

September 2019

**MONTHLY
CURRENT
AFFAIRS
GK DIGEST**



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MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS GK DIGEST: SEPTEMBER 2019

MOTOR VEHICLE (AMENDMENT) ACT, 2019

Current context: The Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act, 2019 that contains provisions for an increase in penalty/fine for a traffic rule violation, is made effective from 31st August 2019.

SILENT FEATURES OF THE ACT ARE:

- A penalty of Rs 500 would be imposed for **traffic violations** in place of Rs 100 earlier.
- Rs 2000 in place of Rs 500 (earlier) would be imposed on the **disobedience of orders of authorities**.
- A penalty of Rs 10,000 would be levied for not **giving way to emergency vehicles**.
- Rs 1 lakh would be fined on aggregators **violating the driving licence**.
- A penalty in the range of Rs 1000- Rs 2000 for **over-speeding**.
- Persons **driving without helmets** will be fined Rs 1,000 along with the 3-month suspension of licence.
- **Driving without insurance** would get Rs 2000 fine.
- **Drunken Driving** will cost a fine of Rs 10,000.

5 NEW GOVERNORS APPOINTED

Current context: President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed 5 new Governors in the states of Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Telangana.

NEW GOVERNORS

- **Bhagat Singh Koshiyariwas** appointed as the Governor of **Maharashtra**, replacing Vidyasagar Rao.
- **Tamilisai Soundararajan** was appointed as the Governor of **Telangana**, replacing E.S.L. Narasimhan.
- **Arif Mohammed Khan** was appointed as the Governor of **Kerala**, replacing P. Sathasivam.
- **Bandaru Dattatreya** was appointed as the Governor of **Himachal Pradesh**, replacing Kalraj Mishra.
- **Kalraj Mishra** was appointed as the Governor of **Rajasthan**, replacing Kalyan Singh.

INDIA 9TH ON HAPPINESS INDEX

Current context: India ranked 9th among 28 global markets on the Happiness Index 2019.

KEY FACTS

- It is an online survey done by **Ipsos** over 1000 individuals in each of the **28 countries**.
- **Australia and Canada** occupied the top spot in the Index and Argentina, Spain and Russia emerged at the Bottom.
- It was found that largely the markets of Developed nations had the highest prevalence of happiness.
- India has seen a **6% drop** from earlier 83% in 2018 to 77% in 2019.
- The "Global happiness index" revealed that Indians consider good financial conditions and physical well-being as a priority criteria to remain joyous.
- 65% Indian said they feel happy to spend time on Social media, which is more than the global average of 42%.
- **The top sources of happiness** for Indians were found to be living conditions (89%), physical well-being (88%), and personal financial situation (83%).

INDIA WILL HOST COP14 OF UNCCD

Current context: India for the first time will host the UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD).

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The **14th session of the Conference of Parties (COP)** of UNCCD will be held from 2nd September in Greater Noida, India.
- It will be a 12-day conference to discuss expertise in combating desertification, which is directly affecting 250 million people and a third of the earth's land surface.
- **'Reversing land degradation and its outcomes'** is the main agenda of the COP14, as it is estimated that about one-third of the world's land is degraded and India accounts for 29%.
- UNCCD was established in **1994** and works towards sustainable land management for linking issues of environmental & development to land agenda.
- The UNCCD agreements are **legally binding** on the 196 member countries.
- India had committed to restoring **13 million hectares** of degraded/deforested land by 2020, and an additional 8 million hectares by 2030 in the previous edition of the COP.

'RASHTRIYA POSHAN MAAH'

Current context: The Government of India has decided to observe the whole month of September as the 'Rashtriya Poshan Maah'.

ABOUT RASHTRIYA POSHAN MAAH

- The 'Rashtriya Poshan Maah' would begin from 1st September and the **theme** for the year is **"Complementary Feeding"**.
- The Poshan month is celebrated to spread the message of nutrition to every citizen and enhance their focus on treatment and prevention from infections in children, complimentary food, overall health etc.
- POSHAN Abhiyaan is a Scheme for Holistic Nourishment with a vision to address **malnutrition by 2022**.
- The multi- ministerial convergence mission was launched the Prime Minister in **March 2018** from Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan.

- The Programme **aims** to improve the nutritional status of children up to 6 years of age, pregnant women and lactating mothers, adolescent girls etc.

MEITY TIED UP WITH GOOGLE TO “BUILD FOR DIGITAL INDIA”

Current context: The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) signed a statement of intent with Google to roll-out 'Build for Digital India' Programme.

ABOUT 'BUILD FOR DIGITAL INDIA' PROGRAMME

- The programme is launched to give a platform to the **engineering students** to develop technology-based solutions to solve **social problems**.
- Engineering Students would be called to apply and join the programme and they can take part in both **online and offline learning**.
- Learning opportunities on topics of **IOT, machine learning, cloud computing etc.** would be offered to the students under the course by the **Google's Developer Student Club network** and other Google Developer networks.
- The programme would allow students to apply their learnings in **areas** of healthcare, infrastructure, education, women safety, environment etc.

FINTECH COMMITTEE FINAL REPORT

Current context: A steering committee headed by the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA) Secretary, has submitted its report to the Finance Minister on 2nd September 2019.

KEY FACTS

- The committee was constituted as per the announcement made by Arun Jaitley, then Finance Minister in his **Budget speech 2018-19**.
- The committee gave some recommendations on **Fintech space globally and in India**.
- The suggestions are as follows:
 - It recommended a **Cash flow-based financing** for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) may be **considered by the RBI**.
 - Suggested **Using drones and remotes** by the Insurance companies and lending agencies, sensing **to assess risk in agriculture credit and insurance**.
 - Recommends the **Department of Financial Services (DFS) to work with PSU banks** to reduce fraud and security risks.
 - **NABARD** to take immediate steps to **create a credit registry** for farmers by using Fintech
 - Increasing the use of artificial intelligence among state-owned banks.
 - Setting up a dedicated **National Digital Land Records Mission** for modernisation and standardisation of land records to making available land ownership data on an online basis to Financial Institutions.
 - Adoption of **Regulation technology (or RegTech)** by all financial sector regulators to develop compliance standards.
 - To set up an **Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on fin-tech Applications** in Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), to carry on the tasks of implementing this report.

KVIC LAUNCHES 'TERRACOTTA GRINDER'

Current context: Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) launched the "Terracotta Grinder" on 2nd September 2019 at **Sewapuri, Varanasi**.

ABOUT 'TERRACOTTA GRINDER'

- The '**Terracotta Grinder**' is the **first-ever machine** launched to grind the wasted pottery items for reusing them in pottery making.
- It requires mixing of only **20%** of the terracotta powder with the clay to make a saving of Rs 520.
- The grinder is expected to **reduce the cost of production** of the pottery and would avoid a **shortage of clay**.
- The grinder will create more **job opportunities** for the village people (about 900 in a single village).
- The step will also help to complete the **action plan** given by the **Ministry of Railways** to IRCTC to use only environment-friendly terracotta products like Kulhad and glasses in railway premises.
- KVIC that comes under the **Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises**, in its Jaipur's unit, has started its project **REPLAN (REducing PLastic in Nature)** in which plastic is mixed with paper raw material in a ratio of 20% (plastic waste) and 80% (pulp).

72ND SESSION OF THE WHO REGIONAL COMMITTEE FOR SOUTH-EAST ASIA

Current context: Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, inaugurated the 72nd Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia on 2nd September 2019.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The **committee works for** discussing experts opinions to deliberate on public health issues and achieve the elimination of diseases faced by the countries in the South-East region.
- The Regional Committee is the **highest decision making and governing body of the WHO** in the **South-East region**.
- Dr Harsh Vardhan was also unanimously elected as **Chairman** of the 72nd Session.
- India is **hosting** the Regional Committee for the 2nd time.
- South-East Asia Region constitutes about **one-fourth of the global population**, and has set its priorities to eliminate measles, rubella control, NCD prevention, Reduce MMR, fight against antimicrobial resistance etc.
- The South-East region **eradicated polio in 2014** and comes second to eliminate maternal and neonatal tetanus. Nepal has eliminated trachoma. Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh and Thailand have controlled Hepatitis B.

IAF INDUCTED 8 AH-64E APACHE

Current context: Eight AH-64E Apache attack helicopters were formally inducted into service by the Indian Air Force (IAF) on 3rd September 2019.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Apache is the **most advanced multi-role heavy attack helicopter** in the world.

- It is a multi-role combat helicopter with anti-tank guided air-to-air missiles system that works on fire and forgets.
- The Apache helicopters would replace the **current Mi-35 fleet**.
- India is the **16th nation** to add Apache and the **AH-64E** is the **most advanced variant**, Boeing.
- Contracts for a total of **22 Apache helicopters** were made from the **U.S. government** and Boeing in September **2015** and the entire package will be given to the **IAF by 2022**.

SUNIL ARORA ASSUMED CHAIRMANSHIP OF AWEB

Current context: The Chairmanship of the **Association of World Election Bodies (AWEB)** has been handed over to **India to its Chief Election Commissioner, Sunil Arora**.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **India has hosted the 4th General Assembly** of the AWEB at **Bengaluru** on 3rd September 2019 and the same day will take over its chairmanship.
- India took over the Chairmanship of the AWEB from **Romania** for the term of two years, **2019-21**.
- India's CEC Sunil Arora also launched Election Commission of India's quarterly magazine – '**VOICE International**' that shares best election practices of 25 countries.
- The appointment of the new **Vice Chairman of AWEB** – Mr Glen Vuma Mashinini was also ratified at the General Assembly.
- India is one of the founding members of the AWEB in **October 2013** and has taken over the **Vice-chairman** post of AWEB since 2017.

INDIA ANNOUNCED \$22 MILLION TO GFTAM

Current context: India has announced to give \$22 million to the **Global Fund for AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFTAM)**.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- This is the **6th replenishment cycle (2020-22)** of the GFTAM, and India has increased its contribution by 10% over its 5th cycle contribution.
- India is the 1st country among G20 and BRICS to announce the pledge of Global fund for the 6th replenishment cycle (2020-22).
- India has a partnership, both as a **recipient and as a donor** with the GFTAM **since 2002**.
- So far, the GFTAM has made an investment of \$2 billion in attaining targets related to HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria reduction.
- The Global Fund has allocated **\$500 million to India** in the current funding cycle (2018-21).
- From the initiation of its partnership with the Global Fund, **India has contributed \$46.5 million so far till 2019**.

CAPITAL INFUSION BY GOVERNMENT IN IDBI BANK

Current context: The Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Modi has approved the Capital Infusion of Rs 4,557 crore in the IDBI Bank.

KEY FACTS

- The infusion will be done through “**recap bonds**” i.e. there will no impact on the liquidity, as the bank will buy the recap bond from the government on the same day for the capital infused by the government into the bank.
- With the infusion, the bank would be able to subsequently raise further capital on its own and has more probability to come out of the **RBI's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework**.
- The IDBI bank has **reduced its net NPA** from peak of 18.8% in June 2018 to 8% in June 2019.
- **The government** continues to be a promoter and holds **46.46% stakes** of the IDBI Bank and LIC acquired **51% stakes**.
- Out of the **Rs. 9,300 crore needed** for a one-time infusion of capital, LIC would meet 51% (Rs. 4,743 crores) and Government will provide Remaining 49%, amounting to Rs. 4,557 crore, on a **one-time basis**.

INDO-US YUDH ABHYAS 2019

Current context: Exercise Yudh Abhyas – 2019, a joint military training exercise between India and US defence forces is being conducted from 5th to 18th September 2019 in Washington, USA.

EXERCISE YUDH ABHYAS 2019

- The Exercise of Yudh Abhyas is the **largest joint exercise** for defence cooperation between the militaries of the USA and India and will **focus** on anti-terror operations, counter-insurgency etc.
- The exercise is **hosted alternately between the two countries** and will be the **15th edition** of the exercise that is going to be conducted from 5th September 2019.
- The armed forces of both countries share their expertise to train in an integrated manner at Battalion level.
- At the end of the training, a series of procedures or exercise will be taken for operation as per the **United Nations (UN) mandate**.
- The Exercise Yudh Abhyas was started under US Army Pacific Partnership Programme in the **year 2004**.

20TH INDIA-RUSSIA SUMMIT

Current context: PM Modi attended the 20th Annual Summit between India and Russia at **Vladivostok, Russia**.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the fields of LNG Business and LNG supplies, energy and science, military and technical cooperation etc. were signed by the leaders.
- Russia proposed to set up more than **20 nuclear power units** in India over the **next 20 years** in the meeting.
- Moscow has decided to confer PM Modi with the **highest civilian award of the country**- the Order of the Holy Apostle Andrew the First.
- Both the leaders paid a visit to the '**Zvezda**' **Shipbuilding Complex**, which is poised to make a huge contribution to the development of Arctic shipping.
- The **1st India-Russia Summit was held in 2001** at the time of former Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee's.

