indian Navy since 2005.
- The indigenously designed BrahMos missile an Indo-Russian joint venture is a tested and a proven supersonic cruise missile and will form the primary weapon on board these vessels.

#### Project 1135.6' frigates

- Recently, deal for the Grigorovich-class 'Project 1135.6' frigates, between Goa Shipyard Ltd (GSL) and the Russia's state-run arms exporter Rosoboronexport was inked in New Delhi for two frigates which will be built at Yantar shipyard, Kaliningrad in Russia, at a cost of \$ one billion (\$ 500 million each).
- Known as Project 1135.6 – the frigate is a class of guided-missile frigates designed and built by Russia for the Indian Navy, as modified Krivak III-class frigates (the class that is also the basis of the Russian Admiral Grigorovich-class frigate), with a number of systems of Indian design and manufactured here.

#### Connect to BrahMos

- BrahMos is a short-range ramjet supersonic cruise missile that can be launched from submarines, ships, aircraft or land.
- It is a joint venture between Russia's NPO Mashinostroeyenia and the Defence Research and Development Organisation of India.

- They have formed BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited to make the missile. The name BrahMos is a portmanteau formed from the names of two rivers, the Brahmaputra of India and the Moskva of Russia.
- The new frigates once commissioned in the Indian Navy will add more strength in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- There is already a shortage of 10 frigates out of the 24 that the navy needs. According to the Indian Navy, presently it is operating six of the Talwar-class frigates, and the new ones when they come will be more advanced technologically.
- It may be recalled that the 3,620-ton Admiral Grigorovich-class is an upgraded variant of the six Talwar-class frigates that Russia built for the Indian Navy between 2003 and 2013.
- The first of three frigates, INS Teg and INS Tarkash were delivered to the Indian Navy in 2012 and the INS Trikand was delivered in 2013.

### ***Ex Cope India 2018***

#### **What**

- Ex Cope India-18 is the fourth edition in the series of Bilateral Joint exercise held between IAF and USAF, which is conducted in India.

#### **Connect to the exercise**

- This is the first time, the exercise is being planned at two Air Force bases, Kalaikunda and Panagarh from 03-14 Dec 18.
- USAF is participating with 12 X F15 C/D and 03 X C-130. IAF is participating with the Su-30 MKI, Jaguar, Mirage 2000 , C-130J & AWACS aircraft.
- The aim of exercise is to provide operational exposure and undertake mutual exchange of best practices towards enhancing operational capability.



## **Defence**

### ***EX SHINYUU Maitri-2018***



#### **What**

- The Japanese Air Self Defence Force (JASDF) is in India for a bilateral air exercise SHINYUU Maitri-18 with Indian Air Force from 03-07 Dec 18 at A F Station Agra.

- The theme of the exercise is joint Mobility/Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) on Transport aircraft.
- The JASDF C2 aircraft along with aircrew/observers are part of this first air exercise between the two Air Forces. IAF is participating with An-32 and C-17 aircraft with aircrew & observers.
- The focus of the exercise is set for the IAF and JASDF crews to undertake Joint Mobility/ HADR operations. Display of heavy loading/ off loading are also planned to be practiced during this exercise.

## Defence

### ***Book Release - 'Blue Waters Ahoy!'***

- The Indian Navy released a book titled 'Blue Waters Ahoy!' – chronicling the Indian Navy's History from 2001-10.
- The Indian Navy celebrates Navy Day every year on 04 December 2018 to commemorate its offensive actions during the 1971 war.

### **Connect to the book**

- The book has been authored by Vice Admiral Anup Singh, who retired as the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief of Eastern Naval Command in 2011.
- This is, in fact, the sixth volume of the Navy's history; the first five having covered the period from 1945 to 2000.
- This unique undertaking by the Indian Navy can be traced back to 1968, when the Service established a History Cell.
- The idea was collation and subsequent analysis of historical data relevant to the evolution of the Navy. Generally, each such volume has covered the period of a decade, and it has been a tradition to release it on the occasion of Navy Day.

### ***Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX)***

#### **What**

- Indian Navy will conduct the large-scale coastal defence exercise Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX) from January to March 2019 to test robustness of entire coastal security apparatus.

#### **Connect to TROPEX**

- Indian Navy will conduct large-scale coastal defence exercise 'Exercise Sea Vigil'.
- This exercise will involve all stake holders across mainland and island territories.
- It will see participation of all operational ships, submarines and aircraft as well as units of Indian coast guards (ICG), Indian Army and Indian Air Force (IAF).

### **Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise (TROPEX)**

- It is yearly exercise that takes place on Western Seaboard.
- It is conducted to test various aspects of not only joint combat capabilities but also to test war capabilities of three services in war like situation.
- It will also seeks to strengthen interoperability and joint operations in complex conflict situation. It provides opportunity to test combat capability of the Indian Navy, Indian Army, IAF and ICG.
- It will see participation of over 45 ships from both Western and Eastern Naval Commands of Indian Navy, including aircraft carrier INS Vikramaditya, submarines including nuclear powered Chakra, naval aircraft MiG29K, helicopters as well as ships from Indian Coast Guard

## Science and Technology

### ***India's heaviest communication satellite GSAT-11 launched successfully from French Guiana***

#### **What**

- Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO) heaviest and most-advanced high throughput communication satellite GSAT-11 was successfully launched from the Spaceport in French Guiana.



## What

- The GSAT-11 satellite, weighing 5,854 kg is the heaviest Indian-made equipment that the agency put into its orbit.
- The launch vehicle Ariane 5 VA-246 lifted off from Kourou Launch Base, French Guiana carrying India's GSAT-11 and South Korea's GEO-KOMPSAT-2A satellites, as scheduled.
- Ariane 5 is one of three launch vehicles operated by Arianespace along with Soyuz and Vega.
- Indian Space Research Organisation or ISRO's GSAT-11 satellite also called the "Big Bird "

## Connect to the benefits

- The satellite will help provide satellite-based internet to remote places where cable-based internet cannot reach.
- The satellite, weighing 5,854 kg, is the heaviest Indian-made equipment that the agency put into its orbit.

## Connect to GSAT -11

- This launch was the second attempt after ISRO's first bid failed in May earlier this year and was placed into space on its 102 nd flight, the Ariane 5 rocket.
- GSAT-11 is the next generation high throughput communication satellite that will play a vital role in providing broadband services across the country.
- The "Big Bird" has cost about Rs. 600 crore. The ariane-5 heavyweight rocket was hired from Arianespace by ISRO. The satellite is expected to have a life span of 15 years.
- The satellite internet, which the GSAT-11 will help to provide, will aid in giving internet connectivity in flights in India.
- The 5,854-kg GSAT-11 will provide high data rate connectivity to users of Indian mainland and islands through 32 user beams in Ku-band and 8 hub beams in Ka-band.
- GSAT-11 will boost the broadband connectivity to rural and inaccessible Gram Panchayats in the country coming under the Bharat Net Project, which is part of Digital India Programme
- The Bharat Net Project aims to enhance the public welfare schemes like e-banking, e-health, e-governance among others

## Defence

### Sino-India Joint Exercise Hand-in-Hand 2018



#### What

- Exercise Hand-in-Hand is conducted annually as part of military diplomacy and interaction between armies of India and China.

#### Connect to the exercise

- The joint exercise for the year 2018 will be conducted from 10 to 23 December 2018 at Chengdu, China.
- The aim of the exercise is to build and promote close relations between armies of both the countries and to enhance ability of joint exercise commander to take military contingents of both nations under command.
- The exercise will involve tactical level operations in an International Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorist environment under UN mandate.
- Troops from the Indian side have been selected from 11 SIKHLI of Indian Army, while troops from a unit of Tibetan military district will be taking part.
- Exercise Hand-in-Hand 2018 will go a long way to further cement relationship between both the nations and will act as a catalyst in bringing bonhomie at grassroots levels between the armies of both countries.

## Defence

### *Clean Sea– 2018*

#### Conducted by

- Indian Coast Guard (ICG)

#### What

- Regional Level Marine Oil Pollution Response Exercise titled ‘Clean Sea– 2018’

#### Where

- Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar (A&B) Islands.

#### Objective

- The objective of exercise was to ascertain preparedness of IGC, resource agencies and other stakeholders in responding to major oil spill in line with provisions of National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP).
- To evaluate preparedness for Response Operations for any such oil pollution incident in highly sensitive area of A&B islands.

- The exercise saw participation of ICG Pollution Control Vessel and integration of ICG Dornier/Chetak aircraft into Oil Spill Disaster Management System for aerial assessment and delivery of Oil Spill Dispersant for mitigation of spilled oil.

### **Connect to Indian Coast Guard (ICG)**

- It comes under the Ministry of Defence is responsible for marine environment protection in maritime zones of India and is coordinating authority for response to oil spills in Indian waters.
- It has drawn up National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOSDCP) and has established three pollution response centres at Mumbai, Chennai and Port Blair.

## **Science and Technology**

### ***Agreement between India and Algeria on Cooperation in the field of Space Sciences, Technologies and Applications***

- Agreement between India and Algeria on Cooperation in the field of Space Sciences, Technologies and Applications.

### **Connect to the agreement**

- This Agreement shall enable pursuing the following potential interest areas of cooperation such as, space science, technology and applications including remote sensing of the earth; satellite communication and satellite based navigation; Space science and planetary exploration; gse of spacecraft and space systems and ground system; and application of space technology.
- Signing of the Agreement will strengthen the cooperation between India and Algeria, and provide impetus to explore newer research activities and application possibilities in the field of remote sensing of the earth, satellite navigation, space science and exploration of outer space.

### **India and Algeria**

- India and Algeria have been pursuing 'commercial' interactions in the field of space, Antrix Corporation Limited has been interacting with Algerian officials towards establishment of ground station, and launch of satellites (3 micro-satellites and one nano-satellite of Algeria were launched by PSLV during 2010-2016).
- Algeria expressed interest to pursue space cooperation with India through diplomatic channels.
- In December 2014, MEA requested ISRO / DOS to consider Algeria's proposal for entering into an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) for space cooperation and forwarded the draft agreement, provided by Algeria.

