

Monthly GK Digest

November 2018

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MONTHLY GK DIGEST: NOVEMBER 2018

13TH INDIA-JAPAN ANNUAL SUMMIT

- The annual bilateral summit of India-Japan was held on 28, 29 October 2018 in Japan.
- The Indian Prime Minister visited Japan to attend the summit.

DETAILS:

- Investors from Japan will invest around \$2.5 Billion US dollars in India.
- The two sides agreed for a 2+2 dialogue between their foreign ministers and defence ministers to further work towards world peace.
- An India-Japan Business Platform will be established to enhance the development of industrial corridors and industrial network in the region.
- Both countries will cooperate for the first time in the areas of traditional medicinal systems such as Yoga and Ayurveda.
- This will facilitate a boost in the healthcare in both the countries.
- Both the countries have agreed to synchronize upon sharing benefits of the Ayushman Bharat scheme and the Japanese healthcare programme.
- There will be commencement of talks on a military logistics pact, the Acquisition and Cross Servicing Agreement, between the two nations that will ensure the access to each other's military bases and naval bases.
- Japan will invest more significantly in the up gradation of infrastructure in the Northeast which will also link India to Southeast Asia.
- The two countries will work together to extend access to education, health and other amenities to the people of the Indo-Pacific, including Africa.
- Japan-India Investment Promotion Roadmap enhanced the contribution of Japan in India's Make in India initiative with establishment of Business Support Centre in Ahmedabad.

ABOUT INDIA-JAPAN RECENT TIES:

- Cooperation in Sri Lanka, in the development of LNG-related infrastructure and in Africa, in the area of health service- developing a cancer hospital in Kenya.
- Cooperation in Myanmar, to facilitate development efforts in the Rakhine State Cooperation in Bangladesh, for improving connectivity on the Ramgarh to Baraiyarhat stretch and constructing the Jamuna Railway Bridge over the Jamuna River.
- The Act East Forum established last year has served as a driving force to improve India-Japan cooperation in the North-East.
- The cooperation in the project for the construction of International Cooperation and Convention center in Varanasi.
- India and Japan are cooperating to construct the Mumbai Ahmedabad High Speed Rail (MAHSR).

CSIR DEVELOPED LESS POLLUTING FIRECRACKERS NAMED- SWAS, SAFAL AND STAR

- The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) scientists have developed less polluting green firecrackers named SWAS, SAFAL and STAR.
- Green crackers are so named because they do not contain harmful chemicals that would cause air pollution.

DETAILS:

- SWAS stands for safe water releaser, SAFAL stands for safe minimal aluminum and STAR stands for safe thermite cracker.
- These crackers are 15-20 percent cheaper than the conventional ones.
- STAR eliminates usage of Potassium nitrate and sulphur.
- SAFAL has less usage of aluminum as compared to commercial crackers.
- The new crackers have been developed by Central Electrochemical Research Institute (CECRI) based in Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu and National Environmental Engineering Research Institute in Nagpur.
- The firecrackers have a unique property of releasing water vapour.
- The researchers at CECRI have developed green crackers by modifying the chemical formulations for flower pots, 'jiljil' and used flower pots as a substitution for barium nitrate.
- The crackers will come in the market after the approval from Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organization (PESO), which is the nodal agency for safety requirements in manufacture, storage, transport of all types of explosives.
- It matches the sound intensity of commercial crackers in the range of 105-110 decibels.

ABOUT CSIR-NEERI:

- The CSIR-National Environmental Engineering Research Institute is a research institute created and funded by Government of India under the Ministry of Science and Technology.
- It works in the field of environmental science and engineering and is a part of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.
- It was established in Nagpur in 1958.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- The Indian fireworks industry has an annual turnover of over Rs 6000 crore.
- It provides employment opportunities to about 5 lakh families annually.
- CSIR tried to address pollution level and at the same time protecting the livelihoods of those involved in this industry.

RESEARCHERS DEVELOPED A WEB-BASED TOOL TO MONITOR FAKE NEWS ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER

- A web-based tool to monitor the spread of fake news on social media platforms has been developed by researchers from the University of Michigan in the US.

- The tool uses a Platform Health Metric called the Iffy Quotient and will supposedly draw data from two external entities namely News Whip and Media Bias/Fact Checker.

HOW WILL THE TOOL WORK?

- The News Whip will collect URLs from hundreds of thousands of sites each day and then it will gather information about the engagements of these sites on Facebook and Twitter.
- The Iffy Quotient will fetch information by querying News Whip for the top 5000 most popular URLs Facebook and Twitter.
- Then the tool will check using the information at Media Bias/Fact checker whether the URL has been classified as iffy, ok, or unknown.

ABOUT NEWSWHIP:

- It is a social media engagement tracking firm to collect URLs of thousands of sites everyday and collect information these sites have in Facebook and Twitter.

ABOUT MEDIA BIAS/FACT CHECKER:

- It divides the URL into three categories, 'Iffy' if the website is on a questionable source or a conspiracy list and 'OK' if the website is on the lists such as Left Bias, Right Bias or Satire, and 'Unknown' if the website is not on any of the lists.

19TH MEETING OF FSDC HELD IN NEW DELHI

- The 19th meeting of Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was held in New Delhi under the Chairmanship of Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.
- The meeting was attended by RBI Governor Dr. Urjit R. Patel, SEBI Chairman, IRDAI Chairman along with heads and other senior officers of Government and financial sector regulators.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF MEETING:

ECONOMIC REVIEW:

- It reviewed the health of economy, both domestic and global, financial sector performance and issues due to rising oil prices.
- It also discussed issue of real interest rate, current liquidity situation, including segmental liquidity position in NBFCs and mutual fund space.

CYBER SECURITY IN FINANCIAL SECTOR:

- It also reviewed developments regarding strengthening of Cyber Security in Financial Sector and progress made towards setting up of a Computer Emergency Response Team in the Financial Sector (CERT-Fin) under Statutory Framework.

- It also deliberated on need for identifying and securing critical information infrastructure in financial sector.

CRYPTO CURRENCY:

- It also deliberated on issues and challenges of Crypto Assets and Currency.
- It was briefed about deliberations of High-level Committee chaired by Secretary (Economic Affairs) to devise appropriate legal framework to ban use of private crypto currencies in India and encouraging use of distributed ledger technology (blockchain), as announced in Budget 2018-19.

REGTECH AND SUPTECH:

- It also discussed market developments and financial stability implications of use of RegTech and SupTech by financial firms and regulatory and supervisory authorities.
- It also discussed implementation of recommendations of Sumit Bose Committee on measures, such as promoting appropriate disclosure regime for financial distribution costs.

ABOUT THE FINANCIAL STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (FSDC):

- FSDC is the super regulatory body for regulating financial sector which is vital for bringing healthy and efficient financial system in economy of the country.
- It was set up in 2010 by then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee.