5TH EEF 2019 IN RUSSIA

Current context: Prime Minister Modi has been invited as the **chief guest** of the 5th **Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) at Vladivostok in Russia.**

KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM SUMMIT

- PM Modi will address the EEF as the chief guest at the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin.
- The EEF is **aimed** to expand international cooperation in the **Asia-Pacific region** and to develop the Russian economy far east.
- India will join sessions of Logistics - a digital pathway, power of Youth, Russia-India business dialogue and the Human Capital in Eurasia at the EEF.
- India will have its own pavilion called the **India Lounge** with the support of the Roscongress Foundation at the 5th Eastern Economic Forum.
- The lounge will serve as a **platform** to demonstrate investment opportunities in the Far East, attract Russian investors to the growing economy of India and, promote Indian investments in the region.

RBI MANDATED TO LINK RETAIL LOANS TO EXTERNAL BENCHMARK

Current context: The RBI has mandated banks to link their fresh retail loans to the external benchmark with effect from 1st October 2019.

ABOUT EXTERNAL BENCHMARK

- The RBI has proposed **3 external benchmarks**:
 1. Policy repo rate
 2. The Government of India's **3-month and 6-month** Treasury bill yields published by **Financial Benchmarks India Private (FBIL)**
 3. Any other benchmark **market interest rate published by FBIL**
- The directive is applicable to **all Public Sector Banks** voluntarily, while the private banks are yet to.
- Recently, some state-run banks have introduced home and auto loans having repo-linked products but the RBI wants them to add loans to **micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs)** to an external benchmark.
- RBI has clarified that the final rate charged to the borrowers after the switchover to external benchmark **would be same** as the rate charged for a new loan of the same category at the time of origination of the loan.

1ST US-ASEAN MARITIME DRILLS

Current context: The first ASEAN-US Maritime Exercise (AUMX) is being jointly held between the United States and ASEAN Countries in the **South China Sea.**

AUMX 2019

- The Sattahip Naval Base is starting from **Thailand** and will end in **Singapore**, and will last for **5 days.**

- The exercises will stretch into “international waters in Southeast Asia, including the Gulf of Thailand and the South China Sea” in its whole journey.
- The **Association of Southeast Asian (ASEAN) nations** will undergo exercise activities such as boarding of target vessels to simulate search and seizure, drilling etc.
- The drill has been conducted after a **Chinese survey vessel had extended its activities** to an area closer to Vietnam’s coastline.
- China and some ASEAN countries lie at the border of the South China Sea and the area of contention lie mainly in the “**Nine-dash line**”.

INDIA TO TAKE PART IN TSENTR 2019

Current context: India is going to take part in the TSENTR 2019, conducted by **the Central Military Commission of Russia**.

ABOUT EXERCISE TSENTR 2019

- TSENTR 2019 is a part of the annual series of exercises that forms a part of the **Russian Armed Forces' annual training cycle**.
- The exercise is held every year at one of the four Russia’s military Commands namely, **Kavkas (South), Zapad (West), Vostok (East) and TSENTR (Centre)**.
- This year the exercise would begin from 9th September and end on 23rd September at **Donguz training ranges, Orenburg, Russia**.
- The exercise is widening itself to be of International Character, with Belarus participating in **ZAPAD-2017** and China and Mongolia participating in **VOSTOK-2018**.
- This year the invitation has been extended to **9 other countries including India**.
- The exercise **aims** at enhancing military security in the strategic **Central Asian region** by training the participating armies into modules. The 1st module includes repelling airstrikes, counter-terror operations, etc. and the 2nd module has focused on offensive operations.

“EAT RIGHT INDIA MOVEMENT”

Current context: Dr Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Health and Family Welfare launched the ‘Eat Right India Movement’ on the side-lines of the 5-day **‘72nd Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia’**.

KEY FACTS

- The ‘Eat Right India Movement’ of **Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)** was launched with a new logo and tagline **‘Sahi Bhojan, Behtar Jeevan’**.
- The movement is aligned with the Government’s flagship public health programmes Ayushman Bharat Yojana, POSHAN Abhiyaan, Swachh Bharat Mission etc.
- The movement along with the ‘Fit India’ Movement’ emphasises on a new healthy eating approach which places citizens at the centre of a Health Revolution through food and fitness, to fight lifestyle diseases like hypertension, obesity and diabetes effectively.
- **WHO Director Poonam Khetrpal Singh**, said that the step will be held in aiding the **4 main factors** of preventing the Non-communicable diseases- **healthy diet, physical exercise, avoidance of tobacco and alcohol**, as the cause of mortality is shifting from communicable diseases to non-communicable diseases.

- To avoid the harmful effects of reused cooking oil, FSSAI has prescribed a limit for **Total Polar Compounds (TPC) at 25% in cooking oil.**

ANNUAL KAUSHALACHARYA AWARDS LAUNCHED BY MSDE

Current context: The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) has organized “Kaushalacharya Samadar 2019” to honoured trainers for their contribution to skilled workforce development.

ABOUT ANNUAL KAUSHALACHARYA AWARD

- The “**Kaushalacharya award**” is launched under the **Skill India Mission**, would be given to 53 trainers from various fields including trainers from National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs), Jan Sikshan Sansthan (JSS), WorldSkills Competition winners etc.
- The award will recognize the trainer’s contribution and make them join a training career as it is estimated that **by 2022 India will need about 2.5 lakh trainers** across the skilling ecosystem.
- The **Directorate of General Training (DGT), the nodal body for vocational training** in India also launched a workbook developed by the National Instructional Media Institute (NIMI) that aimed at building a meaningful learning experience for students.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) was signed between Dhanbad (Jharkhand) based Kaushalya Kameshwar Techno Solution Pvt Limited and DGT for providing training in Industrial environment in mining sector courses.

INDO-LANKA MARITIME FLEET EXERCISE-SLINEX 2019

Current context: The joint maritime naval exercise SLINEX 2019, is scheduled to be held from 7th September 2019.

ABOUT EXERCISE-SLINEX 2019

- SLINEX 2019 is an **annual joint Indo-Lanka maritime** fleet exercise that will be held from 7th September to 13th September 2019.
- The exercise **aims** to enhance co-operation and strengthen mutual trust and interoperability between the navies of India and Srilanka.
- Both countries will work on improving their capabilities and operational effectiveness to maintain maritime security in the **Indian Ocean region.**
- Offshore patrol vessels, **SLNS Sindurala and Suranimala** will participate from Sri Lankan Navy
- SLINEX is a bilateral series of maritime exercises **initiated in 2005.**

28TH EDITION OF CORPAT

Current context: 28th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (Indo-Thai CORPAT) is conducted from 5th September to 15th September 2019.

INDO-THAI COORDINATED PATROL (CORPAT)

- The exercise is held between the **Indian Navy (IN) and the Royal Thai Navy (RTN).**

- His Majesty's Thailand Ship (HTMS) Kraburi, Indian Naval (IN) Ship Kesari and Maritime Patrol Aircraft from both the navies are participating in the CORPAT.
- **Since 2003**, the Royal Thai Navy (RTN) and the Andaman and Nicobar Command have been participating in the exercise.
- The **aim of CORPAT** is to ensure effective implementation of **United Nations Conventions on Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS)** which specify regulations regarding-
 1. protection and conservation of natural resources
 2. conservation of the marine environment
 3. prevention of unregulated or illegal fishing activity/piracy/ drug trafficking
 4. prevention of smuggling, illegal immigration by exchanging information
 5. conduct of Search and Rescue operations at sea

CHANDRAYAAN 2 HAS GONE INCOMMUNICADO

Current context: The lander of the Chandrayaan-2 lunar spacecraft lost control just minutes before its planned soft-landing near the moon's the South Pole on 7th September 2019.

KEY FACTS

- The communication from the **Vikram Lander** to the ground was lost at a distance of just **2.1km from the moon**.
- The mission is scheduled for soft-landing on the moon around 1.50 a.m. on 7th September 2019.
- Chandrayaan-2 arrived near the moon after **30 days in earth orbit** from its launch on 15th July 2019 from Sriharikota.
- The lander was named 'Vikram', after **Vikram Sarabhai, father of the Indian space programme**.

ABOUT CHANDRAYAAN-2:

- Launch date: July 15,2019
- Launch vehicle: GSLV-Mk III
- Launch station: Satish Dhawan Space Centre
- Launch Location: Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh
- Chandrayaan-2 is the second lunar mission of ISRO after Chandrayaan-1 launched on 22nd October 2008.
- The mission consists of 3 modules- Orbiter, Lander (Vikram) and Rover (Pragyan).
- Chandrayaan-2 is an indigenously developed mission of ISRO and with its success, India will become the 4th country in the world to successfully land on the Moon after U.S., Russia and China.

6TH INDIA-CHINA STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DIALOGUE

Current context: The 6th edition of the India-China strategic economic dialogue is started from 7th September 2019.

ABOUT 6TH INDIA-CHINA STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DIALOGUE

- **India will host** the 3-day Economic Dialogue which will discuss various issues, including infrastructure, energy and pharmaceuticals and others.

- The dialogue would be held between the **NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar** (Indian Side) and the Chairman of **National Development and Reforms Commission** (Chinese side).
- The dialogue is **held annually alternately at the capital cities** of the two countries for enabling ease of doing business and facilitating bilateral trade and investment flows.
- The bilateral trade between India and China stood at **\$87 billion** in 2018-19 and the trade deficit at **\$50 billion**(in favour of China).
- The dialogue was initiated during the visit of Chinese Prime Minister **Wen Jiabao to India in December 2010**.
- The **5th SED was held in Beijing** on 14th April 2018.

GOVT URGED CPSES TO BOOST CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Current context: Finance Ministry has urged Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) to boost their capital expenditure during the current FY 2019-20.

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

- A statement was issued after the meeting held between the Financial advisors of various Ministries and Maharatna and Navratna categories of CPSEs for considering measures to pump liquidity into the market by boosting capital expenditure of the Union government.
- The meeting was chaired by **Economic Affairs Secretary Atanu Chakraborty**.
- There are **eight Maharatna CPSEs** Coal India, — BHEL, BPCL, NTPC, ONGC, GAIL, Indian Oil, and SAIL — and **16 Navratna CPSEs**.
- The Centre has budgeted **Rs 3.38-lakh crore** for capital expenditure for the FY 2019-20.
- The government wants to utilise CPSEs' spending powers to **boost liquidity**, as the private sector continues to struggle due to poor demand and declining sales.

TASK FORCE FOR INFRA PROJECTS BY FINMIN

Current context: The Finance Minister has constituted a task force to draw up a National Infrastructure Pipeline worth \$1.4 trillion.

ABOUT TASK FORCE

- The task force is headed by the **secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)**.
- The National Infrastructure Pipeline would be set up for **each of the years from FY 2019-20 to FY 2024-25**.
- The decision has been taken as India needs to spend about \$1.4 trillion (Rs. 100 lakh crore) to achieve the GDP of \$5 trillion by 2024-25.
- The other members of the task force include **CEO, NITI Aayog** or his nominee, Secretary, Department of Expenditure, Ministry of Finance or his nominee, Secretary of the Administrative Ministry, Additional Secretary (Investment), Department of Economic Affairs, joint Secretary, Infrastructure Policy & Finance Division, DEA.
- The National Infrastructure Pipeline would include **Greenfield and brownfield projects** costing above Rs 100 crore each.
- The Task Force will **submit its report** on the pipeline for **FY 2019-20 by 31st October 2019** and by 31st December 2019 on the indicative pipeline for FY 2021-25.

1ST MEGA FOOD PARK IN TELANGANA

Current context: Harsimrat Kaur Badal, the Union Minister for Food processing has inaugurated the 1st Mega Food Park in Telangana.

ABOUT MEGA FOOD PARK

- The Mega Food Park will generate a turnover of about Rs14,000 crore and will leverage an additional investment of about Rs250 crore in 22 food processing units.
- Mega Food parks are **aimed** at facilitating the doubling of farmer's income by 2022.
- The initiative will aid the **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme** by reducing post-harvest losses and hedging the farmer's risk, by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of the supply chain.
- The government provides **financial assistance up to Rs50 crore per Mega Food Park project**.
- The facilities in the park include 500-tonne deep freeze, quality control lab and other related food processing facilities, 5,000-tonne warehouse each for raw materials, finished commodities etc.

ADB TO PROVIDE \$200 MILLION TO MAHARASHTRA

Current context: The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved \$ 200 million to Maharashtra to **improve road safety** by upgrading rural roads to all-weather standards.

ADB PROJECT FOR IMPROVING ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

- The road upgrades would link the local and rural residents to the markets and will in turn help in boosting the agricultural productivity and incomes.
- The project would also work with the **Maharashtra Rural Road Development Association (MRRDA)**, to develop climate resilient design, road asset management etc.
- A **technical assistance grant of \$1 million** for institutional strengthening of the MRRDA is to be given for enhancing its management performances.
- The state of Maharashtra accounts for **8% of the total road incidents** in India.
- The states' agriculture accounts for about **47% of employment** and contributes **11% to the state gross domestic product**.

