

Monthly GK Digest

July 2018

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RAMANDEEP SINGH

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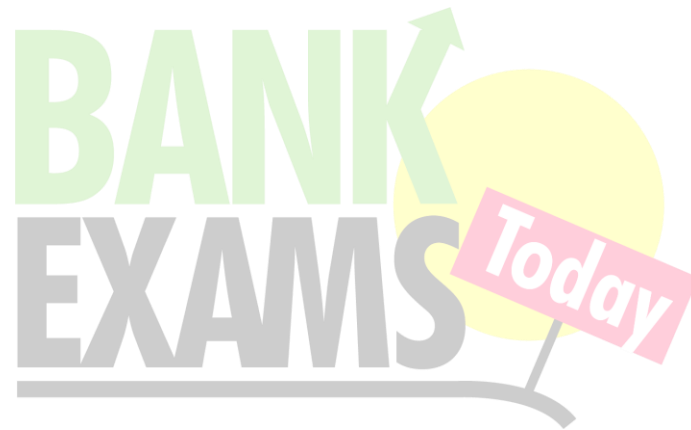
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MONTHLY GK DIGEST: JULY 2018

JUNE 29: INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE TROPICS

The International Day of Tropics is observed every year on 29 June across the world with an aim to **raise awareness to specific challenges faced by tropical areas** and the far-reaching implications of **issues affecting world's tropical zone**.

FACTS ABOUT THE TROPICS/TROPICAL REGIONS:

- The Tropics are region of Earth **between tropic of Cancer and tropic of Capricorn**.
- The tropical locations are **typically warm and experience little seasonal change** in day-to-day temperature, even though their topography and other factors contribute to climatic variation.
- The peculiar climatic feature of Tropics is **prevalence of rain in moist inner regions near equator** and **increase in seasonality of rainfall with distance from the equator**.
- The Tropics account for **40% of world's total surface area** and are host to **approximately 80% of the world's biodiversity** and also much of its language and cultural diversity.
- The region is facing number of **challenges such as climate change, deforestation, logging, urbanization and demographic changes**.
- The Tropics host nearly **95% of world's mangrove forests by area** and **99% of mangrove species**.
- **They have just over half of the world's renewable water resources (54%)** and yet almost **half their population is considered vulnerable to water stress**.
- For those plants and animals for which there are adequate data, **loss of biodiversity is greater in Tropics than in the rest of the world**.
- Sadly, tropics region is consistent with **higher levels of poverty**, more people here experience **undernourishment** than in the rest of the world.
- Besides, **proportion of urban population living in slum conditions** in Tropics is **higher** than in rest of the World.
- By 2050, the tropics region **will host most of world's people and two-thirds of its children**.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE TROPICS:

- **The International Day of the Tropics was instituted** by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on **14 June 2016** by adopting resolution A/RES/70/267
- The day was proclaimed to mark anniversary of launch of '**State of the Tropics Report**' by Nobel Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi on **29 June 2014**.
- The report was culmination of collaboration between **12 leading tropical research institutions** and offered unique perspective on this increasingly important region.
- This day underlines the important role that countries in tropics will play in achieving **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

PM LAYS FOUNDATION STONE OF NATIONAL CENTRE FOR AGEING

A step to care of those who took care of us when we needed it the most !

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** laid the foundation stone for **National Centre for Ageing at All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi.**
- The Centre will be developed at **cost of Rs. 330 crores** and shall be completed by **February 2020.**

MORE ABOUT THE NATIONAL CENTRE FOR AGEING:

- The Centre will **provide state of art clinical care to elderly population** and shall play key role in guiding **research in field of geriatric medicine** and related specialties.
- It will also serve as **key training facility** for under graduate and post graduate courses.
- It will **provide multi-specialty health care** and will have **200 general ward beds**, which will include **20 medical ICU beds.**

ANOTHER MAJOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE FIELD OF MEDICAL CARE:

- **Prime Minister also inaugurated 555 bed Super Speciality Block in Safdarjung Hospital, New Delhi** which **hosts tertiary care facilities** in areas of:
 - Cardiovascular Sciences
 - Neurosciences
 - Pulmonary Medicine
 - Nephrology
 - Endocrinology
- He also dedicated **300 bedded Power Grid Vishram Sadan** funded by the **Power Grid Corporation in AIIMS.**
- It is **300 bedded night shelter facility** meant for **patients and their relatives** visiting **AIIMS main hospital and JPNA Trauma centre at AIIMS.**
- He also **inaugurated underground tunnel** providing connecting facility between **AIIMS and JPNA Trauma Centre**, reducing commute time between the two centers.

ODISHA GOVERNMENT SIGNS MOU WITH RIMES

A noble step in the direction of preventing/reducing miseries that disasters bring along.

- **Odisha Government** has signed **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES)** to enhance effective management of all kinds of disasters.
- The collaboration is aimed at **automating risk management, advisory generation and dissemination.**

MORE ABOUT THE COLLABORATION:

- The partnership has been forged between **Odisha State Disaster Mitigation Authority (OSDMA)** and **RIMES** in field of **drought monitoring and early warning** for different natural disasters.
- The collaborative effort aims at enhance early warning system for effective management of all kinds of disasters like:
 1. Flood
 2. Drought
 3. Heat Wave
 4. Lightning

5. Road Accidents

- Initially, the MoU will be in force for 5 years with cost involvement of about Rs. 8 crore.
- Under it, efforts will be made to create open-source software platforms and public domain data sets using weather and climate information, sourced from the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

WHAT WILL BE GAINED FROM THIS COLLABORATION?

- The collaboration will **help OSDMA to engage integrated multi-hazard early warning system** to strengthen its prediction and response capability.
- It will also strengthen OSDMA for more effective management of natural disasters.
- It will also help in **transfer of best practices among different countries of world in handling natural disasters.**
- It will also enhance **warning response capacities** of OSDMA **by imparting specialized expert training.**
- It will also help to **develop one-stop risk management system** for all OSDMA needs such as integration of multiple data database/servers.

REGIONAL INTEGRATED MULTI-HAZARD EARLY WARNING SYSTEM (RIMES)

- The RIMES is an intergovernmental body registered under United Nations.
- It is owned and managed by 45 collaborating countries in Asia Pacific and Africa Region.
- India is chairman of the body.
- It was established in 2009 and was registered with UN in July 2009.
- It was established in 2009 and was registered with UN in July 2009.
- It operates from its regional early warning centre located at campus of **Asian Institute of Technology in Pathumthani, Thailand.**
- It has evolved from efforts of countries in Africa and Asia in aftermath of **2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.**
- It seeks to **establish regional early warning system** within multi-hazard framework for generation and communication of early warning information and capacity building for **preparedness and response to trans-boundary hazards.**
- It provides information related to Tsunami and extreme weather conditions.
- It also acts as a **test bed for emerging technologies** and help to enhance performance.

REUNITE MOBILE APP LAUNCHED TO TRACE MISSING CHILDREN

Government makes a sincere effort in bringing light in the life of a missing/abandoned child.

The Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation has launched mobile application “ReUnite” in New Delhi to track and trace missing and abandoned children in India.

ABOUT THE APP:

- It has been **developed by Nobel Laureate Kailash Satyarthi’s NGO Bachpan Bachao Andolan and IT company Capgemini.**
- The app is available for **both Android and iOS.**

- The **ReUnite app** is **multiuser** where parents and citizens can upload **pictures of children** and **provide detailed description** like **name, address, birthmark**, in order to search and **identify missing kids** and report to the police station.
- It uses **Amazon Rekognition**, a web-based **facial recognition service** to identify missing kids.
- The **photographs uploaded** on the app **will not be saved** in the mobile phone's physical memory.

ANTONIO VITORINO ELECTED DG OF UN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

A lawyer and politician from Portugal, with an extensive career in public service, has been elected to head the United Nations migration agency.

- Portugal's Antonio Manuel de Carvalho Ferreira Vitorino (61) was elected by the member states as **next Director General (DG) of International Organization for Migration (IOM)**, a UN Migration Agency.
- He will **succeed** incumbent **DG William Lacy Swing** who will be stepping down after **completing the second of two five-year terms**.
- In this election for top most post of IMO (held in **secret ballot**), **Vitorino defeated Costa Rica's Laura Thompson** who came second and **US nominee Ken Isaacs** who came third.

ABOUT ANTONIO VITORINO:

- Antonio Vitorino had **earned degree** from **University of Lisbon's School of Law** in **1981**, as well as **Master's Degree in Legal and Political Science**.
- He was elected to Portugal's Parliament in 1980.
- **In 1983, he was made Secretary of State for Parliamentary Affairs.**
- He had served as **Minister for National Defense** and **Deputy Prime Minister** within government of Antonio Guterres, who is now **United Nations' Secretary General**.
- He also had served as **European Commissioner for Justice and Home Affairs** from 1999 to 2004.
- He has been **President of the think tank Notre Europe** since June 2011.

INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MIGRATION (IOM)

- IOM is a UN Migration Agency and is a leading intergovernmental organization **that provides services and advice concerning migration to governments and migrants, including refugees, internally displaced persons and migrant workers**.
- It is **headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland**.
- It was **established in 1951** as Intergovernmental Committee for European Migration (ICEM) **to help resettle people displaced by World War II**.
- It was **granted Permanent Observer** status to UN General Assembly in **1992**.
- **Cooperation agreement** between IOM and UN was **signed in 1996**.

MODUS OPERANDI:

IOM works in four broad areas of migration management:

1. Migration and Development
2. Facilitating Migration

3. Regulating Migration

4. Forced Migration

MORE ABOUT IOM:

- It has 166 member states and 8 states holding observer status.
- It has over 400 offices in more than 150 countries.
- It has more than 9,500 staff and 400 offices worldwide.

9TH HEADS OF MISSION CONFERENCE HELD IN NEW DELHI

The 9th Heads of Mission Conference was held in New Delhi from June 30-July 2, 2018.

- It was **inaugurated by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj**.
- The conference comes at the time when India is monitoring several important global developments such as:
 - **Sanctions imposed by United States on Russia and Iran.**
 - **China's new assertiveness in the Indo-Pacific region.**

MORE ABOUT THE CONFERENCE:

- The theme of three-day annual conference was:- **'Unprecedented Outreach: Unparalleled Outcomes'.**
- It saw **participation of all Indian ambassadors and high commissioners** and deliberated on **India's key foreign policy issues and goals.**
- It provided government a common platform to brief country's top diplomats **for promoting India's national interests abroad** and on **economic reform initiatives and measures taken for improving ease-of-doing business** in the country so that **these aspects can be highlighted on the global stage.**
- All in all, it was an important conference that set certain **goals for our top diplomats to take our country's case forward in the international community in order to further strengthen our position in global arena !**

ANJOLIE ELA MENON AWARDED NATIONAL KALIDAS SAMMAN

Well-deserved award for an incredible artist!

- Well known artist Anjolie **Ela Menon, 78** received the **National Kalidas Samman for visual arts from the Madhya Pradesh government.**
- The award came as a recognition of her insightful and **sensitive portrayal of the identity and spirit of women through her meaningful paintings** in a variety of media.

WHO IS ANJOLIE ELA MENON?

- She is counted among India's most accomplished artists.
- She is a **well-known muralist** and one of India's leading contemporary artists.
- **Her preferred medium is oil on masonite**, but she also has worked in other media, including glass and watercolour.
- She is **recipient of numerous national and international awards including the Padma Shri.**
- She recently **received a doctorate from Rabindra Bharati University.**

ABOUT KALIDAS SAMMAN:

- It is a prestigious arts award **presented annually by the Government of Madhya Pradesh.**
- **The award is named after Kālidāsa, a renowned Classical Sanskrit writer of ancient India.**
- It was **first awarded in 1980.**
- It was **initially conferred in alternate years in fields of Classical Music, Classical Dance, Theatre and Plastic Arts.**
- From 1986-87 onwards, **it was presented in all four fields every year.**
- The award is presented for outstanding achievement **in one of the four categories.**
- Some of the previous recipients are **Pandit Ravi Shankar, MF Husain, Pandit Jasraj, Shambhu Mitra, Habib Tanvir, Ebrahim Alkazi etc.**

BBB RECOMMENDS ELEVATION OF 15 EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Government's continues its efforts to improve the situation at PSU Banks.

- **The Banks Board Bureau (BBB)** has recommended **15 executive directors to be elevated as managing directors (MD)** at various public sector banks (PSBs).

HOW DID IT HAPPEN?

- The recommendations came at a meeting of the Banks Boards Bureau that was **headed by former Department of Personnel and Training Secretary B P Sharma.**
- However, **these recommendations are subject to various clearances.**
- It must also be noted that the **Appointments Committee of Cabinet (ACC)** headed by Prime Minister will take the final decision in this regard.

ABOUT BANKS BOARD BUREAU (BBB):

- BBB is an advisory authority (autonomous and self-governing body) of Central Government comprising eminent professionals and officials to improve governance of PSBs.
- It was announced by Union Government in **August 2015** as part of seven point **Indradhanush Mission** to revamp PSBs and based on recommendations of **RBI-appointed Nayak Committee.**
- It is based in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- The **first BBB** was set up in **February 2016** under chairmanship of **former CAG Vinod Rai.**
- BBB comprises of **Chairman, three ex-officio members (from government) and three expert members, two of which are from private sector.**

AGENDA/MANDATE OF BBB:

- Its broad agenda is to **improve governance at state-owned lenders.**
- Its mandate also involves **advising government on top-level appointments in PSBs and assisting banks with capital-raising plans through innovative financial methods and instruments as well as strategies to deal with issues of stressed assets or bad loans.**

9TH MEETING OF EPG ON INDO-NEPAL RELATIONS CONCLUDES IN KATHMANDU

Meeting was aimed at further strengthening relations between the two neighbours.

- The **ninth and final meeting of Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on India-Nepal relations** concluded in **Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal**.
- During this two day meeting, representatives from India and Nepal deliberated upon various bilateral issues including 1950 Peace and Friendship treaty, trade, transit and border.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE LAST MEETING?

- During the last meeting, **EPG successfully prepared joint report which will be submitted to Prime Ministers of both the countries**.
- It has **agreed to update all the bilateral treaties and agreements reached in past** between India and Nepal in line with the present reality of the two countries.

EPG MEMBERS FROM INDIA:

1. Bhagat Singh Koshyari
2. Mahendra P Lama
3. Jayanta Prasad
4. B.C. Upreti

EPG MEMBERS FROM NEPAL:

1. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa
2. Nilambar Acharya
3. Suryanath Upadhyay
4. Rajan Bhattarai

ABOUT EPG:

- The EPG was **formed in January 2016** by Governments of Nepal and India for reviewing the entire gamut of Nepal-India relations and update bilateral agreements and treaties.
- It is a **joint mechanism consisting of experts and intellectuals** from India and Nepal.
- There are **four members each from Nepalese and Indian sides** in the group.
- It is mandated to review various aspects of the bilateral relations including **Nepal-India Friendship Treaty 1950 and provide suggestion on ways to reshape bilateral relations between the two countries**.
- **During earlier meetings of EPG, Nepali side had presented facts regarding need to review Nepal-India Peace and Friendship Treaty of 1950** so as to update it as required by time and situation.

A LOOK AT THE 1950 INDIA-NEPAL TREATY OF PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP:

- The treaty is a bilateral pact between India and Nepal aimed at establishing close strategic relationship between two South Asian neighbours.
- It was inked on July 31, 1950 at Kathmandu by then Prime Minister of Nepal Mohan Shamsheer Jang Bahadur Rana and then Indian ambassador to Nepal Chaudhreshwar Narayan Singh.
- The treaty has 10 articles.
- It permits free movement of people and goods between two countries and close relationship and collaboration on matters of defence and foreign affairs.
- It envisages for eternal peace and friendship between two nations and recognizes and respect complete sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence of each other.
- According to Articles 6 and 7 of the treaty, the two countries agree to grant, on reciprocal basis, to citizens of one country in territories of other, same privileges in matter of residence, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce, movement and other privileges of similar nature.
- This enables the Nepali and Indian nationals to move freely across border without passport or visa, live and work in either country and own property or do trade or business in either country.
- There is a significant number of Nepalis (in millions) living, owning property and working or doing business in India as beneficial aspect of treaty for Nepal.
- Similarly, many Indians live, own property and do business in Nepal.

MANUFACTURING PMI: INDIA'S MANUFACTURING GROWTH JUMPS

Economic Activity is on accelerated mode !

- According to Nikkei Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI), compiled by IHS
- Markit, India's manufacturing growth jumps to six-month high in June 2018.
- Manufacturing PMI rose to 53.1 in June 2018 from 51.2 in May 2018, the highest since December 2017.
- It must be noted that this is the 11th consecutive month that the manufacturing PMI remained above the 50-point mark.
- The reading above 50 on index denotes expansion and less than that indicates contraction in activities.

WHAT IS THE PURCHASING MANAGERS' INDEX (PMI):

- PMI is an indicator of business activity-both in the manufacturing and services sectors.
- It is a survey-based measure that asks respondents about changes in their perception of some key business variables from month before.
- It is calculated separately for manufacturing and services sectors and then composite index is constructed.

WHY IS THE PMI IMPORTANT FOR THE ECONOMY?

- PMI is usually released at the start of the month, much before most of official data on industrial output, manufacturing and GDP growth is made available.
- It is, therefore, considered as good leading indicator of economic activity.
- Manufacturing growth measured by PMI is considered good indicator of industrial output.

NATIONAL DOCTORS' DAY: JULY 1

A day to recognize the role of lifesavers around us!

- **The National Doctors' Day** is observed **every year on 1 July across India** to express gratitude and acknowledge the dedication and commitment of the doctors towards our society.
- The observance of the day **honours legendary physician and West Bengal's second Chief Minister, Dr Bidhan Chandra Roy whose birth and death anniversary coincides on the same day.**
- **Indian Medical Association (IMA's) theme for 2018 National Doctors' Day is: 'Zero tolerance to violence against doctors and clinical establishment'.**

ABOUT DR BIDHAN CHANDRA ROY:

- He was born on **1 July 1882 in Patna, Bihar and died on 1 July 1962 in Kolkata, West Bengal.**
- He was highly respected physician and a renowned freedom fighter.
- He was the **second Chief Minister of West Bengal** and remained in his post for 14 years from 1948 until his death in 1962.
- He is often considered the great architect of **West Bengal.**
- He had founded five cities of West Bengal Durgapur, Bidhannagar, Ashokenagar, Kalyani and Habra.
- He was also a member of the **Brahmo Samaj.**
- He was an alumnus of the Medical College Calcutta of the University of Calcutta.
- He was awarded **Bharat Ratna**, India's highest civilian award in 1961.
- The Union Government has instituted Dr BC Roy National Award in his memory.
- He was instrumental in formation of Indian Medical Association (IMA) in 1928 and also in establishment of Medical Council of India (MCI).

HISTORY OF THE NATIONAL DOCTORS' DAY:

- The National Doctor's Day was **established by Central Government in 1991** to be **recognized and celebrated every year on 1st of July** i.e. on the **birth and death anniversary** of the most famous physician of India Dr B C Roy.

KERALA GOVERNMENT DECLARES TWO DISTRICTS FREE FROM NIPAH VIRUS

Kerala Government's hard work pays off !

- Kerala Government has declared **Kozhikode and Malappuram districts free from Nipah virus infection**
- These districts were declared as temporarily Nipah free as no positive case of the infection was reported till completion of double incubation period of the virus.
- Earlier in June 2018, state government had lifted the travel advisory issued in the wake of the virus for travelling to any part of the state.
- It also **had lifted high alert in districts** and said the **virus has been brought under control and its spread checked.**
- It must be noted that **educational institutions were also reopened.**

WHAT IS NIPAH VIRUS (NIV) INFECTION?

- NiV infection is a **zoonotic disease (disease transmitted to humans from animals)** that causes severe disease in both animals and humans.
- **The organism which causes Nipah Virus encephalitis is RNA or Ribonucleic acid virus of family Paramyxoviridae, genus Henipavirus, and is closely related to Hendra Virus.**

ORIGIN OF NIPAH VIRUS:

- It was first identified in 1999 during outbreak among pig farmers in Malaysia and Singapore.
- It gets its name from Sungai Nipah, a Malaysian village, where pig farmers became ill with encephalitis.
- In these subsequent outbreaks, there were no intermediate hosts of the virus.
- In Bangladesh in 2004, humans got infected after consuming date palm sap that had been contaminated by infected fruit bats.

HOW THE VIRUS CAME INTO OCCURENCE?

- **Fruit bats of Pteropodidae Family, Pteropus genus are natural host of the virus.**
- **The virus is present in bat urine and potentially, bat faeces, saliva, and birthing fluids.**
- **Presumably, first incidence of NiV infection occurred when pigs in Malaysian farms came in contact with fruit bats who had lost their habitats due to deforestation.**

HOW THIS VIRUS IS TRANSMITTED?

- The virus spreads fast and is mostly fatal. **Infected bats shed virus in their excretion and secretion.**
- **It cannot be transmitted through air. It is transmitted through direct contact with infected bats, pigs.**
- Human to Human transmission from other NiV-infected people is also reported.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS & SYMTOMS AMONG PEOPLE WHO ARE INFECTED WITH THIS VIRUS?

- NiV infection in humans has range of clinical presentations i.e., **from asymptomatic infection to acute respiratory syndrome and fatal encephalitis (inflammation of brain).**
- **After exposure and incubation period of 5 to 14 days, illness presents with 3-4 days of fever and headache, followed by drowsiness, disorientation and mental confusion.**
- These signs and symptoms can progress to **coma within 24 to 48 hours.**
- The **mortality rate** of patients infected with NiV infection is **reportedly 70%.**
- By the way, it is **capable of causing diseases in domestic animals too.**

WHAT IS THE TREATMENT?

- **There is no vaccine for NiV disease either for humans or animals.**
- **The main treatment for those infected is intensive supportive care and supportive medicines.**
- **NiV Infection can be prevented by avoiding exposure of infected people without protective gear.**
- **In disease prone areas, fruits strewn on the ground should not be eaten, for safety.**

GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTES COMMITTEE FOR STATE & DISTRICT LEVEL ECONOMIC DATA COLLECTION

Retired professor of IIM Ahmedabad- Ravindra H Dholakia to head the committee.

- The Union Government has constituted **13-member Committee for Sub-National Accounts to upgrade the norms for computation of economic data at states and districts level** in backdrop of plans to revise the base year for National Accounts or Gross Domestic Production (GDP) calculation.
- It will be headed by **Ravindra H Dholakia**.

HOW WILL THE COMMITTEE FUNCTION?

- The committee will **review concepts, definitions, classifications, data conventions, data sources and data requirements for preparation of State Domestic Product (SDP) and District Domestic Product (DDP)** and to lay down revised guidelines.
- It will also **suggest measures for improving SDP and DDP** in the country taking into consideration availability of data and requirements of Centre and States/UTs.
- It will also **suggest state-level annual and benchmark surveys** keeping in view needs of System of National Accounts especially in view of next base year revision.
- **It will submit its report within one year.**

HOW THE CONCEPT OF "BASE YEAR" IS WORKED?

- The Central Statistics Office (CSO), under Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) **revises the base year of macroeconomic indicators**, as regular exercise, to capture structural changes in economy and improve quality and representativeness of indices.
- **CSO had last updated base year for GDP calculation to 2011-12 from January 2015, replacing old series base year of 2004-05.**
- **MOSPI is planning to change base year to 2017-18 for calculation of GDP and Index Industrial Production (IIP) numbers from current 2011-12** with an aim to capture changes in the economy.
- At conference of **central and state statistical organisations (COCSSO)** earlier this year, it was suggested that same principles and concepts should be used while calculating SDP and DDP across the country to make data comparable.

DELHI GOVERNMENT LAUNCHED HAPPINESS CURRICULUM FOR SCHOOL STUDENTS

Delhi Government's initiative to teach "Happiness" to students!

- The Delhi government launched 'Happiness Curriculum' which includes **meditation, moral values and mental exercises for its school students.**
- **It was launched by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the presence of His Holiness The Dalai Lama.**

ABOUT HAPPINESS CURRICULUM:

- **The Happiness Curriculum focuses on holistic education by including meditation, value education, and mental exercises in conventional education curriculum.**
- It was designed and prepared by a **team of 40 Delhi government teachers, educators and volunteers over period of six months.**
- **It involves 'Happiness' period of 45 minutes for all students studying in nursery up to class VIII at all Delhi government schools.**
- **Each class will begin with 5-minute meditation practice.**
- The curriculum focuses on meditation, moral teachings, and mental exercises, **with the aim of turning students into good human being.**
- **With the rise in cases of depression and attention disorder among students, this is a welcome step from the Delhi Government.**

LOW GROWTH OF 3.6% REGISTERED IN THE INDEX OF EIGHT CORE INDUSTRIES

Growth in the index drops to a 10 month low!

- According to **Index of Eight Core Industries** released by **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**, the growth of eight core infrastructure industries has **dropped to 10-month low of 3.6% in May 2018 due to decline in production of crude oil and natural gas.**
- This is the **lowest growth rate since July 2017** when eight core infrastructure industries had expanded by 2.9%.
- The growth rate recorded in April 2018 stood higher at 4.6%.
- In April and May 2018, the eight industries recorded 4.1% growth compared to 3.3% in same period in 2017.

WHAT ARE CORE INDUSTRIES?

- **Core industries** can be defined as **main or key industries of the economy.**
- In most countries, these particular industry are **backbone of all other industries.**
- **In India, there are eight core sectors comprising of coal, crude oil, natural gas, petroleum refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity.**
- The eight infrastructure sectors, **constitute 40.27% of the total index of industrial production (IIP).**

LET'S LOOK AT THE REVISED WEIGHTAGE IN CORE SECTORS:

- Petroleum Refinery production (weight: 28.04%)
- Electricity generation (19.85%)
- Steel production (17.92%)
- Coal production (10.33%)
- Crude Oil production (8.98%)
- Natural Gas production (6.88%)
- Cement production (5.37%)
- Fertilizers production (2.63%)

NRL IN ASSAM BECOMES FIRST OIL PSU

- The cloud-based compliance management system is expected to increase transparency. Numaligarh Refinery Ltd (NRL) in Assam became first oil public sector undertaking (PSU) in India to adopt an online legal compliance system by introducing "Legatrix".
- This initiative aims to induce greater transparency to NRL's operations and augment its contribution towards Digital India Mission of the Government.

ABOUT LEGATRIX:

- Legatrix is cloud-based compliance management system to serve as onestop solution for effectively managing organisations legal and regulatory compliances through monitoring control at different levels.
- It encompasses requirements of laws like labour, IT, taxation, commercial, export-import, corporate laws and other industry-specific laws.
- It will support risk tracking and compliance on real-time basis along with creation of centralised repository, auto-generated reports and certificates, compliance calendar and immediate updates for legal and regulatory amendments.

ABOUT NUMALIGARH REFINERY LIMITED (NRL):

- Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL) is a public sector oil company in Assam.
- It is under administrative control of Union Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.
- It is located at Morangi, Golaghat district, Assam in India.
- It is a joint venture between Bharat Petroleum (61.65%), Oil India (26%) and Government of Assam (12.35%).
- It has a capacity of 3 million metric tonnes (mmt) per year.

5TH RCEP INTERSESSIONAL MINISTERIAL MEETING HELD IN TOKYO

Trade discussions are in the air!

- The 5th Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) intersessional ministerial meeting was held in Tokyo, Japan.
- It was first RCEP ministerial gathering to be held outside ASEAN countries.
- It was co-chaired by Singapore's Minister of Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing and his Japanese counterpart Hiroshige Seko.

WHAT HAPPENED AT THE MEETING?

- During the meeting, ministers from member countries had in-depth discussions on issues such as trade, service, investment and rules at the meeting.
- They recognized importance of early conclusion of RCEP negotiations consistently.
- They also reaffirmed their resolve to work together and achieve agreement that will allow economies of different levels of development to actively participate in and benefit from open and inclusive regional economic integration.

ABOUT REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP (RCEP):

- **RCEP is a proposed free trade agreement (FTA)** or comprehensive regional economic integration agreement **between the 10-ASEAN countries** (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) **and its six FTA partners** (Australia, New Zealand, **India**, China, Japan and Korea).
- Its negotiations were **formally launched at 2012 ASEAN Summit in Cambodia**.
- **Till 2017, 16 RCEP member states** accounted for population of 3.4 billion people with **total GDP (in terms of PPP) of \$49.5 trillion**, approximately **38% of the world's GDP (combined GDPs of China and India makes up more than half that amount)** and **29% of world trade**.
- **RCEP is viewed as an alternative to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP)**, a proposed trade agreement that includes several Asian and American nations but excludes China and India.

TEJAS: INDIGENOUS FIGHTER AIRCRAFT COMMENCES OPERATIONS

India's very own fighter aircraft on the prowl!

- Indigenous fighter aircraft **Tejas of no 45 squadrons 'The Flying Daggers'** formally started operations **from the Air Force Station at Sulur in Coimbatore** under **Group Captain S Dhankhar on Monday**.
- With deployment of Tejas, its squadron 'Flying Daggers' took up active wartime role towards safeguarding national skies.
- The Southern Air Command base at **Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala** has been entrusted with the responsibility of integrating the fighter in the Air Force's concept of operations.
- It has been involved in training aircrew of fighter aircraft Tejas.
- It will now undertake operations and maintenance of the indigenous fighter aircraft.