MANDATE:

- To strengthen and institutionalise mechanism of maintaining financial stability, financial sector development, inter-regulatory coordination along with monitoring macro-prudential regulation of economy and promoting financial sector development.

COMPOSITION:

- Union Finance Minister is the Chairman of FSDC.
- Its members are heads of all financial sector regulatory authorities (i.e, RBI, SEBI, IRDA, PFRDA), Chairman of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board, Finance Secretary and Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs; Secretary, Department of Financial Services and Chief Economic Adviser.

ODISHA COASTAL DISASTER ALERT SYSTEM

Odisha Government has launched an automatic public address system to warn citizens about cyclone, tsunami and floods.

DETAILS:

- This is the first of its kind technology in field of Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS) in India.
- The EWDS of Odisha government has been implemented under the assistance of World Bank with a cost of around 82 crores.

- Around 122 towers have been installed along the 480 km long coastline of the odisha state to produce sound and sirens during emergency situations.
- Sound produced from the towers can be heard in communities within a radius of 1.5 km.
- The button will be pressed from the state emergency centre in Bhubaneswar during an emergency situation.
- Six coastal districts named Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara, Puri and Ganjam have been covered under the system.
- It is a part of the last-mile connectivity programme under the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project an aimed at protecting people from the cyclone.
- The system will prove to be boon for the fisherman of the state.

ODISHA AND DISASTERS:

- Odisha is vulnerable to many disasters.
- The state is prone to tropical cyclones, storm surges and tsunamis.
- A large part of the state comes under Earthquake Risk Zone-II.
- The super-cyclone of 1999 which claimed 10,000 lives in Odisha.
- In 2013, Cyclone Phailin hit the Indian coasts.
- Cyclone Hudhud hit Odisha in 2014.
- Recently cyclone Titli hit odisha coast in 2018.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS OF ODISHA:

- The Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) was established in 1999.
- OSDMA was the first disaster management authority centre established in India.
- Odisha has an active State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA).
- Odisha, has built close to 800 multipurpose cyclone and flood shelters in cyclone prone areas.
- All vulnerable regions in Odisha have active Cyclone Management Centres.
- Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) is a well known name in cyclone hit areas.
- With continuous focus on developing manpower, skill, and infrastructure, state of Odisha has emerged as one of the most disaster-ready states in the world today.

DEFENCE MINISTRY SIGNS CONTRACT WITH GRSE FOR SUPPLY OF FOUR SURVEY VESSELS FOR INDIAN NAVY

Union Defence Ministry has signed a contract worth Rs 2,435.15 crore with public sector Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata for manufacturing of four survey vessels aimed at boosting the capabilities of Indian Navy.

- The project completion time is 54 months from date of signing the contract.
- The first ship will be delivered within 36 months and remaining within an interval of six months for each vessel.

DETAILS:

- These survey vessels will be 110 metre long with deep displacement capacity of 3,300 tonnes.
- They will be equipped with highly advanced state-of-the-art hydrographic equipment and sensors including "Hello Hanger" to accommodate one advanced light helicopter.
- The design and construction of these vessels will be as per Classification Society Rules and Naval Ship Regulations and also conform to latest MARPOL (Marine Pollution) Standards of International Maritime Organisation (IMO).

APPLICATIONS OF THE VESSELS:

- These vessels will be used for full-scale coastal and deep-water hydrographic survey of ports and harbours, approaches and determination of navigational channels and routes.
- They will be also used to undertake surveys of maritime limits up to Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and extended continental shelf.
- They will be deployed for collection of oceanographic and geophysical data for defence applications.
- In their secondary role, they will also perform limited search and rescue, ocean research and operate as a hospital ships and casualty holding ships.

ABOUT GARDEN REACH SHIPBUILDERS AND ENGINEERS (GRSE):

- It is a defence PSU and one of India's leading state-owned shipyards, located in Kolkata, West Bengal.
- It builds and repairs commercial and naval vessels.
- It has also started building export ships.
- It was founded in 1884 as a small privately owned company on the eastern bank of Hooghly River.
- It was renamed as Garden Reach Workshop in 1916.
- It was nationalised by Government in 1960.
- It has a Miniratna status.
- It is the first Indian shipyard to build 100 warships.
- It is currently handling a major project to make three Stealth Frigates for Indian Navy under P17A Project.
- 100 warships built by GRSE so far, range from advanced frigates to anti-submarine warfare corvettes to fleet tankers, fast attack crafts, etc..

ANUPAM KHER RESIGNS AS CHAIRMAN OF FTII

- Veteran actor Anupam Kher has resigned as Chairman of the Film and Television Institute of India (FTII).
- He was appointed as Chairman of FTII in October 2017 and had replaced Gajendra Chauhan.
- With this, Kher became the first chairperson of FTII to resign before completion of his full term.
- He had served as Chairman of FTII for 11 months, which makes his tenure shortest since FTII's formation.

ABOUT ANUPAM KHER:

- During the span of his 35 years acting career, he has appeared in over 500 films and many plays.

- He is best known for his roles in Saarang, Daddy, Lamhe, Khel, Ram Lakhan, Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge, Maine Gandhi Ko Nahin Mara and A Wednesday among others.
- He has also acted in international films like Bend It Like Beckham, Bride and Prejudice, Silver Linings Playbook and The Big Sick.
- He is the recipient of Padma Shri (2004) and Padma Bhushan (2016).

ABOUT FILM AND TELEVISION INSTITUTE OF INDIA (FTII):

- FTII is the premier institute in the country that provides training for acting, film making, video editing, direction and production.
- It is an autonomous body under Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- It was established in 1960 and is registered under Societies' Registration Act of 1860.
- FTII is situated in Pune (Maharashtra) on the premises of erstwhile Prabhat Film Company.
- Since its inception, FTII has become India's premier film and television institute.
- Its alumni have become technicians, actors and directors in the film and television industry.

INDIA AMONG NATIONS THAT FACE GRAVE DANGER TO SOIL BIODIVERSITY: WWF

- According to recently released Global Soil Biodiversity Atlas prepared by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), India is among the nations that face grave danger to soil biodiversity.
- The atlas was released as a part of WWF's bi-annual Living Planet Report (LPR) 2018.
- The key aspect of this year's report was the threat to soil biodiversity and pollinators, the two key drivers of biodiversity.
- These two key drivers loss were due to over exploitation of natural resources and agriculture.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT:

SOIL BIODIVERSITY:

- It encompasses presence of micro-organisms, micro-fauna (nematodes and tardigrades for example), and macro-fauna (ants, termites and earthworms).
- Millions of microbial and animal species live and make up soils, from bacteria and fungi to mites, beetles and earthworms.
- Soil biodiversity, thus is the total community from genes to species, and varies depending on environment.
- The immense diversity in soil allows for great variety of ecosystem services that benefit species that inhabit it, the species that use it and its surrounding environment.