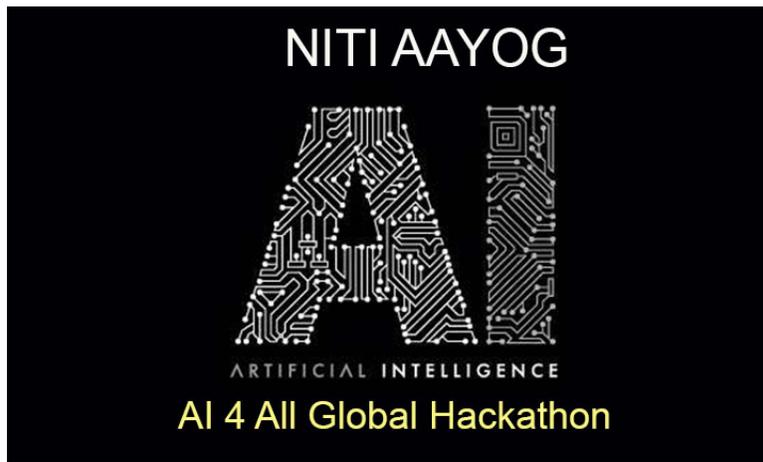
## **NITI Aayog**

### ***NITI Aayog Launches Global Hackathon On Artificial Intelligence***

#### ***Partnering with Perlin, a Singapore-based AI start-up for the four- month hackathon***

### **What**

- With the vision to further expand the idea of 'Artificial Intelligence, AI for All' articulated in the National AI Strategy
- NITI Aayog organises hackathons to source sustainable, innovative and technologically-enabled solutions to address various challenges in the development space.



### **AI 4 All Global Hackathon**

- Taking the initiative forward, NITI Aayog is now partnering with Perlin – a Singapore-based AI start up - to launch the 'AI 4 All Global Hackathon', and is inviting developers, students, start-ups and companies to develop AI applications to make significant positive social and economic impact for India.
- The challenge question seeks to develop solutions in Distributed Computing and Privacy Preserving techniques, such as multi-party computation, in AI.
- The objective of this hackathon is to promote awareness and subsequently develop solutions that deliver the twin benefit of efficient computing to address the infrastructure challenges, while also not compromising on privacy of data for training AI algorithms.
- NITI Aayog organized its first hackathon, 'MoveHack' in August, on the sidelines of the Global Mobility Summit 2018, with the aim of garnering cutting-edge mobility applications.
- Over 2,000 submissions were received out of which the Top 10 teams were awarded at the summit.

### **Connect to the process**

- The hackathon will be run two stages with Stage One ending 15 January 2019 and Stage Two, which will only include shortlisted participants from the previous stage, will conclude on 15 March 2019
- The first stage will invite ideas for use cases of multi-party computation in areas such as Healthcare, Education, Agriculture, Urbanization, Financial Inclusion.
- The second stage will call for these ideas to be matured and developed, with a focus on privacy preserving AI and distributed computing.

## **Science & Technology**

### ***National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems***

#### **What**

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi today has approved the launching of National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NM-ICPS) to be implemented by Department of Science & Technology at a total outlay of Rs. 3660 crore for a period of five years.

#### **Connect to the mission**

- The Mission addresses the ever increasing technological requirements of the society, and takes into account the international trends and road maps of leading countries for the next generation technologies.

#### **Connect to NM ICPS**

- The NM-ICPS is a comprehensive Mission which would address technology development, application development, human resource development & skill enhancement, entrepreneurship and start-up development in CPS and associated technologies.
- The Mission aims at establishment of 15 numbers of Technology Innovation Hubs (TIH), six numbers of Application Innovation Hubs (AIH) and four numbers of Technology Translation Research Parks (TTRP).

- These Hubs & TTRPs will connect to Academics, Industry, Central Ministries and State Government in developing solutions at reputed academic, R&D and other organizations across the country in a hub and spoke model.
- A strategic approach involving a suitable mix of Academic, Industry and Government is proposed to be adopted.

### **Connect to CSP technology**

- CPS technologies provide a cutting edge to a Nation's scientific, engineering, and technological innovative capabilities; support other missions of the government, provide industrial and economic competitiveness and have truly become a Strategic Resource.
- Volume, scale and complexity of emerging applications demand continued evolution of new technologies for the foreseeable future.
- The proposed Mission would act as an engine of growth that would benefit national initiatives in health, education, energy, environment, agriculture, strategic cum security, and industrial sectors, Industry 4.0, SMART Cities, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) etc.
- CPS is an integrated system of upcoming technology, which in turn is being taken up on priority basis by countries in the race for development.
- The Mission will feed the Central Ministries/ Departments and State Govts and also the Industry to effectively use the CPS technologies in their projects and schemes for the benefit of the society.
- NM-ICPS is a Pan India Mission and covers entire gamut of India that includes Central Ministries, State Governments, Industry and Academia.
- CPS and its associated technologies, like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Machine Learning (ML), Deep Learning (DP), Big Data Analytics, Robotics, Quantum Computing, Quantum Communication, Quantum encryption (Quantum Key Distribution), Data Science & Predictive analytics, Cyber Security for physical infrastructure and other infrastructure, have pervaded and is playing a transformative role in almost every field of human endeavour all most in all sectors.

## **Science and Technology**

### ***ISRO to launch dedicated satellite for IAF – GSAT – 7A***

#### **Connect to the highlights**

- Once ISRO places GSAT-7A in the geo stationary orbit, the communication satellite will enable the IAF to interlink different ground radar stations, airbases and AWACS aircraft.
- It will boost the air force's network-centric warfare capabilities and enhance its global operations.

#### **Connect to the report**

- After the heaviest satellite GSAT-11 mission ISRO is gearing up to launch a dedicated communication satellite for the Indian Air Force.
- ISRO will launch a communication satellite GSAT-7A dedicated for the IAF in the third week of this month.
- In January, there will be a PSLV launch and then communication satellite Gsat-31 will be launched from French Guiana that will replace INSAT 4CR, whose end of life is expected soon.
- And then we have the Chandrayaan-2 mission in January, whose launch window is from January 3 to February 13.”

#### **Connect to GSAT – 7A**

- Once ISRO places Gsat-7A in the geo stationary orbit, the communication satellite will enable the IAF to interlink different ground radar stations, airbases and AWACS aircraft.
- It will boost the air force's network-centric warfare capabilities and enhance its global operations.
- Costing around Rs 500-800 crore, GSAT-7A will have a lifetime of nine years.
- It will have Ku-band transponders and two deployable solar arrays. The satellite weighing 2.2 tonnes will be launched by GSLV Mk II.
- Gsat-7A will be the second satellite dedicated to the military.
- Earlier, ISRO had launched Gsat-7 or Rukmini on September 29, 2013 exclusively for the Navy.

- Rukmini has helped the Navy monitor the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) as the satellite has a nearly 2,000 nautical mile 'footprint' and provides real-time inputs to Indian warships, submarines and maritime aircraft.

### Benefits of GSAT 7A

- GSAT-7A will also boost drone operations as it will help the navy upgrade from existing ground control stations to satellite-control of military unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).
- The transition will boost the range, endurance and flexibility of UAVs.
- This comes at a time when India is in process of acquiring US armed Predator-B or Sea Guardian drones, which are high-altitude and long endurance satellite-controlled UAVs that can fire at enemy targets from long distances.
- The IAF is also likely to get another satellite Gsat-7C, within a few years that will boost its network-centric operations.

### Status of military satellite

- Currently, there are 320 military satellites currently orbiting the earth, with the US owning half of them, followed by Russia and China. Of late, China, considered to be India's biggest rival, has taken huge strides in developing military assets in space, testing even ASAT (anti-satellite) weapons against "low-earth satellites" in January 17.
- India, on the other hand, currently possesses around 13 military satellites.
- Most of these remote-sensing satellites like Cartosat-series and Risat satellites are placed in the near-earth orbit which help in better scanning of the earth.
- However, some of these military satellites have also been put in the geo orbit. The forces use these satellites for surveillance, navigation and communication purpose.
- The remote sensing satellites had also helped the military in the surgical strike against Pakistan to destroy terror launchpads.

## BUSIEST YEAR FOR ISRO

### SATELLITE, LAUNCH MONTH & LAUNCHPAD

**Gsat-11** (Heaviest communication sat): **May-June** (French Guiana)

**Gsat-29** (Comm sat): **June** (Sriharikota)

**Gsat-7A** (IAF comm sat): **September** (Sriharikota)

**Chandrayaan-2 mission:** **Oct 1st week** (Sriharikota)

**Risat-2A:** **Year-end** (Sriharikota)

## Health and Family Welfare: Defence

### Sino-India Joint Exercise Hand-in-Hand 2018

#### What

- Opening ceremony for the 7th Sino-India joint exercise Hand-in-Hand 2018, scheduled from 10 to 23 December 2018 was held on 11 December 2018 at Chengdu, China.
- Company size contingents of 11 SIKHLI from Indian Army and a regiment from Tibetan Military District of People's Liberation Army participated in the exercise.

#### Connect to the exercise

- The exercise will consist of a balance of indoor classes and outdoor training activities.
- The aim of the exercise is to build and promote close relations between armies of both the countries and to enhance ability of the joint exercise commander to take military contingents of both nations under command.
- The exercise will involve tactical level operations in an international counter insurgency/ counter terrorism environment under UN mandate.

## Defence

### Indra Navy 2018

#### What

- Russian Federation Navy (RuFN) Ships Varyag Admiral Panteleyev and Boris Butoma arrived Visakhapatnam to participate in INDRA NAVY, the bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Federation Navy exercise on 09 Dec 18.



## Connect to INDRA

- The 10th edition of exercise INDRA NAVY will be conducted at/off Visakhapatnam from 09 to 16 December 2018.
- The primary aim of the exercise is to increase inter-operability amongst the two navies, develop common understanding and procedures for maritime security operations. Initiated in 2003, INDRA NAVY exercise has matured over the years with increase in scope, complexity and level of participation.
- This edition of the exercise would be held in two phases. The Harbour Phase would be held at Visakhapatnam from 09 to 12 December 2018
- The Sea Phase from 13 to 16 December 2018 would be conducted in the Bay of Bengal.
- The thrust of exercises at sea would be on Anti Submarine Warfare (ASW), Air Defence drills, Surface Firings, Visit Board Search and Seizure (VBSS) operations and tactical procedures.
- INDRA NAVY-18, the Indian Navy would be represented by INS Ranvir, a guided missile destroyer, INS Satpura, an indigenous frigate, INS Kadmatt, an indigenous anti-submarine warfare (ASW) corvette, IN Ships Kuthar and Khanjar both indigenous missile corvettes and INS Jyoti, a fleet tanker.