FACTS ABOUT "TEJAS" :

- **Tejas is the first advanced fly-by-wire Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) designed, developed and manufactured indigenously by state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL).**
- It is a **lightweight single-seat multi-role jet fighter**.
- It has been pegged as **world's smallest and lightest supersonic fighter**.
- It is **powered by a single engine**.
- It has a **tailless and compound delta wing design**.
- **It was developed and manufactured under Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) programme, which began in the 1980s to replace India's ageing MiG-21 fighters.**
- It is equipped with **satellite-aided Inertial Navigation System**.
- It has a **digital computer-based attack system and an autopilot mode**.
- It can fire **Air to Air missiles, carry bombs and precision guided ammunition**.
- It has **limited reach** of a little over **400-km**.
- It will be mainly used for **close air-to-ground operations**.
- Interestingly, **LCA Tejas is not India's first indigenous fighter to be inducted into IAF. In April 1967, IAF had formed the first operational squadron with the indigenous HF-24 Marut fighter.**

DEFENCE MINISTRY APPROVES CONSTRUCTION OF 17 NEW BAFFLE FIRING RANGES

Ready, Aim, Fire!

- **The Union Ministry of Defence** has sanctioned **construction of 17 new baffle firing ranges** at various military stations, cantonments and training establishments **at an approximate cost of Rs. 238 crore.**
- **The proposed baffle shooting ranges can facilitate firing from 300 to 500 meters.**
- These 17 new firing ranges will be in **addition to 60 similar firing ranges existing all over the country.**
- **These firing ranges will come at:**
 - Southern Command (7 ranges)
 - Eastern Command (3 ranges)
 - Northern Command (2 ranges)
 - South Western Command (1 range)
 - Central Command (1 range)
 - One range is proposed at Central Command for Officers Training Academy, Gaya, Bihar

WHY ARE THESE BAFFLE FIRING RANGES NEEDED?

- **Baffle firing ranges are covered shooting practice areas which prevent possible accidents due to stray bullet injuries.**
- In recent times, **due to growth of civilian population around cantonments areas, possibility of accidents due to stray bullet injuries have increased.**
- In order to **prevent accidents and casualties without affecting the training requirements of Armed Forces new baffle ranges were approved.**
- **Baffle ranges require less than 50 acres of real estate as compared to about 500 acres needed for conventional small arms practice firing ranges.**
- Apart from less land, baffle ranges use a system of ground barriers, side-walls, baffle walls and stop-butts to stop or trap misdirected or ricocheting bullets.
- Interestingly the Army, of course, is also battling a **shortage in larger ranges like field-firing ranges (FFRs) and manoeuvre ranges to train soldiers for use of heavier weapons like artillery guns and rockets.**

CVIGIL: ELECTION COMMISSION LAUNCHES APP TO REPORT MODEL CODE VIOLATIONS

A step to prevent violations of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during elections.

- **The Election Commission of India** has launched **cVIGIL** mobile application for citizens to report any violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during elections.
- The app aims at empowering people across the country to share evidence of malpractice by political parties, their candidates and activists directly with ECI.
- **At present its beta version has been released** and will be made available for use during forthcoming Assembly elections in **Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram and Rajasthan.**

FEATURES OF CVIGIL APP:

- It will **allow anyone** in election-bound state to report violations of MCC.
- By using this app, **vigilant citizens can immediately report on incidents of misconduct anonymously** and in real-time by **clicking picture or record video of upto two minutes and uploading it on the app**.
- **The identity of the complainant will be kept confidential and will be provided with Unique ID** to track and receive the follow up updates on the mobile.
- The app also has **inbuilt features to prevent its misuse**.
- It will be **active only in States where elections have been announced**.
- The app also facilitates **sharing of geo-tagged photographic and video evidence without disclosing identity of sender**.
- The uploaded information will be **transmitted to control room and from there to field units or flying squads**, mapped on Geographic Information System (GIS) for further action.

WHAT MAKES THE CVIGIL APP MUCH NEEDED?

- So far, complaints about violations of MCC often were not followed instantly, leading to violators escaping detection from action squads.
- Besides, **lack of any documented evidence** in form of pictures or videos was seen as **hurdle in verifying complaint**.
- Further, **absence of robust response system to quickly and accurately identify scene of occurrence of violations** with help of geographical location details hampered election officers' ability to apprehend violators.
- The cVIGIL app is expected to fill in all these gaps and **create fast-track complaint reception and redressal system**.

NITI AAYOG TO ORGANISE INDIA'S FIRST GLOBAL MOBILITY SUMMIT

India aims for a clean energy economy!

- **NITI Aayog is going to organise 'MOVE: Global Mobility Summit' on September 7-8, 2018** in collaboration with various ministries and industry partners.
- **The summit will be held in New Delhi and will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi**.
- It will help to **drive India's goals for vehicle electrification, renewable energy integration and job growth**, thus, **speeding up India's transition to a clean energy economy**.

AIM OF THE GLOBAL MOBILITY SUMMIT:

- **The summit aims to bring together and engage with key stakeholders within rapidly transforming global mobility landscape and to evolve public interest framework for shared, connected, zero emission agenda for the future**.
- It also aims to **encourage synergies between indigenous industries such as automobile manufacturing, information technology, electronics, telecommunication** to integrate with global supply chains.
- It also envisages **mobility as key driver for generating employment, providing innovative solutions** to improve efficiency and efficacy of transport sector and accelerate economic growth.

WHAT WILL THE SUMMIT FEATURE?

- The summit will feature **global political leaders from mobility space and will see participation of over 1200 participants** from across world including **government leadership, research organizations, academia, industry leaders, think tanks and civil society organisations**.
- The Summit has been organised along key 'tracks' to anchor debate and deliberations on towards preparing a collective mobility agenda. The six tracks or themes for the Summit will focus on:
 - Asset Utilization and Services
 - Comprehensive Electrification
 - Alternative Energy
 - Reinventing Public Transit
 - Logistics and Goods Transport
 - Data Analytics and Mobility

KIMIS: KVIC LAUNCHES E-MARKETING SYSTEM

Government promotes Khadi products!

- **The Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC)** launched its in-house developed, single-umbrella e-marketing system named **Khadi Institution, Management and Information System (KIMIS)** in New Delhi.
- **The system can be accessed from anywhere in the country** for sale and purchase of Khadi and Village Industries products.

WHAT IS KHADI INSTITUTION MANAGEMENT AND INFORMATION SYSTEM (KIMIS)?

- **KIMIS will serve as in-house single umbrella billing software for sale and purchase that could be monitored, round-the-clock, from any part of India.**
- It has been **developed by KVIC IT team**.
- It will give **real-time data of sales and also give updated status of stocks of khadi bhawans and godowns**, allowing better planning and control of inventory.
- **480 Khadi institutions and showrooms of KVIC will be linked with this billing software.**
- The software will be useful in raising demand and supply of goods in high demand.

KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES COMMISSION (KVIC)?

- **KVIC is a statutory body formed under the Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act, 1956.**
- It is an apex organization under the aegis of **Union Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)**.

WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF KVIC?

- It **plans, promotes, organizes and implements programmes** for development of **Khadi and village industries in rural areas**.
- It creates and manages **reserves of raw materials** and **supplies them to producers, creating common service facilities for processing of raw material** and semi-finished goods.

- It promotes sales and marketing of Khadi Products.
- It also encourages and promotes research in production techniques and equipments in Khadi Industries.

URUGUAY'S MAJOR GENERAL JOS ELADIO ALCAIN APPOINTED HEAD OF UNMOGIP

- However, India still stands by its view that UNMOGIP is irrelevant after the Shimla Agreement of 1971. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has appointed **Major General José Eladio Alcain of Uruguayan Army as Head of Mission and Chief Military Observer for UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP)**.
- He will succeed Major General Per Gustaf Lodin of Sweden, who completed his two-year assignment.

FACTS ABOUT UN MILITARY OBSERVER GROUP IN INDIA AND PAKISTAN (UNMOGIP):

- UNMOGIP has been established by UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution and started its operations in 1949.
- It has been tasked with monitoring the ceasefire line between nuclear-armed India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir.
- UNMOGIP has 44 military observers, 25 international civilian personnel from 10 countries and 47 local civilian staff.
- The group is financed by the United Nations regular budget.

WHAT DOES THE UNMOGIP DO?

- UNMOGIP's military observers conduct field tasks (field trip, area recce, field visit and observation post) along LoC.
- As part of 1949 Karachi Agreement, it also conducts investigations into alleged ceasefire violation complaints, which two parties (India and Pakistan) can submit to it.
- Its findings of investigations are shared with UN Secretary-General and summary of investigations with two parties.

WHAT IS INDIA'S OPPOSITION?

- India has maintained that UNMOGIP has outlived its utility and is irrelevant after the Shimla (Accord) Agreement and consequent establishment of Line of Control (LoC) in 1971.
- In Shimla Agreement, India and Pakistan had agreed to change ceasefire line to LoC and held that they will resolve their disputes bilaterally without third-party interference.
- In 2014, India had asked UNMOGIP to wind up its work in Kashmir and in 2017, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had reiterated that UNMOGIP does not have the mandate to monitor situation in Kashmir.
- However, Pakistan continues to welcome UNMOGIP mission based there.
- On India opposition, UN Secretary-General has held that given the disagreement between India and Pakistan about UNMOGIP's mandate and functions, it can only be terminated by decision of UN Security Council.

CABINET APPROVES DNA TECHNOLOGY (USE AND APPLICATION) REGULATION BILL, 2018

The government aims at strengthening the justice delivery system of the country.

- The Union Cabinet has approved The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill 2018.
- The Bill aims at expanding application of DNA-based forensic technologies to support and strengthen justice delivery system of the country.

FEATURES OF THE BILL:

- It allows law enforcement agencies to collect DNA samples, create “DNA profiles” and special databanks for forensic-criminal investigations.
- It states that all DNA data, including DNA samples, DNA profiles and records, will be **only used for identification of the person and not for any other purpose.**
- It creates **DNA Profiling Board (DPB)** that will be final authority that will **authorise creation of State-level DNA databanks, approve the methods of collection and analysis of DNA-technologies.**
- It makes **accreditation and regulation mandatory for DNA laboratories.**
- **It allows government to set up DNA data banks** across India to store profiles.
- **These banks will maintain national database for identification of victims, accused, suspects, undertrials, missing persons and unidentified human remains.**
- It also empowers government to **impose jail term of up to 3 years and fine of up to Rs. 1 lakh** on those who leak information stored in such facilities.
- It prescribes similar punishment for those who seek information on DNA profiles illegally.

WHAT WILL BE ACHIEVED BY THIS BILL?

- Bill will ensure that with proposed expanded use of DNA profiling technology in the country, there will be an assurance that DNA test results are reliable and data remain protected from misuse or abuse in terms of the privacy rights of our citizens.
- It will also ensure speedier justice delivery and increased conviction rate.
- It will also enable **cross-matching between persons who have been reported missing on one hand and unidentified dead bodies found in various parts of the country on other, and also for establishing the identity of victims in mass disasters.**
- It will set in place, **an institutional mechanism to collect and deploy DNA technologies** to identify persons based on samples collected from crime scenes or for identifying missing persons.

WHY DO WE NEED THIS BILL:

- The utility of forensic DNA profiling based technologies for solving crimes and to identify missing persons is well recognized across the world.
- It has proven value in solving cases involving offences that are categorized as affecting human body (such as rape, murder, human trafficking or grievous hurt) and those against property (including burglary, theft and dacoity).
- The aggregate incidence of such crimes in the country, as per statistics of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) is in excess of 3 lakhs per year in the year 2016.

- Of these, only very small proportion is being subjected to DNA testing.
- The expanded use of DNA profiling technology in these criminal cases will result in speedier justice delivery and also in increased conviction rates, which at present is only around **30% (NCRB Statistics for 2016)**.

NBWL ADDS 4 SPECIES IN RECOVERY PROGRAMME

A move to save endangered species!

- The standing committee of **National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)** has recently added four species- **Northern River Terrapin, Clouded Leopard, Arabian Sea Humpback Whale and Red Panda** into **Centre's Recovery Programme for Critically Endangered Species**.
- They were added on the recommendation by **Wildlife Division of Ministry of Environment and Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC)**.

NORTHERN RIVER TERRAPIN:

- It is species of riverine turtle found in rivers that flow in Eastern India.
- It is hunted for its **meat and carapace**.
- It is a native of **Bangladesh, Cambodia, India, Indonesia and Malaysia**.

CLOUDED LEOPARD:

- It is found in **Himalayan foothills**.
- It is threatened due to habitat loss, poaching for its skin and is also as a live pet trade.
- The IUCN in its Red List assessment of 2016 has categorized Clouded Leopard as 'Vulnerable' and indicating declining trend in its population.

ARABIAN SEA HUMPBACK WHALE:

- It is a species found in all of major oceans.
- This species migrates from the Oman coast through the **Arabian sea**, along the Indian coasts till the **Sri Lankan coast**.
- Ship strikes, unforgiving fishing gear and seismic explorations pose grave threat to it.

RED PANDA:

- It is closely associated with montane forests with **dense bamboo-thicket**.
- It is found **Sikkim, West Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh**.
- It is poached for its meat, and for use in medicines, and as a pet.
- The IUCN has categorized Red Panda as '**Endangered**'.
- As per its Red List assessment of 2015, population of this species is decreasing.

RECOVERY PROGRAMME FOR CRITICALLY ENDANGERED SPECIES

- The programme is one of the three components of centrally funded scheme, **Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (IDWH)**.
- It was started in 2008-09.
- IDWH is meant for providing support to protected areas (national parks, wildlife sanctuaries, conservation reserves and community reserves except tiger reserves), protection of wildlife outside protected areas and recovery programmes for saving critically endangered species and habitats.
- So far, **17 species were identified** under this recovery programme. These are Snow Leopard, Bustard (including Floricans), Dolphin, Nilgiri ahr, Hangul, Marine Turtles, Edible Nest Swiftlet, Dugongs, Asian Wild Buffalo, Nicobar Megapode, Manipur Brow-antlered Deer, Vultures, Malabar Civet, Indian Rhinoceros, Asiatic Lion, Swamp Deer and Jerdon's Courser.

NCSK: CABINET APPROVES CREATION OF POSTS OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON AND MEMBER

Government makes a move with an intention of welfare.

- The **Union Cabinet** has **approved** creation of **one post each of Vice-Chairperson and Member in the National Commission for Safai Karmacharis (NCSK)**.
- The decision aims **at optimizing functioning of NCSK** and fulfilling desired objectives of **welfare and development of target group**.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION NOW?

- At present, it has sanctioned strength of four members and a chairperson.

WHAT WILL THIS DECISION CHANGE?

- With these additional posts, sanctioned **strength of NCSK will be one Chairperson, one Vice-Chairperson and five members**.

NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SAFAI KARAMCHARIS (NCSK)

- NCSK is statutory body **established under National Commission for Safai Karmacharis Act, 1993**.
- It was **established in 1994** to deal with the grievances of persons engaged in manual scavenging.
- It aims to **promote and safeguard interests and rights of Safai Karmacharis and Manual Scavengers** and works for welfare of both.
- It is mandated to **work towards elimination of inequalities in status facilities and opportunities for Safai Karmacharis**.
- It has an important role to ensure rehabilitation of all identified manual scavengers on time-bound basis.
- Its mandate is to **study, evaluate and monitor implementation of various schemes** for Safai Karmacharis as autonomous organisation.

UNDER SECTION 31 OF PROHIBITION OF EMPLOYMENT AS MANUAL SCAVENGERS AND THEIR REHABILITATION ACT 2013, NCSK PERFORM FLOWING FUNCTIONS:

- Monitor implementation of Act.
- Enquire into complaints regarding contravention of provisions of Act.
- Advice Central and State Governments for effective implementation of Act.
- Working for the welfare of both Safai Karamcharis and Manual Scavengers.

CABINET APPROVES EXTENSION OF SCHEME OF RECAPITALIZATION OF RRB

Recapitalization of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) to continue.

- Union Cabinet has approved extension of scheme of recapitalization of Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) for next three years (upto 2019-20).
- This will enable RRBs to maintain minimum prescribed Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of 9%.
- It will ensure strong capital structure and minimum required level of CRAR.
- This will facilitate financial stability of RRBs and enable them to play greater role in financial inclusion and meeting the credit requirements of rural areas.

WHAT HAPPENED IN THE PAST IN THIS SCHEME AND HOW WILL IT MOVE FORWARD?

- The scheme of Recapitalization of RRBs was started in 2010-11 and was extended twice in the year 2012-13 and 2015-16.
- The last extension was upto March 2017.
- Total amount of **Rs. 1107.20 crore**, as Central Government share, out of **Rs. 1450 crore**, was released to RRBs upto March, 2017.
- The remaining amount of Rs.342.80 crore will be utilized to provide recapitalization support to RRBs whose CRAR is below 9%, during the extended three years period.
- This will be in addition to announcement made in 2018-19 Budget of allowing financially strong RRBs to raise capital from sources other than Central Government, State Government and Sponsor Bank.
- The identification of RRBs requiring recapitalization and amount of capital to be provided will be **decided in consultation with NABARD**.

ABOUT REGIONAL RURAL BANKS (RRBS)

- RRBs were set up as a government-sponsored, regional based rural lending institutions under Regional Rural Banks Act, 1976.
- They are **scheduled commercial banks** (Government banks) and are **configured as hybrid micro banking institutions**, combining local orientation and small scale lending culture of cooperatives and business culture of commercial banks.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF RRBS?

- They have been **created with a view to serve primarily rural areas of India with basic banking and financial services.**
- **They fulfill the credit needs of relatively unserved sections in rural areas-small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers and socio-economically weaker sections and small entrepreneurs in rural areas** for development of agriculture, trade, commerce, industry and other productive activities.
- **RRBs can also set branches set up for urban operations and their area of operation may include semi urban or urban areas too.**

WHO OWNS THE RRBS?

- **RRBs are jointly owned by Central Government, concerned State Government and Sponsor Banks** with the issued capital shared in the proportion of 50%, 15% and 35% respectively.

WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF RRBS?

- **To provide banking facilities to rural and semi-urban areas,** they carry out government operations like **disbursement of wages of MGNREGA workers, distribution of pensions etc.**
- Interestingly, they **provide para-Banking facilities like locker facilities, debit and credit cards.**
- That's not all, **they can also function as Small financial banks.**

CABINET APPROVES ACCESSION TO WIPO COPYRIGHT TREATY, PERFORMANCE & PHONOGRAMS TREATY

Government ensures that the work & rights of innovators in the e-commerce industry are safeguarded.

- **The Union Cabinet has approved India's accession to WIPO Copyright Treaty, 1996 and WIPO Performers and Phonograms Treaty, 1996** which extends coverage of copyright to the internet and digital environment.
- **The proposal was submitted by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**

WHAT DOES THIS APPROVAL MEAN?

- The approval is a step towards the objective laid in the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy adopted by Government which **aims to get value for IPRs through commercialization by providing guidance and support to EPR (End Point Royalties) owners about commercial opportunities of e-commerce Internet and mobile platforms.**
- Both treaties provide framework for creators and right owners to use technical tools **to protect their works and safeguard information about their use** i.e. Rights Management Information (RMI) and Protection of Technological Protection Measures (TPMs).

WHAT WILL BE THE BENEFITS AND WHO WILL BE BENEFITTED?

- These treaties **will help India to enable creative right-holders enjoy fruit of their labour**, through international copyright system that can be used to secure return on investment made in producing and distributing creative works.
- It will also **facilitate international protection of domestic rights holder by providing them level-playing field in other countries** as India already extends protection to foreign works through International Copyright order and these treaties will enable Indian right holders to get reciprocal protection abroad.
- **It will instil confidence and distribute creative works in digital environment with return on investment and spur business growth and contribute to the development of a vibrant creative economy and cultural landscape.**

A LOOK AT THE COPYRIGHT ACT, 1957:

- Copyright Act, 1957 **governs the subject of copyright law** in the country.
- **Its administration was transferred to DIPP in March 2016.**
- The Act was **amended in 2012** to bring it in conformity, with WCT and WPPT.
- It includes **amendment in definition of Communication to the public** to make it applicable to digital environment (Section 2(ff)).

IT ALSO INCLUDES:

1. Protection Measures (Section 65A)
2. Ad Rights Management Information (Section 65B)
3. Moral rights of performers (Section 38B)
4. Exclusive rights of the performers (Section 38A)
5. Safe harbour provisions over electronic medium (Section 52 (1) (b) and (c))

Since we have learned so much, lets spend just a little more time on "WIPO Copyright Treaty" & "WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty".

WIPO COPYRIGHT TREATY:

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

WIPO PERFORMANCES AND PHONOGRAMS TREATY:

- It came in force **on May 2002** and has been **adopted by 96 contracting parties.**
- **It deals with rights of two kinds of beneficiaries**, particularly in digital environment.
- It includes:
 - **Performers** (singers, musicians, actors etc.)
 - **Producers of Phonograms** (Sound recordings)
- It **empowers right owners** in negotiations with new digital platforms and distributors.
- It also **recognizes moral rights of performers for first time and provides exclusive economic rights to them.**

CBIC DEVELOPS GST VERIFY MOBILE APP

- The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has developed mobile app 'GST Verify' to protect the interest of consumers.
- It is an android app to verify if the person collecting GST from consumer is eligible to collect it or not.

ABOUT THE MOBILE APP "GST VERIFY":

- The app provides details of person or company collecting GST.
- It has been developed by B Raghu Kiran joint commissioner GST Hyderabad and can be used all across the country.
- It will allow customers to verify their bill if any GST amount mentioned is of genuinely registered person or not.
- This will help consumers to save the amount shown as tax from fraudsters that are cheating them.

CENTRAL BOARD OF INDIRECT TAXES AND CUSTOMS (CBIC)

- CBIC is the nodal national agency responsible for administering Customs, GST, Central Excise, Service Tax & Narcotics in India.
- It is part of the Department of Revenue under Union Ministry of Finance.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- It is one of the oldest government departments of India (established in 1855 by the then British Governor General of India, to administer customs laws in India and collection of import duties / land revenue).
- It was renamed to present name from Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC) in March 2017.
- CBIC deals with tasks of formulation of policy concerning levy and collection of customs and central excise duties and service tax, prevention of smuggling and administration of matters relating to customs, central excise, service tax and narcotics.
- It is an administrative authority for its subordinate organizations, including Central Excise and Service Tax Commissionerates, Custom Houses and Central Revenues Control Laboratory.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES CMSMS AND MOBILE APP 'KHAN PRAHARI'

A step to prevent unauthorized mining activities.

- The Union Ministry of Coal has launched Coal Mine Surveillance & Management System (CMSMS) and mobile application 'Khan Prahari'.

WHO HAS DEVELOPED CMSMS & KHAN PRAHARI?

- The CMSMS and the Khan Prahari mobile app have been developed by CMPDI, Ranchi a Subsidiary of CIL and Bhaskaracharya Institute of Space Application and Geo-informatics (BISAG).

WHAT IS THE COAL MINE SURVEILLANCE & MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (CMSMS)?

- The CMSMS is a **web based GIS application** through which location of sites for unauthorised mining can be detected.
- **Its objective is reporting, monitoring and taking suitable action on unauthorised coal mining activities.**
- The basic platform used in the system is of Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology's (MeiTY) **map which provides village level information.**
- **The leasehold boundary of all coal mines are displayed on this map.**
- The system **uses satellite data to detect changes** by which unauthorised mining activity extending beyond allotted lease area can be stopped by taking suitable action.
- **It also uses information provided by responsible citizens using smartphones using Khan Prahari mobile app.**

ABOUT THE KHAN PRAHARI MOBILE APPLICATION:

- It is a tool used for reporting any activity taking place related to illegal coal mining like rat hole mining, pilferage etc.
- By using this app, **one can upload geo-tagged photographs of incident along with textual information** directly to the system.
- It uses both **satellite data and human information** to capture information on unauthorised mining activities.
- Once incident is reported through this app, **information will be automatically directed to nodal officers to take suitable action** on those activities.
- The **complainant can also track his complaint** through it **without his identity being revealed.**

PM TO VISIT RAJASTHAN ON JULY 7, 2018

The Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi, will visit Jaipur, Rajasthan on July 7, 2018.

- **At a large public meeting, the Prime Minister will witness an audio-visual presentation of experience sharing by 12 beneficiaries of schemes of the Government of India and Government of Rajasthan.**
- **This presentation will be moderated by the Chief Minister of Rajasthan, Smt. Vasundhara Raje.**

THESE SCHEMES INCLUDE:

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana
- Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana
- Skill India
- Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram
- Mukhyamantri Rajshri Yojana
- Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana
- Mukhyamantri Jal Swavlamban Abhiyan
- Shramik Kalyan Card
- Mukhyamantri Palanhar Yojana
- Chhatra Scooty Vitaran Yojana
- Din Dayal Upadhyay Varishth Nagrik Tirth Yatra Yojana

The Prime Minister will lay the foundation stone for thirteen urban infrastructure projects, with a total outlay of over Rs. 2100 crore.

PROMINENT AMONG THESE PROJECTS ARE:

- Integrated Infrastructure package for walled city of Udaipur
- Elevated Road Project for Ajmer
- Water Supply and Sewerage projects in Ajmer, Bhilwara, Bikaner, Hanumangarh, Sikar and Mount Abu.
- Upgradation of STPs in Dholpur, Nagaur, Alwar and Jodhpur
- Projects under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) in the districts of Bundi, Ajmer and Bikaner.
- Dussehra Maidan (Phase 2), Kota.

The Prime Minister will also address the public meeting.

ALLOW GAMBLING, BETTING ON SPORTS AS REGULATED: LAW COMMISSION

- The Law Commission of India (LCI) in its report “Legal Framework: Gambling and Sports Betting including Cricket in India”, has recommended that gambling and betting on sports be allowed as regulated activities.
- It recommended number of changes in law for regulating betting for making it taxable under direct and indirect tax regimes and used as source for attracting foreign direct investment (FDI).
- The commission is led by former Supreme Court Justice BS Chauhan.

DETAILS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LCI:

- It recommended linking Aadhar or PAN card of individual indulging in betting and gambling and making transaction cashless to regulate illegal activities such as money laundering.
- It also recommended amending laws regulating forex and India's FDI policy to allow investments in casino and online gaming industry.
- It suggests amending Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999 and rules made thereunder and also Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Policy to encourage Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in casino and online gaming industry, lawfully permitting technological collaborations, licensing and brand sharing agreements, etc.
- FDI in casino and online gaming industry will bring substantial amounts of investment to those states that decide to permit casinos, propelling the growth of the tourism and hospitality industries, while also enabling such states to generate higher revenue and employment opportunities.
- Parliament may also enact model law for regulating gambling that may be adopted by states or Parliament also may legislate in exercise of its powers under Articles 249 or 252 of the Constitution.
- In case legislation is made under Article 252, states other than consenting states should be free to adopt the same.

ABOUT LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA (LCI):

- The LCI is a non-statutory and non-constitutional body constituted by the Union Government from time to time.
- The first commission was constituted in 1955 and since then various commissions were re-constituted every three years.

- It is usually headed by a retired Supreme Court judge or former Chief Justice of a high court.
- The Secretary Department of Legal Affairs and Secretary, Legislature Department of Union Ministry of Law & Justice are ex-officio members of the Commission.
- So far, various Law Commissions have submitted 262 reports to make important contribution towards codification and progressive development of laws of the country.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF COOPERATIVES: JULY 7, 2018

Let's Co-operate!

- The International Day of Cooperatives (IDC) was observed on July 7 (first Saturday of July) across the world to promote the co-operative model as it contains core aspects of sustainable development and is based on ethical values and principles.
- The 2018 theme of the Day was 'Sustainable societies through cooperation', aimed at creating sustainable societies through cooperation.
- Co-operatives around world celebrate this day in various fashions and each year the organising institutions agree on a theme for the celebrations.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATIVE DAY (IDC):

- IDC is an annual celebration of the co-operative movement.
- It has been observed on first Saturday in July since 1923 by International Co-operative Alliance (ICA).
- It was proclaimed as first Saturday of July by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by adopting resolution 47/90 on December 16, 1992 to mark the centenary of establishment of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA).
- Since 1995, United Nations' International Day of Co-operatives has been observed jointly alongside International Co-operative Day.

ABOUT CO-OPERATIVES:

- Co-operatives foster external equality as they are community-based and are committed to sustainable development of their communities – environmentally socially and economically.
- Its open membership model affords access to wealth creation and poverty elimination.
- In co-operatives, the main aim of the members is to contribute equitably to, and democratically control the capital of their co-operative.
- Co-operatives Movement has been recognised as distinct and major stakeholder in both national and international affairs.

ISRO CONDUCTS FIRST TEST OF CREW ESCAPE MODULE

ISRO gears up for Human Space Flight Programme.

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully conducted test of Crew Escape System that provides escape mechanism for astronauts if the launch operation is aborted.
- The crew escape system is being developed as part of the proposed Human Spaceflight Programme.

- It was the first pad abort test, critical for future human space mission that **demonstrated safe recovery of crew module in case of any exigency at the launch pad.**
- **The test lasted little more than three minutes** and involved aborting space capsule at the launch to save the astronaut.

WHERE DO WE STAND AT PRESENT?