WWF'S 'RISK INDEX' FOR GLOBE:

- It indicated threats from loss of above-ground diversity, pollution and nutrient over-loading, over-grazing, intensive agriculture, fire, soil erosion, desertification and climate change.
- India was coloured red on atlas and is among countries whose soil biodiversity faces the highest level of risk.

- Other countries in this category include Pakistan, China, several countries in Africa and Europe, and most of North America.

INDIA'S PER CAPITA ECOLOGICAL FOOTPRINT:

- It was less than 1.75 hectares/person (it is in the lowest band among countries surveyed).
- India's high population made it vulnerable to ecological crisis, even if per-capita consumption remained at current levels.

POLLINATORS:

- 150 million bee colonies were needed to meet the pollination requirements of about 50 million hectares of agricultural land in India, but only 1.2 million colonies were present.

ECOLOGICAL LOSS:

- Population of fish, mammals, birds, amphibians and reptiles has dwindled by average of 60% from 1970 to 2014 and fresh-water species have declined by 83% in same period.
- Globally, the extent of wetlands are estimated to have declined by 87% since 1970.

ABOUT WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE (WWF):

- It is an international non-governmental organization working in the field of wilderness preservation and reduction of human impact on the environment.
- It was formerly named World Wildlife Fund.
- It is the world's largest conservation organization with over five million supporters worldwide, working in more than 100 countries, supporting around 1,300 conservation and environmental projects.
- It was founded in 1961 and is headquartered in Gland, Switzerland.
- WWF aims to stop degradation of planet's natural environment and build future in which humans live in harmony with nature.
- Currently, its work is organized around these six areas: food, climate, freshwater, wildlife, forests, and oceans.
- It publishes Living Planet Report every two years since 1998 and it is based on Living Planet Index and ecological footprint calculation.

WORLD CITIES DAY: OCTOBER 31

The World Cities Day is observed every year across the world on 31st October to work together for planned and sustainable urban life in the wake of rapid growth of population and problems.

MORE ABOUT THIS DAY:

- The observance of this day aims to promote international community's interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization, and contributing to sustainable urban development around the world.
- The global observation of 2018 World Cities Day was celebrated in Liverpool, United Kingdom.

- 2018 Sub-theme: 'Building Sustainable and Resilient Cities'
- It aims to highlight the importance to support cities to become resilient and develop their capacity to absorb impact of hazards, protect and preserve human life and limit damage to and destruction of public and private assets while continuing to provide infrastructure and services after crisis.

MORE DETAILS:

- The World Cities Day was established by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by passing resolution 68/239 in December 2013.
- This day was constituted in recognition of significance of urban basic services as foundation for overall social and economic development.
- The general theme of World Cities Day is "Better City, Better Life", to promote successes of urbanization and address specific challenges resulting from urbanization, while each year different sub-theme is selected to either promote successes of urbanization or to address specific challenges resulting from urbanization.
- The first World Cities Day was celebrated in Shanghai, China on 31 October 2014 under the sub-theme "Leading Urban Transformations".

GROWTH OF EIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE SECTORS AT 4.3% IN SEPTEMBER 2018

- As per the data released by Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry, index of eight core industries slowed down to 4.3% in September 2018.
- It is the lowest growth recorded by core sectors in the last four months, as production of crude oil and natural gas declined by 4.2% and 1.8%, respectively.
- Previously, lowest growth rate was in May 2018 when core sectors expanded at 4.1%.
- In September 2018, Fertiliser, Cement and Electricity sectors output grew by 2.5%, 11.8% and 8.2%, respectively.

WHAT ARE CORE INDUSTRIES?

- Core industries are the main or key industries of the economy.
- In most countries, these particular industries serve as 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).
- 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%).

SS DESWAL APPOINTED DIRECTOR GENERAL OF INDO-TIBETAN BORDER POLICE

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed senior IPS officer S S Deswal as the Director General of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

- He will succeed R K Pachnanda, who superannuated from office and shall be in office for period up to his superannuation on August 31, 2021.
- Deswal is 1984 batch IPS officer of Haryana cadre.
- Prior to this appointment, he was Director General of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

ABOUT INDO-TIBETAN BORDER POLICE (ITBP):

- ITBP (भारत-तिब्बत सीमा पुलिस बल) is one of the five Central Armed Police Forces of India.
- It was raised on 24 October 1962, under CRPF Act, in wake of the 1962 Sino-Indian War.
- It was provided full autonomy after Parliament enacted Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force Act, 1992.
- It works under the command of Union Home Ministry.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- Its motto is Shaurya- Dridhata- Karm Nishtha (English: Valour- Steadfastness- Commitment).
- At present, ITBP is a strong Central Armed Police Force of 90000 personnel.
- It primarily guards the 3,488 km long Indo-China border along Tibet Autonomous Region from Karakoram Pass in Ladakh to Jachep La in Arunachal Pradesh.
- It is a specialized mountain force and mans border outposts on altitudes ranging from 9000 feet to 18700 feet in Western, Middle and Eastern sectors of Indo-China Border.
- It is also engaged in variety of internal security tasks including anti-naxal operations, disaster management, civil Medical Camp, nuclear, biological and chemical disasters and UN peacekeeping missions around the world.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY SELECTS MALALA YOUSAFZAI FOR 2018 GLEITSMAN AWARD FOR PROMOTING GIRLS; EDUCATION

- Harvard University (US) has selected Nobel Prize Winner Malala Yousafzai (20) for its 2018 Gleitsman Award in recognition of her work in promoting girls' education.
- She will be presented with this award at the December 6, 2018 ceremony.
- The Gleitsman Award provides US \$125,000 for activism that has improved quality of life around the world.

ABOUT MALALA YOUSAFZAI:

- Malala was born on 12 July 1997 in Mingora city in Swat province of Pakistan.
- At the age of 11 she had caught international attention as female education activist after writing for the BBC about life under the Taliban in Pakistan under pseudonym Gul Makai.
- Her campaign had led to a Taliban assassination attempt that left her severely wounded after she was shot in the head in 2012.
- Later she had founded nonprofit Malala Fund to support her work.
- At present she is a student at Oxford University in England.

AWARDS AND HONOURS:

- In 2014, at the age of 17 she was awarded Nobel peace prize, becoming the youngest Nobel Laureate in the history of Nobel award.

- She had shared this award with Indian children's rights activist Kailash Satyarthi.
- She also has been honoured with National Youth Peace Prize (2011), Mother Teresa Awards for Social Justice (2012), Simon de Beauvoir Prize (2013), Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought (2013), Anna Politkovskaya Award (2013). United Nations in her honour has declared 12 July as 'Malala Day'.