## *Ex Aviaindra 2018 Commences on 10 Dec 2018*

### What

- Ex AVIAINDRA, a service specific exercise between Indian Air Force and Russian Federation Aerospace Force (RFSAF), is planned at Air Force Station Jodhpur from 10-21 Dec 2018.

### Connect to the exercise

- The inaugural IAF-RFSAF Ex AVIAINDRA was conducted in 2014. AVIAINDRA-2018 is the second in the series of bilateral joint exercise between IAF-RFSAF. The exercise is planned in two phases.
- The exercise is unique wherein the foreign participant does not bring its air assets.
- In Russia, the IAF pilots flew alongside their Russian counterparts in RFSAF aircraft at Lipetsk from 17 Sep 18 to 28 Sep 18.
- In India, the RFSAF pilots will fly alongside their Indian counterparts in the IAF aircraft, which are common to both Air Forces.

## Successful Test Firing of Long-Range Missile Agni V

### What

- Agni V, a long-range surface-to-surface Nuclear Capable Ballistic missile, was successfully launched from a canister on a road mobile launcher at the Dr Abdul Kalam Island off the coast of Odisha.



A photograph of the Agni-V missile being launched from a mobile launcher. The missile is ascending vertically, leaving a large plume of white smoke and fire. A red circular graphic in the bottom left corner of the image states "RANGE More than 5,000 kilometres".

FIRE POWER					
The Agni-V is the most advanced version of the indigenously-built missile series					
▪ It is an intercontinental surface-to-surface nuclear-capable ballistic missile			▪ Developed by DRDO		
Propulsion	Length	Weight	Payload	Engine	
<b>3</b> stages	<b>17.5</b> metres	<b>50</b> tonnes	<b>1</b> tonne	<b>3</b> stage solid	
▪ Agni-V was last tested on December 26, 2016					
▪ Countries with ICBM technology: U.S., Russia, U.K., France and China					
Other missiles in the series					
	Agni-1	Agni-2	Agni-3	Agni-4	Agni-5
Range (km)	700	2,000	3,000	4,000	5,000+
Test date	April 19, 2012	Sept. 15, 2013	Jan. 31, 2015	Nov. 9, 2015	Jan. 18, 2018

### Connect to the launch

- The launch operations were carried out and monitored by the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) in presence of Scientists from Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and other associated officials.
- All the mission objectives were successfully achieved. This launch comes after a series of successful launches of the missile.
- It further strengthens the country's deterrence capability, which has been developed indigenously by assiduous efforts of scientists.

### Connect to Agni V

- Agni-V is a three stage missile, 17 metres tall, two metres wide and capable of carrying 1.5 tonne of nuclear warheads.
- This is the seventh trial of the indigenously-developed surface-to-surface missile, defence sources said.
- Agni-V is a three stage missile, 17 metres tall, two metres wide and capable of carrying 1.5 tonne of nuclear warheads.
- Agni-5 is the most-advanced in terms of navigation and guidance, warhead and engine, according to officials.
- The missile has been designed to hit the designated target point accurately, guided by the on-board computer with the support of a Ring Laser Gyro-based Inertial Navigation System, the Micro Inertial Navigation System, fully-digital control system and advanced compact avionics, as per DRDO officials.
- The first two flights of Agni-5 in 2012 and 2013 were in open configuration.
- The third, fourth and fifth launches were from canister integrated with a mobile launcher, in its deliverable configuration to enable launch of the missile with a very short preparation time as compared to an open launch.
- The sixth trial was in June during which the missile was fired from a mobile launcher. Several new technologies were successfully tested during the sixth trial.
- The Agni-5 also has advantages of higher reliability, longer shelf life, less maintenance and enhanced mobility, according to sources.

## Science and Technology

### *In a first, ISRO will make dead rocket stage 'alive' in space for experiment*

#### What

- Indian Space Research Organisation is working on a new technology where it will use the last stage of the PSLV rocket for space experiments.
- It will perform a technology demonstration of this new system when it launches the PSLV C44 rocket in January.

#### Connect to the last stage of PSLV

- Normally, the last stage of a PSLV rocket after releasing the primary satellite in space becomes dead and categorised as debris.
- It remains in the same orbit as that of the released satellite.
- ISRO is working on a new technology where it will give life to this “dead” last stage of PSLV, also called PS4 stage, for six months after its launch.
- This rocket stage will double up as a satellite. This will be the most cost-effective way to perform experiments in space as we don't have to launch a separate rocket for the purpose.
- India is the only country in the world that is working on this new technology

#### First experiment with C44

- The rocket stage of PSLV C44, which will be carrying a microsat as the primary satellite in January, will be made alive with the help of new systems that will include batteries and solar panel.
- Even after the primary satellite separates from the PSLV, the last stage of the rocket will remain active and can be used as an experimental platform for new space technologies.
- Students or space scientists can use this “alive” rocket stage for space experiments for free.
- They can attach their small experimental module or satellite (micro or nano) in the last stage and can perform experiments in space once the PSLV delivers the primary satellite into its orbit.
- ISRO can do the same with the GSLV rocket as well where we can use its last stage as an experimental platform.

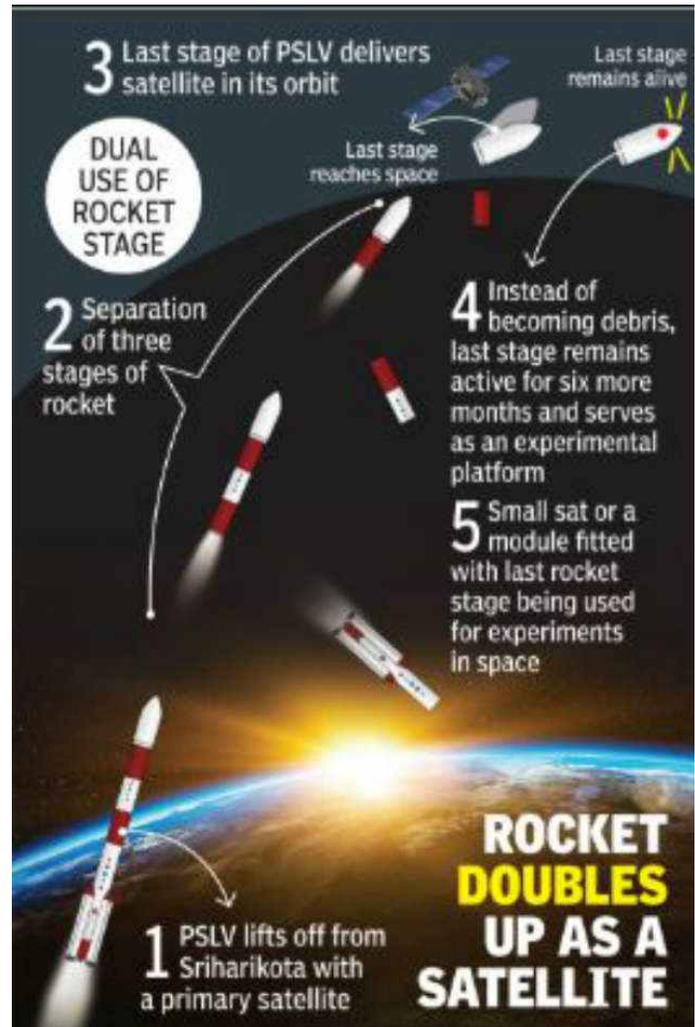
#### *ISRO to Launch GSAT-7A Communication Satellite*

#### What

- India will launch its latest communication satellite, GSAT-7A from Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota onboard the Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle GSLV-F11

#### Connect to GSAT 7A

- The 2,250 kg GSAT-7A is the 35th Indian Communication satellite built by ISRO. It is configured on ISRO's standard I-2000 Kg (I-2K) Bus
- The satellite with a mission life of eight years is built to provide communication capability to the users in Ku-band over the Indian region.





- Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV), in its 13th flight, will inject GSAT-7A into a Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).
- The satellite will be placed in its final Geostationary Orbit (GEO) using the onboard propulsion system, adding GSAT-7A will take a few days after separation from the launcher to reach its orbital slot.
- GSLV-F11 is ISRO's fourth generation launch vehicle with three stages.
- The four liquid strap-ons and a solid rocket motor at the core form the first stage of the launch vehicle, while the second stage is equipped with high thrust engine using liquid fuel
- The Cryogenic Upper Stage forms the third and final stage of the vehicle, it added.

## Defence

### *18<sup>th</sup> IRIGC-MTC Meeting*

#### What

- The 18<sup>th</sup> meeting of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military Technical Cooperation (IRIGC-MTC) was held
- The meeting was co-chaired by Raksha Mantri Smt Nirmla Sitharaman and Minister of Defence of the Russian Federation General Sergei Shoigu.

#### Connect to the meeting

- In the framework of the bilateral Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership, the IRIGC-MTC meeting discussed a wide range of issues relating to defence equipment, industry and technological engagement between India and Russia as well as after sales support/upgradation of military equipment of Russian origin.
- Intensive discussions were held on joint manufacturing projects, including the Kamov-226 Helicopters, naval frigates and projects related to land systems.
- The two sides also agreed to take forward inter-governmental arrangements for facilitating joint manufacturing of spares for Russian origin equipment in India, under the 'Make in India' initiative.
- With a view to enhancing military-to-military engagement and rationalising the functioning of the Commission, a revised Inter-Governmental Agreement on restructuring the existing IRIGC-MTC to the IRIGC on Military and Military Technical Cooperation was also signed by the two Ministers.
- The inaugural meeting of the IRIGC-MTC is proposed to be held in Russia in 2019 on mutually convenient dates.