- India at present does not have human space flight programme.
- Only three countries **United States of America (USA), Russia and China** have human space flight programmes.
- The only Indian citizen to ever travel to space was **fighter pilot Rakesh Sharma who flew aboard Soyuz T-11 (spacecraft of former USSR) in 1984.**

HOW ARE WE PROGRESSING?

- ISRO is preparing report to be submitted to government for approval for human space flight programme.
- Critical technology developments and demonstration for indigenous human space flight capability are in progress.
- The crew module systems, space suit, recovery systems, crew escape systems and elements of environmental control and life support systems have already been developed by ISRO.
- ISRO already has a designed phased programme in place to execute such mission.
- If the programme is approved by the government, it could take less than 10 years for ISRO to take humans to space.

SUPREME COURT ONCE AGAIN UPHOLDS CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA AS MASTER OF ROSTER

Supreme Court reaffirms CJI's exclusive authority to allocate cases.

- The Supreme Court in latest ruling once again has upheld Chief Justice of India (CJI) as **'Master of Roster'**.
- According to ruling given by SC bench of **Justices A.K. Sikri and Ashok Bhushan**, CJI is an individual judge and not the powerful collective of five senior-most judges of Supreme Court called the **'Collegium'**.
- CJI has exclusive authority to allocate cases to fellow judges and is the spokesperson of the court.

WHAT LEADS TO THE JUDGEMENT?

- The judgment was based on petition filed by former Union Law Minister **Shanti Bhushan** for considering expression CJI should be read as meaning Collegium for the purpose of allocation of cases.
- The petition had mentioned that to have collegium of Supreme Court judges collectively to allocate cases rather than leave the entire power in the hands of CJI in his administrative capacity as the 'Master of Roster'.
- Earlier the apex court in two separate judgments in November 2017 and April 2018 had upheld CJI's complete administrative authority to allocate cases and constitute Benches.

WHAT WAS SPECIAL IN THE SC'S RECENT RULING?

- Court agreed with the submission of **Attorney General K K Venugopal** that if allocation of cases and constitution of benches is given in multiple hands, it will lead to differences and hurdles in smooth distribution of work.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF CHIEF JUSTICE?

- **CJI is empowered to exercise leadership on the court**, and in this role **he is expected to be the spokesperson and representative of judiciary** in its dealings with executive, among others.
- **CJI has authority and responsibility for administration of the apex court**, which gives him the **ultimate authority for determining the distribution of judicial work load**.

CJI BEING THE FIRST AMONG EQUALS:

- The phrase is generally relatable to judicial function designed to emphasise the fact that **voices of members of a particular bench, which may include 'Chief Justice', are given equal weight in deciding cases**.
- In such a bench **opinion of Chief Justice carries same weight and is no different from those of other members of the bench**.
- Thus, in given case, there is a **possibility that Chief Justice's view may be minority view and in that eventuality, outcome of case may be what majority decides**.
- The word "**first**" in this case signifies only fact that Chief Justice is the seniormost judge of the court.

UTTARAKHAND HC DECLARES ENTIRE ANIMAL KINGDOM AS LEGAL ENTITIES

The Hon'ble Court shows what it means to be human.

- **The Uttarakhand High Court has declared entire animal kingdom i.e. all animals, including avian and aquatic species as legal entities with rights, duties and liabilities of living person.**
- The order was given by **Division Bench of Justice Rajiv Sharma and Justice Lok Pal**.
- The Division Bench of High Court **was hearing PIL by Narayan Dutt Bhatt, filed in 2014** where petitioner had sought directions to restrict movement of horse carts (tongas) between India and Nepal through Banbasa in **Champawat district of Uttarakhand**.
- However, High Court had enlarged scope of petition in larger public interest to promote protection and welfare of the animals.

WHAT WAS IN THE COURT'S RULING?

- **The court ruled that entire animal kingdom, including avian and aquatic ones are legal entities and have distinct persona with corresponding rights, duties and liabilities of living person.**
- **All the citizens throughout state are hereby declared persons in loco parentis as human face for welfare and protection of animals.**
- **It directed State Government that no animal, including horses moving between India and Nepal, carries excess weight.**
- **It also banned use of any sharp equipment throughout state to avoid bruises, swelling, abrasions or severe pain to animals.**

- It also directed all veterinary doctors across Uttarakhand to mandatorily treat animals brought to them by citizens of the state.
- If animal cannot be brought to doctor, then vet must personally visit and attend the stray cattle, or animal without delay.

WHAT DOES LEGAL ENTITY MEAN?

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

SIX BIDS TO SUPPLY 110 FIGHTERS FOR IAF

IAF wants new Jets to dominate the sky!

- **Six global aircraft manufacturers have responded Indian Air Force's (IAF) Request for Information (RFI) to supply 110 fighter aircrafts** to replace its ageing fleet of MiG-21s and MiG-27s, which are being phased out of service.
- Of the six bids received, **Lockheed Martin F-16 and SAAB Gripen are single-engine fighters, while Dassault Rafale, Boeing F-18, Eurofighter Typhoon and United Aircraft Corporation MiG-35 are twin-engine fighters.**

HOW WILL THE PROCESS MOVE FORWARD?

- The bids now will be evaluated after which IAF will issue Request For Proposal (RFP) with exact specifications of aircraft to be procured.
- **The RFP is expected by early 2019.**
- It has not specified exact requirement of fighter jets, opening up contest to both single-and twin-engine jets.
- Both configurations were equally competent and final choice will depend on price and extent of technology transfer.
- **The processes** including technical evaluation and selecting one aircraft **will be completed in less than two years.**
- After that, it depends on how fast the contract negotiations can be completed.
- It is believed that the **technical evaluation and trials can be completed very quickly,** as all aircrafts already have been tested extensively earlier.
- **The entire cost of procurement of 110 fighter jets will be worth over \$15 billion.**
- **Single-engine aircraft will cost lower than twin-engine jets,** both in unit and operational costs.
- It stated Government is planning to **buy 110 fighters jets, of which 85% will have to be built in India** under 'Make in India' programme in partnership with a Strategic Partner or an Indian Production Agency.
- The procurement will be processed through **Strategic Partnership (SP) model under Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP).**

A LOOK AT IAF'S NEED FOR NEW FIGHTER AIRCRAFTS:

- The IAF needs minimum strength of 42 fighter squadrons to dominate and tackle two-front collusive threat simultaneously from China and Pakistan.
- Currently, IAF has 32 fighter squadrons but due to retirement of old aircrafts, the number of fighter squadrons will further go down by 2021.
- By then, 11 squadrons of Mig-21 and Mig-27, which are 35 to 45 years old, will be retiring from service.
- So to mitigate the shortfall, IAF is procuring new advance fighter aircrafts.

JEE (MAIN), NEET TO BE HELD TWICE A YEAR, OVER MULTIPLE DAYS: HRD MINISTRY

- **Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD)** has announced that two of India's most popular competitive exams, **Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) (Main)** and **National Eligibility and Entrance Test (NEET)**, will now be held twice a year and over multiple days.
- Both exams will be conducted by newly formed **National Testing Agency (NTA)**.
- It will also conduct **National Eligibility Test (NET)**.

MORE DETAILS:

- All these exams were **earlier conducted by Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)**.
- Henceforth, **JEE (Main)** for undergraduate admission into various engineering colleges **will be held twice a year in January and April**.
- **NEET for admission into medical and dental courses will be held in February and May**.
- NET to determine eligibility for post of assistant professor and award of junior research fellowship will be held in December.
- NTA will conduct these exams and **they will be held over many days and students will have option to choose date**.
- Moreover, if a student appears for JEE (Main) and NEET both times in a year, **best of his/ her two scores will be taken into account**.
- All tests will be **computer-based and practice modules will be made available on NTA website**.
- For conducting these exams, **NTA will create network of test centres and students will be able to use them free of charge**.
- These exams will be conducted **more securely, at par with international norms and there will be no issues of leakage and it will be more student-friendly, open and scientific**.

BENEFITS:

- By holding these competitive professional career exams twice a year, **students will not lose one year because there will be two examinations before admission**.
- This will give students **more choice and reduce stress due to single exam conducted on one single day in year**.
- **This will give more chances to students**, thereby giving adequate opportunity to bring out his/her best.

ABOUT NTA:

- **The Union Cabinet** approved in November 2017 setting up of the **NTA as an autonomous body to conduct examinations for entrance to higher educational institutions**.

- Apart from above three exams, **NTA will also conduct Common Management Admission Test (CMAT) and Graduate Pharmacy Aptitude Test (GPAT).**
- **JEE (Advanced) exam conducted for IITs entrance will be not conducted by NTA.**

MHA TO UPGRADE NATIONAL INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY AND GUIDELINES

Cyber Security on the Government's Mind!

- **The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) will be upgrading National Information Security Policy and Guidelines (NISPG) to secure government data and control access to it in order to prevent sensitive information making its way to the internet.**
- **The upgraded and updated policy will cover issues pertaining to the Official Secrets Act.**

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FIELD OF CYBER SECURITY IN THE PAST:

- **MHA has been designated as the lead agency for the protection of the “Information” in Cyberspace.**
- **In 2013, cybersecurity, which was sole preserve of MHA, was moved to National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) under Prime Minister’s Office (PMO).**
- **Besides, critical infrastructure was moved to National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) and non-critical part to Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeITY).**
- **Recently in June 2018, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh had presided over meeting to review evolving cyberthreats and had directed that NISPG to be upgraded and updated for government sector.**

ABOUT NATIONAL INFORMATION SECURITY POLICY AND GUIDELINES (NISPG):

- **NISPG has been prepared by MHA, based on experience of existing security standards and frameworks and global best practices and experience of implementation in the wake of expanding information security threat scenario.**
- **It aims at improving information security posture of organization possessing any information, including classified information and does not restrict organizations from adopting additional stringent practices over and above these guidelines.**
- **It elaborates baseline information security policy and highlights relevant security concepts and best practices, which government ministries, departments, and organizations must implement to protect their information.**

67TH PLENARY MEETING OF NORTH EASTERN COUNCIL HELD IN SHILLONG

Development Projects in the North-East discussed.

- **The 67th plenary meeting of North Eastern Council (NEC) was recently held in Shillong, Meghalaya.**
- **It was chaired by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh.**

- The meeting was attended by Union Minister of Development of NER and Governors and Chief Ministers of the north-eastern States.

WHAT WAS DISCUSSED IN THE MEETING?

- The meeting discussed development projects of Northeast States.
- It also reviewed various presentations on matters related to all-round development of NER.
- The status of NEC-funded projects was also discussed.
- It also deliberated on livelihood programmes, management of water resources, afforestation and doubling farmer's income, by 2022, road connectivity, Implementation of Poshan Abhiyan and Ayushman Bharat etc.
- It also **evaluated security and connectivity matters** in the region.
- **For the first time** since it was established in 1971, **NEC discussed topics related to security in the region.**
- It also discussed **issues related to Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) and proposed Naga accord.**

ABOUT THE NORTH EASTERN COUNCIL (NEC):

- **NEC is the nodal agency for economic and social development of North Eastern Region (NER) which consists of eight states** of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura.
- It was **constituted in 1971 under North Eastern Council (NEC) Act, 1971 (Thus NEC is a statutory body).**
- In June 2018, the **chairmanship of NEC** was transferred by Union Cabinet to **Home Minister** from Minister of Development of NER.
- NEC serves as an apex level body for **securing balanced and coordinated development and facilitating coordination with NER states.**
- It has been **mandated to function as regional planning body for NER.**
- **It gives priority to schemes and projects while formulating regional plan for this area benefiting two or more states.**

GOVERNMENT TO LAUNCH GLOBAL HOUSING CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGE UNDER PMAY-U

Government creates a healthy competition to develop the housing sector.

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) is going to **launch Global Housing Construction Technology Challenge** as part of technology sub-mission of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban (PMAY-U).
- The challenge aims to **accelerate PMAY-U's target of providing 'housing for all'** as the scheme is moving at pace far slower than its rural counterpart.

ABOUT GLOBAL HOUSING CONSTRUCTION TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGE:

- Through this global challenge, **MoHUA will invite ideas for innovative technologies for mass housing projects** that can help **build houses faster, cheaper and of better quality with sustainable green materials.**

- The selected **technologies will be tried and tested** to be found suitable to geographical conditions of **six different urban areas selected across the country with varying terrains such as hilly, plain, or earthquake-prone etc.**
- **Four parameters in challenge are time, cost, quality, and sustainability.** The winning technologies will be used to **build 1,000 houses, multi-storey or otherwise, depending on area type, in each of these places.**
- The technology will chosen in such a way that it is **scalable so that it can be used to construct cheaper and faster mass housing** in similar areas.

WHAT MAKES THIS CHALLENGE SIGNIFICANT?

- The global challenge will **invite best innovative ideas** from across globe for alternative technologies **that go beyond brick-and-mortar building model** used widely in Indian construction.
- The winning technologies, selected based on criteria laid down by a technical committee of MoHUA under this challenge, will be used to **build mass houses in tie-up with states, for economically weaker sections and low-income groups under affordable housing project vertical of PMAY-U.**
- Such houses will be constructed in **varying geo-climatic zones across the country.**
- **The winning technologies will be used to construct houses within the next six to seven months,** as against the one-year period required to finish such a project.

REPORT CARD SO FAR:

- **Under PMAY-U, around 8 lakh houses have been constructed since its launch in June 25, 2015.**
- **It does not even account for 10% of revised MoHUA target of providing 1.2 crore houses by 2022.**
- As against this, **under rural component of the scheme, PMAY-Gramin, 48.26 lakh houses have been built,** with pace almost on course of meeting target of 2.95 crore houses by 2022.

CHINA LAUNCHES TWO REMOTE SENSING SATELLITES FOR PAKISTAN

- **China successfully launched two remote sensing satellites PRSS-1 and PakTes-1A of Pakistan** on board of Long March-2C rocket from **Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre.**
- It was **overall 279th mission** for the Long March rocket series (mainly used to send satellites into low Earth or Sun-synchronous orbits) and first international commercial launch in nearly two decades after it carried Motorola's Iridium satellites into orbit in 1999.

ABOUT THE 2 SATELLITES:

PRSS-1:

- **It is China's first optical remote sensing satellite sold to Pakistan.**
- It can carry out day and night monitoring.
- It also has viewing capacity even in clouded conditions.
- It will be used for land and resources surveying, agriculture research, urban construction, monitoring of natural disasters and **to provide remote sensing information for (CPEC) under China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI).**

- It is China's first optical remote sensing satellite sold to Pakistan and overall 17th satellite developed by China Academy of Space Technology (CAST) for an overseas buyer.

PAKTES-1A:

- It is Pakistan's indigenously developed scientific experiment satellite developed by engineers from its space agency SUPARCO (Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission).

HOW ONE SHOULD WE VIEW THIS?

- The launch of the two satellites marks yet another space cooperation between China and its all-weather ally Pakistan.
- The satellites will provide space remote sensing information services for strategic US\$ 50 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which passes through Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK).
- Pakistan already had five satellites in space but lacks heavy-duty launchers and satellite fabrication facilities and is dependent on China.
- India is way ahead of Pakistan in space technology, with 43 operational satellites in space.
- India also has its indigenous radar imaging satellites with all-weather surveillance capability.

IFFCO INKS PACTS WITH TWO SOUTH KOREAN FIRMS

Wants to explore the Agri/Farm Machinery & Credit Sectors.

- Fertiliser cooperative major IFFCO (Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited) has entered into strategic partnership with two leading South Korean firms to explore business opportunities in agri-machinery and farm credit sectors.
- These two firms are LS Mtron Ltd, a South Korean agriculture equipment manufacturer and NH Capital co. Ltd., South Korea's leading financial services provider.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR THESE SECTORS?

- The farm machinery and agriculture credit sector are still evolving in India.
- Over the years, IFFCO has been expanding its footprint beyond chemical fertiliser and was scouting for partner to venture into farm machinery and agri-credit sectors for long time.
- The entry of established player like IFFCO in these emerging sectors will certainly infuse much-needed competition and freshness in the sector.
- Under this strategic partnership, IFFCO together South Korean firms will explore business opportunities involving supply, sales and distribution of agricultural machinery and finance to fulfil the market demand in India.

ABOUT INDIAN FARMERS FERTILISER COOPERATIVE LIMITED (IFFCO):

- IFFCO is a large scale fertiliser cooperative federation in India which is registered as Multistate Cooperative Society.
- It is one of India's biggest cooperative society which is wholly owned by Indian Cooperatives.

- It was **founded in 1967 with just 57 cooperatives** and at present it has **amalgamation of over 36,000 Indian Cooperatives** with diversified business interests ranging from General Insurance to Rural Telecom apart from its core business of manufacturing and selling fertilisers.
- It is **headquartered in New Delhi**.

GUJARAT GOVERNMENT GRANTS RELIGIOUS MINORITY STATUS TO JEWS

Gujarat Government says Shalom!

- **Gujarat Government has granted religious minority status to Jews living in the state.**
- In this regard, State's Department of Social Justice and Empowerment has issued GR to this effect.
- **Gujarat has become the third state in India** to grant religious minority status to Jews **after West Bengal and Maharashtra**.
- **Gujarat has small Jewish community** with no more than **170 members** and majority of them located in **Ahmedabad**.

WHAT WILL THE JEWISH PEOPLE GET FROM THIS?

- As religious minority members professing faith of Judaism, **Jews in the states will get religious minority rights envisaged in the Constitution of India and various acts and rules of the State Government.**
- They will also get benefits of **welfare schemes formulated for religious minority communities within the jurisdiction of Gujarat.**

SOME FACTS RELATED TO THIS DECISION:

- **Chief Minister Vijay Rupani**, during his **official visit to Israel in June 2018**, had announced that his government was in the process of granting religious minority status to the community.
- **Gujarat also had hosted Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu** during his six-day India visit in January 2018.

ABOUT JUDAISM:

- **Judaism is one of the oldest religions of the world, evolved in Egypt about 3,700 years ago.**
- It believes in the unity and oneness of universal Creator.
- Judaism is the religion, philosophy and way of life of the Jewish people.
- Jews have been living in India for over 2,000 years ever since **they first landed on West coast of India.**
- Indian Jews are known as a peace-loving community.
- They follow **Hebrew calendar**.
- **They have special Thanks Giving ceremony known as Eliyahoo-ha-Nabior** i.e. 'gratitude to Elijah the Prophet', on festive occasions.

INDIAN JEWS FALL INTO FIVE CATEGORIES:

- **Bene Israel** – meaning Children of Israel. Marathi speaking. **Arrived in Maharashtra 2,100 years ago.**

- **Cochin Jews** – arrived in India 2,500 years ago and **settled down in Kerala** as traders.
- **Baghdadi Jews** – Jews who came to India as traders from West Asia, mainly from Baghdad. **They are settled mainly in Mumbai, Pune and Kolkata.**
- **Bene Menashe – The Manipur Jews** constitute a community which sees itself as descendants of the Manasseh (Menashe) Tribe (which is one of the 10 lost tribes of Jews).
- **Bene Ephraim** – also called “**Telugu Jews**”. They are a small group who **speak Telugu**. Their observance of Judaism dates to 1981.

SAMSUNG INAUGURATES WORLD’S LARGEST MOBILE PHONE FACTORY IN NOIDA

A new benchmark in mobile phone manufacturing!

- South Korean technology giant **Samsung inaugurated the world’s largest mobile manufacturing unit in Noida, Uttar Pradesh.**
- It was **jointly inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South Korean President Moon Jae-in.**

ABOUT THE FACILITY:

- **Samsung Electronics facility at Sector 81 in Noida** will help company to **double its current manufacturing capacity** for mobile phones in Noida **from 6.8 crore units a year to 12 crore units a year** (10 million phones in a month), **in phase-wise expansion that will be completed by 2020.**
- The facility will allow Samsung to make phones at a lower cost due to its scale when other phone making hubs such as China are getting more expensive.
- **70% phones manufactured in this facility will be earmarked for domestic market in Indian and remaining 30% will be exported to Middle-Eastern and African nations.**
- **The new factory has been built at investment of Rs. 4,915 crore on 35-acre land.**
- **It will generate 2,000 direct jobs.**
- At present, **Samsung provides 70,000 direct and indirect jobs in country**, 5,000 of them are employed in Noida.
- **Production in this new facility will range from low-end smartphones priced below \$100 to company’s flagship models.**
- This new facility is expected to help Samsung to consolidate its leadership position in Indian mobile market, which currently is facing strong competition in smartphone segment by **Chinese players** such as **Xiaomi, Vivo, Oppo and others.**

SOMETHING INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **India is world’s second-largest smartphone** market after China (after it overtook US).
- According to a study by Cisco Systems, **there will be 780 million connected smartphones in 2021**, compared with 359 million in 2016.

ADB APPROVES LINING PROJECT OF SON CANAL IN BIHAR

- **The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved Lining Project of Son canal in Shahabad-Bhojpur region of Bihar.**

- The estimated cost of this project is US \$503 million (Rs 3272.49 crore) out of which US \$352 million is being provided by ADB.
- This project on completion will bring immense benefits to agriculture sector of Shahabad – Bhojpur region of Bihar.
- Ministry of Power has requested ADB and Ministry of Finance to expedite and tender for first phase of lining of the main canal and branches by October 2018.

ABOUT ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB):

- ADB is a regional development bank which aims to promote social and economic development in Asia.
- It was established in December 1966.
- It is headquartered in Manila, Philippines.
- It has total 67 members, of which 48 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.
- The ADB's main objective is to assist its members and partners, by providing loans, technical assistance, grants, and equity investments to promote social and economic development.
- The ADB has been modelled closely on the lines of World Bank.
- It has similar weighted voting system where votes are distributed in proportion with members' capital subscriptions.
- As of 2014, Japan was largest shareholder (capital subscription) of ADB having 15.7% shares followed by US (15.6%), China (6.5%), India (6.4%), and Australia (5.8%).

FSSAI LAUNCHES EAT RIGHT MOVEMENT TO PROMOTE SAFE AND HEALTHY FOOD

An initiative to move towards a Healthy India!

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has launched national campaign 'The Eat Right Movement' to improve public health and combat lifestyle diseases.
- FSSAI also launched the Eat Right toolkit and the Safe and Nutritious Food at Workplace campaign.

WHAT IS THE EAT RIGHT MOVEMENT?

- It is a voluntary and collaborative movement built on two broad pillars – "Eat Healthy and "Eat Safe".
- It is a collective effort to encourage people towards making right food and dietary choices.
- It focuses on both sides- demand and supply side to come together.
- On demand side it focuses on empowering citizens to make right food choices.
- On supply side, it requests food businesses to reformulate their products, provide better nutritional information to consumers and make investments in healthy food as responsible food businesses.
- Under this campaign, FSSAI has asked industry to voluntarily reduce salt, sugar and saturated fat in packaged food products.
- Edible oil industry, bakeries, halwais and FMCG companies, including Nestle India, HUL and Patanjali have taken pledge to reduce the level of salt, sugar and fat in food products.

WHAT IS THE EAT RIGHT TOOL KIT?

- The kit aims to serve as a **supplementary engagement resource** to be mainstreamed in national nutrition and public health programmes at grassroots level.
- It includes components on eating safe such as maintaining hygiene and sanitation and food adulteration.
- It has a simple message on eating healthy food and avoiding food with high fat, sugar and salt.

WHAT IS THE SAFE AND NUTRITIOUS FOOD AT WORKPLACE (SNF@WORKPLACE) CAMPAIGN?

- It is a nation-wide campaign to **help people eat safe, eat healthy and eat right at their workplaces.**
- It promotes safe and healthy diets through The Orange Book (its resource book) and through FSSAI-trained **Food Safety Supervisors (FSS)** and **Health and Wellness Coordinators (HWC)** at every workplace across the country.

ABOUT THE FOOD SAFETY AND STANDARDS AUTHORITY OF INDIA (FSSAI):

- FSSAI is a nodal statutory agency responsible for protecting and promoting public health in India through regulation and supervision of food safety.
- It was established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and operates under aegis of Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX (GII): INDIA RANKS 57TH

India moves up in ranks!

- In the recently released **Global Innovation Index (GII) 2018**, India was ranked 57th among 130 countries.
- It was the 11th edition of GI and was jointly released by Cornell University, INSEAD and World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).
- This year, India has moved up 3 places as compared to 60th rank in GI 2017 and emerged as top-ranked economy in Central and South Asia.

TOP 10 COUNTRIES BY RANK IN 2018:

1. Switzerland
2. Netherlands
3. Sweden
4. UK
5. Singapore
6. USA
7. Finland
8. Denmark
9. Germany
10. Ireland

FACTS RELATED TO INDIA:

- India has maintained its top place in central and South Asia region.
- It has been consistently moving up on global ranking from 81st in 2015 to 57th this year.
- In fact, it has climbed up the list third year in row.
- It ranked at 66th position in 2016 and 60th last year.
- These indicators have helped India to improve its ranking. It includes India's human capital (graduates in science & engineering), growth rate of GDP per worker, exports of information and communication technology (ICT) and services, productivity growth and creative goods exports etc.
- However, India has fared badly on indicators such as ease of starting business, political stability and safety, overall education and environmental performance.

ABOUT GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX (GII):

- The GII global ranking is published by World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) – a specialized agency of United Nations in association with Cornell University and graduate business school INSEAD.
- It ranks nations based on 80 indicators, ranging from intellectual property filing rates to R&D, online creativity, mobile application creation, computer software spending, education spending, scientific & technical publications and ease of starting business.
- India's Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) is one of the knowledge partners which assists GII team in bringing out the annual ranking.
- GII is published annually since 2007 and is considered leading benchmarking tool for business executives, policy makers and others seeking insight into state of innovation around the world.
- It is being used by them to evaluate progress on continual basis.

INDIA, RWANDA SIGN MOU FOR PROMOTING INTER-PARLIAMENTARY DIALOGUE

- India's upper house of parliament Rajya Sabha and Senate of Rwanda has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for promoting inter-parliamentary dialogue capacity building and cooperation.
- It was signed between Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu and visiting President of Senate of Rwanda, Bernard Makuza in New Delhi.

FACTS ABOUT THE MOU:

- The MoU has 6 articles of cooperation and seeks to promote inter-Parliamentary dialogue, capacity building of parliamentary staff, organisation of conferences, forums, seminars, staff attachment programmes.
- It also calls for conducting workshops and exchanges, collaboration in mutual interest in regional and international multilateral parliamentary bodies in furtherance of bilateral relations and friendship between the two countries.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS MOU?

- This is for the first time in 76 years since Rajya Sabha came into being, it has entered into MoU with foreign counterpart for promoting inter-parliamentary dialogue.
- Besides, it makes Venkaiah Naidu first Chairman of Rajya Sabha to sign such agreement with foreign counterpart.

INDIA-SOUTH KOREA TECHNOLOGY EXCHANGE CENTRE INAUGURATED IN NEW DELHI

Betterment of the MSME sector on Government's mind.

- The India-Korea Technology Exchange Centre was inaugurated at National Small Industries Corporation premises in New Delhi.
- It was inaugurated by Minister of State (I/C) MSME Giriraj Singh and Minister of SMEs and Start-ups of South Korea, Hong Jong-hak.

ABOUT THE INDIA-KOREA TECHNOLOGY EXCHANGE CENTRE:

PURPOSE:

- The purpose of centre is to create platform for MSMEs of India and South Korea where they can be assisted to identify and exchange latest technologies, share management expertise, product development and technology applications for product development.

AIM/OBJECTIVES:

- The centre will work towards identifying Indian technologies which can be exported to Korea and find suitable Korean partners for the same.
- It will initiate various cooperative MSME projects complimenting each other's strengths in MSME sector.
- It will also create Technology Data Bank from each side to encourage technology transfers, production of high-quality products in India.
- It will also encourage Joint Ventures (JVs) and business matching between Indian and South Korean SMEs, besides others.

UN SECURITY COUNCIL ADOPTS RESOLUTION 2427

Welfare of children is UNSC's priority.

- The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has adopted Resolution 2427 aimed at providing legal framework for mainstreaming protection, rights, well-being and empowerment of children throughout the conflict cycle.
- The resolution has won unanimous approval of the 15 members of the council.

WHAT DOES RESOLUTION 2427 SAY?

- The resolution strongly condemns recruitment and use of children in armed conflicts as well as their re-recruitment, killing and rape, maiming and other forms of sexual violence and abductions.
- It also condemns attacks against schools and hospitals and denial of humanitarian access by parties to armed conflict and all other violations of international law committed against children in situations of armed conflict.
- It demands that all relevant parties immediately put end to such practices and take special measures to protect children.

- It also emphasizes responsibility of all states to put end to impunity and investigate and prosecute those responsible for genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes and other egregious crimes perpetrated against children.
- It reiterates **UNSC's readiness to adopt targeted and graduated measures against persistent perpetrators** of violations and abuses committed against children.
- It calls on member states and UN to **mainstream child protection into all relevant activities in prevention of conflict, during conflict and post-conflict situations** with aim of sustaining peace and preventing conflict.
- It recalls **importance of ensuring that children continue to have access to basic services during the conflict and post-conflict periods, including education and health care** and urges UN member states and bodies and civil society to take **specifically into account girls' equal access to education**.
- It also stresses importance of **long-term and sustainable funding for mental health and psychosocial programming in humanitarian** contexts and ensuring all affected children receive timely and sufficient support and encourage donors to integrate mental health and psychosocial services in all humanitarian responses.

HOW SERIOUS THE PROBLEM IS?