7TH RCEP MINISTERIAL MEETING

Current context: Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Railways Piyush Goyal represented India in the 7th RCEP Ministerial Meeting held on 8th September 2019.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING

- The meeting was held in **Bangkok, Thailand** and was attended by 16 RCEP Participating Countries (RPCs).
- The Meeting was **chaired by Jurin Laksanawisit**, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce of Thailand.
- The meeting reviewed the negotiations made in the last ministerial meeting and concluded that the negotiations have reached a critical milestone.

- The **Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)** is a proposed **Free Trade Agreement (FTA)** between 16 countries including 10 ASEAN countries and its 6 FTA partners (India, Japan, Australia, South Korea, New Zealand and China).
- The RCEP negotiation was **launched** at the ASEAN Summit in Cambodia in November **2012**.
- The Ministers last met was held in Beijing on 2-3 August 2019.

NEW ANIMAL FACILITY ESTABLISHED BY UNIVERSITY OF HYDERABAD

Current context: The University of Hyderabad has established an Animal Facility centre for experimental research.

DETAIL

- The facility is one of the largest in the country and will cater to the needs of **research investigators** working with small animal models like rodents and rabbits.
- It will provide the researchers to perform **cutting edge research** and publish them with facts and accuracy in high impact journals.
- The holding capacity of the animal house is nearly 12,000 that include rabbits, rats, mice, and genetically modified transgenic mice/immunocompromised animals.
- **5 different features for research** offered will be Insect related work, Silkworm rearing, mouse & rats, mosquitoes breeding, Fisheries and also transgenic.

US OPEN TENNIS 2019

Current context: Rafael Nadal has won Men's singles and Bianca Andreescu won the Women's Singles tennis title at the 2019 US Open.

ABOUT BIANCA ANDREESCU

- **Rafel Nadal** won beating Daniil Medvedev and **Bianca Andreescu** won beating Serena Williams.
- This is Rafael's **fourth US Open title** and **19th Grand Slam trophy**.
- While Bianca Andreescu won her **first Grand Slam title**, at the 2019 US Open.
- Apart from the US Open, Nadal has won 12 French Opens, two Wimbledons and one Australian Open.
- Bianca Andreescu is the **1st Canadian** to win the Grand Slam singles title.
- The US 2019 was the 139th edition of the US Open (tennis) and the 4th Grand slam event of the year.
- The event was held at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in **New York City**.

68TH PLENARY SESSION OF NEC

Current context: Union Home Minister Amit Shah inaugurated the 68th plenary session of the North Eastern Council (NEC) in Guwahati on 8th September 2019.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF 68TH NEC PLENARY SESSION

- He is the **chairman** of the North Eastern Council (NEC) and the meeting constituted the Governors, the Chief Ministers and officials of eight north-eastern States.
- In the meeting, he has assured that the Government would never touch **Article 371** of the constitution, which grants special provisions to the northeast region.
- **Meghalaya Chief Minister, Conrad Sangma** proposed the **8-laning** of Guwahati- Shillong- Dawki-Sylhet-Chittagong Highway.
- **Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal** suggested the council to start hosting a festival in each country of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to promote the northeastern states of India as "hub of opportunities".
- **The North Eastern Council** is the nodal agency for the economic and social development of the region which consists of Sikkim, Tripura, Manipur, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Mizoram and, Nagaland.

IPPB ROLLED OUT AEPS SERVICES

Current context: The India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) has announced that it has rolled out Aadhaar enabled payment system (AePS) services.

ABOUT IPPB'S AEPS

- The announcement has been made by the Union Minister for Communications and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad on the **1st anniversary of the IPPB**.
- The vision is to build a **'Truly Inclusive Financial System'** and the most trusted, accessible and affordable bank for the common man in India.
- IPPB with the launch of AePS services has now become the single largest platform in the country for providing interoperable banking services to the customers of **any bank**.
- Now, any common person can perform basic banking services such as cash withdrawals and balance enquiry, with a bank account linked to Aadhaar irrespective of the bank they hold their account with.
- A customer who has an Aadhaar linked account can authenticate his/her identity with Aadhaar authentication & fingerprint scan, to complete a transaction.
- India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) was **established under** the Department of Posts, **Ministry of Communication**.
- IPPB's **100% equity** is owned by the **Government of India**.

CONFERENCE ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY 'ANGAN' BEGAN

Current context: ANGAN (Augmenting Nature by Green Affordable New-habitat), an international conference on energy efficiency began in New Delhi on 9th September 2019.

KEY FACTS

- The Conference is being organised by the **Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power** in collaboration with the Indo German Technical Cooperation.
- In the 3-day conference, experts will discuss the technologies/designs for making energy-efficient **Commercial as well as Residential Buildings**.

- It was estimated that an investment of **Rs. 2000 billion** in Building energy efficiency activities would lead to a cumulative savings of **388 Billion units of electricity** for the next ten years with a payback of about 2 years.
- The Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) has the objective of reducing the energy intensity of the Indian economy and perform functions under the **Energy Conservation Act**.

RECIPIENTS OF VISITOR'S AWARDS 2019

Current context: President's Secretariat has announced the Recipients of Visitor's Awards 2019 on 9th September 2019.

VISITOR'S AWARDS 2019

- This year the awards are presented in the fields of Physical Sciences and Biological Sciences, Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences and are presented by the President of India.
- **Prof. Sibnath Deb** from Pondicherry University will get the Visitor's Award for Research in **Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences** for his research in the field of child protection, student's mental health and HIV/AIDS.
- **Prof. Sanjay Puri** from Jawaharlal Nehru University would be presented the Visitor's Award for **Research in Physical Sciences** for his research in the field of non-equilibrium statistical physics and nonlinear dynamics.
- **Prof. Asad Ullah Khan** from Aligarh Muslim University would be presented the Visitor's Award for **Research in Biological Sciences** for identifying Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) problem in India.
- **Dr Shaon Ray Chaudhuri** from Tripura University will be awarded the Visitor's Award for **Technology Development**.
- Visitor's Awards had been **instituted in 2014** to promote healthy competition amongst Central Universities and motivate them to adopt best practices from around the world.

22ND SESSION OF UN COMMITTEE ON CRPD

Current context: The 22nd Session of the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) held in Geneva.

ABOUT UNCRPD

- India ratified the UNCRPD Convention on **1st October 2007** and submitted its **First Country Report on Status of Disability in India** on November 2015.
- The 22nd session on CRPD discussed India's First Country Report for consideration at UNHRC.
- India is a **signatory** of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD).
- The UN Committee appreciated the initiatives taken by the Government of India like **RPwD Act, 2016**, the launch of **Accessible India Campaign**, the establishment of **National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation (NIMHR)** for persons with disability.
- CRPD is a **United Nation's (UN) body** that meets **twice** annually in **Geneva** to discuss reports submitted by 153 member nations.

INDIA'S SECOND MULTI MODAL TERMINAL

Current context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is to inaugurate India's 2nd Multi-Modal Terminal at **Sahibganj, Jharkhand** on 12th September 2019.

ABOUT MULTI-MODAL CARGO TERMINAL

- It has been built in 2 years at a cost of 290 crores, on **National Waterway -1 (river Ganga)**.
- PM Modi had laid its foundation in April **2017**.
- The **purpose** of the terminal is to open up industries of Jharkhand and Bihar to the global market and improve connectivity between India and Nepal for movement of cargo through waterways route.
- This will be the **2nd of the 3 MMTs** being constructed on Ganga River. The 1st MMT was inaugurated by PM Modi on November 2018 at **Varanasi**.
- The MMTs are built as part of the **Jal Marg Vikas Project** which aims to develop navigation of large vessels upto 1500-2000 tonnes weight, on river Ganga between **Varanasi to Haldia**.
- **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI)** is the Implementing Agency of the MMT project.

42ND UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL MEETING

Current context: India had a face-off with Pakistan on the issue of Kashmir in 42nd regular session of United Nations Human Rights Council.

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (UNHRC)

- Pakistan demanded to set up a **commission of inquiry**, which is UN's highest-level probes for major crisis, to look into **the issue of Kashmir**.
- Pakistan has termed the abrogation of **Article 370 in Kashmir** by India as "Indian brutality" in the region.
- India slammed Pakistan's comment and said that the parliament of India took the decision after a full debate that was televised and enjoyed widespread support and reiterated that the issue is internal to India.
- UNHRC **aims** to protect and promote human rights around the world and is headquartered at **Geneva, Switzerland**.
- It was established on 15th March **2006** and investigates human rights violations in UN member states.

MOTIHARI-AMLEKHGANJ PETROLEUM PRODUCTS PIPELINE

Current context: India and Nepal jointly inaugurated the Motihari-Amlekhganj petroleum product pipeline on 10th September 2019.

ABOUT MOTIHARI-AMLEKHGANJ OIL PIPELINE

- This is the **1st ever cross-border petroleum product pipeline** in the **South Asia region**.
- As per an arrangement in place since 1973, tankers carry petroleum products from India to Nepal.
- This is a **69 km pipeline** with a capacity of **2 million metric ton per annum**, will provide petroleum products to Nepal at a cheap price.
- The project is led by the **Indian Oil Corporation** and the **Nepal Oil Corporation**.
- India is already supplying diesel to Bangladesh through cross border trains.

- The inauguration was made jointly by the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli through a video conference.

PM MODI TO LAUNCH NATIONAL ANIMAL DISEASE CONTROL PROGRAMME

Current context: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the National Animal Disease Control Programme (NADCP) on 11th September 2019 from Mathura, Uttar Pradesh.

SIGNIFICANCE

- The programme is launched for eradicating the **Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) and Brucellosis** in the livestock.
- These diseases are very common amongst the livestock – cow-bulls, goats, pigs, buffaloes, sheep etc.
- If a cow/buffalo gets infected with FMD, the **milk loss is up to 100% for 4 to 6 months** and with infection of Brucellosis, the **milk output reduces by 30%, for the entire life cycle**.
- The infection of brucellosis can also be transmitted to the farmworkers and livestock owners.
- The programme is of **Rs 12,652 Crores** for a period of **5 years till 2024** and is **100% funded by the Central Government**.
- The Programme has **2 components** i) to control the diseases by 2025 and ii) eradication by 2030.
- It **aims** at vaccinating over 500 Million Livestock including cattle, buffalo, sheep, goats and pigs against the FMD.

INS KHANDERI TO BE COMMISSIONED INTO INDIAN NAVY

Current context: INS Khanderi, India's 2nd Scorpene-class attack submarine is to be commissioned into the Indian Navy on 28th September 2019.

ABOUT THE AGREEMENT

- **Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited (MDL)** has manufactured the submarine in Mumbai and designed by the **French naval Defence and Energy Company DCNS**.
- INS Khanderi is undersea trial since its **launch** in January **2017**.
- It is named after its predecessor INS Khanderi (S22), which was named after **Chhatrapati Shivaji's island fort of Khanderi**.
- Scorpene class submarine **features** diesel propulsion and are diesel-electric attack submarines.
- **INS Kalvari was the 1st scorpene class submarine** to be commissioned into the Indian Navy on December 2017.

GEM AND PUNJAB GOVERNMENT SIGN MOU FOR SETTING UP PMU

Current context: GeM under the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry** and Government of Punjab, signed MoU to set up **GeM Organizational Transformation Team- Project Management Unit (GOTT PMU)**.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- GOTT will assist the buyer agent to redesign the **procurement processes** and enhance competencies to derive maximum benefit from the **online marketplace**.
- Government of Punjab is the **first State** to establish GOTT PMU.
- Among the CPSUs, **SAIL** has already signed MoU for setting up of PMU.
- The national public procurement portal **GeM was launched in August 2016** to bring transparency, efficiency and inclusion.
- It has facilitated procurement worth over **Rs. 34,000 crores of goods & services** by various Government Departments, Organisations and PSUs.
- It is projected that through the initiatives of GOTT PMU, the Punjab government will be able to transact about **Rs 1700 crore on GeM platform in the first year**, in terms of annual Gross Merchandise Value (GMV).

NCST DEMANDED INCLUSION OF LADAKH IN THE 6TH SCHEDULE

Current context: National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) has asked the centre to include UT of Ladakh under Fifth/Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India.

ABOUT 6TH SCHEDULE

- The deliberation took place at the **119th meeting of the NCST** on 11th September 2019 under the Chairmanship of **Dr Nand Kumar Sai**.
- The commission observed that the territory of Ladakh created recently is predominantly a tribal region, **accounting for more than 97% tribal people**.
- The **Scheduled Tribe population** represent 66.8 per cent in Leh, 83.49 per cent in Kargil, 89.96 per cent in Sanku and 99.16 per cent in Zaskar, 73.35 per cent in Nubra, 97.05 per cent in Khalsti areas of the Ladakh region.
- The **Schedule tribes in the region** include Balti, Bot, Boto, Changpa, Mon, Purigpa, Garra, Brokpa, Drokpa, Dard, Shin, Beda.
- **Sixth Schedule of the constitution** says that tribal areas in each item of Parts I, II and II(A) and in Part-III shall be an **autonomous district** and empowers Parliament to amend any provisions of the schedule.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SKILLS, MUMBAI

Current context: The Union Minister for Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) Dr Mahendra Nath Pandey, laid the foundation stone of Indian Institute of Skills (IIS) at Mumbai.