## Defence

### *Sino-India Joint Exercise Hand-in-Hand 2018*

#### What

- Opening ceremony for the 7th Sino-India joint exercise Hand-in-Hand 2018, scheduled from 10 to 23 December 2018 was held on 11 December 2018 at Chengdu, China.

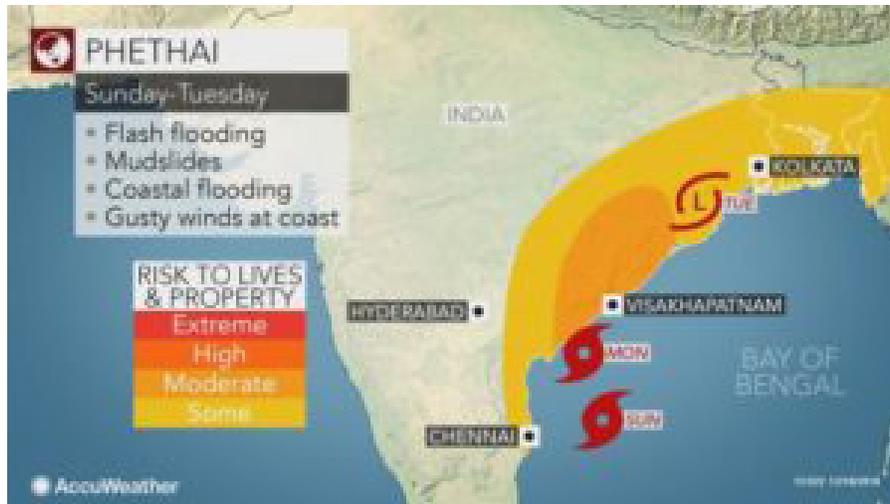
- Company size contingents of 11 SIKHLI from Indian Army and a regiment from Tibetan Military District of People's Liberation Army participated in the exercise.

### Connect to the exercise

- The exercise will consist of a balance of indoor classes and outdoor training activities.
- The aim of the exercise is to build and promote close relations between armies of both the countries and to enhance ability of the joint exercise commander to take military contingents of both nations under command.
- The exercise will involve tactical level operations in an international counter insurgency/ counter terrorism environment under UN mandate.

## Earth Science

### *Cyclonic storm 'PHETHAI' over southwest & adjoining West central Bay of Bengal*



### What

- Coastal areas in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are on high alert as the cyclonic storm developing over the Bay of Bengal is set to make landfall around Kakinada.
- Dubbed as Phethai, the cyclone is set to hit Andhra Pradesh coast with a wind speed of up to 70-90 kmph.
- Anticipating the storm, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has been put on high alert along with the Coast Guard.

### Connect to Phethai

- Phethai, name of the cyclone is suggested by Thailand. It is pronounced as 'Pay-ti', means a vegetarian bean in Thailand.
- Cyclonic Storm Phethai is the sixth named cyclone of 2018 North Indian Ocean Cyclone season. The previous five named cyclones are Sagar, Mekunu, Luban, Titli and Gaza.
- Formation Cyclone Pethai has emerged as a deep depression in the Bay of Bengal around 900 kms off Chennai on 15 December 2018. It was expected to bring heavy rainfalls in the coastal areas of north Tamil Nadu,

## Government Schemes

### *IMPRESS scheme has been launched to promote Social Science Research in the country*

### What

- The Government has approved "Revitalising Infrastructure and Systems in Education by 2022", as per which the scope of institutions to be funded through Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) has been enlarged to encompass School Education and Medical Education institutions, apart from Higher Education.
- The total authorized equity capital of HEFA has been raised to Rs.10,000 crore, with the facility to leverage additional resources from the market, based on requirement.

## IMPRESS

Impactful Policy  
Research in Social Science



भारत सरकार  
Government of India  
मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय  
MINISTRY OF  
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT



The ICSSR will be the project implementing agency. They shall put in place an online portal for receipt, evaluation, selection and monitoring of proposals.



There shall be no duplication with any existing scheme; and UGC shall not fund any social science research which is being funded under this scheme.



There shall be (4) calls for proposals – October, 2018, February 2019, September 2019 and February 2020. The process of evaluation of the proposals and selection shall be completed within 90 days from the date of call for proposals.



The experts for evaluation of proposals shall be persons of eminence and selected using objective criteria.



There shall be a regular monitoring of the progress of projects using the online portal, in which the progress can be directly updated by the Project Coordinator. There shall be a third party evaluation of the projects in March 2021.

### Connect to HEFA financing mechanism

- A total Government equity of Rs. 6,000 Crore, has been approved. All funds for educational infrastructure in centrally funded educational institutions will henceforth be in the form of ten year loans through HEFA to the institution, the interest liability of which would be borne by the Government.
- The principal repayment would be undertaken by the institutions in part or full depending on their age profile and financial capability.
- For new institutions and those which have limited internal fund generating capacity, the entire principal and interest repayment would be undertaken by the Government.
- There is an additional window of financing for school and medical education institutions where the sponsoring Department would undertake to repay the principal and interest to HEFA.
- So far, HEFA has approved projects of Rs. 24430 Crore with total loan amount of Rs. 12307 Crore.
- The Government of India, in August 2018, had sanctioned the scheme “Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences (IMPRESS)” at a total cost of Rs. 414 Cr for implementation up to 31.03.2021.
- Under the Scheme, 1500 research projects will be awarded for 2 years to support the social science research in the higher educational institutions and to enable research to guide policy making.
- The Indian Council of Social Science and Research (ICSSR) will be the project implementing agency.

### Connect to the objectives of the scheme are:

- To identify and fund research proposals in social sciences with maximum impact on the governance and society.
- To focus research on (11) broad thematic areas such as : State and Democracy, Urban transformation, Media, Culture and Society, Employment, Skills and Rural transformation , Governance, Innovation and Public Policy, Growth, Macro-trade and Economic Policy, Agriculture and Rural Development, Health and Environment, Science and Education, Social Media and Technology, Politics, Law and Economics.
- 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.
- ICSSR funded/ recognized research institutes will also be eligible to submit research proposals on the given themes and sub-themes.

## Defence

### *India's first military flight using Blended Bio-Jet Fuel Flown by IAF*



#### What

- The Experimental Test Pilots and Test Engineer from IAF's premier testing establishment ASTE, flew India's first military flight using blended bio-jet fuel on the An-32 transport aircraft.
- The project is a combined effort of IAF, DRDO, Directorate General Aeronautical Quality Assurance (DGAQA) and CSIR-Indian Institute of Petroleum.
- CAS had stated that IAF intended to fly the An-32 with 10% biojet fuel on 26 Jan 2019 Republic Day flypast.
- Indian Air Force carried out extensive engine tests on the ground. This is now followed by flight trials using 10% biojet blended ATF.
- This fuel is made from Jatropha oil sourced from Chattisgarh Biodiesel Development Authority (CBDA) and then processed at CSIR-IIP, Dehradun.
- IAF intends to fly the An-32 transport aircraft using biojet fuel on 26 January 2019, in the Republic Day flypast.

## Science and Technology

### *ISRO'S GSLV-F11/Gsat-7A mission successful, satellite meant for military applications placed in orbit*

#### Highlights

- The satellite is expected to boost the IAF's network-centric warfare capabilities
- Gsat-7A is expected to interlink all ground-based radars, airbases and airborne early warning and control aircraft for surveillance, maintain air superiority, gather intelligence by detecting aircraft, vessels and other vehicles in long range

#### What

- The Indian Space Research Organisation successfully placed GSAT 7 the second communication satellite meant primarily for military applications in orbit
- Gsat-7A is meant for augmenting the existing communication capabilities of satellites utilised by the Indian Air Force.

## GSLV – F11

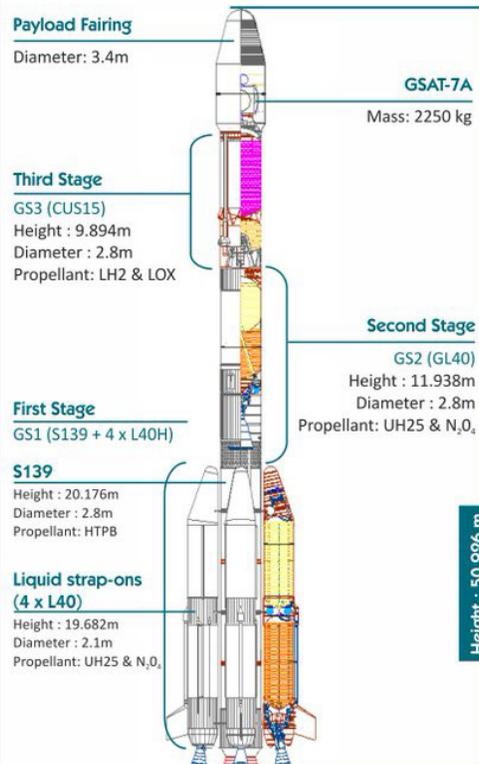
- (Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle) carrying the satellite lifted off from the second launch pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota
- It was the 13th flight of GSLV Mark II and the seventh flight with an indigenous cryogenic engine.
- In the coming days, the satellite will be moved to its final geostationary orbital slot at an altitude of around 35,000km by firing its onboard chemical propulsion system.
- GSLV had placed GSAT-7A in a super synchronous orbit achieving an altitude of 2,000km more than the intended slot.

## Specifications

- The propellant for the second stage had been increased from 35.5 tonne to 40 tonne and cryo stage from 12 tonne to 15 tonne.
- The cryo stage was also burnt to depletion.
- ISRO has also used a Gregorian antenna to improve performance of the satellite
- Gsat-7A -- the 39th communication satellite of Isro -- has communication capabilities to users in Ku-band over the Indian region.
- Gsat-7A is expected to interlink all ground-based radars, airbases and airborne early warning and control aircraft for surveillance, maintain air superiority, gather intelligence by detecting aircraft, vessels and other vehicles in long range.
- The satellite is also expected to boost the IAF's network-centric warfare capabilities, i.e., linking all its platforms.
- It will help drones conduct surveillance and satellite-controlled unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) improve their range and endurance to strike at enemy targets from long distances.
- In September 2013, ISRO launched Gsat-7 (Rukmini), a communication satellite exclusively for Navy to monitor the Indian Ocean Region up to 2,000 nautical miles and provide real-time inputs to Indian warships, submarines and maritime aircraft.