- According to annual report of UN Secretary-General on children and armed conflict, **over 21,000 cases of grave violations of children's rights in armed conflict were verified in 2017**.
- It is **drastic increase from previous year (2016)** with 15,500 violations.
- Among the violations in 2017, over 15,000 violations were perpetrated by non-state armed groups and about 6,000 were committed by government forces.

LET'S LOOK AT THE FUNCTIONS OF UNSC:

- It is **responsible for determining existence of threat against peace and to respond to act of aggression**.
- It is also **responsible for finding peaceful means to settle conflict or dispute between states**.
- In some cases, it **resorts to sanctions or even authorise use of force to maintain or restore international peace and security**.
- It also recommends to UNGA, the **appointment of UN Secretary-General and admission of new members to the UN**.

WINGS: BSNL LAUNCHES INDIA'S FIRST INTERNET TELEPHONY SERVICE

BSNL spreads new "Wings" in the domain of phone calls!

- State-run telecom firm **BSNL** through its mobile app 'Wings' launched India's first internet telephony service.
- Through this app, **BSNL customers will be able to make calls to any phone number, domestic or international**.
- Before this service, phone calls on mobile apps were possible within users of particular app (such as Whatsapp, Duo etc) and not on telephone numbers.

WHAT WILL "WINGS" ALLOW ITS USERS TO DO?

- The Wings service will allow calls from mobile phone to any number, domestic or international using internet.
- It requires mobile data of any operator or wifi services.
- It will allow customers to **make video or audio calls by paying fee and also send SMSs**.

- This service will use **mobile numbering scheme**, provided using **IP based access network of IMS NGN Core switches** to allow users to make and receive calls over the Internet via their landline or mobile phone.

ROLE OF TELECOM REGULATORY AUTHORITY OF INDIA (TRAI):

- This development comes after **Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) had refreshed VoIP guidelines in October 2017 and that was approved by Telecom Commission in May 2018.**
- **It allowed full-fledged internet telephony by telecom operators** which will enable calls from app to app of licensed service providers as well as on phone numbers.
- **It only allows authorised licensed holders to provide full-fledged internet telephony** and not over-the-top players like Google Duo, WhatsApp that allow only app-to-app calling.
- In effect, **telcos have been allowed to piggyback on each other's data networks** in case of voice calls over WiFi and these calls can terminate on mobile or landline networks.

EBRD: INDIA FORMALLY ANNOUNCED AS 69TH SHAREHOLDER

- **India was formally inducted as 69th shareholder of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).**
- This comes after the entire membership process was completed recently and after **EBRD's board of governors**, which represents all existing shareholders **voted unanimously in favour of India's application in March 2018.**
- **India had applied for EBRD membership in December 2017.**

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR INDIA?

- **India being shareholder, will only take shareholding in EBRD and will not be recipient of EBRD financing.**
- **But it may benefit India indirectly through EBRD projects** or if Indian companies invest alongside the bank.
- **It will pave way for more joint investment with Indian companies** across EBRD's regions of operation.
- **It opens up further joint investment prospects for India in markets such as Central Asia, Egypt and Jordan.**

ABOUT EUROPEAN BANK FOR RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT (EBRD):

- **EBRD is a multilateral developmental investment bank.**
- **It was established in 1991 after fall of Berlin wall** to promote private and entrepreneurial initiative in emerging Europe.
- **It is owned by 65 countries and two EU institutions.**
- **It is headquartered in London, United Kingdom.**
- **It initially focused to help former Communist states build their economies after the Cold War.**
- Later it expanded to support development in more than 30 countries from central Europe to central Asia.
- Now it works only in countries that are committed to democratic principles using investment as a tool to build market economies.
- **It invests in 38 emerging economies across three continents (North America, Africa, Asia and Australia)** with predefined set of criteria that aim to make its countries more competitive, better governed, greener, more inclusive, more resilient and more integrated.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES TECHNOLOGY CHALLENGE TO ELIMINATE HUMAN ENTRY INTO SEPTIC TANKS

An initiative for welfare of people who maintain sanitation.

- Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoUHA) has launched "**Technology Challenge: Identifying solutions for cleaning of Sewerage Systems and Septic Tanks**" to promote suitable techniques for cleaning sewers and septic tanks in a way in which it eliminates the need for human entry in them.

MORE ABOUT THE CHALLENGE:

- The main objective of the challenge is to eliminate human intervention in cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.
- It also aims to identify technological as well as business process innovations to avoid human intervention in cleaning of sewers and septic tanks.
- It will also endorse viable business models that are suitable for different size, geographies, and class of cities.

THE CHALLENGE WILL BE CONDUCTED FOR TWO SEPARATE CATEGORIES.

1. CATEGORY A:

- Technological solutions for cleaning and maintenance of **sewerage systems** to eliminate need for human entry.
-

2. CATEGORY B:

- Technological solutions for cleaning and maintenance of **septic tanks** to eliminate need for human entry.
- The challenge will be part of **Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention that will be held on October 2, 2018.**
- Individual innovators, consortium partners, companies, academic institutions, R&D centers, NGOs, Parastatal and municipal bodies can participate in this challenge.
- Special jury comprising experts from MoUHA, faculty from IITs/IIMs and representatives of leading civil society groups will evaluate and scrutinize the technological solutions submitted by participants.

A BROAD CRITERIA FOR EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS WILL BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATIONS SUCH AS:

- Operational Effectiveness of Technology
- Life or Durability of Machinery
- Ease of Use (Automation)
- Ease of Availability and Economies of Scale
- Adaptability and Versatility
- Made in India
- Environmental Sustainability

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ENTIRE MEN'S HOCKEY TEAM INCLUDED IN TOPS

Government rewards Indian Men's Hockey Team.

- The Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) of Union Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs has included the entire Men's Hockey team of India under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).
- This is first instance that entire team has been made beneficiary of the scheme as earlier only individual athletes from different sports were included as beneficiaries of the scheme.

ABOUT THIS DECISION:

- The decision to include hockey was taken after India's performance had improved as they had finished runners up in Champions Trophy in Netherlands.
- The 18 team members will be provided with monthly allowance of Rs. 50,000 each under the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).
- The women's team may be also included in the TOPS after reviewing its performance in the upcoming World Cup and following Asian Games.

WHAT IS TARGET OLYMPIC PODIUM SCHEME (TOPS)?

- TOPS was launched by Ministry of Sports within the ambit of National Sports Development Fund (NSDF).
- It aims at identifying and supporting potential medal prospects for upcoming Olympic Games.
- It will provide selected sportspersons: customized training at institutes having world class facilities and it also provides other necessary support to the elite athletes.
- It will also provide a benchmark for selection of athletes on par with international standards.
- Under it, Sports Authority of India (SAI) and federations, which are members of Mission Olympic Cell (MOC), will be nodal agencies for disbursement of fund.
- They will make payments directly to beneficiary person and institution concerned on behalf of athletes.
- Abinav Bindra Committee was constituted to identify and support potential medal prospects for 2020 and 2024 Olympic Games under the scheme.

INDIA BECOMES WORLD'S 6TH LARGEST ECONOMY IN 2017: WORLD BANK

India climbs the economic ladder!

- According to updated World Bank figures on GDP of countries for 2017, India has become world's sixth-largest economy surpassing France which comes at seventh place.
- India's gross domestic product (GDP) amounted to \$2.597 trillion at the end of 2017, as against \$2.582 trillion for France.

FACTS ABOUT THE TOP ECONOMIES OF THE WORLD:

- At end of 2017, United States was world's largest economy with size of US \$19.39 trillion, followed by China (US \$12.23 trillion) at the second place.
- Japan (US \$4.87 trillion) and Germany (US \$3.67 trillion) are at third and fourth places, respectively.

- Britain is still world's fifth-largest economy with a GDP of \$2.622 trillion.

INDIA IN COMPARISON TO FRANCE:

- India, with population of around 1.34 billion is poised to **become world's most populous nation**, whereas France's population stands at 67 million.
- This means India's per capita GDP will continue to amount to just fraction of that of France which is **still roughly 20 times higher**.

WHAT LEAD TO INDIA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH AND WHAT IS THE PICTURE AHEAD?

- India has grown at seven-quarter high of **7.7%** in the three months ended March 2018, **helped by higher government spending and investment**.
- **Manufacturing and consumer spending** were main drivers of Indian economy in 2017.
- **India has doubled its GDP within decade** and is expected to power ahead as key economic engine in Asia, even as China economy is slowing down.
- **In near future India is also expected to surpass the fifth-largest economy: United Kingdom.**
- According to International Monetary Fund (IMF), India is projected to grow at **7.4% in 2018** and **7.8% in 2019**, mainly boosted by household spending and tax reform.
- This is in comparison to **world's expected average growth of 3.9%**.
- Besides, **London-based Centre for Economics and Business Research** has predicted that in future, India will **overtake both Britain and France in terms of GDP** and has a good chance of becoming world's third-biggest economy by 2032.

DHAROHAR BHAWAN: PM INAUGURATES NEW HQ BUILDING OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA

ASI gets a makeover!

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated 'Dharohar Bhawan' – the new headquarters building of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) at 24, Tilak Marg, New Delhi.

ABOUT DHAROHAR BHAWAN:

- **ASI's new headquarters** building is equipped with state-of-the-art facilities, including **energy-efficient lighting and rainwater harvesting**.
- **It hosts rare portfolios** related to Ajanta, Ellora and many sites of archaeological importance.
- It includes **Central Archaeological Library** with a collection of about **1.5 lakh books and journals**.
- **It hosts a valuable archaeological treasure trove of India and the World.**
- It has a **large collection of books on Archaeology, Indology, Epigraphy, Indian culture and its past**, etc.
- **It houses authentic records related to archaeology**, such as ASI reports, diary of Alexander Cunningham (founder of ASI), John Marshall, etc.
- It also has an **original collection of religious books and books on cultural heritage of India**, such as sacred books on Hindus, Manusmriti, Kautilya's Arthashastra.

ABOUT THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA (ASI):

- ASI is the premier organization for the archaeological researches and protection of the cultural heritage of the country.
- Its prime objective is to maintain archaeological sites, ancient monuments and remains of national importance.
- It was established in 1861 by Alexander Cunningham.
- ASI regulates all archaeological activities as per the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958.
- It functions under Ministry of Culture.
- It also regulates Antiquities and Art Treasure Act, 1972.

TCA RAGHAVAN APPOINTED AS DIRECTOR GENERAL OF ICWA

Will work towards boosting India's international relations.

- Former career diplomat **Dr. TCA Raghavan** was appointed as the Director General (DG) of Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA).
- He was selected by Governing Body and Governing Council of ICWA headed by Vice President **M. Venkaiah Naidu**.
- The post of DG is equivalent to the rank of Secretary to Government of India.
- Dr. Raghavan is Indian Foreign Service (IFS) officer of 1982 batch.
- He had served as India's High Commissioner to Islamabad (Pakistan) and Singapore.
- He has also served in Indian missions in London, Kuwait and Thimphu.

ABOUT INDIAN COUNCIL OF WORLD AFFAIRS (ICWA):

- It was established in 1943 by a group of Indian intellectuals as a think tank.
- It was established as non-official, non-political and non-profit organisation under Registration of Societies Act 1860.
- It was declared institution of national importance by Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), 2001 enacted by Parliament.
- ICWA is devoted exclusively for the study of international relations and foreign affairs.
- Vice President of India is its ex-officio President.
- It had conducted historic international conferences like Asian Relations Conference in 1947 under the leadership of Ms. Sarojini Naidu and United Nations and New World Order in 1994.

INDIAN RAILWAYS LAUNCHES CONSOLIDATED BRIDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

- Indian Railways has launched its first consolidated Bridge Management System (IR-BMS), a web-enabled IT application to store data on its 1.5 lakh bridges.
- It was launched by Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal days after a bridge in Mumbai collapsed on a railway track.

ABOUT BRIDGE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IR-BMS):

- The IR-BMS aims for meaningful assimilation, analysis and dissemination of information related to various activities about its bridges.
- It is a **web-based platform** that will show bridge master data, works data, information regarding inspection and monitoring and maintenance of bridges and other essentials.

IIP: INDUSTRY GROWTH SLIPS TO 7-MONTH LOW OF 3.2% IN MAY 2018

- According to the data released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), factory output measured in terms of the **Index of Industrial Production (IIP)** has slipped to seven-month low of **3.2%** in May 2018.
- It was mainly due to sluggish performance of manufacturing and power sectors coupled with poor offtake of fast moving consumer goods (FMCG).
- Besides, IIP was revised down to 4.8% in April 2018 from previous estimates of 4.9%.
- During April-May 2018, the IIP had recorded growth of 4.4% as compared to 3.1% in same period year ago.
- The IIP had expanded by 2.9% in May 2017 and previous low was 1.8% in October 2017.

DETAILS OF MAY IIP 2018:

- **Manufacturing sector:** It grew by just **2.8%**, marginally up from 2.6% in the corresponding period last year.
- **Power generation growth:** It decelerated sharply to **4.2%** as compared to a high of 8.3% year ago.
- **Mining sector output:** It recorded an impressive growth of **5.7%** as against 0.3% in May last year.
- **FMCG sector:** It was the worst performer among user based goods segment, as its output declined by 2.6% as against a growth of 9.7% year ago.

USER-BASED CLASSIFICATION:

- Its growth rates in May 2018 over May 2017 are 5.7% in primary goods, 7.6% in capital goods, 0.9% in intermediate goods and 4.9% in infrastructure/construction goods.
- The consumer durables and have recorded growth of 4.3% in the month under review.

WHAT IS INDEX OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION (IIP)?

- IIP is a composite indicator that measures short-term changes in volume of production of basket of industrial products during given period with respect to chosen base period.
- It is compiled and published monthly by Central Statistical Organization (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

BASE YEAR:

- CSO had revised base year of IIP from 2004-05 to 2011-12 in May 2017 to capture structural changes in economy and improves quality and representativeness of indices.
- The revised IIP (2011-12) reflects changes in industrial sector and also aligns it with base year of other macroeconomic indicators like Wholesale Price Index (WPI) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

SECTOR WISE ITEMS AND WEIGHTAGES:

- It covers 407 item groups.
- Sector wise, the items included falls into 3 categories viz. **Manufacturing** (405 items), **Mining** (1 items) & **Electricity** (1 item).
- The weights of three sectors are 77.63%, 14.37%, 7.9% respectively.
- **The revised combined weightage of eight core Industries in the IIP is 40.27%.**

GOVERNMENT RAISES THRESHOLD MONETARY LIMIT

Government aims at decreasing taxpayer greivances.

- **Union Finance Ministry has hiked threshold monetary limit for tax departments to file appeals at all three levels of appeal** — Appellate Tribunals, High Courts, and Supreme Court.
- The move is aimed at significantly decreasing taxpayer greivances and litigation burden of tax departments in courts and tribunals across the country.

HOW THINGS WORK AND WHAT WILL CHANGE FROM NOW ON?

- Tax departments, **Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT)** files appeals in **ITAT (Income Tax Appellate Tribunal)** while **Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC)** files appeals in **CESTAT (Customs, Excise and Service Tax Appellate Tribunal)** and also in High Courts and Supreme Courts.
- Under new limits tax departments CBDT and CBIC can file appeals in ITAT/CESTAT **only if the tax amount involved is Rs 20 lakh or more, up from Rs 10 lakh at present.**
- Moreover, **appeals can be filed in High Courts if tax amount involved in litigation is Rs 50 lakh** (up from Rs 20 lakh at present).
- **For appeals in Supreme Court, the threshold limit has been hiked to Rs 1 crore**(from Rs 25 lakh at present).
- **The new threshold limits will result in 41% reduction litigation from CBDT's side**, including 34% cases in ITAT, 48% of cases in case of High Courts and 54% of cases in case of Supreme Court.
- Similarly, in case of CBIC, it will result in reduction in 18% of cases, as 16% of cases will be withdrawn in CESTAT, 22% in High Courts, and 21% in Supreme Court.
- **This decision will give relief to taxpayers.**
- It is also based on the premise that **the cost of litigation is sometimes more than the recovery sought.**
- **It will also create trust in tax administration and give relief to honest, small and mid-sized taxpayers.**
- **It will promote tax friendly environment and help to promote ease of doing business.**

WHY WAS IT NEEDED?

- **More than 66% of the cases that are stuck in litigation, involve 1.8% in value.**
- In many cases, cost of litigation is higher than the recovery.
- As per Economic Survey 2017-18, even though success rate of tax department at all three levels of appeal — Appellate Tribunals, High Courts, and the Supreme Court is under 30% for both direct and indirect tax litigation, **it remains undeterred and persists in pursuing litigation at every level of the judicial hierarchy making it the largest litigant in India.**
- **The tax department unambiguously loses 65% of its cases.**
- Over period of time, **the success rate of tax departments has only been declining, while that of assesseees has been increasing.**

INDIAN ARMY INKS MOU WITH SBI ON DEFENCE SALARY PACKAGE

Aims for the continued welfare of Soldiers & their Families!.

- Indian Army has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with State bank of India (SBI) on Defence Salary Package.
- It is a revised version of the first MoU between SBI and Indian Army signed in 2011 and was renewed again in February 2015 to add suited requirements of serving soldiers, pensioners and families.

DETAILS ABOUT THE MOU:

- There are a number of additional facilities that have been incorporated in the revised MoU which includes:
 - Free personal accident death cover
 - Free permanent total disability cover
 - Other accidental benefits to the deceased soldier and family
- The revised MoU will benefit a large number of serving and retired Army personnel who have their accounts with the SBI.
- Currently, Indian Army has MoUs on Defence Salary Package with 11 public and private sector banks.

CENTURY'S LONGEST TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE OCCUR ON JULY 27-28

How will the cosmos react?

- Union Ministry of Earth Sciences has announced that Century's (2001 AD to 2100 AD) longest total lunar eclipse of 1 hour 43 minutes will occur on July 27-28, 2018.
- The entire eclipse will be visible from all parts of India.
- It will also be visible in region covering Asia, Australia, and Russia – except its northern part, Europe, Africa, east of South America and Antarctica.
- The partial eclipse of Moon will begin on July 27, 2018.
- Later, Moon will be gradually covered by Earth's shadow and totality phase will begin on July 28 and the total eclipse will last up to 2h 43m.
- Then the Moon will start to gradually come out of Earth's shadow and partial eclipse will end on July 28, 2018.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN THIS LONGEST TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE?

- In this particular eclipse, Moon will be passing through central part of Earth's umbral shadow.
- During this time, Moon is located at apogee (i.e. at farthest from the Earth) in its orbit and will be moving at slower speed in its orbit.
- During this transition phase, it will take longer time for Moon and greater distance of Earth's umbral shadow to travel, making it the longest duration of total eclipse of this century.

NCPCR DRAFTS FEE REGULATIONS TO CHECK ARBITRARY INCREASES IN SCHOOL FEES

A move to keep the unaided private schools in check.

- **National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has drafted fee regulations** to put in place uniform fee framework to check frequent and arbitrary increases in school fees by unaided private schools.
- **NCPCR is country's apex child rights body.**
- **It will recommend these draft regulations to Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD).**

WHAT DOES THE DRAFT PROPOSE?

- **It proposes 10% yearly cap on the fee hike permissible by private, unaided schools.**
- **It suggests setting up district fee regulatory authority in states to monitor school fee increases.**
- **It suggests formula for determining fees, based on school's location, costs incurred, revenue earned, student strength and other parameters.**
- **It proposes fines on schools if they violate uniform fee framework.**
- **These schools will be fined 1% of revenue it generates for first instance of violation of these rules and it will increase to 2 % and 5% for second and third violation.**
- **For any subsequent violation, it proposes to place school in no admission category and bar it from admitting new students.**
- **It must be noted that, the regulation of education-related matters is the domain of HRD ministry, but NCPCR has stepped in to draft fee regulations for unaided schools, citing Section 13 of Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CPCR) Act, 2005 and Section 32 of Right to Education (RTE) Act, which gives it authority to review safeguards under law to protect of child rights and recommend measures.**

WHAT'S THE SCENARIO IN THE COUNTRY?

- **There are around 3,50,000 private, unaided schools (24% of all schools) where 75 million children or 38% of all students, study.**
- **Such schools do not receive any grant from government and have to generate their own revenue for sustenance.**
- **Many cities across India have of late seen parents protest arbitrary fee hikes by such schools.**
- **In Mumbai and Delhi, for instance, arbitrary fee hike in such schools in last year varied between 10 % and 40 %.**

ABOUT NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR PROTECTION OF CHILD RIGHTS (NCPCR):

- **NCPCR is a statutory body set up in 2007 under Commissions for Protection of Child Rights Act, 2005.**
- **Its objective is to protect, promote and defend child rights in India** including rights adopted in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Children, 1989, ratified by India in 1992. (This convention defines child as a human being below 18 years of age).

MDWS: LAUNCHES SWACHH SURVEKSHAN GRAMEEN 2018

Government to gather data related to its Cleanliness Drive.

- Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS) has launched Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2018 (SSG 2018) in New Delhi, a rural cleanliness survey to rank all states and districts on basis of qualitative and quantitative evaluation.

ABOUT SSG 2018:

- The objective of SSG 2018 is to undertake ranking of states and districts on basis of their performance attained on key quantitative and qualitative Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G) parameters.
- The rankings will be based on taking into account set of comprehensive cleanliness parameters.
- The criteria of SSG-2018 will include survey of public places, citizens' perspective of cleanliness, their recommendations and data from SBM-G.
- As a part of it, 6,980 villages in 698 districts across India will be covered.
- It will cover total 34,000 public places namely schools, anganwadis, public health centres, haat/bazaars/religious places in these villages.
- The SSG 2018 will assign 65% weightage to findings and outcome and 35% to service level parameters to be obtained from Integrated Management Information System (IMIS) of the MDWS.
- The weights to different elements of SSG are direct observation of sanitation in public places (30%), citizen's feedback on sanitation parameters (35%), service level progress on sanitation progress in the country as per SBMG-MIS (35%).
- The SSG 2018 will be conducted by an independent survey agency in all districts from 1st to 31st August 2018.
- It will also take feedback from over 50 lakh citizens on SBM related issues through direct interaction as well as online feedback.
- The top performing states and districts are expected to be awarded on 2nd October 2018.

UN SECRETARY GENERAL SETS UP PANEL ON DIGITAL COOPERATION

UN aims for a clean cyber space.

- United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has established first-of-its-kind panel on digital cooperation aimed at addressing concerns of cybersecurity threats and rise in hate speech.
- The high-level panel on digital cooperation will be co-chaired by US philanthropist Melinda Gates and China-based Alibaba founder Jack Ma.

STRUCTURE OF THE PANEL:

- The panel will have 20 members in total and include leaders from technology, public policy, science and academia etc.
- Senior Indian diplomat Amandeep Singh Gill along with former diplomat Jovan Kurbalija will be executive directors of panel's secretariat.

OBJECTIVES OF THE PANEL:

- It will map trends in digital technologies, identify gaps and opportunities and outline proposals for strengthening international cooperation.

- It will focus on cyber-bullying, abuse rise, fake news, cyber crime and security aspects.

WHY IT IS NEEDED?

- Digital technologies are expanding rapidly and are changing economies and societies at warp speed.
- At the same time, world is only beginning to address its dark side— such as cybersecurity threats, risks of **cyberwarfare, magnification of hate speech and violations of privacy.**
- Global community is also facing **uncertainties about security, equity, ethics, and human rights in digital age.**
- **Fake news, poisoning of data, electoral manipulation** are concerns that have been highlighted by recent developments.
- So there is need to seize potential of technology while **safeguarding against risks and unintended consequences.**

UNSC ADOPTS RESOLUTION 2428

- **The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has adopted Resolution 2428 (2018) to impose an arms embargo on South Sudan,** almost five years after ruinous civil war was started in infant country.
- The resolution was drafted by United States and won minimum nine votes needed in favour to none against with 6 abstentions.
- **Yes votes:** United Kingdom, United States, Sweden, Poland, Ivory Coast, France, Kuwait, Netherlands and Peru.
- **Abstentions from voting:** Bolivia, China, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Kazakhstan and Russia.

ABOUT RESOLUTION 2428 (2018):

- **It calls upon all UN member states to prevent supply, sale or transfer of arms to South Sudan — from or through their territories till 31 May 2019.**
- The embargo is related to arms and related material and withholds training, technical and financial assistance related to military activities or materials.
- In addition, it lays out several exemptions to the country's arms embargo including for material and activities related to humanitarian activities and lists details related to the inspection of shipments and cargo bound for South Sudan.

ABOUT SOUTH SUDAN'S CIVIL WAR:

- **The civil war in South Sudan started in 2013, two years after it gained independence from Sudan,** when President Salva Kiir accused his then-deputy Riek Machar of plotting coup against him.
- Over the years, long-standing intense rivalry between Kiir and Machar intensified fighting with more than dozen warring factions.
- **The civil war has killed tens of thousands of people** and forced millions to flee their homes, triggering humanitarian crisis.
- **The United Nations has peacekeepers in the country** as part of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS).
- **In June 2018, President Kiir and his rival Riek Machar had agreed to permanent ceasefire,** raising hopes of peace deal to end their country's devastating civil war.
- **But several ceasefires had previously been violated** by the warring parties.

ASI ALLOWS PHOTOGRAPHY AT CENTRALLY PROTECTED MONUMENTS

Decision came after the PM questioned ASI's rules.

- Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has issued order allowing photography within premises of protected monuments and sites.
- The order was issued after Prime Minister Narendra Modi questioned ASI's rules prohibiting visitors from taking photographs at certain monuments while inaugurating ASI's new headquarters- Dharohar Bhawan in New Delhi's Tilak Marg area.

DETAILS OF THE NEW ORDER:

- Under the new order, **photography will be allowed within premises of Centrally protected monuments maintained and managed by ASI.**
- **However, photography will remain prohibited near Ajanta Caves, Leh Palace (both housing paintings that can be damaged by camera flash) and mausoleum of Taj Mahal.**
- Earlier, historians, academicians and professional photographers were required to take permission from ASI for photography in protected monuments.

ROLE OF ASI:

- ASI administers and manages 3,686 ancient monuments and archaeological sites, and remains of national importance.

SCIENTISTS PERFORM WORLD'S FIRST 3D, COLOUR X-RAY ON HUMAN BODY

Medical diagnostics field witnesses a new breakthrough.

- Scientists from New Zealand have performed world's first-ever 3-D, colour X-ray on a human.
- It has potential to improve the field of medical diagnostics.
- The new device is based on the traditional black-and-white X-ray but incorporates particle-tracking technology called Medipix developed by European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN).

ABOUT THE TECHNOLOGY:

- The Medipix technology developed by CERN works like camera detecting and counting individual sub-atomic particles as they collide with pixels while its shutter is open.
- This allows for high-resolution, high-contrast pictures.
- Its small pixels and accurate energy resolution makes this new imaging tool able to get images that no other imaging tool can achieve.
- The technology is being commercialised by New Zealand company MARS Bioimaging, linked to the universities of Canterbury and Otago which helped develop it.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS TECHNOLOGY?

- This colour X-ray imaging technique can produce clearer and more accurate pictures and help doctors give their patients more accurate diagnosis.
- The images very clearly show difference between bone, muscle and cartilage and also the position and size of cancerous tumours.

CLIMATE CHANGE THREATENING 60% OF THE ENDANGERED NILGIRI TAHR'S HABITAT

A call to save an endangered species.

- According to a recent study published in the international journal: Ecological Engineering, climate change is threatening the Nilgiri Tahr.
- It is estimated that the endangered wild goat could lose approximately 60% of its habitat, starting from 2030s.
- There are only around 2,500 Nilgiri Tahrs left in the wild and their population is small and isolated.
- It makes them vulnerable to local extinction.
- The study emphasises need for ecological restoration of Nilgiri tahrs.
- It also highlights demand for comprehensive species management plan.

ABOUT THE NILGIRI TAHR:

- It is the state animal of Tamil Nadu.
- It is endemic to the Western Ghats from the Nilgiris to Kanyakumari.
- It is confined to a narrow belt of higher elevation (altitudes) of Shola Forests in the Western Ghats.
- IUCN in its red data book has classified it as Endangered (number fewer than 2,500 mature individuals).
- Besides, it is a protected species under Schedule I of Wildlife (Protection) Act of 1972.

GOVERNMENT SETS UP TASK FORCE ON WAYS TO REDUCE IMPORT

Government serious on reducing the trade deficit.

- The Union Government constituted a high-level task force under Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary PK Sinha to identify various items and policy interventions to reduce dependence on imports.
- It will suggest ways to cut import of those items which can be manufactured or explored in the country.
- The task force includes secretaries from Departments of Commerce, Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Revenue, Skill Development, Defence Production, Petroleum, Steel, Electronics and Telecommunications.

WHY IS THIS MOVE SIGNIFICANT?

- The move holds significance as India is heavily dependent on imports of several items such as oil, machinery, electronic hardware, pharmaceuticals ingredients including (active pharmaceuticals ingredients), gold and chemicals.

- On an average, India's imports stand at around US \$450 billion per year. In financial year 2017-18, the inbound shipments grew about 20% to US \$460 billion.
- India's oil imports during same fiscal had risen by 25.47% to US \$109.11 billion.
- Though increase in imports of intermediates and raw materials reflects boost in economic activities, but the inbound shipments of final goods impact domestic manufacturers.
- Earlier, concerns were raised over high dependence on pharmaceutical ingredients or APIs from China by trade experts. At present, over 60 per cent of APIs are imported from China.