ABOUT INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SKILLS (IIS)

- The union cabinet has approved setting up of Indian Institute of Skills (IISs) in three locations- **Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Kanpur**, as part of the Skill India Programme.
- The institute is launched to provide skills to students who want to pursue **technical education** after completing **Class X and Class XII**.
- It will operate on PPP (Public-Private Partnership) model and **Tata Education Development Trust (TEDT)** was selected through a competitive bidding process as the **private partner** for setting up IIS at NSTI campus in Mumbai.

- The aim of IIS is to train about 5000 students every year with 70% placement opportunities.
- The land has been provided by the government for a **period of 25 years** to the private partner for the institute.

NATIONAL PENSION SCHEME FOR TRADERS AND SELF EMPLOYED PERSONS

Current context: Prime Minister Modi has launched the National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self Employed Persons on 12th September from Ranchi, Jharkhand.

ABOUT THE SCHEME

- The nation-wide launch is for the Vyaparis (shopkeepers/retail traders and self-employed persons) with an **annual turnover limit of Rs 1.5 crore**.
- NPSTSEP is a voluntary and **contributory pension scheme**, with the provision for minimum assured pension of **Rs 3,000/- monthly once the subscriber attains the age of 60 years**.
- The beneficiary should be within the **age group of 18 to 40 years**.
- The beneficiary should **not be income taxpayer** and also not a member of **EPFO/ PM-SYM/ESIC/NPS (Govt.)**.
- The **beneficiary** has to contribute a **50% share** of the monthly contribution and the remaining **50% contribution** shall be made by the **central government**.
- The enrolment under the scheme is free of cost and facilitated through 3.50 lakh Common Service Centre (CSCs) across the country.
- The self-roll facility is also applicable through the portal www.maandhan.in/vyapari.
- Only an **Aadhaar card and a saving bank/ Jan-Dhan Account passbook** are required at the time of enrolment.
- **GSTIN** is required only for subscribers with a turnover above **Rs. 40 lakhs**.

PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN MAAN DHAN YOJANA

Current context: PM Modi had made a nation-wide launch of the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana on 12th September at Ranchi, Jharkhand.

ABOUT KISAN MAAN DHAN YOJANA

- Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan Dhan Yojana is an age-old pension scheme for all **small and marginal farmers** between the **age group of 18 to 40 years**.
- Under the scheme, the farmers would receive a **monthly pension of Rs 3000**, once they attain the **age of 60 years**.
- The government has made an outlay of **Rs 10,774 crore** for the scheme for the **next 3 years**.
- It is a voluntary and contributory scheme, in which farmers will make a monthly contribution of **Rs.55 to Rs.200**, depending on their age of entry, till they attain the age of 60 years.
- PM Modi also inaugurated Jharkhand's new Vidhan Sabha Building and lay the foundation stone for the New Secretariat Building at Ranchi.

INDO-THAI MAITREE – 2019

Current context: Indo-Thailand Joint Military Exercise Maitree – 2019 is going to be conducted at Umroi (Meghalaya) from 16th to 29th Sep 2019.

MAITREE: INDO-THAILAND JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE

- 50 soldiers from each the **Indian Army (IA) and the Royal Thailand Army (RTA)** would participate in the event.
- The **aim** of the exercise is to share experiences of **counter-terrorism operation** done in their respective countries.
- MAITREE is an **annual** training exercise which is conducted since **2006** alternatively in India and Thailand.
- The exercise covers company level joint training in the jungle and urban scenario on counter-terrorism operations.
- This will be the **3rd consecutive military engagement** on the line of similar exercise carried out twice in the past 1 month.

WATER FOUND ON AN EXOPLANET

Current context: For the first time, water has been discovered in the atmosphere of the exoplanet named **K2-18b**.

KEY FACTS

- Researchers have found **both water and temperatures** on K2-18b, being the **only exoplanet** having such components.
- The **exoplanet** is a planet orbiting a distant star outside our solar system.
- K2-18b is eight times the mass of Earth and about 110 light-years from the Earth in the Leo constellation.
- The team used the **Hubble Space Telescope** and developed open-source algorithms to analyse the starlight filtered through K2-18b's atmosphere.
- K2-18b is a **cool exoplanet** and receives only 5 per cent more radiation than the Earth.
- This planet is about the same temperature as Earth, but researchers are not confirmed that it is habitable or not.

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS SIGNS MOU WITH CII

Current context: Ministry of Railways has signed an MoU with the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) to facilitate green initiatives in Indian Railways.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The MoU has been signed as part of **Indian Railways' green initiative** to mitigate the cause of global warming and its effects that are causing climate change.
- The key objective of the MoU are:
 1. Enhancing Energy efficiency in manufacturing facilities and railway workshops.
 2. Greening of Railway properties.
 3. Demonstrative pilots of 'net-zero energy buildings/ railway stations'.

4. Capacity and skill development by sharing of best practices through training programmes on energy and environment.
5. Development of waste management policy, Green procurement policy, carbon neutrality, solid waste disposal, phytoremediation.

RAJASTHAN LAUNCHED THE “JAN SOOCHNA PORTAL”

Current context: Rajasthan has launched the first-ever public information portal on the line of the RTI.

ABOUT JAN SOOCHNA PORTAL

- The portal has promised to provide information about government authorities and departments suo motu to the public in the true spirit of the **Right To Information Act, 2005**.
- Rajasthan, where the RTI movement had started in 1990s has become the **1st state in the country to launch a public portal** for providing governmental information to the public.
- The State government has collaborated with the civil society groups to develop the portal.
- The portal would initially provide information about **13 departments on a single platform**.
- The information will be provided about things such as works undertaken in different areas, land records, the number of beneficiaries of schemes, and social security pensions etc.
- The portal named the “**Jan Sookna Portal-2019**”, would be in compliance with section (4) of the RTI Act that mandates the public authorities to disclose information in the public domain.

PRESIDENT VISIT TO SWITZERLAND

Current context: President Ram Nath Kovind met his Swiss counterpart Ueli Maurer in Bern on 13 September 2019.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- President Kovind unveiled the **bust of Mahatma Gandhi**, marking the 150th anniversary of the Father of the Nation at **Villeneuve, Switzerland**.
- Mahatma Gandhi had a special connection, as he visited Villeneuve in 1931 at the invitation of **Noble laureate Romain Rolland**.
- During the visit, India and Switzerland **signed and exchanged agreements/MOUs for:**
 - a) Cooperation in the field of Climate Change
 - b) Letter of Intent to create an India-Switzerland Science and Innovation Alliance
 - c) For renewal of the Hindi Chair at the University of Lausanne.
- India and Switzerland agreed to have the **first automatic exchange of information on tax matters**.
- India also looks forward to Switzerland joining the International Solar Alliance.
- Switzerland is the **largest exporter to India from Europe** and has a bilateral trade volume of around \$19 billion.

AADHAAR AUTHENTICATION MADE MANDATORY FOR NEW DEALERS BY GSTN

Current context: The GST Network has decided to make Aadhaar authentication or physical verification mandatory for new dealers.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The verification is mandated from **January 2020** for checking malpractices in GST.
- Deputy Chief Minister of Bihar **Sushil Kumar Modi**, head of the Group of Ministers of GST Network has announced the decision.
- The decision has been taken by analyzing the last two years of increasing numbers of fly-by-night operators, **making fake invoices**.
- For those dealers who do not want Aadhaar authentication, **physical verification** will be carried out for them.
- The government has decided to do **complete online refunding** from 24th September 2019 from a single source, either by the Central GST or State GST.
- The **next GST council meeting** is scheduled to take place in Goa on **20th September 2019**.

GOVERNMENT PUTS MINIMUM EXPORT PRICE FOR ONION

Current context: The government has announced a Minimum Export Price of \$850 per tonne for Onion.

KEY FACTS

- The decision has been taken in order to **check exports** and bring down sharp increasing prices in the domestic market which touched Rs 30/kg as Wholesale price.
- The **Minimum Export Price** is the rate, below which no exports are allowed.
- The notification has been issued by the **Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT)** to export all varieties of onions only on Letter of Credit subject to the MEP of \$850 FOB per tonne.
- **Reasons for the price rise** of onion is said to be due to fall in supply of onions from Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka, rains in parts of Maharashtra hampering onion markets followed by droughts.
- **India's export** on an average of **15 lakh tonnes of onion and produces around 17-18 million tonnes of onions in a year**.

PANKAJ ADVANI CLAIMED THE 22ND WORLD TITLE AT IBSF

Current context: Pankaj Advani bagged the 22nd world title at the IBSF World Billiards Championship.

KEY FACTS

- This is Pankaj's **fifth title in the last six years** since returning from a professional stint in the UK in 2014 and hence has brought home a **world trophy every year**.
- The championship was held in **Myanmar**.
- Advani won the title by **defeating Nay Thway of Myanmar**.

- The IBSF World Billiards Championship is an international **tournament for English Billiards** and is in place since **1973** when it was sanctioned by the International Billiards and Snooker Federation.

'JALDOOT' TRAVELLING EXHIBITION LAUNCHED

Current context: 'JALDOOT' a travelling exhibition for spreading the message of water conservation to masses has been launched.

ABOUT 'JALDOOT'

- The travelling exhibition has been launched by **Regional Outreach Bureau, Pune** under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- The Jaldoot will visit 8 districts of Maharashtra (Pune, Ahmednagar, Nashik, Jalgaon, Buldhana, Amravati and Solapur) in the next 2 months to spread awareness about water conservation.
- '**Swachhta**' oath was also administered by Shri Javadekar to participants on the occasion.
- The Regional Outreach Bureau, ROB, is the office under **the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**, with its headquarter at Pune for Maharashtra and Goa region.
- It carries out various outreach activities and development communication needs of the Central Government.
- The Jaldoot Campaign has been launched by the ROB in association with **MSRTC (Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation)**.
- The **Jaldoot : Travelling Exhibition on Jalshakti Abhiyan** is made by redesigning the bus by ROB.

RELIEF TO INDIAN RAILWAYS PASSENGERS

Current context: The Ministry of Railways has announced to rationalize the fare structure and composition of Humsafar class of trains.

KEY FACTS

- The step has been taken to make the fares more affordable and comfortable.
- The existing variable fare system of the **Humsafar class of trains has been done away with**, which means these trains will now have only 'fixed' fare system.
- The base fare of Humsafar trains will be 1.15 times of the base fare of **Mail/Express Trains** instead of "Superfast" Mail/Express Trains.
- The Tatkal charges in Humsafar have also been **reduced from existing 1.5 times** of Humsafar base fare to approximately 1.3 times of Humsafar base fare.
- Tatkal fare in Humsafar trains has been brought equivalent to the Normal Tatkal Rule of other Mail/Express trains (Humsafar base fare + Normal Class wise Tatkal charges).
- **Sleeper class coaches will also be attached** in addition to existing only 3AC class coaches as per the requirement.
- Tickets under current booking after the first charting shall be sold with **10% discount**.

GOVT INCENTIVE TO BOOST EXPORTS AND HOUSING SECTOR

Current context: The Finance Ministry has announced a set of measures to boost exports and housing sector.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The measures worth **Rs 70,000 crore** and the key highlights of the initiatives taken are:
 - To provide a 10,000 crore rupees **special window** to help complete the ongoing affordable and middle-income housing projects.
 - The housing projects under the special window include **non-NPA (Non-Performing Assets) and non-NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) projects**.
 - Extending the scheme of reimbursement of taxes and duties for export promotion.
 - Fully automated electronic refund for **Input Tax Credits (ITC) in GST**.
 - Revised **priority sector lending norms** for exports.
 - Expanding the scope of **Export Credit Insurance Scheme (ECIS)**.
 - Formation of an **inter-ministerial working group** to monitor export finance.
 - Merchandise **Exports from India Scheme (MEIS)** for textiles will be replaced by the **scheme for Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Product (RoDTEP)**.
 - Textile and all other sectors will transit into RoDTEP from **January 1, 2020**, which currently enjoy incentives up to 2 per cent over MEIS.
 - The **Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC)** scope will be expanded to **export credit insurance service (ECIS)**.

IPS OFFICER CHHAYA SHARMA TO BE HONORED BY ASIA SOCIETY

Current context: IPS officer Chhaya Sharma (India) has been chosen for the 2019 Asia Society Game Changers award.