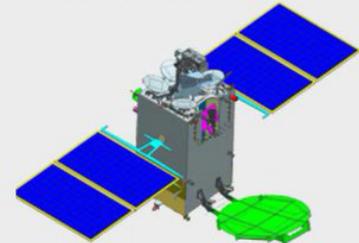
# GSLV-F11 successfully launches GSAT-7A into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO)

- Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle – F11 (GSLV-F11) is the 13th flight of India's GSLV and the 7th flight of GSLV with indigenous Cryo stage
- The GSLV-F11 was launched from the Second Launch Pad (SLP) at Satish Dhawan Space Centre SHAR, Sriharikota



## GSAT-7A

- GSAT-7A is a geostationary satellite built to provide communication services in Ku-band over the Indian region
- GSAT-7A is configured using ISRO's 2000 kg satellite bus



## SALIENT FEATURES

Lift-off Mass	: 2250 Kg
Spacecraft Power	: 3.3 kW
Payload	: Ku-band transponders
Mission Life	: 8 Years



[www.isro.gov.in](http://www.isro.gov.in) [@isro](https://twitter.com/isro) [www.facebook.com/ISRO/](https://www.facebook.com/ISRO/)



## Defence

### *Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS)*

#### *Indigenous gun trials of Army to enter next stage*

#### *Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation*

#### **Connect to the current context**

- The development of the indigenously-designed heavy artillery gun, the **Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS)**, has advanced to a stage where user-assisted trials of the gun are likely to start
- Two guns are currently undergoing trials and another two guns will join the trials in a month

#### **Connect to The Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS)**

- ATAGS is a 155mm, 52 calibre gun being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation on two parallel tracks: one prototype is being built in partnership with **Tata Power** (Strategic Engineering Division), and the other is in collaboration with **Bharat Forge**.

#### **Firing on all cylinders**



- Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) is a 155mm, 52 calibre gun, developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in a consortium model
- One prototype has been built in partnership with Tata Power (Strategic Engineering Division) and another with Bharat Forge
- Two guns from each company

are undergoing trials; two more guns to join trials later

- There is a sanction for production of 10 guns as part of the development process
- The gun currently weighs about 18 tonnes while the ideal weight is 14-15 tonnes

- The defence Ministry has approved purchase of 150 guns at an approximate cost of ₹3,365 crore

- The Army is in the process of finalising the Preliminary Specifications Qualitative Requirements (PSQR) which details the essential parameters, which should be ready by July 2019

- The gun is presently undergoing development trials. User assisted trials will begin from May-June 2019

#### ▪ **KEY FEATURES**

- Electric drive
- High mobility
- Quick deployability
- Auxiliary power mode
- Advanced communication system
- Automated command and control system
- Six round magazine instead of a standard three round magazine

- There is a sanction for production of 10 guns as part of the development process.
- The gun has been undergoing development trials for some time now, with a few trials held in the Pokhran firing ranges as recently as last month.

- Guns from both Bharat Forge and Tata Power would be evaluated and based on the commercial bids, the order would be split between them with the lowest bidder getting a larger order.
- The Defence Ministry has already approved the in-principle purchase of 150 of these guns at an approximate cost of Rs. 3,365 crore.
- The gun has several significant features including an **all-electric drive, high mobility, quick deployability, auxiliary power mode, advanced communications system, automated command and control system.**
- It also sports a six-round magazine instead of the standard three-round magazine.
- This necessitates a larger chamber and is a major factor pushing up the overall weight of the system.
- The Army, which has been seeking to modernise its weaponry, recently inducted its first modern pieces of artillery in 30 years: the **M777 Ultra-Light Howitzer** from the U.S. and the **K9 Vajra-T self-propelled** artillery gun from South Korea.

### *Relevance in – Prelims and G.S (Paper III)*

## Defence

### *Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR)*

#### Connect to the current

- Defence minister launched the Information Fusion Centre – Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR) at Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC) Gurugram.
- The Indian Ocean Region is vital to world trade and economic prosperity of many nations as more than 75% of the world's maritime trade and 50% of global oil consumption passes through the IOR.

#### Connect to Information Management and Analysis Centre (IMAC)

- However, maritime terrorism, piracy, human and contraband trafficking, illegal and unregulated fishing, arms running and poaching pose myriad challenges to maritime safety and security in the region.
- Response to these challenges requires enhanced situational awareness of the maritime activities in the region so as to enable security agencies function effectively.
- The **IFC-IOR aims to engage with partner nations and multi-national maritime constructs to develop comprehensive maritime domain awareness and share information on vessels of interest.**
- The intention of this collaborative endeavour shall be to secure the global commons for a peaceful, stable and prosperous region towards the well-being of all.
- IFC – IOR shall be a collaborative construct that will work with partners, countries as well as international agencies; to enhance maritime security and safety.
- It would also aim to work closely with the multi-national constructs and other information fusion centres
- The IFC-IOR would work towards capability building in the region, coordination of incident response and disaster relief, and in time, also share submarine safety information.

### *Relevance in – Prelims and Mains G.S paper III*

## Defence

### *INHS Sandhani*

#### What's the NEWS

- The Indian Navy has been commissioned a **naval hospital ship**, the INHS Sandhani at Naval station Karanja in the Raigad district of Maharashtra.

#### Know all about INHS Sandhani

- The hospital has its origins as a small primary health care unit established in 1955.
- The Naval station Karanja expanded rapidly over the last couple of decades, there was a need to develop the station's healthcare services.



- The hospital has been expanded from a 16-bed facility to a 30-bed hospital. The hospital is capable of providing treatment in the fields of General Medicine, Surgery, Gynaecology, Anaesthesia, Paediatrics and dental services to naval personnel at the station
- INHS Sandhani is the tenth one commissioned by the Indian Navy.
- The Navy had earlier commissioned its ninth hospital 'INHS Navjivani' at the Indian Naval Academy in Kerala's Ezhimala

## Science and Technology

### *National Children's Science Congress*

**NATIONAL CHILDREN'S SCIENCE CONGRESS 2018**

**SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION  
FOR A CLEAN, GREEN AND HEALTHY NATION**



राविप्रौसंप NCSTC

A PROGRAMME OF  
**NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE  
& TECHNOLOGY COMMUNICATION**  
DEPARTMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

### **What's the NEWS**

- 26<sup>th</sup> edition of The National Children's Science Congress to be held between 27-31 December at **Bhubaneswar, Odhisa.**
- Theme of the 26<sup>th</sup> National Children's Science Congress is **"Science, Technology and Innovation for a Clean, Green and Healthy Nation."**
- The National Children's Science Congress is being held at Odhisa for the second time.
- Children from across the country together with those from Gulf and ASEAN countries are attending the event.

## National Children's Science Congress

- It is a nationwide Science Communication programme started in the year 1993.
- It is the programme of the National Council for Science and Technology Communication (NCSTC), Department of Science and Technology, Government of India.
- National Children's Science Congress aims at providing a forum for children from both formal school systems as well as from out of school of the **age-group of 10-17 years** to exhibit their creativity and innovativeness and more particularly their ability to solve a societal problem experienced locally, by using the method of science.

## National Council for Science and Technology Communication

- The objective of NCSTC is to communicate science & technology to masses.
- Through its various programmes, the council aim to build capacity for informed decision making in the community.
- NCSTC encourages research in areas of Science & Technology communication

## Science and Technology

### *Manned space mission*

### *Three Indian astronauts will take part in 7-day venture*

### *Relevance in – Prelims and Mains (GS Paper III – Awareness in the field of space)*



### Highlights

- Human-rating says the system is capable of safely transporting humans
- At least 50% of the Rs 10,000 crore will go into human-rating
- The escape system will boast of a recently included geometry, while work on parachute enlargement and new architecture will be ready soon

### What's the NEWS

- The Union Cabinet approved the ambitious Gaganyaan programme, which will send three Indian astronauts to space for up to seven days by 2022 at a cost of 10,000 crore.
- As part of the programme, two unmanned flights and one manned flight will be undertaken.
- The **two unmanned flights** in full complement will be carried out to gain confidence
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has developed the launch vehicle **GSLV MK-III**, which has the necessary payload capability to launch a three-member crew module in low earth orbit.
- The ISRO has also tested the crew escape system, an essential technology for human space flight. Elements of the life support system and the space suit have also been realised and tested

- ISRO will start working on three sets of rockets, crew and service module building three GSLV-MK III launch vehicles and the other modules and conducting various human-rating tests
- Each set will be used for three missions — two unmanned missions planned for December 2020 and June-July 2021, and the actual mission by December 2021 or early 2022.