INDIA INVITES US PRESIDENT TO BE REPUBLIC DAY CHIEF GUEST IN 2019

Will India witness a consecutive U.S. President as the Republic Day Chief Guest?

- Union Government of India has invited United States President Donald Trump to be the Chief Guest at 2019 Republic Day celebrations.
- The invite was reportedly followed up with multiple rounds of diplomatic talks.
- If President Trump accepts the invitation, he will be second serving US President after Barack Obama to be invited as chief guest of Republic Day Parade.
- It will indicate importance of the Indo-U.S. relationship.

FACTS FROM HISTORY:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi had invited US President Trump and his family to India when he visited Washington in June 2017.
- His daughter Ivanka Trump, who is seen as President's adviser, had travelled to India in September 2017 as head of US delegation for Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) at PM Modi's invitation.

EARLIER CHIEF GUESTS OF INDIA'S REPUBLIC DAY PARADES ARE:

- In 2018:- 10 Leaders of ASEAN Countries (It was first Republic Day event that saw participation of many leaders at same time as chief guests)
- In 2017:- Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan (Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi)
- In 2016:- Francois Hollande (President of France)
- In 2015:- Barack Obama (US President)
- In 2014:- Shinzo Abe (Japanese Prime Minister)
- In 2013:- Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck (King of Bhutan)
- In 2012:- Yingluck Shinawatra (Then Prime Minister of Thailand)
- In 2011:- Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono (Then President of Indonesia)

CARNATIC VOCALIST ARUNA SAIRAM SELECTED FOR 2018 SANGITA KALANIDHI AWARD

Recognitions for Great Musicians.

- Renowned Carnatic Vocalist Aruna Sairam has been selected for 2018 Sangita Kalanidhi award of Music Academy for her contribution to Carnatic music.

- Under this recognition, she will preside over 92nd annual conference to be held between December 15, 2018 and January 1, 2019.
- The award will be conferred to her on January 1, 2019 the day of Sadas of the conference.

OTHER AWARDS THAT ARE TO BE PRESENTED:

SANGITA KALA ACHARYA AWARD:

- It will be awarded to Mridhangist Thanjavur R. Ramadoss and Vocalist K. Oman Kutty.

T.K. AWARDS:

- It will be given to Veena Player Kalyani Ganesan and Nagaswaram Player S.R.G. Rajanna.

MUSICOLOGIST AWARD:

- It will be given to Dr Premeela Gurumurthy, the Vice-Chancellor, Tamil Nadu University.

NRITIYA KALANIDHI AWARD:

- It will be awarded to Veteran Danseuse Shanta Dhananjayan.

ABOUT THE SANGITA KALANIDHI AWARD:

- It is a prestigious award/title bestowed annually upon expert of Carnatic Music by Madras Music Academy.
- The award's name has been derived from Sanskrit which means treasure of Music and art in English (sangita = music, kala = art, nidhi = treasure).
- This honour is considered as one of the highest awards in Carnatic music.

FRANCE WINS 2018 FIFA WORLD CUP FOOTBALL TITLE

The European nation becomes the World Champion for the second time.

- France has won 2018 FIFA World Cup Football by defeating Croatia by 4-2 goals in the final match held at the Luzhniki Stadium in Moscow, Russia.
- It was France's second World Cup crown after it won it in 1998 (by defeating Brazil) on its home soil.
- With this, victory France joins Uruguay and Argentina in winning the World Cup for a second time.
- It was Croatia's first World Cup final appearance and smallest country ever to reach final in the modern era.

GOAL SCORES:

For France, four goals were scored by:

1. Mario Mandžukić (Croatia's self-goal at 18 min)
2. Antoine Griezmann (38 min)
3. Paul Pogba (59 min)

4. Kylian Mbappe (65 min)

For Croatia, two goals were scored by:

1. Ivan Perišić (28 min)
2. Mario Mandzukic (69 min)

2018 FIFA WORLD CUP AWARDS:

- **Top 4 team rankings:**
France (1st, Winner)
Croatia (2nd, Croatia)
Belgium (3rd)
England (4th)
- **Golden Ball award:** Luka Modric (Croatia)
- **Golden Boot award:** Harry Kane (England captain) for scoring six goals across six games.
- **Golden Glove award:** Thibaut Courtois (Belgium)
- **FIFA Young Player award:** 19-year-old Kylian Mbappe (France).
- **FIFA Fair Play Award:** Spain for superb disciplinary record.

ABOUT THE NEXT FIFA WORLD CUP:

- Qatar will be hosting next FIFA World Cup in 2022.
- It will be the first Arab country to host World Cup and it will also for the first time will be held in the Middle East region.

ABOUT THE FIFA WORLD CUP:

- It is an international association football competition contested by senior men's national teams of members of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA), the sport's global governing body.
- It is held every four years since the inaugural tournament held in 1930 except in 1942 and 1946 due to World War II.
- The total 21 World Cup tournaments played so far have been won by eight national teams.
- Brazil has won for record five times and it is only team that has played in every World Cup.
- Germany and Italy have each won four titles, Argentina, France and Uruguay have won two titles each.
- England and Spain has won one title each.

UN FOR FIRST TIME FINALIZES GLOBAL COMPACT FOR SAFE, ORDERLY AND REGULAR MIGRATION

Proper migration on UN's mind.

- United Nations for first time has finalized Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration to better manage international migration, address its challenges, strengthen migrant rights and contribute to sustainable development.

- This is for first time UN Member countries came together to negotiate agreement covering all dimensions of international migration.

ABOUT THE "COMPACT":

- The compact is the first intergovernmental agreement to cover wide-ranging dimensions of international migration in holistic and comprehensive manner, **agreed upon by all the UN member states minus the United States.**
- It is not legally binding.
- It sets out 23 objectives to deal issues ranging from factors that compel people to move, legal channels for migration, combating trafficking and smuggling, harnessing the economic benefits of migration and return of the migrants.

SOME INTERESTING FACTS:

- Currently, over 250 million migrants worldwide account for 3% of the world's entire population, but contribute 10% of the global gross domestic production (GDP).
- Migrants remittance is huge contributor to their home countries' development.
- The process of developing compact was started in early 2017 as implementation of decision by the UN member states that was adopted in the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants in September 2016.
- UN member states' another decision pledged in the declaration is to **develop a Global Compact on Refugees.**

ISRO SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCTS GROUND TEST OF HIGH THRUST VERSION OF VIKAS ENGINE

Another milestone for ISRO.

- ISRO has successfully conducted ground test of its high thrust version of Vikas Engine at ISRO Propulsion Complex (IPRC) in Mahendragiri, Tirunelveli District of Tamil Nadu for duration of 195 seconds.

DETAILS ABOUT VIKAS ENGINE:

- Vikas belongs to a family of liquid fuelled rocket engines conceptualized and designed by ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre in the 1970s.
- The design was based on licensed version of Viking engine with chemical pressurisation system.
- It is the workhorse liquid rocket engine powering second stage of India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), second stage and four strap on stages of Geosynchronous Launch Vehicle (GSLV) and is a part of the first stage i.e. twin engine core liquid stage (L110) of GSLV Mk-III.
- The propellant loading for Vikas engine in PSLV, GSLV Mark I and II is 40 tons, while in GSLV Mark III it is 55 tons.
- The recently tested high thrust version of Vikas engine will improve the payload capability of PSLV, GSLV and GSLV Mk-III launch vehicles.

INDIA BECOMES VICE CHAIR OF THE ASIA PACIFIC REGION OF WCO

India takes the leadership role at the WCO.

- India became Vice-Chair or regional head of Asia Pacific Region of the World Customs Organisation (WCO) for two years from July 2018 to June 2020.
- By becoming Vice Chair, India will be able to take up leadership role at the WCO.

ABOUT THE EVENT TO MARK THIS ROLE:

- To mark assumption of Vice Chair, an event will be organised in New Delhi by Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in partnership with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- The event will be attended by Customs delegations of 33 countries of Asia-Pacific Region, Customs officers from different Ports in India, Partner Government Agencies and representatives from the trade community among others.

ABOUT WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANISATION (WCO):

- WCO is an independent intergovernmental body whose mission is to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of Customs administrations.
- It was established in 1952 as Customs Co-operation Council (CCC).
- It is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters and is considered as voice of international Customs community.
- WCO represents 182 Customs administrations across the globe that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade.
- It is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.
- It plays leading role in discussion, development, promotion and implementation of modern customs systems and procedures.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF WCO?

- It aims to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of member customs administrations and assist them to contribute successfully to national development goals, particularly revenue collection, national security, trade facilitation, community protection, and collection of trade statistics.

WHAT IS THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF WCO?

- WCO's governing body – the Council relies on competence and skills of WCO Secretariat and a range of technical and advisory committees to accomplish its mission.
- The Secretariat comprises over 100 international officials, technical experts and support staff of some nationalities.
- WCO has divided its membership into six regions whereby each region is represented by elected vice-chairperson to WCO Council.

WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF WCO?

- It offers a range of Conventions and other international instruments, as well as technical assistance and training services to its members.
- It also actively supports its members in their endeavours to modernize and build capacity within their national Customs administrations.
- It also plays vital role in stimulating growth of legitimate international trade and combats fraudulent activities.
- It also promotes emergence of honest, transparent and predictable Customs environment, thus directly contributing to economic and social well-being of its members.

BRAHMOS MISSILE TESTED IN EXTREME WEATHER CONDITIONS

The Supersonic Cruise Missile now makes the survival of target impossible!

- DRDO has successfully test-fired supersonic cruise missile under extreme weather conditions, as part of the service life extension programme for India.
- The missile was fired from a mobile autonomous launcher from the Integrated Test Range at Balasore, Odisha.

FACTS RELATED TO THE TEST:

- During the test, the missile followed the designated trajectory and its key components functioned perfectly.
- It again proved its all-weather capability, flying in sea state 7, with waves as high as nine metres.
- Sea state is the degree of turbulence at sea, generally measured on a scale of 0 to 9 according to average wave height.
- The test was conducted on the heels of earlier two trials conducted on May 21 and 22, 2018 in which the major sub-systems manufactured indigenously under the 'Make in India' campaign were successfully tested to increase missile's life from 10 to 15 years.

ABOUT THE BRAHMOS MISSILE:

- BrahMos is a supersonic cruise missile developed by BrahMos Aerospace, a joint-venture between Russia's Mashinostroyeniya and India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- It has been named after two rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva (a river in western Russia).
- The missile has established itself as a major force multiplier in modern-day complex battlefields with its impeccable land-attack, anti-ship capabilities with multi-role and multi-platform abilities.

STAGES INVOLVED IN ITS FUNCTIONING:

- It is a two-stage missile, the first one being Solid and the second one being Ramjet Liquid Propellant.
- It is a self-propelled guided missile that sustains flight through an aerodynamic lift.
- Payload:
- It is capable of carrying a warhead of 300 kilograms (both conventional as well as nuclear).

ACCURACY:

- It operates on ‘**fire and forgets principal**’.
- It is claimed that the missile has **strike accuracy rate of 99.99%**.
- It has **enhanced destructive power due to large kinetic energy** (because of supersonic speed) on impact.
- It has a unique feature of **quicker engagement time and non-interception** by any known weapon system in the world.

SPEED:

- It has a **top supersonic speed of Mach 2.8 to 3** (roughly three times speed of sound).
- It is hailed as **world’s fastest anti-ship cruise missile in operation**.

RANGE:

- It was initially capped at 290 km as per obligations of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).
- Since India’s entry into this elite club, its range was extended to 450 km and plan is to increase it to 600km.

LAUNCH VARIANTS:

- It is capable of being launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against sea and land targets.
- It follows a variety of **trajectories like high, high-low, low, surface-skim etc.**
- It can cruise at an altitude up to 15km and terminal altitude of as low as 10 meters.

INDUCTION:

- It has been **already inducted** in the Indian Army and Navy.
- The air-launched version of the missile was test-fired in November 2017, for the first time from a modified Su-30MKI aircraft, making it world’s fastest supersonic cruise missile to be fired from a combat jet against a target.

INDIAN ARMY TO RESUME TRIALS OF M777 HOWITZER ARTILLERY GUN

Testing of the artillery gun back on track!

- Indian Army is going to resume trials of US-made M777 ultralight howitzer in the Pokhran firing range, Rajasthan.
- During the trials local ammunition will be used and tentatively **100 to 150 rounds will be fired**.
- The trials will begin after they were suspended in September 2017 following a barrel burst caused by faulty ammunition during firing.

FACTS ABOUT THE M777 HOWITZER ARTILLERY GUN

- M777 is a 155-mm, 39-calibre towed artillery gun.
- It is manufactured by US based BAE Systems’ Global Combat Systems division.
- It is smaller and lighter, as it is made of titanium and aluminium alloys and weighs just 4 tonnes.

- It has an effective firing range of 24 km.
- It can use all types of 155 mm ammunition.
- It can be easily transported by heavy lift helicopters, which will give Indian Army tremendous flexibility in its operations, especially in high altitude mountainous terrain.
- It takes only three minutes to come into action and has a pack-up time of just two minutes.
- It can sit down like scorpene, which makes it difficult to be spotted by the enemy tanks.

SIGNIFICANCE OF INDUCTING M777S:

- Induction of M777 Howitzer artillery guns is expected to add tremendous firepower and much needed operational advantage to the Indian Army as they will be deployed in high-altitude areas in **Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh, bordering China**.
- It will also give access to state of the art technology.
- These artillery guns are already being used by US, Canadian and Australian armies.

INTERESTING DETAILS ABOUT THE BACKGROUND OF M777 AGREEMENT:

- India signed a Letter of Agreement and Acceptance (LoA) with US Government in November 2016 to buy 145 M777s through the foreign military sale (FMS) route at cost of \$737 million.
- Of the 145 guns, 25 will be imported while the remaining 120 will be assembled in India in partnership with the Mahindra group.
- Deliveries are slated to commence in March 2019 and will be completed by 2021.
- M777s deal is the first contract for artillery guns in almost 30 years after Bofors artillery guns induction in late-1980s, which had got embroiled in political controversy due to illegal kickbacks.
- Bofors guns however had been mainstay for Indian Army for decades and had played important role in Kargil conflict.

IMF CUTS INDIA GROWTH FORECAST FOR 2018 TO 7.3%

Though India still remains the fastest growing economy.

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) in its latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) update has projected growth rate of 7.3% in 2018 and 7.5% in 2019 for India as against 6.7% in 2017.
- This makes India, the fastest growing country among major economies in 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- However, India will grow by 7.3% in 2018-19 against earlier estimate of 7.4%, slightly less — 0.1 percentage point in 2018.
- In 2019-20, it will grow by 7.5% against earlier estimate of 7.8%.
- This reflects negative effects of higher oil prices on domestic demand and faster than-anticipated monetary policy tightening due to higher expected inflation.
- Despite India's slight downgrade in the projections, it continues to outperform China.
- Growth in China is projected to moderate from 6.9% in 2017 to 6.6% in 2018 and 6.4% in 2019.
- This is mainly because of regulatory tightening of financial sector takes hold and external demand softens.
- The global growth is projected to reach 3.9% in 2018 and 2019, in line with forecast of April 2018 WEO.
- Growth prospects in emerging market and developing economies is becoming more uneven, amid rising oil prices, higher yields in United States Treasury bonds, escalating trade tensions and market pressures on currencies of some economies with weaker fundamentals.

ABOUT WORLD ECONOMIC OUTLOOK (WEO)

- WEO is a survey conducted and published by IMF.
- It is published biannually and partly updated two times a year.
- It portrays the world economy in the near and medium context, with growth projections for up to four years into the future.
- WEO forecasts include **key macroeconomic indicators**, such as GDP, inflation, fiscal balance and current **account** of more than 180 countries around the globe.
- It also deals with major economic policy issues.

IIT-MADRAS UNVEILS WORLD'S FIRST REMOTELY OPERABLE LEAP MICROSCOPE

An innovative marvel from the prestigious institution.

- The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Madras has commissioned a remotely operable Local Electrode Atom Probe (LEAP) microscope.
- It is claimed to be **world's first remotely operable LEAP microscope**, as it can be remotely operated through special terminal by researchers divided geographically.

FACTS ABOUT LEAP:

- LEAP is a high-performance microscope that can provide a precise atom-by-atom view of materials.
- It provides atomic-scale insights into metallic objects, which will influence wide spectrum of industries ranging from steel to automobiles and energy to transportation sector.
- It will also give major thrust to research in nanotechnology, among other fields.
- The remotely operable LEAP microscope has been developed in a collaborative exercise involving eight top research institutions in the country, spearheaded by IIT-M.

OTHER PARTNER INSTITUTIONS ARE:

- IITs of Bombay, Delhi, Kanpur, Kharagpur and Ropar
- International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI)
- Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (BRNS)

GOVERNMENT TO CREATE NATIONAL DATABASE OF ARMS LICENSES SYSTEM

Government wants to keep an eye on arms holders.

- Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is going to create National Database of Arms Licenses system from April 2019.
- It will include names of all arms licence holders, new or old and they will be issued a unique identification number (UIN).

- The move is aimed at keeping tab on authorised private gun holders, many of whom are often found involved in crimes and celebratory firing leading to loss of lives.
- It will also eliminate possibilities of issuing arms licence to people with criminal antecedents.

DETAILS OF THE DECISION:

- The decision was taken by exercising powers under Section 44 of Arms Act, 1959 (54 of 1959) by amending the Arms Rules, 2016.
- These rules will be called the Arms (Second Amendment) Rules, 2018.
- Under Section 3 of Arms Act, it is essential to obtain arms possession licence issued by competent licensing authority, by any person for acquisition, possession or carrying any firearms or ammunition.
- Under the new rules, every licensing and renewing authority will enter data in National Database of Arms Licences system from April 1, 2019, which will generate UIN.
- Any arms licence without UIN will be considered invalid.
- Besides, any existing licensee holding multiple licences will make an application for grant of single licence in respect of all firearms held by him under his UIN to the concerned licensing authority.
- In case of licence for restricted category of arms or ammunition, licensing authority concerned will issue new licence under the existing UIN of the licensee.
- Separate licence books will be generated in case of each licence, separately for restricted and permissible categories of arms and ammunition with an overall ceiling of three firearms under single UIN.

AIIA INKS MOU WITH IIT DELHI TO GIVE SCIENTIFIC VALIDATION TO AYURVEDA

Research promoted in the Ancient Science!

- All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA) and IIT (Indian Institute of Technology)-Delhi have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance research in the field of Ayurveda.
- The MoU was signed on sidelines of two-day conference on 'Raising towards Excellence' held at New Delhi.

DETAILS ABOUT THE MOU:

- As of part of the MoU, AIIA will invite technological experts from IIT Delhi for research in ancient Indian medicine.
- IIT Delhi does not have a medical facility and has lined up 10 projects in Ayurveda research.
- It was the idea of Ministry of AYUSH to utilize technological expertise of IIT Delhi for further research in ancient Indian medicine.
- It is also planning to invite professionals and representatives from IIMs (Indian Institutes of Management) to develop leadership skills that are necessary for gaining global recognition.

ABOUT ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF AYURVEDA (AIIA):

- Delhi based AIIA is apex institute for Ayurveda in the country under Ministry of AYUSH.
- It aims at bringing a synergy between traditional wisdom of Ayurveda and modern tools and technology.

- It offers postgraduate and doctoral courses in various disciplines of **Ayurveda** and focuses on fundamental research of Ayurveda, drug development, quality control, standardization, safety evaluation and scientific validation of Ayurvedic medicine.
- It also has a 200 bed referral hospital for facilitating clinical research.

BSE'S ICONIC PHIROZE JEEJEEBHoy TOWERS SECURES TRADEMARK

- Stock exchange major **Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE)** has secured image trademark for its iconic building, Phiroze Jeejeebhoy Towers located on **Dalal Street in Mumbai, Maharashtra under Trade Marks Act, 1999.**
- With this, Phiroze Jeejeebhoy Towers joins elite club of distinguished structures around the world that have secured trademark rights.
- **Henceforth no one can use images of the Phiroze Jeejeebhoy Towers for commercial purposes without consent from BSE or paying it licensing fee.**
- **Violators are liable to be prosecuted under Trade Marks Act, 1999.**

FACTS ABOUT BSE:

- BSE's Phiroze Jeejeebhoy Towers serves as barometer of Indian economy.
- It is a 28-floor building and was built in almost 10 years, completed in 1980.
- At the time of its completion, it was the tallest building in India.
- Initially it was known as BSE Towers and was later renamed after the late chairman of BSE, Sir Phiroze Jamshedji Jeejeebhoy.
- BSE was founded in 1875.
- It began as small group of brokers who functioned under a banyan tree on Dalal Street.

WHAT IS A TRADEMARK?

- **Trademark refers to a graphical representation of goods or services to make it distinguishable from others.**
- It can be words, symbols, sound, colours, shape of goods, graphics representation or packaging etc.
- **It protects owner against unfair competition, prevents damage to reputation of owner and consumer welfare.**
- **In India, trademarks are governed under Trademarks Act, 1999** (it deals with precise nature of rights one can acquire in respect of trademarks), **under aegis of Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce.**
- **The implementing body is Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks.**

• SOME EXAMPLES:

- **Mumbai's Taj Mahal Palace hotel was first building in India to acquire image trademark under Trademark Act of 1999 in June 2017.**
- Other iconic structures (buildings) in the world that have received trademarks are:
 - **Empire State Building**
 - **New York, USA**
 - **Eiffel Tower**
 - **Paris, France**
 - **Opera House Sydney, Australia**

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT: EU, JAPAN SIGN MASSIVE FREE TRADE DEAL

EU & Japan want seamless trade!

- European Union (EU) and Japan have signed Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA).
- It was signed at the EU-Japan summit in Tokyo by EU Presidents Jean-Claude Juncker and Donald Tusk and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe.
- It is the biggest ever trade deal negotiated by the EU and creates free trade zone covering nearly third of the world's GDP.

DETAILS OF THE EPA:

AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS:

- It scraps Japanese duties on many cheeses such as Gouda and Cheddar as well as on wine exports.
- It allows EU to increase its beef exports to Japan and duty-free trade in pork, processed meat and almost duty-free trade for fresh meat.
- It ensures protection in Japan of more than 200 high-quality European agricultural products, so called Geographical Indications (GIs), and the protection of a selection of Japanese GIs in the EU.

SERVICES MARKETS:

- EPA opens up services markets, in particular financial services, e-commerce, telecommunications and transport.

PROCUREMENT MARKETS:

- It guarantees EU companies access to large procurement markets of 48 large Japanese cities and removes obstacles to procurement in economically important railway sector at national level.

AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR:

- It addresses specific sensitivities of EU in this sector and elimination of customs duties in transition periods of up to 7 years.

TRADE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT:

- EPA includes comprehensive chapter on it. It sets very high standards of labour, safety, environmental and consumer protection.
- It strengthens EU and Japan's commitments on sustainable development and climate change and fully safeguards public services.

DATA PROTECTION:

- The negotiations completed by both sides on this matter will complement EPA.

- Both sides recognise each other's data protection systems as equivalent, allowing data to flow safely between EU and Japan and creating world's largest area of safe data flows.

SIGNIFICANCE OF EPA:

- EPA removes vast majority of €1 billion of duties paid annually by EU companies exporting to Japan and a number of long-standing regulatory barriers, for example on cars.
- It opens up Japanese market of 127 million consumers to key EU agricultural exports and will increase EU export opportunities in range of other sectors.
- In addition, it will strengthen cooperation between Europe and Japan in range of areas, reaffirm their shared commitment to sustainable development.
- It also includes for the first time a specific commitment to the Paris climate agreement.

SUTHERLAND: UK SELECTS SCOTTISH SITE FOR FIRST SPACEPORT

UK moving fast in space sciences!

- UK Space Agency has selected site at Sutherland on A'Mhoine peninsula on north coast of Scotland for its first spaceport to launch rockets vertically and put satellites in orbit.
- For development of this spaceport, UK Government is going to provide \$3.3 million funding and will be built with help of consortium of companies.

DETAILS:

- A'Mhoine Peninsula in Sutherland was chosen as most suitable place from which to launch rockets vertically.
- The first rocket launches from this spaceport are planned for early 2020s.
- The site was selected in part due to its beneficial geography.
- Rockets can take direct path from tip of Scottish peninsula to above Arctic Circle.
- This is suitable for launching small satellites particularly, which are often placed in polar orbits, circling Earth and passing over Arctic and Antarctic.
- It is located on coast in sparsely populated area, thus in case of failures rocket will harmlessly fall into the ocean or empty land.

BENEFITS TO UK:

- The spaceport will help UK to grab slice of growing market for small satellite launches.
- UK already has many component and satellite makers and adding ability to launch satellites locally would increase its international appeal.
- The spaceport will help to attract \$5 billion spaceflight market into UK's economy over the next decade.

WHERE THE SPACE LAUNCH TECHNOLOGY IS MOVING?

- In recent years, new breed of small satellites (nano satellites) have created boom in space launch industry.
- These satellites are often size of shoebox or smaller and far more technologically capable than older, larger models.

- **They are cheaper to launch** and can be put to range of uses from communications to weather monitoring to scientific experiments.
- **It's estimated that global market for such launches (including supporting infrastructure) is currently worth \$339 billion, and will grow eightfold by 2045 to \$2.7 trillion.**

UNEP PARTNERS WITH GOOGLE FOR MONITORING IMPACT OF HUMAN ACTIVITY

Environmental welfare on UNEP & Google's mind.

- **UN Environment Programme (UNEP) has entered into a partnership with search engine giant Google to monitor impacts of human activity on global ecosystems by using sophisticated online tools.**
- The partnership was launched during a High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development at United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York.

AIM & FOCUS:

- The aim of the partnership is to develop platform to enable governments, NGO's and public to **track specific environment-related development targets with user-friendly Google front-end.**
- **Its initial focus will be on freshwater ecosystems** including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.
- Freshwater ecosystems areas account for 0.01% of world's water but provide habitat for almost 10% of world's known species and evidence suggests a rapid loss of freshwater biodiversity.
- **Google will periodically produce geospatial maps and data** on water-related ecosystems by employing massive parallel Cloud computing technology.
- **It will generate satellite imagery and statistics to assess extent of change occurring to waterbodies** and make it freely accessible to ensure nations have opportunity to track changes, prevent and reverse ecosystem loss.
- Other areas of collaboration under this partnership include advocacy and capacity building activities as well as **the development of partnerships with organisations like European Space Agency (ESA), European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA).**

IMPORTANCE/SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PARTNERSHIP:

- This partnership builds on a common shared vision between these organisations.
- In long term, it will **strive to establish platform for open-source data and analysis of UN Sustainable Development Goals.**
- **It will enable UNEP to get access to most sophisticated online tools** to track progress, identify priority areas for action, and needs for making world sustainable.
- **It will enable all countries with equal access to latest technology and information** in support of global climate action and sustainable development.

ABOUT UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP):

- UNEP is the voice for the environment within the United Nations system.
- **It was founded as result of United Nations Conference on Human Environment in June 1972.**
- It is **headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya.**
- **UNEP also has six regional offices and various country offices.**

- UNEP acts as catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to **promote wise use and sustainable development of global environment.**
- It works with wide range of partners, including **UN entities, international organizations, national governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector and civil society.**

ISRO SIGNS CONTRACTS WITH 3 VENDORS TO ASSEMBLE 27 SATELLITES

ISRO takes up projects that opens up new avenues of technological achievements.

- **U.R. Rao Satellite Centre (URSC), ISRO's nodal satellites division has signed separate contracts with three vendors to outsource Spacecraft Assembly Integration and Testing (AIT) activities.**
- The contracts were signed with **Alpha Design Technologies Pvt. Ltd.** and its six consortium members, also with defence public enterprise **Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL)** and **Tata Advanced Systems Ltd, Hyderabad.**

PURPOSE OF THE CONTRACTS AND HOW WILL THEY FUNCTION?

- The outsourcing is part of capacity-building initiatives undertaken by U R Rao Satellite Centre **to promote participation of Indian industry from spacecraft subsystems to spacecraft assembly, integration and testing.**
- Each of the contract partners will work with URSC to produce three small to medium satellites each year or total of 27 spacecraft by July 2021.
- About 50 members from each contract partner will separately work with URSC engineers to complete the project.

ABOUT U R RAO SATELLITE CENTRE (URSC):

- **URSC (formerly known as ISRO Satellite Centre) is the nodal centre of ISRO for design, development, fabrication and testing of all Indian made satellites.**
- **It was established in the year of 1972 and is based in Bengaluru, Karnataka.**
- **It was renamed after former ISRO Chairman and ISAC founding Director Dr. Udupi Ramachandra Rao in April 2018.**
- **Since inception, URSC has a distinction of building more than 100 satellites for various applications like scientific, communication, navigation and remote sensing.**

LOK SABHA PASSES FUGITIVE ECONOMIC OFFENDERS BILL, 2018

Government plans to tackle the menace of "Fugitive Economic Offenders".