ABOUT CHHAYA SHARMA

- She has been nominated for the award for her investigation and prosecution of the **Delhi gang-rape case** and other high-profile crimes in India.
- As the then south Delhi Deputy Police Commissioner, she responded immediately at a call in the wee hours of **16th December 2012**.
- For the first time since the launch of the award in 2014, this year all the awardees are women.
- 6 other female awardees of the 2019 Asia Society Game Changers award are:
 1. Japan's **Yuriko Koike**, the first female governor of Tokyo
 2. China's **Jane Jie Sun**, the leader of Ctrip, in China,
 3. **Sheikha Hoor Al Qasimi** from UAE, a pioneer in the art
 4. **Sana Mir**, from the field of sports
 5. **Faiza Saeed**
 6. **Kung Fu Nuns**, a group of Buddhist nuns from India and Nepal, known for their social activism and humanitarian work
- **Asia Society** is an educational organization dedicated to strengthening partnerships and mutual understanding among the institutions and people of Asia and the United States.
- The award honours people who make a positive contribution to the future of Asia.

60TH FOUNDATION DAY OF DOORDARSHAN

Current context: 60th foundation day of Doordarshan was celebrated on 15th September in New Delhi.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- On the occasion, the union minister Prakash Javadekar released **Postage Stamp** to mark Doordarshan's 60th Foundation Day.
- A **poem penned by Alok Srivastava** and rendered in the voice of Amitabh Bachchan was also launched, highlighting the role played by Doordarshan.
- A **Korean Public Service Broadcasting channel, KBS World** was launched through which DD India will now be available in the Republic of Korea.
- Doordarshan is **India's first public service broadcaster** that was founded in **1959**.
- In 1965, the first five-minute-long news bulletin was read by **Pratima Puri** and she interviewed **Yuri Gagarin**, the first man to travel into outer space.
- The first **coloured broadcast** of Doordarshan happened in **1982** which was of **Asian Games** in Delhi.

LEAP-2019 & ARPIT-2019 LAUNCHED

Current context: Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank', Union HRD Minister has launched the **Leadership for Academicians Programme (LEAP) - 2019** and **Annual Refresher Programme In Teaching (ARPIT) - 2019**.

LEADERSHIP FOR ACADEMICIANS PROGRAMME

- LEAP has been launched for leadership development for Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) which is a **3-week leadership development training programme** for second-level academic functionaries.
- The **objective** of LEAP is to prepare the second tier academic heads that are potentially likely to assume leadership roles in the future.
- ARPIT is a platform for teachers to learn about the latest developments in their field and develop their teaching qualities.
- ARPIT was launched by the HRD Ministry in **November 2018** as a unique initiative of online professional development of 1.5 million higher education faculty through **SWAYAM**.
- The training module of various subjects built by discipline-specific **National Resource Centres (NRCs)** and are uploaded and made available through SWAYAM to all the teachers from 1st September 2019.
- For 2019 ARPIT, 46 disciplines are covered in addition to the 75 NRCs in the year 2018.

PUBLIC PREMISES (EVICTION OF UNAUTHORIZED OCCUPANTS) AMENDMENT BILL, 2019

Current context: The Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorized Occupants) Amendment Bill, 2019 has come into effect from 16th September 2019.

FEATURES OF THE BILL

- The bill was passed by the Parliament during the **last Budget Session**.
- The bill will facilitate smooth and speedy **eviction of unauthorized occupants** from Government residential accommodations.
- The step would increase the availability of **government residential accommodations** and reduce the waiting period for eligible persons.

- The government provides residential accommodation to those in service (employees, Members of Parliament and others) or till the term of their office on a **license basis**.
- The act empowers **the Estate Officers** to evict such unauthorized occupants in a time-bound manner.

AIR-TO-AIR MISSILE ASTRA

Current context: Indian Air Force (IAF) has successfully tested the air-to-air missile Astra on 16th September 2019.

ABOUT TEST

- The missile was launched from a **Sukhoi Su-30 MKI combat aircraft**, off the coast of **Odisha**.
- The **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** has developed the missile.
- This is the **first indigenously built** beyond visual range air-to-air missile of the Indian Air Force.
- The mission profile was executed in a textbook manner and the missile was tracked by **Electro-Optical Tracking System (EOTS)**, Various Radars and Sensors.
- ASTRA has a range of **over 70 km** and can fly with a speed of **over 5,555 kilometres per hour**.

RBI ALLOWED PAYMENT BANKS TO APPLY FOR SMALL FINANCE BANKS

Current context: RBI has allowed the Payments banks to apply for Small Finance Bank (SFB) licences through the “on tap licensing”.

ABOUT SMALL FINANCE BANK

- Under the “**on tap licensing**”, the criteria that the promoter of a payment bank have to meet to set up an SFB is that both banks come under the **non-operating financial holding company (NOFHC) structure**.
- The SFB licence to the payments banks will allow them to boost deposits and lend, that is currently **capped at Rs 1 lakh per customer**.
- The **minimum paid-up capital requirement for SFBs** is also revised by the RBI from **Rs 100 crore to now Rs 200 crore**.
- Promoter’s shareholding should be a **maximum of 40% by the end of 5 years**, and within **10years it should be down to 30%** and within **15years it should be down to 15%** shareholding.
- Promoters could exit from the bank after the lock-in period of 5years.
- RBI also allowed **primary urban cooperative banks** to convert into SFBs with a minimum net worth of such SFBs Rs100 crore and to be increased to Rs 200 crore within 5 years.
- **SFB** offers basic banking services, accepting lending and deposits to underserved and unserved sections, including small and marginal farmers, unorganized sector, small businesses, micro and small industries.

RBI SUGGEST FEDERAL BODY LIKE GST COUNCIL FOR FARMING SECTOR

Current context: An RBI panel has suggested to set up a federal body like a GST council for providing credit flows to the agriculture sector.

KEY FACTS

- To boost the Credit flow in agriculture RBI recommended the following measures:
- Interest subvention/subsidy to be replaced with Direct transfer of subsidies or DBT (Direct Benefit Transfer).
- No farm waivers
- A management information system (MIS) to be developed by banks to flag loans sanctioned against gold as collateral.
- Set up a federal institution like GST council with participation from centre and states.
- Banks should increase credit for consumption loans to farmers and other allied farm activities up to a sanctioned limit of Rs 1 lakh.
- The centre should complete updation and digitisation of land records in a time-bound manner.
- RBI had set up the '**Internal Working Group**' in February 2019 to understand the reasons for the regional disparity in agricultural credit and suggest measures.

RASHTRIYA PURASKAR AND NATIONAL SAFETY AWARDS FOR THE PERFORMANCE YEAR 2017

Current context: Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar (VRP) and National Safety Awards (NSA) were given by the Ministry of Labour and Employment for the performance year 2017.

ABOUT NATIONAL SAFETY AWARDS

- The "**National Safety Awards (NSA)**" and "**Vishwakarma Rashtriya Puraskar (VRP)**".(Previously known as ShramVir National Awards) are operated since **1965** under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.
- VRP is awarded in recognition of **outstanding suggestions** given by a worker or a group of workers and receive a cash prize and a certificate of merit in three categories:
 1. Class 'A' - Five(05) awards of Rs. 75,000/- each
 2. Class 'B' - Eight(08) awards of Rs. 50,000/- each
 3. Class 'C' - Fifteen(15) awards of Rs. 25,000/- each
- NSA is awarded for the outstanding safety performance of construction sites, ports, industrial establishments, and installations under the Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) in management of accident prevention programs.
- A Certificate of Merit and a Shield is given under the NSA.
- A total of 130 candidates have been selected for the performance award for the year 2017.

PROMULGATION OF THE PROHIBITION OF ELECTRONIC CIGARETTES ORDINANCE

Current context: The Union Cabinet chaired has approved the Promulgation of the **Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes** (production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement) **Ordinance, 2019**.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The e-cigarettes are **battery-operated devices** that heat a solution containing nicotine and produce an aerosol.
- The ordinance prohibits the use of **any kind of e-cigarette** including e-Hookah, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems, Heat Not Burn Products etc.
- As per the ordinance, **the production, manufacture, import, export, transport, sale, distribution, storage and advertisement** of e-cigarettes shall be a punishable offence.
- For **the 1st offence**, imprisonment of up to one year or fine up to Rs. 1 lakh or both have been put and for a **subsequent offence**, imprisonment of up to three years and fine up to Rs. 5 lakh is listed.
- Imprisonment up to 6 months or fine up to Rs 50,000 or both is charged for **storage of electronic-cigarettes**.
- A designated **Authorized Officer** (Sub-Inspector of Police, any other equivalent officer(s)) can take action under the ordinance.

VINESH PHOGAT WON BRONZE AT THE WORLD WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP

Current context: Vinesh Phogat clinched bronze at the World Wrestling Championship held in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan on 18th September 2019.

ABOUT VINESH PHOGAT

- She has defeated **Maria Prevolaraki of Greece**, two-time world bronze medallist in 53 kg category.
- Vinesh is the **5th Indian female wrestler** to win the World Wrestling Championship after Alka Tomar (2006), Geeta Phogat (2012), Babita Phogat (2012) and Pooja Dhanda (2018).
- She has also assured the **2020 Tokyo Olympics** qualification along with winning the WWC after a medal-less run in three World Championships before.
- She scored 8-2 win to over silver medallist of the world championship to secure her place at the Tokyo Games.

NIRVIK LAUNCHED SCHEME

Current context: The Ministry of Commerce & Industry has introduced a new **Export Credit Insurance Scheme (ECIS)** called NIRVIK.

FEATURES OF SCHEME

- The **Export Credit Guarantee Corporation (ECGC)** under the ministry has introduced the scheme with the aim to **ease the lending process and enhance loan availability** for exporters.
- The scheme will ensure guaranteed insurance cover **up to 90%** of the principal and interest including the pre and post-shipment loss.
- The present coverage is provided up to **60%** of the loss by the current Export Credit Guarantee Corporation of India (ECGC).
- The initiative would make the ECGC more exporter friendly and also make Indian exports more competitive.
- ECGC facilitate exports from India and is a premier export credit agency of the Government of India, **headquartered at Mumbai** and is in establishment since 1957.

4 NEW SC JUDGES APPOINTED

Current context: Four new appoints have been made for the Supreme Court Judge on 19th September 2019.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The four judges are the **Chief Justices of the High Courts**.
- The total strength of the Supreme Court has now gone up to **the highest ever number of 34**.
- The appointed judges are as:
 - Himachal Pradesh High Court Chief Justice V. Ramasubramanian
 - Punjab and Haryana High Court Chief Justice Krishna Murari
 - Rajasthan High Court Chief Justice S. Ravindra Bhat
 - Kerala High Court Chief Justice Hrishikesh Roy
- Chief Justice of India **Ranjan Gogoi, head of the SC collegium** recommended the names of the judges for appointment to the apex court on 28th August 2019.
- The number of judges has been recently **increased by the Parliament from 31 to 34**, including the Chief Justice of India.

NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL ALLIANCE FOR TECHNOLOGY (NEAT)

Current context: A new Public-Private-Partnership Scheme has been announced by the Ministry of Human Resource Development, named National Educational Alliance for Technology (NEAT).

ABOUT NEAT SCHEME

- The Neat platform has been created to bring all the startups providing one-stop access to these technological solutions on a **single platform** and use their expertise to help **disadvantaged communities**.
- Its **objective** is to harness the technologies of the companies for better learning outcomes in higher education.
- The platform will provide **easier access to technology** to the marginalised students.
- Under the scheme, companies using artificial intelligence must **offer 25% free coupons** for students from disadvantaged communities.
- The 25% free coupons provided by the Startup companies will be distributed to the most socially and economically backward students.
- **All India Council for Technical Education** is tasked for implementing and administering the programme.

“HANDBOOK ON FISHERIES STATISTICS - 2018”

Current context: “Handbook on Fisheries Statistics - 2018” has been released by the Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying, Giriraj Singh.

KEY FACTS

- This is the **13th edition** of the Handbook published by the **Department of Fisheries of Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry & Dairying**.
- The last (12th edition of) Handbook was published in **2014**.

- The Government will invest 25,000 crore in the next 5 years in the fisheries sector to boost production and enhance infrastructure of fishes in India.
- **The key information provided in the latest edition are:**
 - **During 2017-18**, a total fish production of **12.59 million metric tonnes** was registered.
 - Production from the inland sector was registered at 8.90 million metric tonnes.
 - Production from the **marine sector** was registered at 3.69 million metric tonnes.
 - The **average growth of 10.14%** in the fish production during 2017-18 is seen.
 - India is currently **world's second largest producers** of fish.
 - Inland fish production in the total fish production has increased from 29% during the year 1950-51 to **71% in the year 2017-18**.
 - **Andhra Pradesh** has recorded the highest production of inland fish.
 - **Gujarat** is the leading state in Marine fish production.
 - The export of Marine Fish products is increased to 21.35% (Quantity) and 19.11 % (Value) during the year 2017-18.

GOVERNMENT SLASHED THE CORPORATE TAX RATES

Current context: The Finance Ministry, GOI has slashed the corporate tax rates to 22% for domestic companies and 15% for new domestic manufacturing companies.