### Know about Crew escape system

- The crew escape system is an emergency escape measure designed to **quickly pull the crew module along with the astronauts to a safe distance** from the launch vehicle in the event of a launch abort.
- The first test (Pad Abort Test) demonstrated the safe recovery of the crew module in case of any exigency at the launch pad

## ISRO in 2019

### Calendar dotted with 32 new missions

#### 2019 ISRO Mission

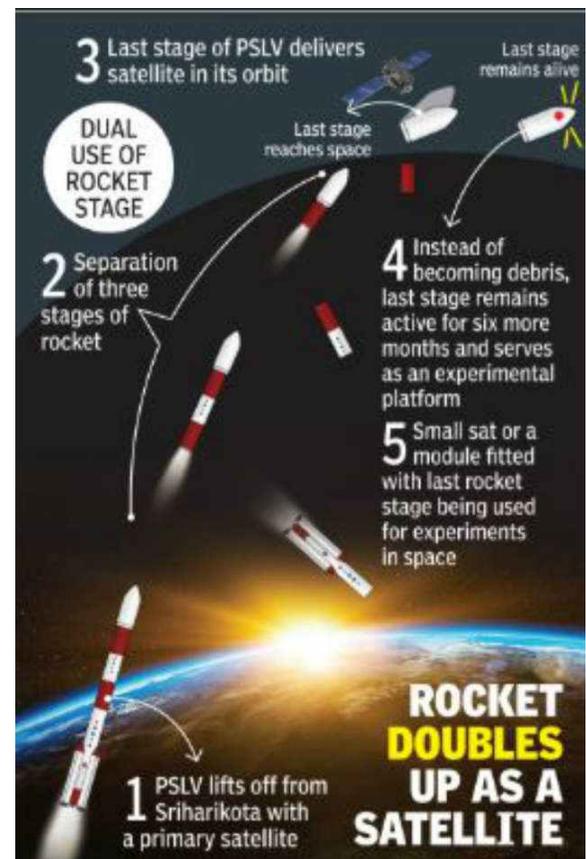
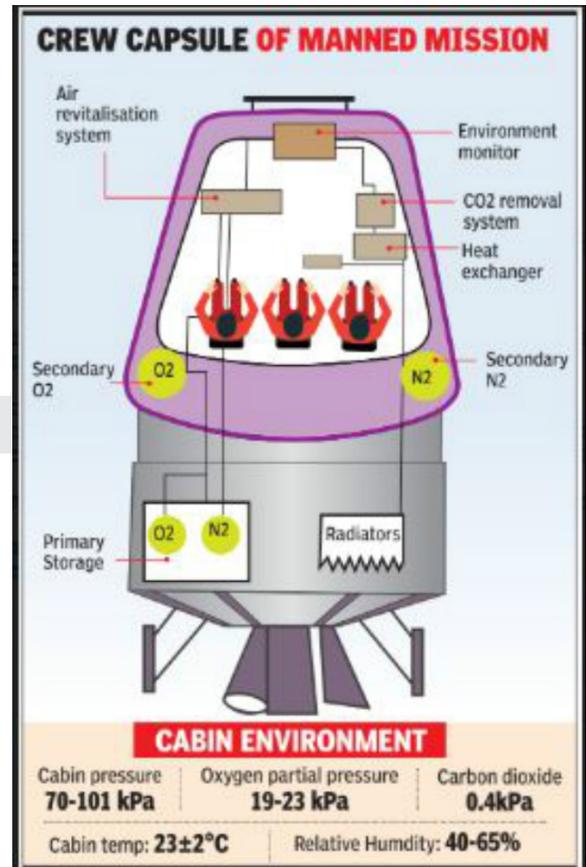
- Novel geostationary remote-sensing spacecraft watching from a high perch. A wasted rocket stage innovatively put to work again in orbit. A utilitarian small wonder called the Small Satellite Launch Vehicle.
- These are a few missions promising to debut from the Indian Space Research Organisation's basket in the new year.

### Know about the ISRO's upcoming missions

- ISRO's 2019 calendar is dotted with 32 new missions, an ambitious record-making goal for the most number of Indian missions in a year.
- In contrast, 2018 saw about 14 missions against a goal of 18, including the failed GSAT-6A satellite of April.
- The new year's very first mission is set for January and will try out a unique experiment **to re-control and rework the fourth and last stage of the PSLV-C44 rocket after it completes its job in space.**
- C-44 is slated to carry the 150/200-kg special purpose **Microsat-R to a low-Earth polar orbit.**

### Know about the Stage 4 of PSLV rockets

- Stage 4 or PS4 takes the satellite to the last lap of desired height (anywhere between 400 km and 700 km.) Job done, it floats there for several years as space junk.
- The trial with the expired fourth rocket stage would easily be the first of its kind by any space agency. It would show PS4 as a unique cost-saving test bed for new technologies.
- Stage 4 of the PSLV rocket usually goes into orbit as debris once the satellite is released. ISRO is planning to use it as a low-cost experimental platform for students working in space-related areas and for our own technologies.
- The PSLV's fourth and final stage weighs about 450 kg and equals two micro satellites (100-500 kg class).



## Launch pad

ISRO has several missions planned for 2019. A look at some of them:

■ AFP



- The Small Satellite Launch Vehicle is likely to undergo trial flights
- GISAT, the first Indian geo-Imaging satellite to work in the geostationary 36,000 km orbit, is planned for take-off during September-November
- Heavy-lift MkIII launcher will put to orbit the lunar landing mission Chandrayaan-2
- It will undergo human rating for being able to orbit around Earth with 3 Indian astronauts

- The set of PSLV missions will launch Earth observation satellites **Microsat-R**, **EMISAT**, a bigger Radar Imaging Satellite **RISAT** and **Oceansat-3**. The third-generation **Cartosat-3** will have a very high resolution of 0.25 cm

## Social Justice and Empowerment

### *International Day of Persons with Disabilities*

3 December  
**International Day of  
Persons with Disabilities**

take action disability-inclusion  
women with disabilities understanding disability mobilize action  
promote dignity plan events mainstream disability  
**organize forums ensure equality**  
develop social policies employment inclusive education  
social integration advocate human rights  
children with disabilities **empowerment**  
accessible healthcare  
**data collection awareness-raising**  
end stigma and stereotyping

Accessible  
United Nations

Be informed! Get involved!  
[www.un.org/disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities)  
[enable@un.org](mailto:enable@un.org)



### What

- The annual observance of the International Day of Disabled Persons was proclaimed in 1992, by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 47/3.

### Objective

- It aims to promote the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in all spheres of society and development, and to increase awareness of the situation of persons with disabilities in every aspect of political, social, economic and cultural life.

### Connect to International Day of Disabled Persons

- Building on many decades of UN's work in the field of disability, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, adopted in 2006, has further advanced the rights and well-being of persons with disabilities in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and other international development

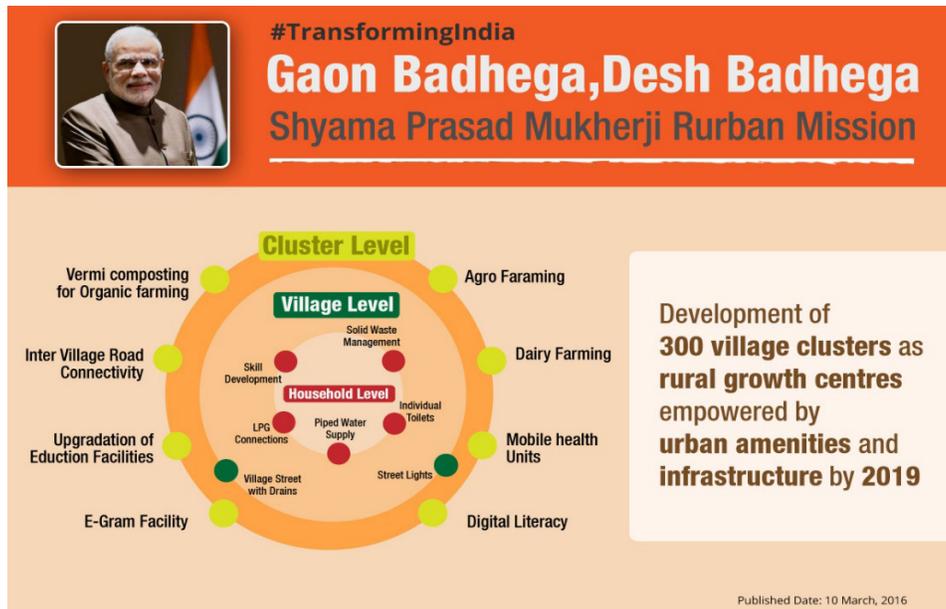
frameworks, such as the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Charter on Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities in Humanitarian Action, the New Urban Agenda, and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda on Financing for Development.

## Theme

- 2018 Theme: Empowering persons with disabilities and ensuring inclusiveness and equality
- This year's theme focuses on empowering persons with disabilities for an inclusive, equitable and sustainable development as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- This year, the UN Secretary-General will launch on the Day a flagship report, entitled "UN Flagship Report on Disability and Development | 2018 – Realizing the SDGs by, for and with persons with disabilities".

## Rural Development

### Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission



## Connect to the mission

- The Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission (SPMRM) is under implementation across the country.
- The Mission has progressed since the launch in 2016. Out of the mandated 300 clusters, 295 clusters have been identified and approved across 29 States and 6 Union Territories.
- SPMRM was launched on February 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016 with an outlay of Rs. 5142.08 crore. This is a unique programme, designed to deliver catalytic interventions to rural areas on the threshold of growth.
- There is a funding support of up to 30% of the estimated investment for each Rurban cluster, given as Critical Gap Funding (CGF), while 70% of the funds is mobilized by the States through convergence with synergic State and Central programmes as well as private investment and institutional funding.
- Upon being re-classified as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme, the CGF is now shared between the Centre and the State in a ratio of 60:40 for Plain area States and 90:10 for Himalayan and NE States.
- Substantial part of the works identified for development in the clusters is focused on provision of basic and economic amenities.
- Provision of basic amenities in a cluster typically comprise; provision of 24/7 Water Supply to all households, Solid and Liquid Waste Management facilities at the household and cluster level, provision of Inter and Intra village roads within the cluster, adequate Street Lights and Public Transport facilities using green technologies.
- Provision of Economic Amenities in a cluster comprise various thematic areas in the sectors of Agri Services and Processing, Tourism, and Skill development to promote Small and Medium Scale Enterprises.

Sources – PIB, The Hindu , My Gov

## NITI Aayog

### *NITI Aayog Organises the Third Edition of the Women Transforming India Awards*

#### **What**

- The NITI Aayog organised the Third Edition of the Women Transforming India Awards 2018 and launched the upgraded portal of the Women Entrepreneurship Platform

#### **WEP Portal 2.0 and WTI Awards 2018.**

- The Women Entrepreneurship Platform will help to realise the dreams of Women Entrepreneurs across India and that the development story of a New India is being scripted with women at the forefront.
- The Women Transforming India Awards were instituted to recognise and celebrate stories of exemplary women from across India.
- This year's theme is "Women and Entrepreneurship" and fifteen winners have been chosen through an extensive six-month long process to identify fascinating and inspiring stories of women entrepreneurs.

#### **Connect to the WEP Conclave**

- The Women Entrepreneurship Platform seeks to transform the entrepreneurial ecosystem in the country and shall be a one-stop resource centre for future and budding women entrepreneurs.
- It seeks to act as a medium for various stakeholders in the economy to come together and offer integrated services such as Incubation Support, Mentorship, Funding avenues, Compliance, Marketing Assistance etc.
- The WEP Conclave saw participation of more than 400 people from various sectors, ranging from established entrepreneurs, industry veterans, renowned experts, senior government officials, budding entrepreneurs etc.