- **Lok Sabha has passed Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018** that aims to curb practice of evading criminal prosecution by economic offenders fleeing from country to evade clutches Indian law by remaining outside jurisdiction of Indian courts.
- The bill will replace an ordinance promulgated **by President in April 2018.**

FEATURES OF THE BILL:

FUGITIVE ECONOMIC OFFENDER (FEO):

- It has been defined as person against whom an arrest warrant has been issued for committing an offence listed in schedule (enlisted in this law) by any court in India, but he leaves or has left India to avoid criminal prosecution or refuses to return to India to face criminal prosecution.
- **It is applicable in cases where total value involved in such economic offences is Rs.100 crore or more.**

SPECIAL COURT:

- **It establishes a Special Court under the Prevention of Money-laundering Act (PMLA), 2002 to declare a person as FEO.**
- **The court will appoint an 'administrator' to oversee the confiscated property.**
- It will be responsible for disposing of confiscated property and the property will be used to satisfy creditors' claims.

ATTACHMENT OF PROPERTY:

- It empowers director or deputy director (appointed under Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, 2002) to **attach any property mentioned in the application with permission of special court.**
- **These properties can be attached provisionally without the prior permission of the special court for 30 days.**
- **The attachment will continue for 180 days, unless it is extended by special court.**
- If at the conclusion of proceedings, person is not found to be FEO, his properties will be released.

BAR ON FILING OR DEFENDING CIVIL CLAIMS:

- **The bill allows any civil court or tribunal to disallow person declared FEO, from filing or defending any civil claim.**
- Further, any company or limited liability partnership where FEO is majority shareholder, then promoter, or a key managerial person (such as MD or CEO) will also be barred from filing or defending civil claims.

POWERS OF DIRECTOR:

- **The director or deputy director will have powers vested of civil court.**
- These powers include entering a place on the belief that individual is FEO and directing searching of building or seizing documents.

APPEAL:

- Under this law, appeals against orders of special court will lie before High Court.

WHY THIS BILL WAS NEEDED?

- **There have been several instances of economic offenders (e.g. Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi) fleeing country to evade the clutches of Indian law to remain outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts.**
- The absence of such offenders from Indian courts has several deleterious consequences.
- **It hampers investigation in criminal cases, wastes precious time of the courts of law, undermines rule of law in India.**

- Further, most such cases of economic offences involve **non-repayment of bank loans thereby worsening financial health of banking sector.**
- Moreover, **existing non-coherent civil and criminal provisions in law are not entirely adequate to deal with the severity of problem.**
- This bill will provide **effective, expeditious and constitutionally permissible deterrent legal teeth to enforcing agencies to ensure that such actions of FEO are curbed.**

ARMAN ALI TAKES CHARGE OF NATIONAL DISABLED PEOPLE'S ORGANISATION NCPEDP

- Arman Ali was appointed as the Executive Director of National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP).
- He will succeed Javed Abidi and take over his new role in **October 2018.**
- Arman has played pivotal role in bringing disability sector together in North East by forming network of organisations from seven states.
- He has been the head of Shishu Sarothi – Centre for Rehabilitation & Training for Multiple Disability since 2009.
- He has worked for the rehabilitation of many physically challenged people as well as leading campaigns and engaging judiciary to uphold rights of persons with disabilities.

ABOUT NATIONAL CENTRE FOR PROMOTION OF EMPLOYMENT FOR DISABLED PEOPLE (NCPEDP):

- NCPEDP is India's only cross-disability advocacy organisation working towards empowerment of persons with disabilities.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- It has to its credit several achievements, including lobbying for creation of new Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) under Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, and call for new Disability Act to replace PwD Act, 1995.

LOK SABHA PASSES RIGHT OF CHILDREN TO FREE AND COMPULSORY EDUCATION BILL, 2017

Government abolishes 'no detention policy' in schools.

- Lok Sabha has passed The Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (Second Amendment) Bill, 2017 to abolish the 'no detention policy' in schools.
- The Bill amends the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act, 2009.
- The Act was having provision of no detention policy i.e. no child can be held back in any class until completion of elementary school (classes 1-8).

DETAILS OF THE BILL:

- The Bill amends provision related to no detention policy in the parent Act to empower the central or state government to allow schools to hold back the child in class 5, class 8, or in both classes.

- It mandates conducting, regular examination in class 5 and class 8 at the end of every academic year.
- In case, a child fails class 5, class 8 examinations, he will be given additional instruction and **opportunity for a re-examination (within two months from the declaration of the result)**.
- **If a child fails again in re-examination, he may be held back in class 5, class 8, or in both classes.**
- **The Bill empowers Union and State governments to decide whether to not hold back child in any class till completion of elementary education.**
- Further, the Union or State governments will decide manner and conditions subject to which the child may be held back.

RBI TO ISSUE NEW 100 RUPEE NOTES IN LAVENDER COLOUR

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) will shortly issue new Rs 100 denomination banknotes in lavender colour in Mahatma Gandhi (New) Series.
- This comes on back of new designs introduced for Rs 200, Rs 500 and Rs 10 notes, in the last couple of years.
- **The old Rs 100 notes in the earlier series will also continue to be legal tender along with new notes.**

KEY FEATURES OF THE NEW RS 100 NOTE:

- The front side of the new Rs 100 note depicts Mahatma Gandhi's face and the back side features motif of "RANI KI VAV", highlighting the country's cultural heritage.
- **Rani ki Vav is a UNESCO world heritage stepwell site in Patan, Gujarat built in memory of the 11th century King Bhima.**
- The dimension of the new note is 66 mm × 142 mm, which will be the same as the other new notes of Rs 200, Rs 500 and Rs 10 released earlier.
- Like every other currency note, it also has a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi at the centre.
- **It has a security thread with inscriptions, 'भारत' and RBI.**
- **If the note is tilted, the colour changes from green to blue.**
- Right side of Mahatma Gandhi portrait includes guarantee clause, Governor's signature with promise clause and RBI emblem.
- **Ashoka Pillar emblem is on right side of note.**
- The top left side and bottom right side have number panel with numerals in ascending font.
- **Mahatma Gandhi portrait and electrotpe (100) has watermarks and it also has Swachh Bharat logo with slogan.**
- **It also has certain features incorporated for the visually impaired.**
- These include intaglio or raised printing of Mahatma Gandhi portrait, Ashoka Pillar emblem, raised triangular identification mark with micro-text 100, four angular bleed lines on the right and left sides.

RAJYA SABHA PASSES PREVENTION OF CORRUPTION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2013

- Bill has new measures to prevent corruption
- Rajya Sabha has passed Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2013 to amend various provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act (PCA), 1988.
- The amendment to PCA, 1988 was necessitated to review its existing provisions to bring it in line with the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) as agreed by India.

RELATED HISTORY:

- The amendments to PCA, 1988 were first brought by UPA government in 2013.
- The Bill was then referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee, Law Commission of India (LCI) and then in December 2015 to a select committee.
- The report of the select committee was submitted in 2016 and again it was moved in August 2017, but was not been taken up.

FEATURES OF THE BILL:

- **Giving bribe made a punishable offence:**
- The Bill introduces the offence of 'giving a bribe' as a direct offence.
- However, a person who is compelled to give bribe who reports the matter to law enforcement authorities within seven days will not be charged with this offence.

REDEFINES CRIMINAL MISCONDUCT:

- The bill redefines provisions related to criminal misconduct to cover only two types of offences viz. illicit enrichment (such as amassing of assets disproportionate to one's known income sources) and fraudulent misappropriation of property.
- Prior approval for investigation:
- It makes mandatory for taking prior approval of relevant Government or competent authority to conduct any investigation into offence alleged to have been committed by a public servant.
- Such approval will not be necessary in cases that involve arrest of person on spot on charge of taking a bribe.

TRIAL TIME LIMIT:

- As per the Bill, trial by the special judge should be completed within two years.
- In case of delays, reasons for it must be recorded for every extension of six months obtained.
- However, total period for completion of trial may not exceed four years.

MEGHALAYAN AGE: NEWEST PHASE IN EARTH'S HISTORY

Meghalaya's name associated with ancient history!

- Scientists have approved three new ages on a geologic time scale of Holocene Epoch viz. Meghalayan Age, Middle Holocene Northgrippian Age and Early Holocene Greenlandian Age.
- These three new ages of Holocene Epoch are represented by the wealth of sediments that accumulated worldwide on the sea floor, on lake bottoms, as glacial ice, and as calcite layers in stalactites and stalagmites.
- Together the strata of the three new ages comprise the Holocene series.

MEGHALAYAN AGE:

- It is named after a cave in the Indian state of Meghalaya.
- It has helped to define climatic events 4,200 years ago, marking the beginning of a phase that continues till today.
- The lower boundary of this stage is defined at a specific level in the stalagmite from a cave in the northeastern Indian state.
- Meghalayan Age was part of a longer period known as Epoch, which reflects everything that has happened over past 11,700 years.
- It began with a mega global drought that devastated ancient agricultural civilisations from Egypt to China.
- This age is unique because it is the first interval in Earth's geological history that coincided with major cultural event, as agricultural societies struggled to recover from shift in climate.
- The droughts over a 200-year period had resulted in human migrations in Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Mesopotamia, Greece, Indus valley and Yangtze river valley.
- The change in global climate during the Meghalayan Age was likely triggered by shifts in the ocean and atmospheric circulation.

MIDDLE HOLOCENE NORTHGRIPPIAN AGE AND EARLY HOLOCENE GREENLANDIAN AGE:

- These two ages are defined with the beginnings of climatic events that happened about 8,300 years and 11,700 years ago, respectively.
- The lower boundary of Greenlandian and Northgrippian stages are defined at specific levels in Greenland ice cores.
- The ice cores are now identified as international geostandards, and have been placed in protected archives, accessible for further study.

ABOUT GEOLOGICAL TIMESCALE:

- Geologists divide the 4.6-billion-year existence of Earth into distinct periods.
- Each period corresponds to significant events such as break-up of continents, shifts in climate, and emergence of particular types of animals and plant life.
- These units of geologic time scale are based on sedimentary strata that have accumulated over time and contain within them sediment types, fossils and chemical isotopes that record passage of time as well as physical and biological events that produced them.
- Those intervals of sedimentary strata on which ages are based are referred to as stages.

NATIONAL MISSION FOR CLEAN GANGA ORGANIZES GANGA VRIKSHAROPAN ABHIYAN

- National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) had organised Ganga Vriksharopan Abhiyan in five main Ganga basin states – **Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.**
- The drive was launched on 9th July 2018 for a week up to 15 July 2018 which was observed as 'Shubharambh Saptah'.

ABOUT GANGA VRIKSHAROPAN ABHIYAN:

- The campaign was initiated as a part of Forest Interventions in Ganga (FIG) component of the Namami Gange programme.
- It aimed to bring greater awareness among people and other stakeholders regarding importance of afforestation for task of Ganga Rejuvenation.
- The state forest departments of these five states were nodal agencies for the smooth and effective execution of the campaign.
- It also saw participation from Ganga Vichar Manch (GVM), Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS), NGOs and educational institutions.
- Under this campaign, a number of schools, colleges and departments were requested to "Adopt a Plant" for making it a people's movement.
- Besides, various seminars, workshops, lectures, drawing and painting competitions etc. were organized on sidelines of this campaign.
- Dehradun based Forest Research Institute (FRI) had prepared a Detailed Project Report (DPR) to implement the afforestation project in a scientific manner.
- On the basis of DPR, State Forest Departments carried out their plantation activities.
- Some of plants that were planted during campaign are: Kanji, Siras, Chhitvan, Mango, Sheesham, Farmis, Jamun, Arjun, Gutal, Neem, Sagwan, Saal, Mahogni, Ber, Semal, Jungal Jalebi, Gulmohar, Kadam, Bamboo, Karaonda, Ashwagandha, Curry Patta, Jathrofa, Beheda, Dhatura, Sarpagandha etc.

ABOUT NATIONAL MISSION FOR CLEAN GANGA (NMCG):

- NMCG is the implementation wing of National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga (also referred as National Ganga Council).
- It was established in 2011 as registered society under Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- It has a two tier management structure and comprises of the Governing Council and the Executive Committee.
- Both of them are headed by the Director General (DG), NMCG.
- The Executive Committee is authorized to approve projects under the mission up to Rs.1000 crore.

INDIA TO HOST INAUGURAL 2+2 DIALOGUE WITH US IN SEPTEMBER 2018

Strengthening of security & strategic ties will be the aim

- India is going to host the inaugural 2+2 Dialogue with the United States in September 2018 in New Delhi.
- In the inaugural meeting, Minister of External Affairs (MEA) Sushma Swaraj and Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will host US Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo and US Secretary of Defence James Mattis.

AGENDA OF THE MEETING:

- The inaugural meeting will cover broad range of bilateral, regional and global issues of shared interest, with a view to strengthening strategic and security ties between the two countries.
- Both nations will discuss strengthening of strategic, security and defence cooperation as both nations have committed to jointly address challenges in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.
- The dialogue is seen as a vehicle to elevate strategic relationship between the two countries.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

- The inaugural 2+2 dialogue was scheduled to be held in July 2018, but was postponed at the last moment by US citing “unavoidable reasons”.
- It was the third time that 2+2 dialogue was postponed in the last six months.

ABOUT THE 2+2 DIALOGUE:

- 2+2 Dialogue between India and US was agreed during visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to US in June, 2017.
- It is similar to the India-Japan 2+2 dialogue format between foreign and defence secretaries and ministers of the two countries.
- It replaces the earlier India-US Strategic and Commercial Dialogue.
- The dialogue is aimed at enhancing strategic coordination between both countries and maintaining peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific region.
- It puts strategic, defence and security relationship between the two countries at the forefront and centre stage.
- It insulates India-US strategic relationship from feuds over trade issues and deep divide on economic integration policies and trade & commercial issues that collided with strategic relationship between both the countries discussed in Strategic and Commercial Dialogue earlier.

4TH BIMSTEC SUMMIT TO BE HELD IN KATHMANDU, NEPAL IN AUGUST 2018

- **The fourth edition of Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) will be held in Kathmandu, capital city of Nepal from 30 to 31 August, 2018.**
- Nepal is the current chair of BIMSTEC.
- **The main focus of the summit will be to increase connectivity between BIMSTEC nations including roads, airways and transmission lines.**
- It will also give top priority connectivity and will work towards poverty alleviation.

ABOUT THE BAY OF BENGAL INITIATIVES FOR MULTI-SECTORAL, TECHNICAL AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION (BIMSTEC):

- BIMSTEC is the sub-regional group of seven countries in South Asia and South East Asia lying in littoral and adjacent areas of Bay of Bengal constituting contiguous regional unity.
- It was established on 6 June 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.
- It is headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- It's member countries are: India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka from South Asia and Myanmar, Thailand from South East Asia.
- BIMSTEC is a sector-driven cooperative organization, starting with six sectors including trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries.
- In 2008, it was expanded to embrace eight more sectors including agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change.
- They are collectively home to around 1.5 billion people which constitute around 22% of global population.

OBJECTIVE OF BIMSTEC:

- Technological and economic cooperation among south Asian and south East Asian countries along the coast of the Bay of Bengal.

10TH EDITION OF DELHI DIALOGUE HELD IN NEW DELHI

- **The dialogue aimed at enhancing cooperation between India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).**
- The 10th edition of Delhi Dialogue (DD X) was held in New Delhi and was hosted by Union External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj.
- This was the first major event organised after ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit, which was held in New Delhi in January 2018.
- The theme for this edition was "Strengthening India-ASEAN Maritime Cooperation".

DETAILS:

- DD X was organised by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in partnership with the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS).
- **It saw participation of political leadership, policy makers, senior officials, diplomats, business leaders, think-tanks and academicians from India and ASEAN member states.**
- Chief ministers from North-Eastern states were also invited to participate in the event.
- DD X comprised of six plenary and four parallel sessions, with each session followed by open discussions.

ABOUT THE DELHI DIALOGUE:

- Delhi Dialogue is a premier annual event to discuss politico-security, economic and socio-cultural engagement between India and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- **It has been held annually since 2009** and political leaders, policy makers, senior officials, diplomats, think tanks and academicians from both sides participate in the discussions pertaining to ASEAN-India relations.
- It is aimed at finding a common ground and expanding the scope of cooperation between India and ASEAN nations.
- **The theme of the ninth edition of the dialogue was "ASEAN-India Relations: Charting the Course for the Next 25 Years".**
- It had marked the 25th anniversary of ASEAN-India Partnership.

NABARD LAUNCHES SOUTH EAST ASIA'S FIRST EVER CENTRE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

An initiative to work towards tackling climate change .

- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has launched Centre for Climate Change in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

- It is a first of its kind centre in South East Asia.
- It aims at accelerating concerted climate action by various stakeholders in government, private, financial and non-government sectors.

ROLES AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CENTRE FOR CLIMATE CHANGE:

- The centre will help NABARD in enhancing its capacity building efforts manifold.
- It will extend professional support to stakeholders for designing climate related projects and take up collaborative studies and action research projects in the area.
- It will also support capacity building and project preparation efforts in developing countries in the region and also in Africa.
- It will address capacity building needs of stakeholders, undertake policy advocacy, promote national and international collaborations by bringing in knowledge, technology and finance for addressing the challenges and opportunities emerging from climate change.

WHAT HAS BEEN DONE IN THE PAST?

- India has experienced an impact of climate change on agriculture and rural livelihoods.
- The Government has taken several measures such as promoting micro irrigation, soil health cards, integrated farming models and traditional farming to de-risk farmers from the impact of climate change.
- NABARD has been engaging itself in capacity building of various stakeholders involved in Climate Change actions.
- It is the National Implementation Entity (NIE) for three important climate funds, viz. Green Climate Fund (GCF), Adaptation fund of UNFCCC and National Adaptation fund for Climate Change (NAFCC).

WHAT IS NATIONAL BANK FOR AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT (NABARD)?

- NABARD is an apex agricultural development financial institution in India.
- It has been entrusted with matters concerning policy, planning and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas in India.
- NABARD facilitates credit flow for promotion and development of **agriculture, small-scale industries, cottage and village industries, handicrafts and other rural crafts.**
- It supports all other allied economic activities in rural areas, promote integrated and sustainable rural development and secure prosperity of rural areas.
- It is active in developing financial inclusion policy.
- It is a member of Alliance for Financial Inclusion.
- It is headquartered at Mumbai, Maharashtra with regional offices all over India.
- It was established in 1982 on recommendations of Shivaraman Committee to implement National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act, 1981.

NASA LAUNCHES REMOTE SENSING TOOLKIT TO PROMOTE COMMERCIAL USE OF SATELLITE DATA

Many to benefit from NASA's generosity!

- The **National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA)** has launched 'Remote Sensing Toolkit' to promote commercial use of satellite data.
- The toolkit was launched as part of NASA's Technology Transfer program that offers open remote-sensing data, benefiting scientific community, other government agencies and nonprofit organizations.

WHAT IS THE REMOTE SENSING TOOLKIT?

- It is an online toolkit that aims to make it easier for users to find, analyse and utilise relevant satellite data for their research, business projects or conservation efforts.
- It has been designed to help users search for data, as well as utilize ready-to-use tools and code to build new tools.
- It provides a simple system that quickly identifies relevant sources based on user input.
- It makes finding and using NASA satellite data easier than ever before.
- It aims to spark innovation among entrepreneurial community and lead to further commercialisation of NASA technology.

POWER GRID SIGNS MOU WITH UP POWER CORP FOR ENERGY EFFICIENCY

Efficient energy on both the central and state power corporation's mind!

- **Power Grid Corporation of India (POWERGRID)** has signed **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** with **Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation (UPPCL)** for energy efficiency and agricultural demand side management programme.
- POWERGRID and UPPCL are going to hold further discussions to decide terms and conditions for replacement of agriculture pump sets in East and South DISCOMs of Uttar Pradesh.

ABOUT THE POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA (POWERGRID):

- POWERGRID is a Navaratna **Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)**.
- It is the **central transmission utility (CTU)** of India.
- It is India's largest electric power transmission utility, transmitting about 50% of total power generated in India on its transmission network.
- It is a listed company since 2007.
- It is headquartered in Gurugram, Haryana.
- Government owns 56.91% of **POWERGRID** and the balance 43.09% is owned by public.
- It operates 90% of inter-state and inter-regional networks.

ABOUT UTTAR PRADESH POWER CORPORATION LIMITED:

- **Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited (UPPCL)** is the company responsible for electricity transmission and distribution within the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.
- It is headquartered in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- Its chairman is Shri Alok Kumar.

UTTAR PRADESH POWER CORPORATION LIMITED (UPPCL) PROCURES POWER FROM:

- State government owned power generators (**Uttar Pradesh Rajya Vidyut Utpadan Nigam & Uttar Pradesh Jal Vidyut Nigam Limited**)
- Central government owned power generators (NTPC Limited & THDC Ltd)
- Independent Power Producers - IPP (mostly private power companies) through power purchase agreement for lowest per unit cost of electricity.

NCERT TO INTRODUCE QR CODE IN TEXTBOOKS

NCERT takes a technological leap in its teaching methodology.

- The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has initiated process of introducing QR code (Quick Response code) in their textbooks.
- It is aimed at helping students understand chapters better by watching film or reading additional content on laptops and digital boards.

MORE DETAILS:

- For this enhanced learning feature, NCERT has started a process of identifying relevant supplementary material including videos, power point presentations, animations, maps and e-content.
- **These will be mapped with the content of each textbook from class 1 to 12 and will be linked with the QR code, which will be printed in the textbooks.**
- The QR code laden textbooks are likely to be introduced from the 2019 academic session.

WHAT IS A QR CODE (QUICK RESPONSE CODE)?

- QR Code is a two-dimensional (matrix) machine-readable bar code consisting of an array of black and white squares, used for storing web-links or other information.
- This code can be read by the camera of a smartphone.
- It is **used for storing URLs or other information that link directly to text, emails, websites and phone numbers.**
- It is capable of 360 degrees (omni-directional), high speed reading.
- It can store up to 7089 digits as compared to conventional bar codes which can store maximum 20 digits.
- It encodes same amount of data in one-tenth the space of a traditional bar code.
- **It carries information both horizontally and vertically.**
- It has error correction capability and data stored in it can be restored even if it is partially damaged or dirty.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS INDEX 2018: KERALA TOPS LIST OF BEST GOVERNED STATES FOR THIRD TIME

Its a hat-trick for Kerala !

- According to the Public Affairs Index (PAI) 2018, Kerala tops the list as best-governed state in the country followed by Tamil Nadu.

- The index was released by the think tank Public Affairs Centre (PAC).
Kerala has topped PAI as the best-governed state for the third consecutive year since 2016 among large states.

A LOOK AT SOME DETAILS:

LARGE STATES:

- Kerala has topped the list, followed by Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Karnataka and Gujarat.
- Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand and Bihar ranked the lowest, indicating higher social and economic inequalities in the states.
- Smaller states (with population less than two crore):
- Himachal Pradesh topped the list followed by **Goa, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura**.
- Nagaland, Manipur and Meghalaya were ranked at bottom of the index among small states.
- **2018 PAI also included separate index on children of India, giving measure of how child-friendly each of the states are.**
- In this category of providing better living conditions for all children, Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Mizoram topped the index.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS INDEX (PAI):

- The index is released since 2016 by Bengaluru based Public Affairs Centre (PAC), a not for profit think tank which aims to improve governance in India.
- It is based on **10 themes, 30 focus subjects and 100 indicators, relying solely upon government data.**
- It covers a wide range of themes such as support to human development, social protection, essential infrastructure, women and children, crime, law and order, delivery of justice, transparency and accountability, environment, fiscal management and economic freedom.

REGIONAL RAIL TRAINING INSTITUTE INAUGURATED AT GHAZIPUR, UTTAR PRADESH

Indian Railways aims to enhance employee expertise!

- Indian Railways has inaugurated Regional Rail Training Institute (RRTI) at Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh in a bid to strengthen expertise and capabilities of the employees of North-Eastern Railways.
- **Besides, newly constructed 400 metre washing pit at Ghazipur City station was also inaugurated at a cost of Rs 19.62 crore.**

ABOUT REGIONAL RAIL TRAINING INSTITUTE (RRTI):

- RRTI was constructed with the **cost of Rs 21 crore** within stipulated time.
- It will provide modern training facilities to the railway employees and would enhance their efficiency.
- It is equipped with modern training facilities, an advanced model hostel, computer room, cafeteria and other necessary facilities.
- It will immensely add to the development of the area.

SAFAR: MOST ADVANCED SYSTEM OF AIR QUALITY AND WEATHER FORECASTING INUAGRATED

- Ministry of Earth Sciences has unveiled state-of-the-art Air Quality and Weather Forecast System– SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting) at Chandni Chowk in Delhi.
- It is a first of its kind and most advanced system in India.
- Such advanced systems are also proposed to be implemented in other three cities of India- Pune, Mumbai and Ahmedabad.

ABOUT SAFAR (SYSTEM OF AIR QUALITY AND WEATHER FORECASTING):

- SAFAR was developed indigenously by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune and operationalized by India Meteorological Department (IMD).
- It is an integral part of India's first Air Quality Early Warning System operational in Delhi.
- It will monitor all weather parameters like temperature, rainfall, humidity, wind speed and wind direction.
- It will also measure **Sun's UV-Index (UVI), PM1, Mercury and Black carbon** in real time in addition to regular air quality and weather parameters like PM2.5, PM10, Sulfur Dioxide, Ozone, Nitrogen Oxides, Carbon Monoxide.
- It can also provide measurement of online automatic ultrafine particles PM1 and Mercury, both of which have direct relevance to human health.
- It will also monitor existence of harmful pollutants of Benzene, Toluene and Xylene.
- SAFAR has a giant **true colour LED display which gives out real-time air quality index on 24x7 basis with colour coding alongwith 72-hour** advance forecast.
- Based on the Air Quality Index on particular day, health advisory and related precaution will be notified to prepare citizens well in advance.

WHAT WILL BE THE BENEFITS OF SAFAR?

- SAFAR will accelerate public awareness and preparedness of air pollution and weather extremes.
- It will also lead to better understanding of linkages among emissions, weather, pollution and climate.
- It will **strengthen existing air quality network of SAFAR, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC).**
- Besides health, SAFAR system will benefit cost savings to several other sectors like agriculture, aviation, infrastructure, disaster management skill, tourism and many others, which directly or indirectly get affected by air quality and weather.

GOVERNMENT SELECTS 734 ATHLETES FOR KHELO-INDIA SCHOLARSHIPS

Sports Authority of India aims to develop promising talent.

- Sports Authority of India (SAI) under Union Ministry of Sports and Youth Affairs has cleared 734 athletes for the scholarship under the Khelo India Talent Development Scheme.
- They were selected by the High Powered Committee of SAI.
- Through this programme, the athletes will get training at government-accredited residential academies.

- They will be provided with annual stipend of Rs. 1,20,000 on quarterly basis to meet their out of pocket expenses, treatment of injuries and other expenses.

ROLE OF SPORTS ACADEMIES:

- The High Powered Committee for the first time also has accredited various private, state and SAI academies to create strong ecosystem for nurturing talent.
- It includes 21 non-SAI academies as well.
- The rationale behind it is to develop more such academies so that young athletes can get access to best training without having to travel long distances.

ABOUT THE KHELO INDIA TALENT DEVELOPMENT SCHEME:

- The scheme was introduced by Ministry of Sports and Youth affairs to revive sports culture in India at grass-root level.
- Its objective is to build strong framework for all sports played in our country and establish India as great sporting nation.
- It aims to help scout young talent from schools in various disciplines and groom them as future sports champions.
- Under it, talented players are identified in priority sports disciplines at various levels by High-Powered Committed and each selected player is provided annual financial assistance of Rs. 5 lakh for 8 years.

FIRST MEETING OF INDIA-BANGLADESH JOINT COMMITTEE ON BORDER HAATS HELD IN AGARTALA

A move to achieve better & easy flow of lives of people living near the Borders.

- The first meeting of the **India-Bangladesh Joint Committee** on Border Haats was held in **Agartala, Tripura**. The Joint Committee also visited Border Haat at Kamlasagar in Sipahijala District, Tripura and Tarapur in Brahmanbaria, Bangladesh.

WHAT CAME OUT OF THE MEETING?

- Both sides noted positive impact of Border Haats on livelihoods of people living in areas adjoining Haats.
- They also held extensive discussions on **issues related to review of operations of four functional Border Haats viz. Kalaichar (Meghalaya), Balat (Meghalaya), Kamlasagar (Tripura) and Srinagar (Tripura)**.
- They also made suggestions for improvement, timeline for setting up six additional Border Haats that have been agreed to earlier by both sides and roadmap for further expansion of Border Haats.
- They also agreed that the next meeting will be held in Bangladesh on mutually agreed dates.

ABOUT BORDER HAATS:

- Border Haats (or rural markets) aims at promoting the well-being of the people dwelling in remote areas across the borders of two countries.
- It seeks to establish **traditional system of marketing local produce through local markets in local currency or according to barter basis**.

- Though trade carried in this informal market is not significant in terms of percentage of bilateral trade, but these local measures help to improve economic well-being of marginalised sections of the society.
- Border haats along **India-Banladesh border are established under Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed for Border Trade and Border Haats between both countries in October 2010.**
- India and Bangladesh had signed MoU on Border Haats in April 2017 for establishment of Joint Committee to review border haats operations, suggest modifications in operational modalities and propose new locations of Border Haats.

LOK SABHA PASSES NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2017

Government aims to reduce the burden of courts.

- **Lok Sabha** has passed **Negotiable Instruments (Amendment) Bill, 2017** to reduce the number of cheque dishonour cases pending in courts.
- The bill amends Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 to primarily address issues of dishonor of cheques and deal with unnecessary delay in disposal of such cases.