INDIA SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCTED NIGHT TRIAL OF AGNI-I BALLISTIC MISSILE

- India has successfully carried out the night user trial of Agni-I short-range nuclear-capable ballistic missile.
- The test flight was conducted by Indian Army's Strategic Forces Command off Abdul Kalam Island in Bay of Bengal, off the coast of the Indian state of Odisha.
- The test was second known night time trial of Agni-I since its first such successful test in April 2014.

ABOUT AGNI-I MISSILE:

- Agni-I is a short range nuclear capable surface-to-surface ballistic missile.
- It is the first missile of the Agni series launched in 1983.
- It was developed by the premier missile development laboratory of DRDO in collaboration with Defence Research Development Laboratory and Research Centre Imarat and integrated by Bharat Dynamics Limited, Hyderabad.
- It weighs 12 tonnes and is 15-metre-long.
- It is designed to carry payload of more than one tonne (both conventional and nuclear warhead).
- It is a single stage missile powered by solid propellants.
- It can hit a target 700 km away.
- Its strike range can be extended by reducing the payload.
- It can be fired from road and rail mobile launchers.
- It is equipped with a sophisticated navigation system which ensures it reaches the target with a high degree of accuracy and precision.
- The missile has already been inducted into armed forces.
- Since its induction it has proved its excellent performance in terms of range, accuracy and lethality.
- It is also claimed to be a part of India's minimum credible deterrence under No first to use policy.

RAHUL DRAVID INDUCTED INTO ICC HALL OF FAME

- Former Indian Cricket Captain Rahul Dravid was officially inducted into the International Cricket Council's (ICC) Hall of Fame.
- He was presented a memento by the legendary opener Sunil Gavaskar at Greenfield International Stadium in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- With this, Dravid became fifth Indian cricketer after Bishan Singh Bedi (inducted in 2009), Sunil Gavaskar (2009), Kapil Dev (2010) and Anil Kumble (2015) to be named on the elite list.
- In July 2018, ICC had announced Rahul Dravid, Australian legend Ricky Ponting and former England's Women wicket-keeper Claire Taylor's induction into Hall of Fame during a ceremony in Dublin.
- Ponting is 25th from Australia to receive the honour.
- Taylor is the third female player from England to be named on the list and seventh overall.

ABOUT RAHUL DRAVID:

- Dravid has scored 23,208 international runs for India across formats, including 48 hundreds and 146 fifties.
- He has scored the runs at an average of 45.41.
- He has scored 13,288 runs in 164 Tests, which comprises 36 centuries, and has scored 10,889 runs in 344 One Day Internationals (ODIs) with 12 centuries.
- He has just played one Twenty20 International.
- He was named ICC Cricketer of the Year and ICC Test Player of the Year in 2004.
- He holds the world record for being the best slip fielder and finished his Test career in 2012 with 210 catches.

ABOUT ICC CRICKET HALL OF FAME:

- It recognises the achievements of legends of the game from cricket's long and illustrious history.
- It was launched by the International Cricket Council (ICC) of Dubai on January 2, 2009 as part of its centenary celebrations in association with Federation of International Cricketers' Associations (FICA).
- Members of Hall of Fame assist in selection of future inductees.
- The inaugural inductees were W. G. Grace and Graham Gooch.
- Former England women's cricket team captain Rachael Heyhoe-Flint was the first woman cricketer to be inducted in the Hall of Fame in 2010.

INDIA RANKED 77TH WORLD BANK'S EASE OF DOING BUSINESS INDEX

- India ranked 77th among 190 countries by leapfrogging 23 ranks in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business (EODB) 2018 rankings.
- In the 2017 rankings, India ranked 100th and had jumped 30 places.
- In 2016, 2015 and 2014, India had not improved much and was placed at 130, 131 and 134, respectively, in ranking.
- EODB 2018 was topped by New Zealand (consecutive for third time), followed by Singapore, Denmark, and Hong Kong.
- US was placed at eighth and China was ranked 46th while Pakistan is placed at 136th.

ABOUT EASE OF DOING BUSINESS INDEX:

- The index ranks 190 countries based on 10 indicators across the life-cycle of a business, from "starting a business" to "resolving insolvency".
- These 10 indicators are: Starting business, Dealing with construction permits, Getting electricity, Registering property, Getting credit, Protecting minority investors, Paying taxes, Trading across borders, Enforcing contracts and Resolving insolvency.
- Each one of these indicators carry equal weightage.
- In case of India, Delhi and Mumbai are the only two cities surveyed by World Bank for these rankings.

INDIA'S PERFORMANCE IN EODB 2018:

- Its jump in ranking in EODB 2018 was aided largely by improvement in areas such as "trading across borders", "dealing with construction permits", "getting electricity", "getting credit" and "starting a business".
- It has improved in rank in six out of ten indicators.
- It has moved closer to international best practice.
- India's score also improved to 67.23, a gain of 6.63 from last year.
- The most dramatic improvements by India was registered in indicators related to 'construction permits' (improved to 52 from 181) and 'trading across borders' (rose to 80 from 146).
- However, compared to last year, India saw its ranking dip on various other parameters, such as "registering property", "protecting minority investors".
- It is among top ten economies improving most across three or more areas alongside countries such as Afghanistan, Djibouti, China, Azerbaijan, Togo, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Turkey and Rwanda.
- It is the only other country, alongside Djibouti, to be in top ten for second year in row.
- Two economies with largest populations-China and India- demonstrated "impressive reform agendas".
- It made starting business easier by integrating multiple application forms into a general incorporation form.
- India also replaced value-added tax (VAT) with GST for which registration process is faster.

UNION CABINET APPROVES INDIA-MOROCCO AGREEMENT ON LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN CRIMINAL MATTERS

- The Union Cabinet has approved an agreement between India and Morocco on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters.
- The Union Cabinet was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

DETAILS OF THE AGREEMENT:

- The agreement will provide broad legal framework for bilateral cooperation between India and Morocco in investigation and prosecution of crime, restraint, tracing, forfeiture or confiscation or proceeds and instruments of crime.
- It will also increase effectiveness in investigation and prosecution of crime and provide necessary peaceful ambience which is a pre-requisite for betterment of society as a whole.
- It will also be further instrumental in gaining better inputs and insights in the modus operandi of terrorists and organised criminals, which in turn can be used to fine-tune policy decisions in the field of internal security.

LT GENERAL RAJESHWAR TAKES OVER AS 12TH CHIEF OF INTEGRATED DEFENCE STAFF

- Lt. Gen P. S. Rajeshwar took over as the 12th Chief of Integrated Defence Staff to Chairman, COSC.
- Prior to this appointment, he was serving as Director General (Perspective Planning) at Integrated Headquarters, Ministry of Defence.