#### **Connect to WEP inception**

- On November 28-30, 2017, NITI Aayog, Government of India in partnership with the Government of the United States of America hosted the 8th Annual Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) in Hyderabad, India with the overarching theme of 'Women First, Prosperity for All'.
- To take the idea forward, CEO, NITI Aayog announced setting up of Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) to promote and support established as well as aspiring women entrepreneurs in India.
- WEP is the first of its kind unified access platform which enables meeting of several stakeholders in the entrepreneurial space on a single platform, work in collaboration with various partner organizations to provide a wide range of support services to women entrepreneurs under various service verticals of WEP.
- WEP partners such as Google, CRISIL, SIDBI, NIC, NASSCOM, UN India Business Forum, WEE Foundation, SEWA bank, MannDeshi Foundation, Shopclues, ICAI, ALC India, LK, GEN India, SSM have committed specific services such as WE check, Free Credit Rating, Free Ad credits, apprenticeship, mentorship, technical workshops etc. to WEP registered women entrepreneurs under verticals such as Financial Assistance and Funding Support, Entrepreneurship Skilling, Incubation and Acceleration, Compliance Assistance, Marketing Assistance and a dedicated vertical for Social Entrepreneurship.

## Tribal Welfare

### *Eklavya Model Residential Schools*

#### **What**

- In the context of establishing quality residential schools for the promotion of education, Eklavya Model Residential Schools (EMRSs) for ST students are set up in States / UTs with provisioning of funds through "Grants under Article 275(1) of the Constitution".
- The establishing of EMRSs are based on demand of the concerned States/UTs with availability of land as an essential attribute.

#### **Connect to the school**

- As per the budget 2018-19, every block with more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons, will have an Eklavya Model Residential School by the year 2022.

- Across the country, as per census 2011 figures, there are 564 sub-districts, i.e. blocks/taluka/tehsils, having more than 50% ST population and at least 20,000 tribal persons.
- Out of these sub-districts, at present 102 sub-districts have EMRSs and the rest 462 sub-districts do not have an EMRS

## Rural Development

### *Deendayal upadhyaya rameen kaushalya yojana (Ddu-Gky)*

#### What

- Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) is the flagship placement linked skill-training programme under the Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD).

#### Connect to DDU -GKY

- There are several challenges that are preventing India's rural poor from competing such as the lack of formal education and employability skills.
- DDU-GKY bridges this gap by funding training projects with an emphasis on placement, retention, career progression and foreign placement.
- The mission of the flagship scheme of MoRD is to ensure rural poor youth are skilled in market relevant trades and job-relevant competencies.
- One of the ways in which DDU-GKY aims to achieve this is through the "Champion Employers" policy.
- The Champion Employers are the industry leaders who have the potential to provide training and captive employment to the DDU-GKY candidates.
- The policy seeks a strategic alignment of objectives of DDU-GKY with the HR strategy of organizations, which have a large potential to absorb trained manpower.

#### Connect to the Current Context

- MoRD signed MOU with Maruti Suzuki India Ltd for training rural youth for skill development
- This partnership between the government and the leading industry from the automotive sector will provide training to at least 5000 candidates in two years with assured placement to the rural youth of our country.

## Social Issues

### *Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2016*

### *Lok Sabha has passed Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2016*

#### Connect to the current

- The bill has banned commercial surrogacy and allows only altruistic surrogacy.
- The bill protects the rights of the surrogate mother and the child born from surrogacy and promotes ethical surrogacy.

#### Connect to Surrogacy

- It is defined as an agreement between a couple who cannot conceive and a surrogate mother to carry their child.

#### Connect to the Provisions of Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill 2016:

- The bill is applicable to all the states of India except Jammu and Kashmir.
- The bill provides the constitution of **National Surrogacy board and State Surrogacy board** for regulation of surrogacy process.
- The bill is providing surrogacy to only Indian citizens. Thus, **Foreigners, NRI and PIOs are not allowed.** Homosexuals and Single parents are also not allowed for surrogacy and bars the couple who already have children
- The couple seeking surrogacy should possess a certificate of essentiality issued by appropriate authority.

- The bill provides that women can only surrogate once in her lifetime and her age should be in between 25 to 35 years.
- The couple who intend for surrogacy should be aged between 23 to 50 years and married for at least 5 years.
- The bill also provides provision for the custody of the child to be born which will be passed by a court of the Magistrate of the first class or above.
- The bill contains the provision of penalty and imprisonment if the person violated the law.

### Connect to the National Surrogacy Board

- The board consists of: Chairperson – Minister in-charge of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare Vice Chairperson – Secretary to the Government of India in-charge of Department dealing with surrogacy matters.
- Members – Three women members of Parliament, Three members of Ministries of Central government from Women and Child Development, Legislative Department in Ministry of Law and Justice and Ministry of Home Affairs not below the rank of Joint Secretary, Director-General of Health Services of Central Government and ten experts members.

## Social Issues

### *No rise in working women despite high literacy levels*

#### Laborious task

Rise in literacy has not translated into jobs for women. The tables show percentage of women out of the labour force in various education levels in the age group of 30 and above; and the gross enrolment ratio

Education	2013-14	2015-16
Not literate	67.6	70.1
Below primary	72.9	74
Primary	72.4	74.2
Middle/ Secondary/HS	77	77
Graduate and above	62.7	62.7

Gross enrolment ratio (2014-15)	Male	Female
Higher education (18-23)years	25.3	23.2
IX-XII (14-17) years	64.9	65.8
XI-XII (16-17) years	54.6	53.8
IX-X (14-15) years	78.1	78.9

Source: Working Paper 368, The Anomaly of Women's Work and Education in India, Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations



### Connect to the context

- A rise in literacy levels among women has **failed to translate into an increase in the number of working women** due to a combination of socio-economic factors such as the importance of education for improving marital prospects as well as higher prestige attached to households which keep women out of labour force, according to a new research.

### Connect to the ICRIER study

- A study by **the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER)** has cited the Labour Bureau's employment figures to show that there is a rise in the percentage of women out of labour force between 2011-2012 and 2015-2016 across all levels of education and age-cohorts.

- This is an indicator that **despite one's educational attainment there has been a decline in the incentive for women to participate in the labour force.**
- This has happened even though there is gender parity in attainment of education.
- The gross enrolment ratio shows that there are equal numbers of boys and girls at secondary level and women remain in education longer.

### Connect to the reason behind this

- The research paper attributes the **trend to four major factors:** the role education plays in marriage markets, social norms, poor condition for educated women and quality of education.
- Social norms also ensure that higher prestige or social status is associated with families which keep their women out of the workforce.

### Recommendations

- The research study recommends that government policies **should focus on behavioural changes** that make female employment more acceptable in the society, communication programmes on gender equality in secondary education to help students imbibe equitable gender norms as well as programmes that acknowledge child care as the responsibility of both parents

## Bills

### Triple talaq Bill passed

***Relevance in – Prelims and Mains GS – I and II ( Social Justice and Government policies and intervention)***

#### What's the NEWS

- The Lok Sabha passed The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2018.

#### Know about the bill

- The Bill to make the practice of triple talaq among Muslims a penal offence was introduced in the Lok Sabha on December 17 to replace an ordinance issued in September.
- Under the proposed law, giving instant triple talaq will be illegal and void, and will attract a jail term of three years for the man.
- The fresh Bill is proposed to supersede an earlier Bill passed in the Lok Sabha and **pending in the Rajya Sabha.**

#### What's the status of triple talaq

- 477 cases of triple talaq had been reported since January 2017, with over 200 coming after the Supreme Court verdict declaring 'talaq-e-biddat' void.

#### Suggestions added

- Several suggestions were added in this fresh bill like removal of the clause that neighbours of the victim could file a case.
- Conditions for bail and mediation have also been added to the Bill as suggested by members

#### Know the features of the bill

## Women and Child Development

***Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012***

***Relevance in – Prelims and Mains ( GS Paper I Social Justice )***

#### What's the NEWS

- The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for Amendment in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 to make punishment more stringent for committing sexual crimes against children.

## Empowering women

Key features of the revised Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill, 2018

- The Bill will replace the ordinance promulgated in September 2018

- Clause 3 of the Bill declares pronouncement of talaq, both in written or electronic form, as illegal and void

- Pronouncement of talaq is a punishable offence with **imprisonment** for up to **3 years** and a fine. The Bill also makes the **woman entitled to maintenance** determined by a magistrate

- Cognisance of offence can be taken only on a **complaint** to a magistrate **by the wife or her close relatives**

- The woman can also **drop the case** against her husband if both reach a compromise

- **There is provision for bail, which can be granted by a magistrate only after hearing the wife**



### Know the Salient Features

- To bring punishments for sexual assaults on boys on a par with those against girls.
- These include the provision of death penalty when the child is under 12 years and when a penetrative sexual assault is committed by a relative.

### Earlier amendments

- The government had brought an ordinance in April and followed it up by passing a Bill in Parliament during the monsoon session to amend the Indian Penal Code.
- The changes included death penalty for gang rape of a girl under 12 years and 20 years in jail or death penalty for rape of a girl under 12 years.