WHAT IS A NEGOTIABLE INSTRUMENT?

- It refers to any legal documents like cheques, promissory notes, bill of exchange etc which promises to pay bearer or holder of instrument or person whose name is written on instrument, specific amount of money either on demand or after specified time i.e. on some future date.
- The Negotiable Instruments Act, 1881 defines promissory notes, bills of exchange and cheques.
- It also specifies penalties for bouncing of cheques and other violations with respect to such negotiable instruments.

FEATURES OF THE BILL:

INTERIM COMPENSATION:

- The Bill inserts new Section 143 A in parent Act to allow the court trying the offence related to cheque bouncing, to direct drawer (person who writes cheque) to pay interim compensation to complainant.
- This compensation may be paid under certain circumstances, including where drawer pleads not guilty of accusation.
- It will not exceed 20% of cheque amount and will be paid by drawer within 60 days of trial court's order to pay such compensation.

DEPOSIT IN CASE OF APPEAL:

- The Bill inserts another new Section 148-A in the parent act specifying that if drawer convicted in cheque bouncing case files appeal, the appellate court may direct him to deposit minimum of 20% of fine or compensation awarded by trial court during conviction.
- This amount will be in addition to any interim compensation paid by drawer during earlier trial proceedings.

RETURNING INTERIM COMPENSATION:

- In case the drawer is acquitted during trial by appellate court, then court will direct complainant to return interim compensation (or deposit in case of an appeal case), along with interest.
- This amount will be repaid within 60 days of court's order.

NITI AAYOG SIGNS SOI WITH LUPIN FOUNDATION FOR COLLABORATING IN ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICTS

A noble and much needed intent.

- NITI Aayog has signed **Statement of Intent (Sol)** with **Lupin Foundation** to collaborate in **Aspirational Districts Programme** to create templates for concerted development policy.
- Under this collaboration, both parties will partner to improve indicators in education, health and nutrition, financial inclusion and skill development, agriculture and water resources and basic infrastructure in Aspirational Districts.

ABOUT THE SOI:

- Lupin Foundation with NITI Aayog will work in **three states (Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan)** to facilitate creation of deal template to develop economic strength, technological viability and moral leadership across three districts in these states as part of Phase I of the cooperation.
- **Phase I of this cooperation will focus on districts of Dholpur (Rajasthan), Nandurbar (Maharashtra) and Vidisha (Madhya Pradesh).**
- It will help to develop comprehensive district-level action plan which integrates various initiatives and interventions.

LUPIN FOUNDATION WILL WORK TOWARDS THREE MAIN PILLARS OF ENSURING INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENTAL POLICY IN MODEL STATES.

THEY ARE:

1. Social development (initiatives for health, education and women empowerment)
2. Economic empowerment (focus on interventions in spheres of agriculture, animal husbandry and skill enhancement)
3. Infrastructure development (establish durable infra in form of internal roads, school buildings and water resources)

WHAT IS ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICT PROGRAMME?

- The programme was **launched in January 2018** and it aims to **quickly and effectively transform some of most underdeveloped districts of the country.**
- It envisages rapid development of selected districts on basis of composite index based on five parameters: health and nutrition, education, financial inclusion, skill development, agriculture and water resources and basic infrastructure.

- It focuses closely on improving people's ability to participate fully in burgeoning economy.
- It seeks to bring these indicators in selected districts at par with the better performing districts in the country.
- Broad contours of the programme are Convergence of Central and State Schemes; Collaboration of Central, State level 'Prabhari' Officers and District Collectors and Competition among districts driven by Mass Movement or Jan Andolan.

LOK SABHA PASSES NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR TEACHER EDUCATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2017

Government to give recognition to certain Teacher Education institutions

- Lok Sabha has passed **National Council for Teacher Education (Amendment) Bill, 2017** to provide post-facto approval to those approved institutions which are funded by Centre or states, but do not have recognition.
- The Bill amends National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) Act, 1993.

FEATURES OF THE BILL:

RETROSPECTIVE RECOGNITION OF CERTAIN TEACHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS:

- The Bill seeks to grant retrospective recognition to institutions that have been notified by central government, funded by **Central Government or State/UT government** but do not have recognition under the parent Act.
- Besides, these institutions must have offered teacher education courses on or after establishment of **NCTE until academic year 2017-2018**.

RETROSPECTIVE PERMISSION TO START NEW COURSES:

- The Bill grants retrospective permission to these institutions to start new course or training in teacher education.

ABOUT NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR TEACHER EDUCATION (NCTE):

- It is a statutory body of Central Government set up under **NCTE Act, 1993** in 1995 to formally oversee standards, procedures and processes in Indian education system.
- **NCTE plans and co-ordinates the development of teacher education system** throughout the country (for both central as well as state governments).
- It also ensures the maintenance of norms and standards in the teacher education system.
- Its headquarters are in New Delhi.

UNNAT BHARAT ABHIYAN 2.0

Engaging Educational Institutions for the betterment of Rural India.

- **Unnat Bharat Abhiyan** is a flagship programme of Ministry of **Human Resource Development (HRD)** that aims to enrich **Rural India**.
- The second edition (Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0) was launched in April, 2018.

- Currently 748 institutions are participating under the scheme.
- In phase II, 605 institutions were selected.
- Out of these 313 are technical Institutions and 292 are Non-Technical Institutions.
- 143 institutions had taken part in phase-1.

ABOUT UNNAT BHARAT ABHIYAN:

- The scheme aims to link higher education institutions with a set of atleast five villages, so that they can contribute to the economic and social betterment of these village communities using their knowledge base.
- Under this scheme, higher education institutions will participate in development activities, particularly in rural areas.

OBJECTIVES OF THE SCHEME:

- To engage faculty and students of higher educational institutions in understanding rural realities.
- Identify and select existing innovative technologies, **enable customization of technologies or devise implementation methods for innovative solutions** as required by people.
- To allow higher educational institutions to contribute to devising systems for smooth implementation of various Government Programs.
- The scheme is inspired by **vision of transformational change in rural development processes by leveraging knowledge base and resources of premier Institutions of the country to help build the architecture of Inclusive India.**
- It also aims to create virtuous cycle between society and inclusive university system, with the latter providing knowledge base, best practices for emerging livelihoods and upgrade in capabilities of both public and private sectors.

ROLE OF INSTITUTES IN THIS SCHEME:

- Institutes through their faculty and students, **will carry out studies of living conditions in adopted villages, assess local problems and needs, workout possibilities of leveraging technological interventions** and need to improve processes in implementation of various government schemes and prepare workable action plans for the selected villages.

GOVERNMENT FORMS GOM AND COMMITTEE TO FRAME LAW AGAINST LYNCHING

- **Union Government has created a Group of Ministers (GoM) and a high-level committee to deliberate and make recommendations for a separate penal provision on incidents of mob violence.**
- The **GoM** will be headed by **Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh**, whereas the **committee** will be headed by **Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba**.

STRUCTURE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE GAUBA COMMITTEE:

- It will include **secretaries of departments of Justice, Legal Affairs, Legislative Department and Social Justice and Empowerment** as its members.

- It will suggest **measures and legal framework to effectively deal with incidents of mob violence and lynching.**
- It will submit its recommendations to the GoM in four weeks.

ABOUT THE GROUP OF MINISTERS (GOM):

- GoM includes: **Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thaawar Chand Gehlot.**
- It will examine recommendations given by **Gauba committee** and submit its report to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

WHAT LED TO THIS DEVELOPMENT?

- The move came **after recent Supreme Court direction to central government** on the issue of mob violence and lynching.
- The apex court had denounced sweeping incidents of lynching as an affront to the rule of law and called for **law to deal** with such horrendous acts of mobocracy.
- It had **passed a series of "preventive, remedial and punitive" measures to deal with lynchings and mob vigilantism.**
- It had made Centre and state governments accountable for mob violence and lynching and had asked them to take steps to curb and stop dissemination of irresponsible and explosive fake messages and videos on social media platforms which incite such incidents.

BANKS, FIS INK INTER-CREDITOR AGREEMENT FOR FASTER NPA RESOLUTION

A new step to tackle the NPA menace.

- **Banks and Financial Institutions (FIs)** have signed **Inter-Creditor Agreement (ICA)** aimed at faster resolution of stressed **assets of Rs. 50 crore** or more which are under consortium lending.
- It has been **signed by 22 public sector banks, 19 private sector banks and 32 foreign banks and 12 major financial intermediaries like LIC, HUDCO etc.**

ABOUT THE INTER-CREDITOR AGREEMENT (ICA):

- ICA Framework is part of the project '**Sashak**'.
- Under it, lead lender (having highest exposure) will be authorised to formulate resolution plan for operation turnaround of assets which will be presented to lenders for their approval.
- It will be **applicable to all corporate borrowers who have availed loans and financial assistance for amount of Rs. 50 crore** or more under consortium lending or multiple banking arrangements.
- Each resolution plan will be submitted by the lead lender to the Overseeing Committee.
- The decision making under ICA framework will be by way of approval of majority lenders i.e. lenders with 66% share in aggregate exposure.
- Once resolution plan is **approved by** majority lenders, it will be binding on all **lenders that are party to ICA.**
- The plan formulated under ICA will be in compliance with RBI norms and all other applicable laws and guidelines.

- Banks opposing resolution plan will have option to sell their stressed loans to company at a discount or buy out loans to that entity from all other lenders at premium.

WHY IS THE ICA FRAMEWORK IMPORTANT?

- The ICA framework **aims for faster facilitation of the stressed assets resolution.**
- It gives a bigger say to lead lender in consortium and **allows** resolution plan to be **approved if 66% of the banks in the group agree to it.**
- It authorises the lead bank to implement resolution plan in 180 days.
- In case a **lender dissents**, the **lead lender will have the right but not the obligation** to arrange for **buying out the facilities of the dissenting lenders.** It could be bought at a value equal to 85 per cent of the liquidation value or resolution value, whichever is lower.
- The dissenting lenders could exercise such rights of buyout in respect of the entire facilities held by other relevant lenders.

INDIA, RWANDA SIGN EIGHT AGREEMENTS IN VARIOUS FIELDS

- **India and Rwanda have signed eight agreements in the fields of defence, trade, agriculture, leather and allied products and dairy.**
- The **agreements** were **signed** following delegation-level talks between **Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Rwandan President Paul Kagame in Kigali, the capital city of Rwanda.**
- **PM Modi became first Indian Prime Minister to visit Rwanda.**

WHAT WERE THE HIGHLIGHTS OF THE BILATERAL MEETINGS HELD?

- PM Modi and Kagame held wide-ranging talks and discussed a **host of measures to boost bilateral strategic ties.**
- India assured Rwanda that India will continue to its development efforts.
- **India also extended two lines of credit (LoCs) worth \$200 million to Rwanda** for development of industrial parks and Kigali **Special Economic Zone (SEZ)** and for development of three agricultural projects in Rwanda.
- PM Modi also announced opening of the first Indian diplomatic mission in Rwanda, which will help to establish communication between governments of two countries and also enable facilities for consular, passport and visa.
- **Both countries also agreed** to set up task force to **enable digital learning mediums for children.**

THE AGREEMENTS THAT WERE SIGNED:

AGREEMENT ON MOU ON CO-OPERATION IN THE FIELD OF AGRICULTURE AND ANIMAL RESOURCES:

- It **focuses on co-operation in agriculture and livestock** with strong emphasis on research, technological development, capacity building and human resource development as well as investment mobilization.

AGREEMENT ON CO-OPERATION DEFENCE ON CAPACITY BUILDING, DEFENCE, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY:

- It **focuses on co-operation in defence matters** and areas related to science & technology to benefit both the nations.

MOU ON CULTURAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM FOR YEARS 2018-22:

- It will involve fields such as: **Music and Dance, Theatre, Exhibitions, Seminars and Conference, Archeology, Archives, Library, Museums, Literature, Research and Documentation** etc.

MOU ON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION BETWEEN RAB AND ICAR:

- Training and Research in Dairy, **Processing of Dairy Products, Quality and Safety of Mil, Biotechnological Intervention** in Livestock.

TRADE CO-OPERATION FRAMEWORK:

- Facilitate, diversify and promote trade and economic cooperation between the two countries.
- **MoU on Collaboration in the Areas of Leather and Allied Sectors between NIRDA and CSIR-CLRI.** LoC Agreement for US \$ 100 million for development of Industrial Parks and expansion of Kigali Special Economic Zones.
LoC Agreement for US \$ 100 million for Agriculture irrigation scheme in Rwanda.

ABOUT THE GIRINKA PROGRAMME:

- Prime Minister **Narendra Modi** **gifted 200 cows to villagers from Rweru villages** as part of Rwandan Government's Girinka Programme.
- The **programme was initiated** by President Paul Kagame in response to **alarmingly high rate of childhood malnutrition** and as way to accelerate poverty reduction and integrate livestock and crop farming.
- Under this programme, poorest residing in region get cows from Government and gift first female calf to neighbour to promote brotherhood.
- The programme is based on premise that providing dairy cow to poor, transforms livelihoods, reconciles communities improving agricultural productivity through use of manure as fertilizers.
- The **program has contributed to increase in agricultural production in Rwanda** – especially milk production and products and has reduced malnutrition and increased incomes.

INDIA, UGANDA SIGN FOUR MOUS IN VARIOUS FIELDS

- India and Uganda signed four MoUs in the areas of defence cooperation, visa exemption for official and diplomatic passport holders, cultural exchange programme and material testing laboratory.
- The **agreements** were inked following delegation-level talks **between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni** in Kampala.

AGREEMENTS SIGNED:

- **MoU on Defence Cooperation**
- **MoU on Visa exemption for Diplomatic and official passport holders**
- **MoU on Cultural Exchange Programme**

- **MoU on Material Testing Laboratory**

DETAILS ABOUT THE BILATERAL MEETING:

- **Both leaders** comprehensively **reviewed** all aspects of **bilateral relations**.
- **India announced two Lines of Credit** worth nearly **US \$200 million to Uganda** in energy, infrastructure, agriculture and dairy sectors.
- India announced to continue to play a stable partner in the country's journey towards development.
- It also **announced to give vehicles, ambulances and cancer therapy machine to Uganda**.
- India reiterated its commitment of training, capacity building and infrastructure creation as these are the core areas of co-operation between both countries.
- **Both countries** also **agreed to work together in trade, investment and tourism sectors**, supporting mutual prosperity through reciprocity.

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE PM'S VISIT?

- **PM Modi visited Uganda** on the **second leg of his three-African nations tour** after concluding his Rwanda visit.
- **After** concluding his **Uganda visit**, he will visit **South Africa to attend 10th BRICS Summit at Johannesburg**.
- It was the **first visit** by an **Indian Prime Minister to Uganda in over 20 years**.
- **PM Modi** also **delivered keynote address** at the **Ugandan Parliament**, making him first Indian PM to do so.

PITCH BLACK – 18: INDIAN AIR FORCE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN MULTINATIONAL EXERCISE

- **Indian Air Force (IAF)** for the first time will participate in the multinational air exercise **Pitch Black – 18 (PB-18)** in **Australia**, hosted by the **Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)**.
It will be a **three week** multi-national large force employment **exercise (27 July to 17 August 2018)** conducted from **RAAF Base Darwin** and **RAAF Base Tindal**.

ABOUT PITCH BLACK-18:

- PB-18 Exercise will host up to **4000 personnel and up to 140 aircraft** from 12 participant countries including **Australia, Canada, India, Germany, Indonesia, France (New Caledonia), Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and United States**.
- The multilateral exercise will feature range of realistic, simulated threats found in modern and dynamic battle-space environment.
- It will provide opportunity to test and improve our force integration, utilising one of largest training airspace areas in the world- **Bradshaw Field Training Area** and **Delamere Air Weapons Range**.
- It will include both **day and night flying**.
- IAF contingent will comprise of **145 air-warriors including Garud commando team, four Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter planes and C-130 & C-17 transport aircraft**.
- IAF men and planes will undertake simulated air combat exercises in controlled environment and mutual exchange of best practices towards enhancing its operational capability.
- **After completion** of the exercise, on its **return leg from Darwin to Subang (Indonesia)**, **IAF fighters will be refuelled in air for the first time by RAAF KC-30A**.

- Moreover during transit to Australia, IAF contingent will also have constructive engagement with Indonesian and Malaysian Air Forces.
- This will be IAF's overall **third participation** in multilateral air combat **exercises over last three years after Red Flag exercise held in United States in April-May 2016** and Blue Flag air combat drill in Israel in November 2017.

HISTORY OF THE EXERCISE:

- It is a biennial warfare exercise hosted by **Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF)**.
- It is normally **held in Northern Australia**, primarily at RAAF Bases Darwin and Tindal.
- The **aim** of the exercise is to **practice Offensive Counter Air (OCA) and Defensive Counter Air (DCA) combat**, in simulated war environment.
- It traditionally consists of red team and blue team based at separate locations, with one attacking other.
- The **first Pitch Black exercises took place in 1981 between different RAAF units**.
- Later in 1990, it began as training exercise between Australia and Singapore and then was expanded as multilateral exercises by inviting international air forces with which Australia has defence ties.

FISH LOSING SMELLING SENSE DUE TO CARBON DIOXIDE LEVEL RISE: STUDY

Aquatic habitat under threat.

- According to a recent study, **fish are losing their sense of smell as rising carbon emissions** is turning water they live more acidic.
 - **CO₂ is absorbed by seawater forming carbonic acid.**
 - Due of ocean acidification, fish will lose some of their smelling sense, making it more difficult to survive.
 - Fish use their sense of smell for essential things such as finding food and safe parts of ocean to re-produce, recognising each other and most importantly- sniffing out danger so that they can avoid predators.
 - **Since 1800's, ocean CO₂ levels have risen by 43%. It is predicted to be more than double current level by the end of the century.**

ABOUT THE STUDY:

- For this study, researchers compared behaviour of juvenile sea bass at CO₂ levels typical of today's ocean conditions and those predicted for the end of the century.
- It was found that **sea bass in acidic waters swam less and less** likely responded when they encountered the smell of a predator.
- It also showed that these **fish were more likely to freeze as they were feeling anxious**.
- Though, only sea bass was used in the research, but the processes involved in sense of smell, are common to many fish species.
- Thus, these findings will also apply to other types of fish as well.

INVEST INDIA AND BUSINESS FRANCE SIGN MOU TO PROMOTE INVESTMENT

India and France aim for better growth of start ups.

- **Invest India and Business France** have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to promote investment facilitation and cooperation between startups of India and France.
- The MoU will facilitate direct foreign investment by providing practical investment information to the enterprises.
- It will also support companies pursuing those opportunities which contribute positively to economic growth of two countries.

DETAILS OF THE MOU:

- Under this MoU, **Invest India and Business France** will collaborate to promote business and startup ecosystem cooperation through joint activities.
- They will also exchange experiences to **strengthen institutional knowledge** and identify opportunities between businesses in the French and the Indian private sector, creating dedicated support structure to facilitate inbound companies and startups.
- The partnership will **strengthen existing business relations between India and France** and provide seamless facilitation channel for new businesses and innovations from both countries to grow in each other's markets.

WHAT IS INVEST INDIA?

- It is an **official Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of the Central Government**
- It is mandated to facilitate investments in the country.
- It is the **first stop for potential global investors** in the country.
- It is a non-profit venture under **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)**, Ministry of Commerce and Industries.

WHAT IS BUSINESS FRANCE?

- It is an executive agency of French government under **supervision of Minister for Economic Affairs and Finance and Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Development**.
- It promotes international business development for French companies and professionals through worldwide network of **80 trade commissions**, which have **worked with over 7,500 SMEs**.
- It mobilizes expertise of **1,400 persons in France** and in **70 other countries**.

INDIA RANKS 11TH IN 2018 AT KEARNEY FDI CONFIDENCE INDEX

- **India has fallen out of top 10 destinations for Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) in terms of its attractiveness according to 2018 Kearney FDI Confidence Index**, in which it was ranked 11th, down from 8th in 2017 and 9th in 2016.
- The index was released by report published by global consultancy firm A T Kearney.

DETAILS OF THE REPORT:

- **Fall in India's rankings** may be due to **teething troubles in implementation of goods and services tax (GST)** and Government's demonetisation decision in 2016.
- These policies may have deterred investors in the short term as they have disrupted business activity and weighed on economic growth.
- Several of India's reforms such as removing **Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB)** and liberalising FDI limits in key sectors such as retail, aviation, and biomedical industries have maintained India's high rankings in terms of FDI attractiveness.
- **In future, potential investors** are likely to be **cautious** as they are **monitoring political risks such as China** abolishing presidential term limits and upcoming general election in India.
- But sheer size of Chinese and Indian markets, will continue to draw investors and they will remain highest-ranking emerging markets on the index.

WHAT IS FDI CONFIDENCE INDEX?

- The index is an annual analysis of how political, economic, and regulatory changes will likely affect FDI inflows into countries in coming years.
- It is constructed using primary data from proprietary survey administered to senior executives of world's leading corporations.
- **Companies participating in survey should have annual revenues of \$500 million or more.**

POSHAN ABHIYAAN: 2ND MEETING OF NATIONAL COUNCIL HELD IN NEW DELHI

- **Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD)** had organized **2nd meeting of National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges** under POSHAN Abhiyaan in New Delhi. It was chaired by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar.

KEY TAKE AWAYS FROM THE MEETING:

- National Council approved inclusion of **32 new districts under POSHAN Abhiyaan** in the current year.
- This will help to saturate all districts of **Union Territories (UTs)** that were **left out under Phase-I and Phase-II**.
- It will also provide full coverage to those states, where up to 5 districts had been left.
- Thus facilitating in saturation of 8 new States/UTs and taking total number of States/UTs covered under POSHAN Abhiyaan to 23. It also **gave in-principle approval** to guidelines for **construction of anganwadi centres** in urban areas and slums under aanganwadi services.
- During the meeting, WCD Ministry presented three modules from online course for nutrition developed with the assistance of National Institute of Nutrition.
- These courses will be hosted independently by WCD Ministry and National Institute of Nutrition portals.
- It was also **announced to celebrate the month of September as National Nutrition Month every year.**

ABOUT POSHAN ABHIYAAN:

- **POSHAN Abhiyaan (Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition)** was launched in **Jhunjhunu, Rajasthan** in **March 2018**.
- It aims to ensure holistic development and adequate nutrition for pregnant women, mothers and children.

TARGETS:

- It **aims to reduce level of under-nutrition** and other related problems by ensuring convergence of various nutrition related schemes.
- It **also targets stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia** (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and low birth rate.

COMPONENTS:

- Its large component involves gradual scaling-up of interventions supported by ongoing World Bank assisted **Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Systems Strengthening and Nutrition Improvement Project (ISSNIP)** to all districts in the country by 2022.

GOVERNMENT AMENDS DEFINITION OF HYDROCARBON TO INCLUDE SHALE...

A move to increase India's energy security.

- **Union Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas** has **amended Petroleum and Natural Gas Rules 1959** to include **Shale in the definition of petroleum**.
- This change will allow private companies to explore and produce the resource in the blocks they already operate.

ABOUT THE UPDATED DEFINITION:

- The updated definition of **petroleum means naturally occurring hydrocarbons**, whether in the form of natural gas or in liquid, viscous or solid form, or mixture thereof, occurring in association with petroleum or coal or shale but does not include coal, lignite, and helium.
- Prior to this, definition excluded shale and therefore barred companies from exploiting it from fields that are producing conventional oil and gas or coal-bed methane.

SIGNIFICANCE/IMPORTANCE:

- The **amendment of definition of petroleum will open up exploration of all hydrocarbons** in existing fields which is line with new **Hydrocarbon Exploration Licensing Policy (HELP)**.
- It will help in enhancing domestic exploration and production of hydrocarbons and increasing India's energy security and reducing dependency on imports.

WHAT IS SHALE?

- It is a **fine-grained sedimentary rock** that forms **from compaction of silt and clay-size mineral** particles, commonly called as mud.
- The composition of shale places it in the category of sedimentary rocks known as **mudstones**.
- Shale is distinguished from other mudstones due to laminated (rock is made up of many thin layers) and fissile (rock readily splits into thin pieces along the laminations) nature.

- Some shales have special properties that make them important resources.
- **Black shales contain organic material** that sometimes **breaks down to form natural gas or oil**.

WHAT IS SHALE GAS?

- Shale gas is a natural gas **formed from being trapped within shale formations**.
- It is an **unconventional source of methane**, like coal-bed gas (in coal seams) and tight gas (trapped in rock formations).
- It is a **colourless, odourless gas** which is lighter than air.
- It is **cheaper than natural gas** and **releases 50% less CO₂**, hence a better source for generating electricity.
- It also provides **feedstock for petrochemicals industry**, which is turned into fertilizer, plastics and other useful stuff.
- In India, potential shale gas sites are **Cambay, Gondwana, Krishna-Godawari and Cauvery Basins**.

WEST BENGAL ASSEMBLY PASSES RESOLUTION TO RENAME STATE AS BANGLA

- West Bengal state assembly dominated by Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress Government has **unanimously passed a resolution to change the state's name to 'Bangla' in all three languages – Bengali, Hindi and English**.
- The name change will only become official when the resolution gets approval from the Union Home Ministry and the Parliament passes the Bill.

REASON CITED BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT FOR THE NAME CHANGE:

- The main reason cited by the State Government for changing the name of West Bengal to Bangla is that **whenever there is a meeting of all states, West Bengal figures at the bottom of the list, as it is prepared according to alphabetical order**.
- With change in its name to Bangla, it will appear (or leapfrog) to fourth place after Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Assam in list of states in alphabetical order.

DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PAST:

- The move of West Bengal state assembly to change the name of the state comes almost two years after it first passed a resolution to change the name of the State in August 2016.
- The state government had earlier submitted a proposal to the Centre to change the name of West Bengal to Bengal in English, Bangla in Bengali and Bangal in Hindi.
- The proposal was turned down by Union Home Ministry.

WHAT IS THE PROCEDURE OF CHANGING NAME OF A STATE?

- The process for changing the name of a state can be initiated by the state itself.
- However, by virtue of article 3 of Constitution, Parliament has the power to change the name of a state even if such proposal does not come from the concerned state.

- If initiated by state assembly, it will first pass a resolution for such change and this passed resolution will be sent to the Central government (Union Home Ministry).
- Then, the Union Home Ministry prepares a note for the Union Cabinet for amendment to Schedule 1 of the Constitution.
- Thereafter, Constitution Amendment Bill is introduced in Parliament under Article 3 of Constitution, which has to be approved with simple majority, before President gives his assent to it.
- Thereafter, the name of the state will be changed.
- An example of such change is the change in the name of Orissa to Odisha.
- The Government of Orissa initiated this change in 2008 when it forwarded resolution passed by State Legislative Assembly to the Union Government to change the name of the state from Orissa to Odisha.
- This bill was passed by Parliament as Orissa (Alteration of Name) Act, 2010 to rename the state.

GOOGLE UNVEILS TWO NEW AI CHIPS

- Internet search engine giant Google at its Cloud Next 2018 conference held in San Francisco, unveiled two new Artificial Intelligence (AI) chips aimed at helping customers develop and deploy intelligent connected devices at scale.
- The AI chips are: **Edge TPU** and **Cloud IoT Edge**.

ABOUT THE CHIPS:

EDGE TPU:

- The new hardware chip is a purpose-built application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC), designed to run AI at the edge.
- It is so small that four such chips can fit on a US penny.
- It will bring brain to devices at extremely low cost and high power efficiency without compromising performance.
- It delivers high performance in small physical and power footprint, enabling deployment of high-accuracy AI at the edge.

CLOUD IOT EDGE:

- It is a software stack that extends Google Cloud's powerful AI capability to gateways and connected devices.
- One of companies using this new technology is: LG CNS, a subsidiary of LG.

WHAT IS ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)?

- AI is a branch of computer science concerned with making computers that behave like humans.
- In contrast to normal hardware and software, AI enables a machine to perceive (i.e. to think) and respond to its changing environment.

ATAL INNOVATION MISSION: NITI AAYOG AND MYGOV LAUNCHES INNOVATE INDIA PLATFORM

A platform that aims to encourage & promote innovation.

- NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission and MyGov has jointly launched 'InnovateIndia Platform' (<https://innovate.mygov.in/innovateindia/>).
- It is a citizen-centric platform that aims to serve as a common point for all innovation happenings across the nation.

ABOUT THE INNOVATE INDIA PLATFORM:

- It creates a much-needed innovations platform for registering both grassroots and deep-tech innovators at the national level.
- It will help those who are searching for critical innovation for benefit of the economy as well as national social needs.
- It is open to all Indian citizens.
- Using it, users can view, comment, share, and rate innovations crowdsourced on #InnovateIndia platform.
- They can view the leaderboard which is calculated based on votes on each innovation.
- It allows citizens to share their organization's or someone else's innovation on the platform by logging in to MyGov website.
- These innovations can also be shared on various social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp.

ABOUT ATAL INNOVATION MISSION (AIM):

- AIM is NITI Aayog's flagship initiative to promote the culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the country.
- It is mandated to create an umbrella structure to oversee the innovation ecosystem of the country and revolutionizing the innovation eco-system by touching upon the entire innovation life cycle through various programs.

WHAT ARE THE OBJECTIVES OF AIM?