MAJOR ANNOUNCEMENTS

- The tax rates are slashed by following an amendment in the **Income-tax Act 1961 and the Finance (No. 2) Act 2019**.
- The effective rate for **domestic companies** with inclusive surcharge and cess shall be **25.17%**.
- The effective rate for **new domestic companies** with inclusive surcharge and cess shall be **17.01%**.
- The **new domestic companies** are those companies that are incorporated on or after 1st October 2019 and will commence production on or before 31st March 2023.
- The FinMin has also said that it will expand the scope of **CSR 2 % spending**.
- The decisions have been taken to increase industrial growth and investment, boost 'Make In India' projects and to promote research in the country.
- **Rs. 1.45 lakh crore** is the estimated total revenue foregone for the reduction in corporate tax rate and other relief.

PM MATRU VANDANA YOJANA HAS CROSSED 1 CRORE BENEFICIARIES

Current context: Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) has added one crore beneficiaries under its coverage.

SILENT FEATURES

- PMMVY is a direct benefit transfer scheme which was launched on **1st January 2017**.
- Under the scheme, cash benefits are provided through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to **pregnant women**.
- The **objective** of the scheme is to meet enhanced nutritional needs of the mother and child and partially compensate for wage loss.
- The scheme is implemented under the **Women and Child Development Ministry**.
- The beneficiaries receive a cash benefit of **Rs 5000 in 3 instalments** under the scheme.

- They eligible beneficiaries also receive cash incentive under **Janani Suraksha Yojana**, through which a women gets **Rs 6000 on an average**.
- All states except **Odisha and Telangana** have implemented the scheme.
- Andhra Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Dadra and Nagar Haveli are the **top 5 States and UTs** in the country in implementation of the scheme.

55TH INDIAN TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (ITEC)

Current context: The 55th Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) was held in **Dhaka, Bangladesh** on 20th September 2019.

INDIAN TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (ITEC)

- ITEC was instituted as part of **India's Development Assistance offering** for developing countries in **1964**.
- ITEC offers the participants of its member developing countries to avail of **short and medium-term courses in premier institutions** like IITs and IISCs in India.
- Areas of **training courses** include Management, SME, Parliamentary Affairs, Accounts, Audit and Rural Development.
- India offers more than 10,000 training slots every year to **161 partner countries**.
- Bangladesh professionals have been taking specialized short and medium-term courses in India **since 2007** under the ITEC programme and about 4000 persons are trained since then.

BAJRANG PUNIA, RAVI DAHIYA WON BRONZE AT WORLD WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Current context: Bajrang Punia and Ravi Dahiya clinched bronze at the World Championships in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Bajrang **defeated** Mongolian **Tulga Tumur Ochir**.
- This is Bajrang's **3rd World Championship medal** after winning silver in 2018 and bronze in 2013 in Budapest.
- Dahiya **beat** Iran's reigning Asian champion Reza Ahmadali Atrinagharchi.
- Both sealed a spot at the **2020 Tokyo Olympics** in 65 kg category (Bajrang) and 57 kg (Ravi) category by qualifying for the bronze medal round.
- India's medal count has increased to **three medals** with Vinesh Phogat winning bronze in the women's 53kg category.
- The last time when India won 3 medals in the WC was in **2013** (Amit Dahiya, Bajrang Punia and Sandeep Tulsi Yadav).

MONGOLIAN PRESIDENT VISIT TO INDIA

Current context: Mongolian president **Khaltmaagiin Battulga** is on a 5-day state visit to India.

KEY FACTS

- This is the first State Visit to India by a Mongolian President in the last 10 years.
- President Battulga and Indian PM Modi jointly unveiled a statue of Lord Buddha at **Gandan Monastery in Ulaanbaatar** through video-conferencing in New Delhi.
- PM Modi announced to give a statue of Lord Buddha to the monastery during his visit in 2015 at the **Gandan Tegchenling Monastery**.
- Both countries signed MoUs in areas including culture, disaster management and space.
- Also, the **Cultural Exchange Protocol** was exchanged and a **Comprehensive Work Plan** was shared between the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia and Ministry of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, India.
- Mongolia announced a **visa-on-arrival scheme** for short-term travellers from India.
- India announced an additional **236 million dollars Line of Credit** for the ongoing **Petrochemical Refinery Project in Mongolia**.

37TH GST COUNCIL MEETING

Current context: The 37th GST Council meeting, chaired by Finance & Corporate Affairs, Minister Nirmala Sitharaman took place in Goa on 20th September 2019.

ABOUT GST COUNCIL MEETING

- Important decisions taken at the meeting are:
 - The council has decided to link **Aadhaar with the registration of taxpayers under GST** and is in the process to make Aadhaar number mandatory for claiming refunds.
 - **No GST** will be charged for **hotel rooms** having tariffs of up to **1,000 Rupees per night**.
 - Hotel rooms whose tariff ranges between **1,001 to 7,500 Rupees**, will be levied with **12% GST** instead of the existing 18%.
 - A hotel room will be charged with **18% GST** those having the tariff of **7,500 Rupees and above** from the existing 28%.
 - **28% tax plus 12% compensation cess** will be charged on **caffeinated beverages** instead of the existing tax rate of 18%.
 - A tax of 12% instead of the existing 5% has been put on railway wagon and coaches.
 - 12% tax is levied on the woven/non-woven polyethylene bags.
 - The council has cut the tax rate to **0.25% from 3%** for cut and polished **semi-precious items**.
 - GST Council **recommends** lowering 12% cess on vehicles of 1,500 cc diesel, 1,200 cc petrol having the capacity to carry up to 13 people.
 - Import of specified **defence goods not being manufactured indigenously** have been **exempted** from GST/IGST till 2024.
 - GST on **marine fuels** has been reduced to **5% from 18%**.
 - All the above changes in the tax rates are made effective from **1st October 2019**.

3 CITIZEN CENTRIC SERVICES OF THE CHANDIGARH POLICE LAUNCHED

Current context: The Ministry of Home Affairs has launched three citizen-centric services of the Chandigarh Police.

KEY FACTS

- The initiatives are launched for strengthening the police-public interface and to reduce the response time of police to address the distress calls of the public.
- **'E-Saathi' App:** The 'Your Police at Your Doorstep' initiative will help people to remain in touch with the police and also give suggestions to facilitate participative community policing.
- With the App, services like passport verification, character certification, tenant verification, servant verification, etc. are provided at a click through the app, without visiting the police station.
- The **'E-Beat Book'** is a web and mobile application to facilitate police a real-time updation of crime/criminal data by linking it to the Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS).
- The information about a crime/criminal is fed into it with ease in the central collection, updation and analysis of the information.
- **Emergency Response Support System (ERSS - Dial 112):** is an emergency response service which is operationalized to strengthen proactive community policing by providing computer-aided dispatch of field resources to the location of distress.

KARGIL TO KOHIMA (K2K) "GLORY RUN"

Current context: Kargil to Kohima (K2K) Ultra-Marathon- "Glory Run" was flagged off on 21st September 2019.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The Glory run is organised to commemorate 20th year of Kargil Victory.
- The K2K glory run is undertaken by the Indian Air Force from Kargil War Memorial, Drass (J&K) to Kohima War Cemetery, Kohima (Nagaland).
- Kohima and Kargil are the two forward most outposts of India in the East and in the North where two of the fiercest battles were fought in 1944 and 1999 respectively.
- K2K – Glory Run which is commenced on 21st September will culminate on 6th November 2019.
- A team of 25 IAF members will cover a distance of 4500 Km in 45 days by running an average of 100 Km per day.
- The aim of the expedition is to 1) promote awareness for Pedestrian Safety 2) To promote Fit India Movement 3) To pay tribute to the brave hearts who have made the supreme sacrifice for our motherland.
- The expedition is led by Squadron Leader Suresh Razdan, a Su-30 aircraft pilot.

NEW STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE BY TRANSPORT MINISTRY

Current context: The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has issued detailed Standard Operating Procedure-SOP for producing documents in electronic form.

FEATURES OF NEW SOP

- The documents include Driving License, Registration Certificate and other transport related information documents.
- **Central Motor Vehicles Rules** are amended to let the person produce the documents in electronic form.
- Under the rule, the hard copy of relevant documents is not necessary but the documents must be available on **DigiLocker or mParivahan app**.

- The new SOP rule allows people to present the documents in electronic form after downloading it from the DigiLocker or mParivahan app so that the presented documents can be legally recognized at par with the original documents.
- The enforcement agencies can simultaneously access these details from eChallan app and the Off-line verification of mParivahan QR Code is also available on this platform.

WAVE SUMMIT 2019

Current context: Union HRD Minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched Waste Management Accelerator for Aspiring Women Entrepreneurs (WAVE Summit 2019) as part of an initiative of All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The WAVE summit is an initiative to promote women entrepreneurs to work towards waste management and providing alternatives to single-use plastic carry bags.
- The theme of WAVE 2019 is "Make your own bag – empowering women to take up income generation activity and entrepreneurship in waste management through making a business out of this record creating concept".
- The WAVE Summit will be held in November to December 2019.
- It will be jointly organized by the Institute of Waste Management (IIWM) and the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) at Jaipur.
- The participants are guided to connect from "Start-Up India to Stand Up India".

MARGADARSHAN AND MARGDARSHAK SCHEME

Current context: The Ministry of Human Resource Development has launched the Margadarshan and Margdarshak initiative for mentoring institutions.

FEATURES OF SCHEME

- Under the initiative, the topmost institutions will mentor institutions that need support for improving their rankings.
- Under the Margadarshan scheme, highly performing institutions with good accreditation record are supposed to mentor relatively newer 10 - 12 potential institutions.
- These institutions are also provided funding up to Rs. 50 lakhs per institution over a period of 3 years in instalments for carrying out various activities like training, workshops, conferences and travel.
- Under the Margdarshak Scheme, mentors/teachers (Margdarshaks) who are serving or superannuated and willing to devote adequate time to make required visits to these Institutions are identified.
- These Margdarshaks will regularly visit to the mentee institutions, stay on their campus and guide them for their improvement in quality so that institutions are able to get accreditation by the NBA.
- In the 1st phase, institutes are provided Margdarshaks, those having a student enrolment of at least 70% and willing to get mentoring through AICTE's Margdarshaks but are not yet accredited.

SCOPE OF THE BHARAT BILL PAYMENT SYSTEM (BBPS) EXPANDED

Current context: The Reserve Bank of India has added other categories of recurring payments to expand the scope of the **Bharat Bill Payment System (BBPS)**.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- BBPS is an interoperable medium to **facilitate customers to pay bills** such as direct-to-home (DTH), telephone, water, gas and electricity **at a single location** either physical or electronic.
- After the expansion of the payment facility, municipal taxes, insurance premiums, school fees and other **recurring payments** can also be paid via BBPS.
- All categories of billers (except prepaid recharges) are permitted, who provide for recurring bill payments to participate in BBPS on a voluntary basis.
- In the **Third Bi-monthly Monetary Policy Statement 2019-20** on 7th August, it was decided to expand the scope and coverage of BBPS.
- BBPS payments can be made using cash, cheques, through digital methods including debit, credit card, internet banking.

GOVERNMENT AMENDED CSR SPENDING NORMS

Current context: The government has amended the corporate social responsibility (CSR) spending norms to allow the corporates to spend on research and development (R&D) activities.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The step has been taken to increase India's spending on research and development (R&D) activities which is presently less than 1% of GDP for years.
- The government has allowed spending the CSR on:
 - Research efforts in science, technology, medicine and engineering at major institutions and bodies.
 - Investments in publicly-funded incubators (funded by Central or State government or any agency of a Central or State public sector undertaking).
 - Autonomous bodies (established under the auspices of ICAR, ICMR, CSIR, DAE, DRDO, DST and Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology).
 - Contributions to publicly- funded universities, IITs, national laboratories.
- The Companies Act requires firms with 1) net worth of Rs 500 crore 2) turnover of Rs 1,000 crore or net profit of Rs 5 crore or more to set aside 2% of their average net profit over the last 3 years towards 'approved' CSR activities.

'UMMID' INITIATIVE LAUNCHED BY THE GOVERNMENT

Current context: Ministry of Science & Technology has launched a scheme named UMMID (**Unique Methods of Management and treatment of Inherited Disorders**).

FEATURES OF SCHEME

- The scheme is launched to help people who cannot afford expensive care **for genetic disorders**.

- Genetic disorders are the **third most common cause of mortality** in new-borns among the urban areas of India and due to high birth rate, large population and consanguineous marriage in many communities, these diseases are very common among them.
- **NIDAN (National Inherited Diseases Administration) Kendra** has also been inaugurated by the ministry to provide help related to genetic diseases at one place.
- The **aims** of the UMMID initiative is to:
 - Establish NIDAN Kendras to provide, management, counselling, prenatal testing and multidisciplinary care in Government Hospitals.
 - To produce skilled clinicians in Human Genetics.
 - To undertake proper screening of for inherited genetic diseases in pregnant women and newborn babies in hospitals at aspirational districts.