### Crime & punishment

*The Cabinet has made the POCSO Act much more stringent:*

- Aggravated sexual assault on a child under 12 years: **20 years in jail/life term/death penalty**
- Minimum jail term for aggravated sexual assault enhanced from **7 years to 10 years**
- Aggravated sexual assault on a child below 16: **20 years in jail**
- Use of children for porn/possession of child porn: **5/3 years in jail**
- Storing child porn: **₹1,000 fine**

## Know more about the amendments

- The POCSO Act, 2012 was enacted to Protect the Children from Offences of Sexual Assault, Sexual harassment and pornography with due regard for safeguarding the interest and well-being of children.
- The Act defines a child as **any person below eighteen years of age**, and regards the best interests and welfare of the child as matter of paramount importance at every stage, to ensure the healthy physical, emotional, intellectual and social development of the child. **The act is gender neutral.**
- The modification is made to address the need for stringent measures required to deter the rising trend of child sex abuse in the country.
- To discourage the trend of child sexual abuse by acting as a deterrent proposed to be amended to provide option of stringent punishment, **including death penalty, for committing aggravated penetrative sexual assault crime on a child to protect the children from sexual abuse.**
- The amendments are also proposed to protect children from sexual offences in times of **natural calamities and disasters** and in cases where children are administered, in any way, any **hormone or any chemical substance, to attains early sexual maturity** for the purpose of penetrative sexual assault.
- The POCSO Act, 2012 are also proposed to be amended to address the menace of the child pornography.
- It is proposed to levy fine for not destroying/or deleting/ or reporting the **pornographic material involving a child.**

## State Specific

### *The first ever Swadesh Darshan Project in the state of Nagaland going to be inaugurated*

#### What

- Development of Tribal Circuit: Peren-Kohima-Wokha Project will be inaugurated by the Chief Minister of Nagaland, Shri Neiphiu Rio, in the presence of Union Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism, Shri K.J. Alphons at Kisama Heritage Village in Nagaland
- This is the first project to be implemented in the state under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India.

#### Connect to the project

- The project “Development of Tribal Circuit: Peren-Kohima-Wokha” was sanctioned by the Ministry of Tourism in November 2015 for Rs. 97.36 Crores.
- Under the project the Ministry has developed facilities like Tribal Tourist Village, Eco Log Huts, Open Air Theatre, Tribal Rejuvenation Centre, Cafeteria, Helipad, Tourist Interpretation Centre, Wayside Amenities, Last Mile Connectivity, Public Conveniences, Multipurpose Hall, Nature Trails, Trekking Routes etc.

#### Connect to Swadesh Darshan scheme

- It is one among the flagship schemes of the Ministry of Tourism for development of thematic circuits in the country in a planned and prioritised manner.
- Under this scheme the Government is focussing on development of quality infrastructure in the country with objective of providing better experience and facilities to the visitors on one hand and on other hand fostering the economic growth.
- The scheme was launched in 2014 -15 and as on date the Ministry has sanctioned 73 projects worth projects for Rs. 5873.26 Crore to 30 States and UTs.
- 30 projects / major components of these projects are expected to be completed this year. 8 projects have been inaugurated as on date under the scheme.



## State Specific

### *Kannur International Airport*



#### **Connect to the facts**

- The Kannur International Airport Limited or KIAL can handle around 2,000 passengers at a time and will serve more than 1.5 million international passengers yearly
- Kannur airport inaugurated, Kerala now only Indian state to have four international airports

#### **Connect to the airport**

- Union Minister Suresh Prabhu and Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan inaugurated the Kannur international airport, making the total number of international airports in Kerala to four.
- Spread across 2,000 acres and costing close to Rs. 1,800 crore, the new airport in Kannur can reportedly handle around 2,000 passengers at a time and will serve more than 1.5 million international passengers yearly.
- International flights operating from Kannur will include those to the UAE, Oman and Qatar. The airport will also be connected to Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Mumbai.
- The three other international airports in Kerala are in Thiruvananthapuram, Kochi and Kozhikode.

### *State of Maharashtra's Agribusiness and Rural Transformation (SMART) Project*

#### **What**

- Launched by the Maharashtra Government and has been assisted by World Bank assisted

#### **Why**

- State of Maharashtra's Agribusiness and Rural Transformation (SMART) Project to transform rural Maharashtra.

#### **Connect to the project**

- This project aims to revamp agricultural value chains, with special focus on marginal farmers across 1,000 villages.
- The objective of project is to create and support value chains in post-harvest segments of agriculture, facilitate agribusiness investment, stimulate SMEs within the value chain.
- It will also support resilient agriculture production systems, expand access to new and organised markets for producers and enhance private sector participation in the agribusiness.
- The project will be implemented in 10,000 villages of total 40,913 villages in states with objective to achieve Agriculture Loan A Farmer Farming sustainable farming within the next three years.
- This scheme will cover almost one-fourth of Maharashtra and its focus is on villages which are reeling under worst agriculture crisis compounded by lack of infrastructure and assured value chains to channelise farm produce.

- The project will be implemented in 10,000 villages comprising 10,000 gram panchayats which were shortlisted by state government based on multiple parameters of socio-economic backwardness in terms of development and growth.
- This project is a step towards transformation of rural economy and empowerment of farmers and also sustainable agriculture through public-private partnership (PPP) model.

## State Specific

### ***Cabinet approves construction of New 4 - Lane Bridge (Parallel to the Existing MG Setu) across river Ganga on NH-19 at Patna on EPC Mode***

#### **What**

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, approved the project for construction of a 5.634 km long new 4 - lane bridge across river Ganga, just 38 meters on upstream side of the existing MG Setu
- The construction period for the project is three and a half years, and likely to be completed by January, 2023.

#### **Connect to the project**

- This mega project is 14.500 km long and passes through Patna, Saran and Vaishali districts of Bihar.
- River Ganga divides the State of Bihar in two parts, North Bihar and South Bihar, and the existing 4 - lane (2x7m only) old M G Setu is an important bridge across river Ganga connecting north Bihar with its capital city of Patna besides facilitating the movement of traffic from Nepal, East UP, North Bihar and North Bengal to Patna, South Bihar and Jharkhand.

## Know All About

### ***National Register of Citizens***

#### **Connect to NRC**

- The Citizenship Act, 1955 provides for compulsory registration of every citizen of India and issuance of National Identity Card
- The Citizenship Rules, 2003 framed under the Citizenship Act, 1955 prescribe the manner of preparation of the National Register of Citizens.
- There is a special provision under the Rules to prepare National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam which is application based and distinct from the rest of India where the process is enumeration based.

#### **Connect to the NRC Procedure**

- The applications for preparation of NRC in Assam were invited in May-August, 2015 and after necessary scrutiny & verification, the draft NRC has been published on 30<sup>th</sup> July, 2018.
- After the publication of draft NRC, the process of filing claims & objections on the draft NRC has started on 25.09.2018 and will remain open upto 31.12.2018 whereafter the verification process will commence from 15.02.2019 in accordance with the directions of the Hon'ble Supreme Court.
- Any person, who does not find his/her name in the draft NRC may file the claims. Similarly, any person can file objections in respect of inclusion of any name in the draft NRC list. Hon'ble Supreme Court of India is monitoring the NRC process in the State of Assam.

## State Specific

### ***Shiksha Setu***

#### **What**

- A mobile app Shiksha Setu has been launched by the Haryana Government

#### **Objective**

- The Shiksha Setu App will help in bringing transparency in the Education Department and in the administration of colleges in the state.



- Prime Minister Narendra Modi today opened the Bogibeel railroad bridge in Assam, billed as **India's longest railroad bridge**. Its foundation was laid in 1997.
- **The five-kilometre structure spans the waters of the mighty Brahmaputra River.**
- Bogibeel bridge will connect Assam's Dibrugarh and Dhemaji districts, bordering Arunachal Pradesh.
- It will cut the travel time between the two points by four hours and help avoid a 170-km detour.
- With its proximity to the China border, the bridge also has tremendous significance for India's defence and has been built strong enough to **support the movement of tanks and even fighter jet landings**.
- Designed like a bridge that links Sweden and Denmark, it is India's only fully-welded bridge for which European codes and welding standards were followed. A fully welded bridge has a low maintenance cost
- The 4.9 km-long bridge was constructed at an estimated cost of Rs. 5,900 crore - exceeding its initial budget of about Rs. 3,200 crore and originally planned length of 4.31 km.
- The foundation stone of the project was laid by former Prime Minister **HD Deve Gowda** on January 22, 1997, while work began on April 21, 2002 under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led government. December 25 happens to be Vajpayee's birth anniversary.

## State Specific

### *Dwijing Festival : Assam*

#### *3rd Dwijing Festival begins on bank of Aye river at Chirang district*



Tourism Live

### What's the NEWS

- In Assam, the third Dwijing Festival has begun on the bank of Aye river at Chirang district.
- Around 15 lakh tourists are expected to participate in the festival.
- Adventure sports, food mart, cultural events, traditional games are being organized in the 12 day long event.
- Participants from Thailand, Bhutan and Bangladesh are also taken part in the festival.

### Dwijing Festival

- Dwijing Festival is an annual river festival celebrated in the **Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD) region of Assam** with various colorful events viz. ethnic trade and food festival, exhibition, games & sports, river campaign & adventure and various culture programs to make it a centre of attraction for the visitors as a New Year Festival.
- River Aie "Mother" originates from the Himalayan Mountains of Bhutan and flows through the Chirang and Bongaigaon districts of Assam before joining the river Brahmaputra.

## Prelims Practice Question

1. Consider the following statements regarding the CRZ Notification 2018
1. The projects which are located in CRZ-I and CRZ - IV will not require the necessary clearance from the Union Ministry.
  2. The temporary tourism facilities like toilets, drinking water and changing room at beaches are also now permissible in No development Zone of the CRZ-II areas.

Find the correct statement from the options given below:

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

2. Consider the following statement regarding the released Second Delta ranking for the Aspirational Districts
1. The Ranking measures the incremental progress made by them between June 1, 2018 and October 31, 2018
  2. The delta rankings are based on six developmental areas i.e Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion, Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure.
  3. The least improved district is Kiphire district of Nagaland
  4. The most improved district is Virudhunagar district of Tamil Nadu

Find the correct statement from the option given below

- (a) 1 and 2                                      (b) 2 and 3                                      (c) All of the above                                      (d) None

3. Consider the following statement about electoral bonds
1. Political Parties which secured not less than four per cent of the votes polled in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.
  2. Electoral Bonds shall be valid for thirty days from the date of issue

Find the correct statement

- (a) 1 only                                      (b) 2 only                                      (c) Both                                      (d) None of the above

4. Which of the following bridges are the on river Brahmaputra
1. Naranarayan Setu
  2. Kolia Bhomora Setu
  3. Bhupen Hazarika Setu
  4. Bogibeel Setu

Choose the correct from the option

- (a) 1 only                                      (b) 2 only                                      (c) All of the above                                      (d) None of the above

### Answer Keys

1	d	2	c	3	d	4	c
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