ABOUT LT GEN PS RAJESHWAR:

- He was commissioned into the Regiment of Artillery in December 1980.
- He is an alumnus of Indian Military Academy (IMA), Dehradun, National Defence College (NDC), Delhi.
- He holds Masters in National Security Administration from NDC, Philippines.
- He has rich operational and staff experience with distinction of serving in operational environments such as Counter Insurgency area in the North East & Counter Terrorist Operations in Jammu and Kashmir, High Altitude Area, apart from United Nations Peacekeeping Operations.
- During 38 years of his illustrious career, he has commanded Artillery Regiment during Operation Parakram, Infantry Brigade at Line of Control (LoC), Counter Insurgency Force in J&K and Corps in the desert sector.

INTEGRATED DEFENCE STAFF:

- Government had established Integrated Defence Staff, headed by Chief of Integrated Staff as Chairman (who enjoys status equivalent to that of Vice Chief of Service) to ensure high degree of synergy between Armed forces.
- It acts as a point organisation for integration of policy, doctrine, war fighting and procurement by employing best management practices.
- It was created on 1 October 2001 based on recommendations of Group of Ministers which was set up in 2000 (post-Kargil) to review India's defence management.
- It has representation from all three services, Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Department of Defence (DoD) and Def (Finance).

CABINET APPROVES RENAMING OF JHARSUGUDA AIRPORT IN ODISHA AS VEER SURENDRA SAI AIRPORT, JHARSUGUDA

- The Union Cabinet has approved renaming of Jharsuguda Airport in Odisha as "Veer Surendra Sai Airport, Jharsuguda" after Veer Surendra Sai who was a well known freedom fighter from Odisha.
- The renaming of airport fulfills long-pending demand of Odisha Government and reflects the sentiments of local public of the respective area.
- It is a befitting tribute to the contribution of the revered personality associated with the State.
- The airport has been developed by Airports Authority of India (AAI) in collaboration with Odisha government at estimated cost of Rs 210 crore, with Rs 75 crore contribution from the state.
- It is spread across over 1,027.5 acres of land and has 2,390-metre long runway.
- The area of its terminal building is 4,000 square metres.

ABOUT VEER SURENDRA SAI:

- He was a freedom fighter and a tribal leader, born in 1809 in a small town Khinda in Sambalpur (now in Odisha).
- He was the direct descendant from Madhukar Sai and was legally entitled to be crowned as king of Sambalpur after the demise of king Maharaja Sai in 1827.
- But he was not acceptable to British power and ignored his claim for succession.

- He revolted against British raj for the throne and it eventually allowed widow of Madhukar Sai Rani Mohan Kumari to succeed him and then followed by succession of Narayan Singh, a descendant of royal family but born of low caste as king of Sambalpur.
- The aim of Surendra Sai's revolt was to drive the British out of Sambalpur.
- His revolution against the British commenced from 1827 when he was only 18 years of age and continued till 1862 when he surrendered and even after that, until he was finally arrested in 1864- a total period of 37 years.
- He had suffered imprisonment in Hazaribagh Jail for 17 years in course of his revolutionary career and after his final arrest for another term of 20 years including his detention of 19 years in remote Asirgarh hill fort till he breathed his last there.
- He was not only a great revolutionary throughout his life but also an inspiring leader of the people.
- He had espoused cause of the down trodden tribal people who were being exploited by higher castes people and who became tools in hands of the British for establishment of their political power in Sambalpur.
- He died in Asirgarh Jail on 23 May 1884.

CABINET APPROVES MOU BETWEEN INDIA AND SOUTH KOREA FOR STRENGTHENING COOPERATION IN TOURISM

The Union Cabinet of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and South Korea for strengthening cooperation in the field of Tourism.

OBJECTIVES OF THE MOU:

- Expand bilateral cooperation in tourism sector.
- Increase exchange of information and data related to tourism.
- Encourage cooperation between tourism stakeholders including hotels and tour operators.
- Establish exchange programmes for cooperation in Human Resources Development (HRD).
- Encourage Investment in Tourism and Hospitality sectors.
- Exchange visits of tour Operators, decision or opinion makers, media for promotion of two-way tourism.
- Exchange experience in areas of promotion, marketing destination development and management.
- Encourage participation in travel fairs/exhibitions in each other's country.
- Promote safe, honorable and sustainable tourism.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- India and South Korea have enjoyed strong diplomatic and long economic relationship.
- Both countries are now desiring to strengthen and further develop established relationship in the field of tourism.
- South Korea is one of leading tourist generating markets for India from East Asia region.
- Signing of this MoU will be instrumental in increasing arrival in India from this source market.

DHARMA GUARDIAN-2018: FIRST INDIA-JAPAN MILITARY EXERCISE BEGINS IN VAIRENGTE, MIZORAM

- The first joint military exercise named "Dharma Guardian" between India and Japan has begun at Indian Army's Counter-Insurgency Warfare School at Vairengte (Mizoram).
- The exercise is aimed at developing mutual understanding and respect between militaries of both countries, and to facilitate the tracking of worldwide phenomenon of terrorism.

ABOUT DHARMA GUARDIAN:

- In this exercise, Indian Army will be represented by 6/1 Gorkha Rifles, while Japanese Ground Self-Defence Force will field its 32 Infantry Regiment.
- The emphasis of this exercise will be on building interoperability.
- Armies of both countries will jointly train, plan and execute series of well-developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats that may be encountered in urban warfare scenario.
- Moreover, experts from both sides will also hold detailed discussions to share their expertise on varied operational aspects.

UNION CABINET APPROVES OPENING UP OF INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE MEMBERSHIP TO ALL UN COUNTRIES

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given ex-post facto approval for opening up International Solar Alliance (ISA) membership to all countries that are members of the United Nations.
- In this regard, Cabinet has approved to move Resolution in first Assembly of ISA for amending the Framework Agreement of ISA.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS MEMBERSHIP:

- It will put solar energy in global agenda with universal appeal for developing and deploying solar energy.
- It will make ISA inclusive, whereby all member countries of UN could become member.
- Thus, expanding membership will lead to ISA initiative benefitting the world at large.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL SOLAR ALLIANCE (ISA):

- ISA is an alliance dedicated to the promotion of solar energy among its member countries.
- The ISA Framework Agreement had entered into force in December 2017 and formally became de-jure treaty based International Intergovernmental Organization.
- It is headquartered at Gurugram, India.
- The main objective of ISA is to include global deployment of over 1,000GW of solar generation capacity and mobilisation of investment of over US\$ 1000 billion into solar energy by 2030.
- ISA also aims to serve as an action-oriented organization by bringing together countries with rich solar potential to aggregate global demand, thereby reducing prices through bulk purchase.