2ND EDITION OF INDIA TOURISM MART (ITM) 2019 INAUGURATED

Current context: The Ministry of Tourism has inaugurated the second edition of the India Tourism Mart (ITM) 2019 in **New Delhi** on 23rd September 2019.

KEY FACTS

- The mart has been jointly organized by the **Ministry of Tourism** and the **Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH)**.
- FAITH is the **apex organization of important trade and hospitality associations** of India and has the objective of positioning the products of the country and tourism destinations in international markets.
- The ITM provides a platform to the **seller delegates** from across the country to do **B2B meetings** with the international **buyer delegates** (International delegates from 51 countries and 160 exhibitors from across the country).
- States & Union Territories get the opportunity to showcase their unique tourism destinations and products.
- **Gujarat** is the Partner State at ITM 2019.

7TH HIGH LEVEL JOINT TASK FORCE ON INVESTMENTS MEETING

Current context: The 7th High Level Joint Task Force on Investments meeting between **UAE-India** took place on 22nd September 2019 in **Abu Dhabi**.

ABOUT TASK FORCE

- The meeting was held to enhance trade and investment between the two countries.
- **Piyush Goyal**, Minister of Railways and Commerce & Industry was the representative from India.
- The task force was initiated in **2012**.
- The main bilateral agreement signed between the countries is related to:
 - Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT)
 - UAE's contribution to India's strategic petroleum reserve.
 - ADIA's participation in India's **National Infrastructure Investment Fund** as the **first foreign institutional investor**.
- Both the countries reviewed the functioning of '**UAE PLUS**' special desk and the '**Fast Track Mechanism**' established at the 6th HLTFI for facilitating UAE investment into India.

- In January 2017, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi have signed the **Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement**, to promote economic ties between the UAE and India.

SEBI TIGHTEN MUTUAL FUND NORMS

Current context: SEBI has tightened the norms for mutual funds by making it mandatory to hold **at least 20% liquid assets in liquid schemes**.

MUTUAL FUND NORMS

- The **liquid assets include** cash, government securities, T-Bill and repo on Government securities.
- The decision is taken in the wake of the recent credit crisis and **aimed at** ensuring sufficient liquidity and improving risk management.
- Also, **Fund houses** have to match **20% norm** before they start their investment.
- The parking of funds in **short term deposits of scheduled commercial banks** won't be charged **investment management and advisory fees** by the **asset management company (AMC)**.
- Investors will be charged with **levy exit load by Mutual fund** if they exit within seven days of investment, however, no levy exit load will be charged to an investor who made an investment in liquid funds before the prescribed date.
- The new rule is applicable from **1st April 2020**.

16TH GLOBAL SME BUSINESS SUMMIT 2019

Current context: 16th Global SME Business Summit 2019 has been inaugurated by the Ministry of MSME in New Delhi on 24th September 2019.

GLOBAL BUSINESS SUMMIT

- The Summit is organized **every year** by the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and **Confederation of Indian Industries (CII)**.
- The **theme** of the summit for this year is "**Making Indian MSMEs Globally Competitive**".
- It focuses on measures to be taken by the government to increase **MSME's present share of 29% of GDP to 50% in the next 5 years** and raise its export contribution from 49 % to 60 %.
- Panel discussion on 'Can MSME's Contribute 50 per cent to Indian's GDP?' was organised with delegates from 15 countries.
- A **digital MSME** portal is in the process to be developed by the Ministry to provide a platform to over **75 lakh currently registered MSMEs with the Ministry**, where they can interact globally to fulfil their requirements for funding, knowledge etc.
- Workshops will be held on **Trade through E-Commerce Digitization** besides Country and Regional sessions in the summit.

MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE & FARMERS WELFARE LAUNCHED TWO MOBILE APPS

Current context: Two mobile apps 'CHC Farm Machinery and Krishi Kisan App for Geo Tagging' have been launched by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.

ABOUT 'CHC FARM MACHINERY APP'

- The **CHC Farm Machinery App** will help the farmers to get the **machinery** required at the rates feasible for them from the **Custom Hiring Centres (CHC)** located in the radius of **50 Kms**.
- The **Krishi Kisan App** will provide information about the best demonstration of high-yielding crops and seeds in the nearby area of the farmers.
- Any farmer with high quality of seeds/crops can use the Krishi Kisan app to demonstrate **best practices of cultivation to other farmers**.
- The App will also give weather forecast message to farmers and help in **geo-tagging and geo-fencing of the crop**.
- CHC Farm Machinery is a **Multi-lingual Mobile App** allows geo-reference photographs of agricultural machinery custom service centres and photographs of machinery.
- Through this app, farmers, especially small and marginal farmers, will have easy access to high value and technical agricultural equipment's.

6TH INDIA WATER WEEK - 2019

Current context: The 6th India Water Week-2019 has been inaugurated by the President on 24th September 2019.

KEY FACTS

- The campaign is to take place at **Vigyan Bhawan** with various rounds of Brainstorming Sessions (4 nos.), Panel Discussions (12 nos.), Seminars (15 nos.), and Special Session (6 nos.).
- Under this campaign, the entire Government machinery (senior Central Government officers) have joined the States to **promote water collection and conservation**, including traditional water bodies restoration and renovation.
- The **theme** of this year's IWW is "**Water cooperation: Coping with 21st Century Challenges**".
- **Japan and the European Union (EU)** are partner countries for this IWW 2019.
- India Water Week is been organised by the **Ministry of Jal Shakti since 2012** as an international event to focus on water-related issues.
- **5 editions of IWW** have been organized so far by the Government.

RBI HAS PLACED PMC BANK UNDER DIRECTIONS

Current context: The Reserve Bank of India has placed the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank Limited under Directions.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- As per the Directions, the depositors of the **Mumbai based PMC Bank** are not allowed to withdraw amount **exceeding Rs 1,000** of the total balance in a savings account/current account or deposit account.
- Other **restrictions** put on the PMC Bank by RBI are:
 - The bank cannot grant or renew any loans and advances.
 - Can't make any investment.
 - Can't incur liability including borrowal of funds.
 - Can't do acceptance of fresh deposits, without prior approval in writing from the Reserve Bank.
 - Not be able to disburse or agree to any payment towards its liabilities and obligations.
 - Enter into any compromise or arrangement.
 - Sell, and transfer or dispose of any of its properties or assets.
- The directions are to remain in force for **6 months** from the close of business of the bank.
- RBI has said that the direction is **not be construed as a cancellation** of a banking licence.

INDIAN COAST GUARD SHIP 'VARAHA'

Current context: The Coast Guard offshore patrol vessel 'Varaha' was **commissioned** at the Chennai Port Trust on 25th September 2019.

ABOUT ICGS 'VARAHA'

- The ICGS Varaha is the **4th in the series** of seven 98-m Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) of the **Indian Coast Guard (ICG)**.
- The ship will have onboard 14 officers and 89 men.
- The ship has been **designed and built indigenously** by **Larsen & Toubro (L&T)** at its Katupalli shipbuilding yard in North Chennai.
- It will be deployed for the surveillance of India's **Exclusive Economic Zone** for maritime security in the region.
- The special features of Varaha include:
 - Latest navigation and communication equipment with a 33-millimetre (mm) gun and 12.7 mm gun with the fire control system.
 - Integrated Bridge System
 - Automated Power Management System and
 - Indigenously built an Integrated Platform Management System.
 - Halo Traversing System
 - The vessel is designed to carry one twin-engine helicopter and four high-speed boats.
- The ship will operate from the port of **New Mangalore** covering the region up to Kanyakumari.

23RD EDITION OF MALABAR EXERCISE 2019

Current context: The 23rd edition of the Trilateral Maritime Exercise MALABAR is scheduled from 26th September to 4th October 2019 off the coast of Japan.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The exercise is conducted between the navies of **India, Japan and the USA**.

- MALABAR 2019 would focus on further strengthening India-US-Japan Naval cooperation and enhance interoperability, based on shared values and principles.
- Indigenously designed and built ships of Indian Navy, multipurpose guided-missile **frigate Sahyadri and ASW Corvette Kiltan** will participate in the exercise.
- A **'P8I' long-range maritime patrol aircraft** will also participate in the exercise.
- The MALABAR exercise began originally in **1992 between India and the United States**, and Japan joined the exercise in **2015**.

'TB HAREGA DESH JEETEGA' CAMPAIGN

Current context: Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched 'TB HAREGA DESH JEETEGA' campaign on 25th September 2019 in New Delhi.

ABOUT 'TB HAREGA DESH JEETEGA' CAMPAIGN

- The campaign has **three strong pillars** that include public health component, clinical approach, and active community participation.
- It **aims** to improve and expand the reach of TB care services across the country, by 2022.
- India is committed to eradicating TB before 2025.
- The minister also launched the **National TB Prevalence Survey** in which 25 vans will carry out TB survey across the country in 6 months.
- The ministry also released the **TB India Report (2019)** and an **all-oral regimen kit** (which does not include painful injections) for multi-drug resistant TB patients.
- A partnership with the **World Bank** was announced which is **providing a \$400 million credit for accelerating TB response in 9 states** through private sector engagement and other critical interventions.

'SARDAR PATEL NATIONAL UNITY AWARD'

Current context: The government has constituted 'Sardar Patel National Unity Award' as the **highest civilian award**, in the name of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

SARDAR PATEL NATIONAL UNITY AWARD

- The award is conferred to recognize the **notable contribution of a person to the unity and integrity of India**.
- The award will be presented on the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel on **31st October** which is observed as the **National Unity Day**.
- The award will be given by the **President of India** with the Padma award presentation ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhawan.
- The award consists of **a medal and a citation and without any monetary grant or cash**. And only **3 awards would be given in a year**.
- An official **Award Committee** would be constituted for selecting the persons for the award and the committee is **constituted by the Prime Minister**, which will include members Secretary to the President, Cabinet Secretary, Home Secretary as Members and eminent persons selected by the Prime Minister.

RBI MODIFIED DIRECTIONS TO PMC BANK

Current context: RBI reviewed and modified the directions put on Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank Ltd, Mumbai.

KEY FACTS

- The modified measures are taken with a view to **reducing the hardship of the depositors** and allowed the bank to perform these functions:
 - Depositors can **withdraw a sum not exceeding 10,000 rupees** of the total balance from Savings account/current account/deposit account.
 - More than **60% of the depositors will be able to withdraw their entire account balance.**
 - The modifications of rules are done after police complaints were filed against the top officials of the PMC bank and **Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited (HDIL)** for allegedly looting 3,000 crore rupees of the depositors.
 - A written complaint was filed alleging that money of at least 9.12 lakh PMC Bank depositors was looted by its top management and real estate firm HDIL.
- The PMC Bank was placed under **All-Inclusive Directions of RBI** due to:
 - major financial irregularities
 - failure of internal control and systems of the bank
 - wrong/under-reporting of its exposures under various off-site Surveillance reports to RBI
 - RBI had already **suspended the Board of the bank** and an Administrator has been appointed.

SINGAPORE INDIA HACKATHON 2019

Current context: The 2nd edition of the joint international hackathon 'Singapore India Hackathon 2019' will be held at **IIT Madras** from 28th to 29th September 2019.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The Singapore India Hackathon 2019 is an initiative of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and is the **1st joint International hackathon** between India and any other country.
- The **aim** of the joint Hackathon is:
 - To develop innovative and out-of-the-box solutions for some of the daunting **problems faced by our societies.**
 - Promote engagement and collaboration of the student community in India with the rest of the world.
- This year the Hackathon is focused on **3 themes**:
 1. Good Health and well-being
 2. Quality Education
 3. Affordable and Clean Energy
- All India Council for Technical Education (**AICTE**), MHRD's Innovation Cell (**MIC**) along with Nanyang Technological University (**NTU**), Singapore and NTUitive Pte Ltd are co-organizing the Hackathon.
- The **1st edition** of the Singapore India Hackathon was held at **NTU, Singapore** in 2018, based on the **theme 'Smart Campus'**.
- Each participating teams comprised of **3 students from India and 3 students from Singapore.**

- Prize money of **\$10,000** is given to the winner team, while the second, third and fourth winning teams will win \$8,000, \$6,000 and \$4,000 respectively.

NATIONAL TOURISM AWARDS

Current context: National Tourism Awards was conferred by the Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu, on the occasion of the World Tourism Day on 27th September 2019.

NATIONAL TOURISM AWARDS

- **For the 1st time**, India is hosting the World Tourism Day event.
- The **theme** of the event is **“Tourism and Jobs: a better future for all”**.
- The events **aim** to highlight the contribution of the tourism sector and address global challenges outlined in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals.
- The **Best State Award for overall growth in the tourism category** was given to **Andhra Pradesh**.
- The award in the **Adventure Tourism category** was given to **Goa and Madhya Pradesh**.
- The award for **best film promotion friendly state** was awarded to **Uttarakhand**.
- **Telangana** won the award for the **best state in the innovative use of IT category**.
- Since 1980, the **World Tourism Day is being celebrated on 27th September** and on this day the Statutes of the World Tourism Organization, **UNWTO** entered into force.