- **Develop new programmes and policies for fostering innovation in different sectors of the economy.**
- **Provide platform and collaboration opportunities for different stakeholders and create awareness.**
- **Create an umbrella structure to oversee the innovation ecosystem of the country.**
- The sub-schemes of AIM include establishing Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) and Atal Incubation Centers (AICs), for providing scaling up support to the Established Incubation Centres.
- It also includes finding ultra-low cost solution to India's most intractable problems through Atal Grand Challenges and Atal Vikas Challenges.

ABOUT MYGOV PORTAL:

- **It is a citizen engagement platform launched by the Central Government in 2014 to promote active participation of citizens in the country's governance and development.**
- **Its objective is to create a common platform for Indian citizens to crowdsource governance ideas from citizens.**
- **It allows users (citizens) to discuss and contribute on various government projects and plans.**
- **It is hosted and managed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).**

GOVERNMENT EXTENDS PRIME MINISTER'S RESEARCH FELLOWS SCHEME

Government now welcomes all potential researchers.

- Union Government has announced that the Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF) Scheme will be open to all potential researchers from 2019 and not limited to candidates from IISc, IITs, NITs, IIST and IISERs.
- The decision was made after the Government failed to find adequate number of candidates for PMRF this year.
- Only 135 fellowships were finally offered against 1,000 positions.

ABOUT PRIME MINISTER'S RESEARCH FELLOWS (PMRF) SCHEME:

- The scheme was announced in the Budget Speech 2018-19.
- It will be implemented for period of seven years beginning 2018-19 at total cost of Rs. 1650 crore.
- Under it, the best students who have completed or are in the final year of B. Tech/Integrated M.Tech/M.Sc courses in Science and Technology streams will be offered direct admission in PhD programme in IITs/IISc.
- Maximum of 3000 Fellows would be selected in the three year period, beginning 2018-19.

MONTHLY FELLOWSHIP:

- Selected students through the selection process laid down in PMRF Guidelines will be offered monthly fellowship of Rs.70,000 for the first two years, Rs.75,000 for the 3rd year and Rs.80,000 in the 4th and 5th years.

RESEARCH GRANT:

- Each selected fellow students will also be provided, a research grant of Rs.2.00 lakh for a period of 5years to cover their foreign travel expenses for presenting research papers in international conferences and seminars.

LOK SABHA PASSES TRAFFICKING OF PERSONS BILL 2018

- The Lok Sabha has passed the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018. The Bill provides for the prevention, rescue, and rehabilitation of trafficked persons and seeks to establish National Anti-Trafficking Bureau to investigate trafficking cases.
- It also provides for the setting up of Anti-Trafficking Units (ATUs) at the district level which will deal with the investigation, prevention, rescue and protection of victims and witnesses.

DETAILS OF THE BILL:

NATIONAL ANTI-TRAFFICKING BUREAU (NATB):

- The Bill proposes the establishment of NATB to investigate trafficking cases and implement the provisions of the Bill.

- **NATB will comprise of police officers and any other officers as required.**
- **It will take over investigation of any offence under the Bill referred to it by two or more states.**
- Further, it may request a State Government to co-operate in investigation or transfer the case to the State Government for investigation and trial, with approval from the Central Government.

WHAT ARE THE FUNCTIONS OF NATB?

- Coordinate and monitor surveillance along known trafficking routes
- Facilitate surveillance
- Enforce and take preventive steps at source
- Transit and destination points
- Maintain coordination between law enforcement agencies and NGOs and other stakeholders
- Increase international cooperation with authorities abroad for intelligence sharing and mutual legal assistance

STATE ANTI-TRAFFICKING OFFICERS:

- **The Bill mandates State Government to appoint a State Nodal Officer.**
- **The officer will be responsible for follow up action as per provisions of the Bill and as per the instructions of the State Anti-Trafficking Committee and provide relief and rehabilitation services.**
- **It also mandates the State Government to appoint a Police Nodal Officer at the State and District levels.**
- **The State Government will also designate Anti-Trafficking Police Officers for each district to deal with all matters related to trafficking in the district.**

ANTI-TRAFFICKING UNITS:

- **The Bill provides setting up of Anti-Trafficking Units (ATUs) at district level.**
- **They will deal with prevention, rescue and protection of victims and witnesses and for investigation and prosecution of trafficking offences.**
- **In districts where ATU is not functional, this responsibility will be taken up by the local police station.**

ANTI-TRAFFICKING RELIEF AND REHABILITATION COMMITTEE:

- **The Bill provides for establishment of these committees (ATCs) at all three levels viz. national, state, and district levels.**
- **These committees will be responsible for providing compensation, repatriation and re-integration of victims in society, among others.**

SEARCH AND RESCUE:

- **The Bill empowers the Anti-Trafficking Police Officer or ATU to rescue persons, if they are in imminent danger.**
- **They will be produced before the Child Welfare Committee or the Magistrate for medical examination.**
- **The district ATC will provide relief and rehabilitation services to rescued persons.**

PROTECTION AND REHABILITATION:

- **The Bill mandates The Central and State Government to set up Protection Homes to provide shelter, food, counselling, and medical services to victims.**

- It also mandates that the Central or State Government will maintain Rehabilitation Homes in each district to provide long-term rehabilitation to victims.
- In all cases, rehabilitation of victims will not be dependent on criminal proceedings being initiated against the accused or outcome of such proceedings.
- Union Government will also create Rehabilitation Fund which will be used to set up these Protection and Rehabilitation Homes.

TIME-BOUND TRIAL:

- The Bill provides for setting up designated courts in each district to complete trial within a year.

PENALTIES:

- The Bill specifies penalties for various offences including for promoting trafficking, trafficking of persons, disclosing identity of victims and aggravated trafficking such as trafficking for bonded labour and begging.
- For trafficking, it prescribes rigorous imprisonment of 10 years up to life imprisonment, along with minimum fine of Rs. 1 lakh.
- For publishing of any material related to identities to victims, it prescribes imprisonment between 5 to 10 years, and fine between Rs 50,000 to Rs.1 lakh.

2ND YOUNG SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE CONFERENCE HELD IN NEW DELHI

- The 2nd Young Superintendent of Police Conference was held in New Delhi on July 26, 2018.
- The 2-day conference was inaugurated by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh.

MORE ABOUT THE 2ND YOUNG SUPERINTENDENT OF POLICE CONFERENCE:

- The theme of the two day conference was "Predictive Policing and Contemporary Challenges for Indian Police Forces".
- It was attended by over 100 Superintendents of Police (SPs) & senior officers from the States & CAPFs.
- The purpose of the 2-day conference is to create awareness among young SPs and Commandants regarding latest technologies in the areas of artificial intelligence (AI), predictive policing, crime analytics, big data analytics, geospatial technology, cybercrime, surveillance tracking & UAVs, CCTV equipment, for effective delivery of police services to the citizens.

ABOUT THE BUREAU OF POLICE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT (BPR&D):

- BPR&D was established in 1970 in furtherance of the objective of the Union Government for the modernisation of police forces.
- It is a nodal national police organisation to study, research and develop on subjects and issues related to policing.
- It functions under the aegis of the Union Home Ministry.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.

- Since its formation, it has evolved as a multifaceted consultancy organisation.

At present it has 4 divisions:

- Research
- Development
- Training
- Correctional Administration

2018 RAMON MAGSAYSAY AWARD: BHARAT VATWANI AND SONAM WANGCHUK AWARDED

- Two Indians Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk are among the six who have been declared winners of the 2018 Ramon Magsaysay Award, often referred to as the Asian version of the Nobel Prize.
- Others are Youk Chhang (Cambodia), Maria de Lourdes Martins Cruz (East Timor), Howard Dee (Philippines) and Vo Thi Hoang Yen (Vietnam).
- The winners will each receive a certificate, a medallion bearing image of late Filipino leader Ramon Magsaysay and a cash prize.
- They will be conferred with the award during a formal presentation ceremony at the Cultural Centre in Philippines in August 2018.

WHO IS BHARAT VATWANI?

- He is a psychiatrist who works for mentally-ill people living on the streets in Mumbai.
- The award recognizes his courage and compassion in embracing India's mentally-afflicted destitutes and his dedication to work of restoring and affirming human dignity of even most ostracized.

WHO IS SONAM WANGCHUK?

- He is an educational reformer from Ladakh.
- In 1988, he had founded Students' Education and Cultural Movement of Ladakh to coach poor Ladakhi students.
- The award recognizes his uniquely systematic, collaborative and community-driven reform of learning systems in remote Ladakh region which has helped to improve life opportunities of youths.
- He is widely regarded as the inspiration for Aamir Khan's character, Phunsuk Wangdu in the film '3 Idiots'.

ABOUT RAMON MAGSAYSAY AWARD:

- It is Asia's highest honour and is often regarded as the region's equivalent of the Nobel Prize.
- It was established in 1957 by the trustees of the New York City based Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Philippine Government in the memory of Philippines' third President Ramon Magsaysay who had died in an air disaster in March 1957.
- It is awarded annually to individuals or organizations from Asia region for their altruistic and philanthropic service.
- It carries a Medallion bearing the likeness of the late President Ramon Magsaysay, a cash prize and a certificate.

BOMBALI: NEW STRAIN OF EBOLA VIRUS DISCOVERED IN SIERRA LEONE

- Researchers working in a joint US-West African study funded by US Aid, have discovered new strain of Ebola virus in bats in northern Bombali region of Sierra Leone.
- It has been named as **Bombali virus** strain, after the district where it was found.
- The Bombali virus is overall **sixth known virus strain of Ebola virus**.
- Others are Zaire, Sudan, Tai Forest, Bundibugyo and Reston.
- Ebola virus is a **highly fatal haemorrhagic fever** that is **spread through contact with bodily fluids from infected persons and animals** which include non-human primates, bats and forest antelope.
- **Zaire strain of Ebola virus is the most deadly strain known.**

ABOUT BOMBALI STRAIN:

- The new Bombali strain of Ebola virus is distinct from its other virus strains.
- **It is not yet known whether it could develop into the deadly disease.**
- **It is also not known that if Bombali virus has been transmitted to people or if it causes disease in people.**
- **However, results show that it has the potential to infect human cells.**
- Further research will help in understanding more about the specific risks that it poses.

HISTORY:

- The finding of new strain of virus comes two years after end of worst-ever Ebola outbreak that killed more than **11,000 people** in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone.
- **The three West African neighbouring countries were hard hit by Ebola outbreak which began in Guinea in December 2013 before spreading to Liberia and Sierra Leone.**
- The epidemic was declared over by **World Health Organisation (WHO)** in 2016 after claiming over 11,300 lives out of nearly 30,000 registered cases.
- **The 2014-2016 Ebola outbreak in West Africa was caused by Zaire virus, which was discovered in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), formerly Zaire in 1976.**

JULY 28: WORLD HEPATITIS DAY

- **The World Hepatitis Day is being observed every year on July 28 around the globe to spread awareness about Viral Hepatitis.**
Observance of the day seeks to **encourage diagnosis, prevention and treatment of Hepatitis.**
- It also seeks to provide a single global platform to raise awareness about Hepatitis and influence real change in disease prevention, testing and treatment.
- The **theme for World Hepatitis Day 2018** is: "**Test. Treat. Hepatitis**".

THE THEME FOCUSES ON:

- Support the **scale-up of Hepatitis prevention, testing, treatment and care services**, with specific **focus on promoting WHO treatment** and testing recommendations.
- Showcase best practices and promote universal health coverage of Hepatitis services.
- Improve partnerships and funding in the fight against Viral Hepatitis.

ABOUT WORLD HEPATITIS DAY:

- The day is being **observed since 2010**.
- It is **one of the 8 official global public health campaigns** marked by the World Health Organization (WHO).
- **WHO had passed a resolution for observance of this day on Viral Hepatitis in May 2010**, providing official endorsement to it.
- **The date 28 July was chosen to mark the birth anniversary of Professor Baruch Blumberg who had discovered Hepatitis B virus.**
- **He was awarded with the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine (1976) for this discovery.**

ABOUT HEPATITIS:

- Hepatitis name has been derived from the **Greek words 'Hepar' meaning liver and 'Itis' meaning inflammation.**
- **Thus, it is a medical condition in which inflammation occurs in liver cells and its complications vary with the type of infection.**
- It is mostly caused by group of viruses called Hepatitis viruses.
- **There are 5 types of Hepatitis viz. A, B, C, D and E.**
- Each type is caused by a different Hepatitis virus.
- Viral Hepatitis can either be **hepatitis A/ E that spreads mainly through contaminated food and water** or **hepatitis B/C that spreads by body fluids, blood transfusions or even from mother to baby.**
- **Hepatitis B and C usually cause chronic Hepatitis and can progress to liver cirrhosis (permanent liver damage).**
- **Hepatitis A and E usually cause acute self-limiting illness, which resolves over few weeks. It has no specific treatment, but it is advised to rely on good nutritious diet and rest.**
- **Hepatitis E can sometimes be dangerous, especially in pregnant women and may cause liver failure.**

BLOOD MOON 2018: CENTURY'S LONGEST LUNAR ECLIPSE SEEN

- **One of this century's unique celestial happening!**
- **Blood Moon 2018 or century's (2001 AD to 2100 AD) longest total lunar eclipse of 1 hour 43 minutes occurred on July 27-28, 2018.**
The rare celestial event was visible from all parts of India.
- **It was majorly seen in the Eastern Hemisphere including Central Asia, Eastern Africa and South East Asia.**
- **The partial eclipse of Moon began on July 27, 2018.**
- **The Moon was gradually covered by Earth's shadow and totality phase was seen on July 28 and the total eclipse lasted up to 2h 43m.**
- **The Moon came out of Earth's shadow and the partial eclipse ended on July 28, 2018.**

ABOUT THE LONGEST TOTAL LUNAR ECLIPSE:

- In this particular eclipse, **the Moon passed through the central part of Earth's umbral shadow.**
- During this time, **Moon was located at apogee (i.e. at farthest from Earth) in its orbit and moved at a slower speed in its orbit.**

- During this transition phase, it took longer time for the Moon and the greater distance of Earth's umbral shadow to travel, making it the longest duration of total eclipse of this century.
- **Such long duration of total lunar eclipses had earlier occurred on July 16, 2000 for a total duration of 1 hour 46 minutes and on June 15, 2011 for a total duration of 1 hour 40 minutes.**

DTAB SUB-COMMITTEE RECOMMENDS BANNING 343 FIXED DRUG COMBINATIONS

- The sub-committee of Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) has recommended prohibition of 343 fixed drug combinations (FDCs) after reviewing 349 and called for regulation and restriction of the remaining six.
- FDC means combination of two or more drugs in fixed dosage ratio.

DETAILS:

- The expert sub-committee in its reports suggested **banning 343 FDCs, three should be restricted for specific indications or diseases and other three FDCs should be restricted to specific quantities of ingredients** and for specific indications.
- It stated that for most **FDCs, their use will lead to unnecessary overuse** and patients will be exposed to the risk of multiple ingredients when one will suffice.

EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN THE PAST:

- In March 2016, The Union Government had banned a total of 344 FDC on suggestion of Kokate committee, which had studied irrationality of various FDCs, recommended ban on 344 of them, citing rising "antibiotic resistance" in the country as one of reasons.
- Later in December 2016, the Delhi High Court struck down the ban stating that the Government had acted in a haphazard manner.
- The matter then went to Supreme Court, which in December 2017 directed the health ministry's expert body DTAB for fresh review of safety, efficacy and therapeutic justification of these 349 FDCs.
- **It had stated that DTAB or its subcommittee will have to decide whether it is necessary in larger public interest, to regulate, restrict or prohibit manufacture, sale or distribution of such FDCs.**
- Therefore, DTAB had formed sub-committee, which studied the issue and submitted its recommendations.

ABOUT THE DRUGS TECHNICAL ADVISORY BOARD (DTAB):

- DTAB is the highest statutory decision-making body on technical matters related to drugs in the country.
- **It is constituted as per the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.**
- It is a part of Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

GOVERNMENT NOTIFIES ETHANOL-MAKING DIRECTLY FROM SUGARCANE JUICE, B-MOLASSES

- **Union Food Ministry** has notified a decision to allow sugar mills to manufacture ethanol directly from **sugarcane juice or an intermediate product called B-molasses**. In this regard, Sugarcane Control Order, 1966 has been amended.
- **The move would help mills divert cane juice for ethanol manufacturing during surplus years.**

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- In case of production of **ethanol directly from sugarcane juice or B-molasses**, the recovery rate of sugarcane factory will be determined by considering every 600 liters so produced as equivalent to one tonne of production of sugar.
- Earlier, **sugar mills were allowed to manufacture ethanol from by-product called C-molasses**, after sugar was taken out while processing raw sugarcane juice.
- **Molasses is also used for manufacturing spirit and alcohol** among other products.

HOW THE SITUATION IS LIKELY TO SHAPE UP NOW?

- **Sugar mills are incurring losses as prices of sugar have fallen below production cost on account of record output of 32 million tonnes (mt) in 2017-18 season as against the annual domestic demand of 25 mt.**
- The production of ethanol directly from sugarcane juice or B-molasses will help to divert this overproduction.
- Sugar mills are expecting **revenue realisation of over Rs 5,000 crore from the sale of ethanol to OMCs during the 2017-18 sugar season (October-September).**
- **OMCs procure ethanol from sugar mills for blending with petrol.**
- **It has mandated blending of up to 10% ethanol in petrol but inadequate availability has restricted this to under 4%.**
- Higher price for ethanol will incentivise higher ethanol production.

INDIA TO DEVELOP MODEL TO GIVE FLASH FLOODS WARNING : WMO

- **World Meteorological Organization (WMO)** has designated India as the nodal centre for developing customized model to issue advance warning of floods to Asian countries, including Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand.
- The model will be called as Flash Flood Guidance System.
- **Indian Meteorological Department (IMD)** under Ministry of Earth Sciences will work to customize this weather model.

ABOUT THE FLASH FLOOD GUIDANCE SYSTEM:

- The **model will provide forecasts by computing likelihood of rainfall and soil moisture levels** to warn of possible floods.
- **It will carry out forecasts by using combination of satellite mapping and ground-based observation.**
- It will be a customized weather model, originally developed by US and donated to WMO to warn about flash floods at least six hours in advance.
- It already has carried out a test version of this model.
- Pakistan was among the list of beneficiary countries of this forecast model, but it has refused to participate in it.

IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW:

- Like India, several southeast Asian countries depend on monsoon and are prone to its vagaries.
- **WMO estimates that flash floods account for 85% of flooding incidents across the world, leading to around 5,000 deaths every year.**
- While the science to warn of floods can be developed, India was yet to work out how exactly it will warn countries of potential inundation.
- India currently has its own warning system for tsunamis that also doubles up warning system for several Asian countries.
- **At present in India, the Central Water Commission (CWC), which monitors dams, warns of rising water levels in water reservoirs, which are usually taken to be signs of imminent floods.**
- Recently CWC has tied up with internet giant Google to develop software application to visualise rising water levels during heavy rains.

ABOUT WORLD METEOROLOGICAL ORGANIZATION (WMO):

- **WMO is an intergovernmental organization** whose mandate covers weather, climate and water resources.
- **It is a UN specialized agency for meteorology, operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences.**
- It is dedicated to international cooperation and coordination on state and behaviour of Earth's atmosphere, its interaction with land and oceans, the weather and climate and distribution of water resources.
- **It has 191 Member States and Territories.**
- **It originated from International Meteorological Organization (IMO), which was founded in 1873.**
- It has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland.

INDIAN RAILWAYS LAUNCHES MISSION SATYANISHTHA IN PUBLIC GOVERNANCE

- **Indian Railways had organised a programme on Ethics in Public Governance and launched Mission Satyanishtha at a day-long event held at the National Rail Museum, New Delhi.**
- It was a first of its kind event organised by any government organization in the country.

ABOUT MISSION SATYANISHTHA:

- The issue of ethics, integrity and probity in public life has been a matter of concern all over government sectors across the country.
- In this context, it is also extremely important that **all railway servants adhere to impeccable conduct and integrity at all times.**
- **Mission Satyanishtha aims at sensitizing all railway employees about the need to adhere to good ethics and to maintain high standards of integrity at work.**
- Under it, talks and lectures on subjects were organised all over Indian Railways for this purpose.

OBJECTIVES OF MISSION SATYANISHTHA:

- **To train every employee to understand the need and value of ethics in personal and public life.**
- To deal with the ethical dilemmas in life and public governance.

- To help understand policies of Indian Railways on ethics and integrity and employee's role in upholding the same.
- To develop inner governance through tapping inner resources.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES NATIONAL VIRAL HEPATITIS CONTROL PROGRAMME

Combating Viral Hepatitis on Government's mind.

- Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched **National Viral Hepatitis Control Programme** to control viral hepatitis C on the occasion of **World Hepatitis Day** (July 28).
- The programme aims to combat viral hepatitis and reduce mortality and morbidity associated with it.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL VIRAL HEPATITIS CONTROL PROGRAMME:

- The programme aims at both prevention and treatment of hepatitis which is among leading causes of liver cancer, cirrhosis of liver and acute liver failure.
- It aims to treat minimum of 3 lakh hepatitis C cases over a period of three years for eliminating the deadly condition by 2030.
- The programme is a part of the National Health Mission.
- Under it, the expensive antiviral for hepatitis B and C infections will be made available free of cost at all government hospitals.
- It will set up and upgrade facilities for diagnosis and treatment primarily of hepatitis B and C.
- These designated treatment centres will provide free anti-viral to hepatitis C patients.
- They will also provide hepatitis B vaccine to babies born to mothers carrying the virus within 24 hours of birth.

ASHOK LEYLAND TO SUPPLY 10×10 HEAVY VEHICLES TO INDIAN ARMY

- Indian Army has awarded Rs. 100-crore contract for 81 high mobility 10×10 vehicles to India's leading vehicle manufacturer Ashok Leyland.
- This is for the first time an Indian vehicle manufacturer will deliver heavy duty, high mobility vehicles for the launchers.
- This will reduce dependency on imports.

DETAILS ABOUT THE 10×10 VEHICLES:

- The heavy duty, high mobility vehicles manufactured by Ashok Leyland are fully designed, developed and built in India.
- They will replace Indian Army's ageing Russian-built Smerch Multi-Barrel Rocket launchers (MBRL).
- They will also carry strategic missiles developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The indigenous 10×10 vehicle will be powered by Ashok Leyland's 360HP Neptune engine.
- It can carry a maximum load of 27 tonnes at a maximum speed of 60 kmph.
- Some of these vehicles will be fitted with rocket handling cranes.
- Their delivery will start in this financial year and will be completed in the next financial year.

WHY IS INDIGENISATION IMPORTANT?

- The **indigenising vehicles** is a key step in improving the maintenance and efficiency of Indian Army's logistics chain.
- In recent years, Indian vehicle manufacturers have managed to develop a variety of heavy and specialist vehicles required by the Armed Forces, thereby reducing import dependency.
- **Ashok Leyland also has won tender from DRDO to develop even heavier 12×12 vehicles to mount country's long range strategic missiles.**
- These vehicles can carry a maximum load of **34 tonnes**.

NASAMS-II: INDIA PLANS TO PROCURE AIR DEFENCE SYSTEM FROM US

- India is in talks with United States to procure National Advanced Surface-to-Air Missile System-II (NASAMS-II), an advanced air defence system at \$1 billion to defend the National Capital Region (NCR) from aerial attacks.
- The proposal is in Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) stage now which was approved by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

ABOUT NASAMS-II:

- NASAMS-II is an upgraded version of the NASAMS developed by Raytheon in partnership with KONGSBERG Defence and Aerospace of Norway.
- It has been operational since 2007.
- It features the new 3D mobile surveillance radars and 12 missile launchers for quicker reaction.
- NASAMS-II is a highly adaptable mid-range solution for any operational air defence requirement.
- It provides tailorable, state-of-the-art defence system that can maximise the ability to quickly identify, engage and destroy current and evolving enemy aircraft, UAV or emerging cruise missile threats.
- **NASAMS-II is armed with 3D Sentinel radars, short and medium-range missiles, launchers, fire-distribution centers and command-and-control units to quickly detect, track and shoot down multiple airborne threats.**
- It is a part of the air defence network guarding US capital city Washington DC.
- It is also deployed in several NATO countries.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANCE FOR INDIA?

- India's purchase of NASAMS-II will help in preventing 9/11-type attack on NCT Delhi.
- It will also complement India's other systems such as the medium and long-range surface-to-air missile (SAM) systems under procurement.
- With this, India will join the league of nations including US, Russia and Israel etc. who have their own missile defence systems to protect their national capital regions.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- India is deploying multi-tiered air defence network to fully secure its airspace from incoming fighter aircraft, missiles and unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs).
- It is also in advanced stage of talks with Russia for procurement of very long range S-400 air defence systems.

- Apart from these imports, **Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)** is in the final stages of developing its two-tier **Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD)** system which is designed to track and destroy nuclear missiles both inside (endo) and outside (exo) earth's atmosphere.
- Phase-I of the indigenous BMD is expected to be deployed soon.

GOVERNMENT CONSTITUTES COMMITTEE TO REVIVE STRESSED THERMAL POWER PLANT

- The Union Government has constituted High Level Empowered Committee headed by Cabinet Secretary to address issues of Stressed Thermal Power Projects.
- The committee has representatives from Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Power, Ministry of Coal and lenders having major exposure to the power sector.

WHAT WILL THE COMMITTEE DO?

- The **Committee** will look into various issues with a **view to stressed assets or non-performing assets in thermal power and maximise efficiency of investment** including changes required to be made in fuel allocation policy, regulatory framework, mechanisms to facilitate sale of power, ensure timely payments and payment security mechanism.
- It will also consider if changes are required in **provisioning norms, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), asset restructuring company (ARC) regulations** and any other measures proposed for revival of stressed assets to avoid investments from turning bad.

A LOOK AT THE BACKGROUND:

- Department of Financial Services under Ministry of Finance in its report had suggested setting up of an empowered panel, besides giving operating thermal power plants not facing insolvency action, 6 months more months to resolve issues.
- The report came after Allahabad High Court in June 2018 had ordered that no action will be taken against power producers till they are heard.
- The power generation companies had challenged Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) February 2018 circular that laid down stricter timelines for initiating insolvency proceedings.
- It also mandated that the banks classify even one-day delay in debt servicing as default.
- Private power producers feared that the RBI's new regulations will push projects with capacity of about 60,000-70,000 megawatts (MW) towards bankruptcy and had sought more time.
- RBI is not in favour of giving more time to these power plants.

V-46-6 AND V92S2: MADE IN INDIA TANK ENGINES HANDED OVER TO INDIAN ARMY

Make in India theme makes the Army proud!

- Two types of **indigenously built high-power multi-fuel engines V-46-6 and V92S2** were handed over to the **Indian Army** for the first time under the **Make in India** campaign.
- These engines were manufactured by **Engine Factory Avadi (EFA)**, a unit of **Ordnance Factory Board (OFB)**.

ABOUT THE ENGINES:

- These engines are **based on Russian design**.
- **V92S2 is a high power diesel engine with 1000 HP capacity and it is fitted in the T-90 Battle Tank (Bhisma Tank).**
- **V46-6 is also a high power diesel engine with 780 HP and it is fitted in the T-72 Main Battle Tank (Ajeya Tank).**
- They are **manufactured with 100% Made in India parts**.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ACHIEVEMENT:

- The indigenisation of two of the three types of tanks used by the Indian Army has made it battle-ready.
- **It has resulted in savings for exchequer for each engine cost to the tune of Rs. 33 lakh for the T-90 engine and Rs. 9.75 lakh for the T-72 engine.**
- It also exhibits self-reliance of OFB in manufacturing these engines in India without any import support.

BAJRANG PUNIA WON INTERNATIONAL GOLD WHILE PINKI WAS LONE GOLD MEDALLIST

- **Bajrang Punia won his second consecutive international gold while Sandeep Tomar won a silver medal at the Yasar Dogu International.**
- **The Indian wrestlers returned with 10 medals, including seven by women, from the ranking event in Istanbul, Turkey.**
- Bajrang did not have to break a sweat as his gold medal opponent Andriy Kvyatkovskyy from Ukraine withdrew from the 70kg final due to an injury.
- **In the 61kg final, Sandeep lost 2-8 to Iran's Mohammadbagher Yakhkeshi.**
- **Vicky had won a bronze in the 57kg category.**

ABOUT THE WOMEN'S COMPETITION:

- **Pinki was the lone gold medallist in the 55kg category with her 6-3 win over Ukraine's Olga Shnaider in the final.**
- In the women's 53kg and 57kg categories both Seema and Pooja Dhanda lost their final bouts.
- **Seema was outplayed 2-10 by Ukraine's Khrystyna Bereza while Pooja was outclassed 0-11 by Ukrainian Irnya Khariv.**
- **In the 62kg, Sarita grabbed a bronze with a commanding 10-0 win over Turkey's Cansu Aksoy.**
- In the same category Sakshi also competed but she won only her qualification round before suffering a defeat by fall against Elmira Gambarova in the quarterfinals.
- **It was Sakshi's first competition since winning a bronze at the Gold Coast Commonwealth Games this year.**
- **In the three-player 72kg category, Rajni finished second after losing the final 3-4 to local girl Beste Aitug.**
- **Sangeeta Phogat (59kg) and Geeta (65kg) won bronze medals in their respective categories.**
- Both Pooja and Pinki are in India's women's Asian Games squad along with Sakshi and Kiran, who also failed to reach the medal round in the 76kg category.