- It also seeks to facilitate deployment of existing solar technologies at scale, and promoting collaborative solar R&D and capacity building.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES UNRESERVED MOBILE TICKETING FACILITY

- Union Ministry of Railways has launched Unreserved Mobile Ticketing facility (UTS on Mobile) to enable seamless booking of unreserved tickets including season tickets and also platform tickets all over Indian Railways.
- This will remove the need for passengers to wait in queues for purchasing the tickets.
- UTS on Mobile aims to promote three C's: Cashless transactions (Digital payment), Contact less ticketing (no need to physically visit the point of sale) and Customer convenience and experience.
- With this, booking of unreserved tickets on all non-suburban sections across all Zonal Railways will be now made available on mobile.

ABOUT UNRESERVED MOBILE TICKETING FACILITY:

- The facility for booking unreserved tickets is available through 'UTSONMOBILE' app, available for mobile phones with Android, IOS and windows operating systems.
- The process of ticket booking involves downloading the application on mobile phone and registration by furnishing the necessary details.
- After successful registration, the user is given user-ID and password through which user can log-in and book ticket through this app within the ticketing area and outside Geo-fenced area.
- The payment can be made by the user digitally using R-Wallet, debit card, credit card, net-banking, UPI and other e-wallets.

BENEFITS OF UTS ON MOBILE:

- This environment friendly initiative will allow seamless booking of unreserved tickets all over Indian Railways.
- It will obviate the need for passengers to wait in queues for purchasing tickets.
- It will also enhance experience for booking unreserved tickets i.e. for journey, platform tickets, season tickets etc.

JUSTICES HEMANT GUPTA, R. SUBHASH REDDY, M R SHAH AND AJAY RASTOGI WERE SWORN IN AS JUDGES OF SC

- Justices Hemant Gupta, R Subhash Reddy, Mukesh Kumar Rasikbhai Shah and Ajay Rastogi were sworn-in as the Judges of the Supreme Court of India.
- They were administered oath of office by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi.
- They will have tenure till they attain age of 65.

DETAILS:

- These four new judges of SC were appointed by President Ram Nath Kovind under Article 124 based on the recommendation of SC Collegium comprising CJI Ranjan Gogoi, Justice Madan B Lokur, Justice Kurian Joseph, Justice A K Sikri and Justice S A Bobde.
- With this, the total number of judges at the Supreme Court rose to 28.
- The sanctioned strength of Supreme Court judges is 31 including the Chief Justice.
- Prior to this elevation, Justice Gupta served as Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court; Justice Rastogi as Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court; Justice Shah as Chief Justice of the Patna High Court and Justice Reddy as Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court.

GOVERNMENT PROMULGATES ORDINANCE TO AMEND COMPANIES ACT, 2013

- Union Cabinet has approved proposal for promulgation of ordinance to amend the Companies Act, 2013.
- The ordinance had received assent from President Ram Nath Kovind under Article 123 and has been promulgated.
- The amendments to the Act are aimed to promote ease of doing business as well as ensure better compliance levels.

DETAILS:

- The ordinance to change Companies Act seeks to declog National Company Law Tribunals (NCLTs) and decriminalise minor offences by companies.
- The ordinance will transfer 90% of the cases to regional directors under Ministry of Corporate Affairs from NCLTs.
- Moreover, it will retain status of all non-compoundable offences since they are serious in nature.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- Union Government-appointed Committee (headed by Corporate Affairs Secretary Injeti Srinivas) had suggested various changes to Act, including restructuring of corporate offences under companies law and in-house adjudication mechanism to ensure that courts get more time to deal with serious violations.
- Apart from restructuring of corporate offences to relieve special courts from adjudicating routine offences, the committee had mooted re-categorisation of 16 out of 81 compoundable offences under the Act.
- This move was recommended to bring down NCLT's load as it looks at insolvency and bankruptcy cases as well.
- It also recommended disqualification of directors in case they have directorships beyond permissible limits and capping an independent director's remuneration.
- It also suggested that remuneration that any independent director gets from the company should be capped at 20% of his gross income in a year to prevent any material pecuniary relationship, which could impair their independence on the board.

12 RAILWAY ZONES FREE OF UNMANNED LEVEL CROSSINGS ON BROAD GAUGE ROUTES: INDIAN RAILWAYS

- Indian Railways has eliminated all Unmanned Level Crossings (UMLCs) on Broad Gauge routes (rails separated by 1676 mm or 1.67m of distance) from 12 of its total 16 zones.
- These 12 zones are Central Railway, Eastern Railway, East Coast Railway, East Central Railway, North Eastern Railway, Southern Railway, North East Frontier Railway, South Central Railway, South Eastern Railway, South East Central Railway and West Central Railway.

DETAILS:

- Out of total of 3,479 UMLCs on broad gauge routes still existing till April 2018, 3,402 have been eliminated.
- The balance 77 UMLCs have also been planned to be eliminated by December 2018.
- Most of UMLCs that have been eliminated are either by provision of subway, road under bridges or by manning.
- All UMLCs on routes having speed more than 130KMPH and on Sub-urban routes have been eliminated.
- By elimination of UMLCs on war footing, accidents have reduced from 65 in 2009-10 to 3 in 2018-19.

MAHARASHTRA GOVERNMENT TO CONVERT DECOMMISSIONED AIRCRAFT CARRIER INS VIRAAT INTO FLOATING MUSEUM

- Maharashtra state cabinet approved plan for conversion of Indian Navy's longest-serving aircraft carrier INS Viraat, into India's first-ever moored maritime museum-cum-marine adventure centre.
- At present, INS Viraat is at Mumbai's Naval dockyard after it was decommissioned (retired) in 2017.

DETAILS:

- As per state government's plan, INS Viraat's conversion will be on publicprivate-partnership (PPP) basis.
- It will be grouted (grounded, sealed to seabed with concrete and moored) seven nautical miles off Malvan coast at Nivati rocks in Sindhudurg district.
- This ship will host biodiversity centres and a marine adventure centre providing sailing and scuba-diving experiences.
- There will be virtual galleries, cafeterias and even training centre for merchant navy crew.
- World over only seven aircraft carriers so far have been converted into museums, theme parks and luxury hotel.

ABOUT INS VIRAAT:

- It was built in 1943 during Second World War and was first commissioned as HMS Hermes into the British Royal Navy in November 1959.
- During the Falklands War in 1982, the aircraft carrier had served as flagship of the Royal Navy's task force.