FIRST INDIGENOUS FUEL CELL SYSTEM LAUNCHED

Current context: President Ram Nath Kovind, unveiled the first Indigenous High Temperature Fuel Cell System on the occasion of **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Foundation Day**.

ABOUT HIGH-TEMPERATURE FUEL CELL SYSTEM

- The Fuel cell system is developed by **CSIR** in partnership with Indian industries under India’s flagship program named **“New Millennium Indian Technology Leadership Initiative (NMITLI)”**.
- The fuel cell generates 5.0 kW power in a green manner using **methanol / bio-methane**.
- The cell amounts to greater than **70% efficiency**, which may not be possible by other energy sources.
- The system of the cell is based on **High Temperature Proton Exchange Membrane (HTPEM) Technology**.
- The **areas of use** of the fuel cell are:
 - Distributed stationary power applications like; for commercial units, data centres, small offices, etc.
 - Backup power generator for telecom towers, remote locations and strategic applications.
- The development would help in replacing **Diesel Generating (DG) sets** and reduce India’s dependence on crude oil.

RBI PUT LAKSHMI VILAS BANK UNDER PCA NORMS

Current context: Due to high bad loans and insufficient capital, RBI has put the **Tamil Nadu based Lakshmi Vilas Bank** under **prompt corrective action framework**.

KEY FACTS

- RBI has said that the marking of the bank under PCA aimed at not having an impact on the normal day-to-day operations of the bank.
- **The reasons cited by RBI for the action include:**
 1. High net NPA (gross NPA as a percentage of gross advances, increased to 17.30 %).
 2. Insufficient CRAR and CET 1 (The bank's **CAR and Tier I CAR stood at 6.46 % and 4.46 %** as of June 30, 2019, against the **regulatory requirement of 10.875 % and 9 %**).
 3. Negative RoA for two consecutive years.
 4. High leverage, based on the on-site inspection under the Risk-Based Supervision carried out for the year ended March 31, 2019.
- RBI helps the bank by taking a corrective course of action when the bank has a weak financial performance for a sustained period on parameters of **capital ratios, asset quality and profitability**.
- **The functioning of the bank put under PCA will be affected in these manners:**
 1. Banks have to reduce lending to corporates
 2. Banks have to work on lowering exposure to specific sectors
 3. The RBI can place restrictions on branch **expansion or dividend distribution** till the time the bank is under these norms.

AADI MAHOTSAV INAUGURATED IN NOIDA

Current context: Ministry of Tribal Affairs will inaugurate the National Tribal Festival "Aadi Mahotsav" at Noida on 28th September 2019.

ABOUT AADI MAHOTSAV

- The **theme** of Aadi Mahotsav is "**A celebration of the spirit of Tribal Culture, Craft, Cuisine and Commerce**".
- The event will provide a platform to the tribal artisans from different states to feature **exhibition-cum-sale of tribal** handicrafts, art, paintings fabric, jewellery.
- It is jointly organized by the Ministry of **Tribal Affairs & Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)**.
- The artisans will showcase their items through stalls and for the **first time payments will be accepted through major credit/debit cards** for which Point of Sale (POS) machines have been provided in each stall.
- MoUs have been signed between **TRIBES India** and Amazon, Flipkart, Snapdeal, PayTM and GEM, a government of India portal for **e-commerce of the tribal products**.
- India also has its own e-com portal **www.tribesindia.com** and the Aadi Mahotsav is an effort to take tribal commerce to the next level of digital and electronic transactions.

DEEPAK PUNIA NAMED WORLD NO.1 WRESTLER IN 86KG CATEGORY

Current context: Wrestler Deepak Punia has been named number one in 86 kilogram category in the **latest ranking issued by the International Wrestling Federation**.

ABOUT DEEPAK PUNIA

- **Deepak Punia from India** was ranked number one but **Bajrang Punia** lost the top rank in the 65-kilogram category.
- Deepak won **silver in the World Championship** and was forced to pull out of the final against Iranian great Hasan Yazdani due to an ankle injury.
- He has now 82 points, four more than World Champion Yazdani and Bajrang Punia now has 63 points.
- **Bajrang Punia was earlier ranked number one** but dropped to number two spot after managing a bronze in the World Championship.
- **Russia's Gadzhimurad Rashidov, who won gold the World Championship**, has been made the new world number one in 65 kg category.
- **Ravi Dahiya** has been ranked at number five in the 57 kg category and **Rahul Aware** has been pushed to world number two.
- In **Women's ranking**, **Vinesh Phogat** is ranked number two in the 53-kilogram category, **Seema Bisla** has dropped to number three in 50 kg category and **Pooja Dhanda** is ranked five in 59 kg category.

INS KHANDERI COMMISSIONED INTO INDIAN NAVY

Current context: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh commissioned INS Khanderi in Mumbai on 28th September 2019.

ABOUT THE AGREEMENT

- INS Khanderi is an **indigenously** built **Kalvari class diesel-electric submarine**.
- INS Khanderi is built under the 'Make in India' initiative at state-run **Mazgaon Dock Limited** and was under **sea-trials for over two and a half years**.
- The **key features of INS Khanderi** include negligible noise under water due to a state-of-the-art stealth technology, its maximum requirement is 36 crew unlike previous requirement of 60 crew, capacity to stay for long during under water operations.
- The submarine is a **reincarnated version of the first Khanderi submarine** which was commissioned into the Indian Navy in December **1968**.
- The first version of the submarine INS Khanderi was **decommissioned** after 20 years of service in October **1989**.
- The submarine is built under the **project 75**, which is being carried out at Mazagon Docks Ltd in collaboration with the **French submarine builder Naval Group (formerly DCNS)**.
- The **1st out of the 6 Scorpene-class submarines built was the INS Kalvari**, was commissioned in December, 2017.
- **INS Khanderi** is the 2nd in the 6 Scorpene-class submarines.
- **3rd** Scorpene-class submarine, the **INS 'Karanj'** was launched at MDL on January 31, 2018 and is currently under sea trials phase.
- **4th** Scorpene-class submarine, the **INS Vela** was launched in May 2019 and is under sea trials.
- The **5th and 6th** submarines namely **INS Vagir and INS Vagsheer** respectively are in various stages of outfitting.

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT BANNED EXPORT OF ONIONS

Current context: Government banned the export of Onions and put a stock limit on traders.

KEY FACTS

- The government has taken the following actions to control the rising price of onions in the domestic market:
 - Imposed **stock limits on onion traders** (limit of **100 quintals on retail traders** and **500 quintals on wholesale traders**) to facilitate the release of stocks in the market.
 - **Banned export of onions** with immediate effect till further orders (on 13th September 2019, the Minimum Export Price of US\$ 850 F.O.B. per metric ton was imposed).
 - A **Central buffer of about 56,700 MT** was built by the Government through **NAFED**.
 - Export below Minimum Export Price to Bangladesh & Sri Lanka will be immediately stopped.
 - The **export policy of onions** was changed by the commerce and industry ministry, that is now **made 'prohibited' from 'free' earlier**.
- **UAE, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka** are the top three destinations for Indian Onions.

DELHI-MEERUT PACKAGE-3 INAUGURATED

Current context: The Delhi-Meerut Package-3 is to be inaugurated by Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways on 30th September.

ABOUT DELHI-MEERUT PACKAGE-3

- The Delhi-Meerut Package-3 will connect **Dasna in Ghaziabad to Hapur in UP**.
- The package is built with a cost of Rs1989 crore and will stretch to 22 kilometres.
- The package includes the construction of a major bridge across the upper Ganga canal, which was a big challenge.
- The **Delhi-Meerut Expressway (82 kilometre-long)** connects Delhi with Meerut in western Uttar Pradesh.
- The project will help in **decongesting National Capital Region** and a considerable reduction in pollution level.
- The Delhi-Meerut Expressway project is being implemented in **four packages**:
 1. 6-lane expressway/ 8-lane NH 24 from **Sarai Kale Khan in Delhi to Ghazipur border**.
 2. 6-lane expressway/ 8-lane NH 24 from **Ghazipur border to Dasna in UP**.
 3. 6-lane NH 24 from **Dasna to Hapur in UP**, which is being inaugurated.
 4. Greenfield 6-lane expressway from **Hapur to Meerut**.

INS 'NILGIRI': NAVY'S 1ST NEW STEALTH FRIGATE LAUNCHED

Current context: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh has launched stealth frigate INS Nilgiri on 28th September 2019.

ABOUT INS 'NILGIRI'

- INS Nilgiri is the **first ship of Project17A** to be launched.
- It is the **1st seven new stealth frigates of the Indian Navy** with upgraded weapons, sensors and features.
- The effort is made avoid **disruption of seaborne trade** due to **terrorism, piracy or conflict**.
- **70% of India's trade by value and 95% by volume is taking place through the sea route** and the strategic effort to safeguard the route is been made through INS Nilgiri.

- Indian Ocean region is the epicentre of activity and plays a big role in the geopolitical and geostrategic dimension.
- **Project 17A frigates** has much more advanced stealth features from its design derivative of the Shivalik class stealth frigates.

RAKESH KUMAR SINGH BHADAURIA TOOK CHARGE AS CHIEF OF THE IAF

Current context: Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria, Air Chief Marshal took charge as the 26th chief of the Indian Air Force.

ABOUT RAKESH KUMAR SINGH BHADAURIA

- IAF Air Marshal Rakesh Kumar Singh Bhadauria has **succeeded Air Chief Marshal B.S. Dhanoa**.
- He was commissioned in the fighter stream of the Indian Air Force in **June 1980**.
- He won the '**Sword of Honour**' for standing first in the overall order of merit in 1980.
- He discovered a technique of **bombing from the Jaguar aircraft using the Global Positioning System (GPS)**.
- Air Marshal Bhadauria is among the few Air Force pilots to **fly a Rafale jet** during Exercise Garuda between the Air Forces of India and France.
- He has flying experience on **26 types** of fighters and transport aircraft for 4,250 hours.

IPCC MEET ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Current context: The IPCC Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) meeting of **Working Group III Sixth Assessment Report** has begun from 30th September 2019 in New Delhi.

KEY POINTS

- The Working Group III meeting will produce a report that will emphasize what can be done in the near term to **mitigate climate change and strategies** for its implementation.
- India is hosting the Second Lead Author Meeting and the meeting will continue till 4th October 2019.
- IPCC is the **UN body** and assesses the science behind climate change.
- The IPCC was **established in 1988** by the United Nations Environment Programme (**UNEP**) and the World Meteorological Organization (**WMO**).
- It provides the scientific assessments concerning climate change, its implications and risks, and suggests migration strategies.
- There are **195 members** in IPCC and it comprises **3 working groups**:
 1. **Working Group I**, dealing with the physical science basis of climate change
 2. **Working Group II**, dealing with impacts, adaptation and vulnerability
 3. **Working Group III**, dealing with the mitigation of climate change

INDEX OF CORE INDUSTRIES

Current context: The Index of Eight Core Industries for the month of August has been released.

KEY FACTS

- The Eight Core Industries **comprise 40.27 %** of the weight of items included in the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)**.
- The **combined Index** of Eight Core Industries **declined by 0.5%** as compared to the index of August 2018 and stood at 128.2 in August 2019.
- **Coal production** (weight: 10.33 per cent) declined by 8.6 per cent in August, 2019 over August, 2018.
- **Crude Oil production** (weight: 8.98 per cent) declined by 5.4 per cent in August, 2019 over August, 2018.
- **The Natural Gas production** (weight: 6.88 per cent) declined by 3.9 per cent in August, 2019 over August, 2018.
- **Petroleum Refinery production** (weight: 28.04 per cent) increased by 2.6 per cent in August, 2019 over August, 2018.
- **Fertilizers production** (weight: 2.63 per cent) increased by 2.9 per cent in August, 2019 over August, 2018.
- **Steel production** (weight: 17.92 per cent) increased by 5.0 per cent in August, 2019 over August, 2018.
- **Cement production** (weight: 5.37 per cent) declined by 4.9 per cent in August, 2019 over August, 2018.
- **Electricity generation** (weight: 19.85 per cent) declined by 2.9 per cent in August, 2019 over August, 2018.

CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS LAUNCHED

Current context: Pinarayi Vijayan, Kerala Chief Minister launched the Kerala edition of WING-Women Rise Together initiative for women entrepreneurs.

ABOUT CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- The initiative is for capacity development of women entrepreneurs in the country and was **launched under Startup India, Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT)**.
- The aim of the programme is to support and identify the aspiring female entrepreneurs by giving them access to inventors, incubation and various business support service.
- It targets to support atleast **7500 women entrepreneurs** in the country till 2020.
- **Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) and LetsVenture** have been given the responsibility to run this programme across the southern states of Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala.
- The initiation of the **1st leg is in Kerala** and then it will be spread across the country.
- **FITT - IIT Delhi, and Singex** will lead the programme in North and **North-East, KIIT-TBI in East and Startup Oasis in West**.