- British navy had decommissioned it in 1985 after 27 years of service.
- It has sailed nearly 11 lakh km, enough to cover the globe 27 times.
- It had spent 30 years in Indian Navy and 27 years in Royal British Navy.
- It was commissioned into the Indian Navy on May 12, 1987.
- It had played a major role in Operation Jupiter in 1989 in the Sri Lankan peace keeping operation.
- It had participated in the standoff Operation Parakram in 2001-2002 when India and Pakistan were engaged in a standoff post the Parliament terror attack.
- Its last operational deployment was for participation in International Fleet Review held at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh in February 2016.
- INS Viraat holds Guinness Books of record of being the longest serving warship in the world.
- It was also the last British-built ship serving with the Indian Navy.

INDIA AND JAPAN SIGN LOAN AGREEMENT FOR TURGA HYDEL PROJECT

- India and Japan signed a Loan Agreement worth Rs. 1817 crore for construction of Turga Pumped Storage Hydel Project.
- On completion, this project will contribute to Industrial Development and Living Standard Improvement in West Bengal.

DETAILS:

- This loan agreement was signed between Union Ministry of Finance, Government of India and Mr. Katsuo Matsumoto, Chief Representative Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).
- The objective of the project is to strengthen capability to respond to fluctuation in supply and demand of power.
- It also seeks to improve stability of power supply by constructing pumped storage facilities, thereby contributing to industrial development and improvement of Living Standard of people in West Bengal.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- India and Japan have a long and fruitful history of bilateral development cooperation since 1958.
- In the last few years, the economic cooperation between India and Japan has steadily progressed, which has further consolidated and strengthened Strategic and Global Partnership between them.

PM LAUNCHES SUPPORT AND OUTREACH PROGRAMME FOR THE MSME SECTOR

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Support and Outreach Programme.
- As part of this programme, PM unveiled 12 key initiatives which will help the growth, expansion and facilitation of MSMEs across the country.
- There are five key aspects for facilitating the MSME sector.
- These include access to credit, access to market, technology upgradation, ease of doing business, and sense of security for employees.

ABOUT THE MSME OUTREACH PROGRAMME:

- It aims to boost MSME sector as it is one of the important sector for major generations of employment opportunities.
- It will run for 100 days covering 100 Districts throughout the country.
- Various Central Ministers will visit these districts in order to apprise entrepreneurs about various facilities being extended to MSME Sector by Union Government and financial institutions.
- Under the programme, entrepreneurs will be encouraged to come forward and make best use of these facilities including access to credit and market, etc.
- Under Access to Credit aspect of this programme, Government will launch 59 minute loan portal to enable easy access to credit for MSMEs.
- Loans upto Rs. 1 crore will be granted in-principle approval through this portal, in just 59 minutes.
- The link to this portal will be available at GST portal.
- Government will give 2% interest subvention for all GST registered MSMEs, on fresh or incremental loans.
- For exporters who receive loans in pre-shipment and post-shipment period will get increase in interest rebate ranging from 3% to 5%.
- All MSMEs or companies with turnover more than Rs. 500 crore will now be compulsorily brought on Trade Receivables e-Discounting System (TReDS).
- This will enable entrepreneurs to access credit from banks, based on their upcoming receivables.
- This will help to resolve their problems of cash cycle.
- For access to markets for entrepreneurs, Union Government has made it mandatory for public sector companies to procure 25 %, instead of 20% of their total purchases from MSMEs.
- Out of the 25% procurement mandated from MSMEs, 3% is reserved for women entrepreneurs.
- It is mandatory for all PSUs of Union Government to be part of GeM.
- For Technology Upgradation, Government will form 20 hubs and 100 spokes in the form of tool rooms will be established vital part of product design.
- For ease of doing business, government will establish clusters of pharma MSMEs.
- 70% cost of establishing these clusters will be borne by the Union Government.
- For simplification of government procedures, the return under 8 labour laws and 10 Union regulations will be now filed only once year.
- Now establishments to be visited by an Inspector will be decided through computerised random allotment.
- Air pollution and water pollution laws now have been merged, and henceforth under them single consent and will be required, besides return will be accepted through self-certification.
- Government has promulgated ordinance under which, for minor violations under the Companies Act, entrepreneur will no longer have to approach Courts, but can correct them through simple procedures.
- For Social Security for MSME Sector Employees, government will launch mission to ensure that they have Jan Dhan Accounts, provident fund and insurance.

ODISHA GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES SAURA JALNIDHI SCHEME

- Odisha Government has launched Saura Jalnidhi scheme to encourage use of solar energy in irrigation by farmers.
- Under this scheme, farmers will be given 90% subsidy and 5,000 solar pumps.

- This will provide irrigation benefits in 2,500 acres of the state.
- The beneficiary of this scheme will be farmers who have valid farmer identity cards and have minimum 0.5 acres of agricultural land.

ABOUT THE SAURA JALNIDHI SCHEME:

- The scheme was launched as part of state government's endeavor to increase the use of solar photovoltaic pump sets in those areas so that irrigation facilities can be provided where power system is bad.
- For this scheme, state government has made a provision of Rs 27.18 crore in the financial year 2017-18.
- In the first phase, this scheme will be available in those areas where electricity is not available for running the pump set.
- This scheme will generate 1.52 lakh human day employments annually and provided livelihood to around 5,000 families and also reduce carbon footprints.
- Under this scheme, farmers will be provided with a well-equipped solar pump irrigation system in convergence mode.
- It will help to reduce burden of input cost on farmers and also increase agricultural income.
- It will promote the use of green energy and reduce pollution.

AYUSH MINISTRY ORGANIZES NATIONAL SEMINAR ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT IN AYURVEDA

- The National Seminar on Entrepreneurship and Business Development in Ayurveda was held in New Delhi.
- It was organised by Ministry of AYUSH in association with NITI Aayog with aim of encouraging entrepreneurs and Ayurveda stakeholders towards businesses opportunities in the sector.

DETAILS:

- The seminar was expected to develop awareness among stakeholders about the business opportunities, encouraging young entrepreneurs to use of modern technologies and modern innovations in business development in the sector and highlight opportunities at a global level.
- Nearly 800 participants from across country participated in the main function of 3rd Ayurveda day.
- It was attended by experts in marketing, finance management, innovation, telemedicine, the policy makers, experts in start-up as well as experienced entrepreneurs in Ayurveda pharmaceuticals and hospital industry.
- The deliberations in the seminar educated young entrepreneurs about the various possibilities of business development in Ayurveda sector, usage of modern technology and ease of business being facilitated by Government for promoting their business in the field of Ayurveda.

SHAKTI: IIT MADRAS DEVELOPS INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS MICROPROCESSOR

- The researchers from Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) have designed India's first indigenous microprocessor called 'Shakti'.

- It is aimed at developing industrial-grade microprocessors and other components of the microprocessor ecosystem.
- It will also help to reduce dependency on imported microchips and risk of cyber-attacks.
- Microprocessors are the brain of all computing and electronic devices and are used to operate larger high-speed systems and supercomputers.

ABOUT SHAKTI MICROPROCESSOR:

- It was designed, developed and booted by IIT Madras with the microchip fabricated in ISRO's Semi-Conductor Laboratory at Chandigarh.
- It has been developed under a project partly funded by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), as part of the two-decade-old efforts to develop indigenous microprocessors.
- Its design originates from open source instruction set architecture (ISA), a set of basic instructions called RISC V, which makes it customisable to any device.
- ISA is programming or machine language and provides commands to processor instructing it on functions to be executed.
- RISC-V is open, free ISA which enables new era of processor innovation through open standard collaboration.
- It delivers new level of free, extensible software and hardware freedom on architecture.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS MICROCHIP?

- It will reduce dependency on imported microchips especially in communication and defence sectors and thus eliminate the risk of cyber-attacks.
- It can be used in mobile computing, wireless and networking systems.
- It may also provide power to mobile phones, smart meters and surveillance cameras.

WHAT IS PARASHAKTI?

- IIT M researchers are now conducting research on 'Parashakti', an advanced microprocessor for supercomputers.
- It will be a super scaler processor that will be ready by December 2018.
- It will have its applications in desktops and 32 such interconnected microprocessors may be used in supercomputers.

ODISHA GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES AEROSPACE AND DEFENCE MANUFACTURING POLICY 2018

- Odisha Government launched Aerospace and Defence Manufacturing Policy 2018.
- The policy is aimed to carry forward process of industrialization through promotion of aerospace and defence manufacturing enterprises, generate employment opportunities and promote value addition.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE POLICY:

- It proposes to extend subsidy upto 50% of cost of land, building, plant and machinery to special purpose vehicle (SPV) for setting up first state-of-the-art Aerospace and Defence Park in the state.
- This is to attract investment in aerospace and defence manufacturing in the State.
- It sets ceiling of Rs. 50 crore for Common Facility Centre, Rs. 30 crore for Technology Innovation Centre and Rs. 25 crore for Testing Centre to be established with private participation.
- It also provides capital grants of 50% of infrastructure cost limited to Rs. 10 crore for subsequent aerospace and defence parks.
- It also extends capital subsidy of Rs. 100 crore for first three OEMs (original equipment manufacturer) for setting up manufacturing facilities in the state with investment of at least Rs. 1000 crore and generating 1000 domiciled employment.
- In addition, it allows interest subsidy allowed up to a limit of Rs. 10 Crore per annum and Rs. 5 crore per annum for first three OEMs setting up manufacturing units in the state based on investment in plant and machinery for amount of more than Rs. 500 Crore and between Rs. 100 crore to Rs.500 crore, respectively.
- This provision is designed to attract key players to set up units in the state.
- This will provide impetus for further development of ancillary and downstream units in the state.
- Enterprises will come up in industrially backward districts namely Kandhamal, Gajapati and Mayurbhanj along with KBK districts will be extended additional incentives.

NDMC LAUNCHES QR-ENABLED FRIDGE MAGNETS FOR DIGITAL PAYMENT OF BILLS

- New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) has launched quick response (QR)-enabled fridge magnets for digital payment of bills.
- The magnets are personalised and each customer will have a unique QR Code mapped to their consumer account number.
- It is powered by SignCatch – an IT and services company.

ABOUT QR-ENABLED FRIDGE MAGNETS:

- There will be separate magnets provided by the NDMC to its consumers' doorstep for both electricity and water bills.
- Consumers can stick these magnets on their refrigerators at home and use their smartphones to scan QR Code on magnet to pay their bills instantly.
- The QR Code will redirect consumers to their current bill with option to pay using any of digital payment channels active with NDMC like credit/debit cards, net banking, wallet, and UPI.
- The move will reduce collection costs and expedite revenue realisation.
- Moreover, these magnets will be extremely useful in cases where a consumer misplaces the pending paper bills.

ABOUT QUICK RESPONSE (QR) CODE:

- It is a two-dimensional (matrix) machine-readable bar code made up of black and white square.

- 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 max 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 an error correction capability and data stored in it can be restored even if it is partially damaged or dirty.

INDIAN COAST GUARD LAUNCHES NEW OFFSHORE PATROL VESSEL ICGS VARAHA

- Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has launched a new Offshore patrol vessel (OPV) ICGS Varaha at L&T Kattupalli shipyard near Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- It is fourth in the series of 98 M OPVs designed and built indigenously by Larsen & Toubro (L&T).

ABOUT ICGS VARAHA:

- It is fitted with advanced technology navigation and communication equipment, sensor and machinery.
- Its weaponry includes one 30 mm and two 12.7 mm guns with fire control system.
- It has been designed to attain a maximum speed of 26 knots and has an endurance of 5,000 nautical miles.
- It is also equipped with an Integrated Bridge System (IBS), Automated Power Management System (APMS), Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS), and High Power External Fire Fighting (EFF) system.
- It can carry one twin engine helicopter and four high speed boats, including two inflatable boats, for boarding operation, search and rescue, law enforcement and maritime patrol.
- It will also be capable of carrying pollution response equipment to contain oil spill at sea.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- In March 2015, Union Defence Ministry awarded a contract to L&T for construction of seven OPVs.
- The first and second ships of this project have already been delivered to ICG and are presently based in Western Coast and Eastern Coast of India and third OPV will be delivered in early 2019.
- The shipyard will deliver all seven ships by March 2021.

RBI INITIATES STEPS TO SET UP DIGITAL PUBLIC CREDIT REGISTRY (PCR) TO CAPTURE DETAILS OF ALL BORROWERS

- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has initiated steps to set up a wide-based digital Public Credit Registry (PCR) to capture loan information of individuals and corporate borrowers.
- In this regard, RBI has invited expression of interest (EOI) for developing PSC from companies with turnover of over Rs 100 crore in last three years.

- Setting up of PCR assumes significance amidst rising bad loans in financial system.
- The non-performing assets (NPAs) in Indian banking system is about Rs 10 lakh crore.

ABOUT THE PUBLIC CREDIT REGISTRY (PCR):

- PCR is a digital registry of authenticated granular credit information.
- It will work as a financial information infrastructure providing access to various stakeholders and enrich the existing credit information ecosystem.
- It seeks to serve as a single point of mandatory reporting for all material events for each loan, notwithstanding any threshold in the loan amount or type of borrower.
- PCR will capture all details of borrowers, including wilful defaulters and also pending legal suits in order to check financial delinquencies.
- It will also include data from entities like market regulator SEBI, Corporate Affairs Ministry, Goods and Service Tax Network (GSTN) and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) to enable banks and financial institutions to get 360 degree profile of existing and prospective borrowers on a real-time basis.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- In June 2018, RBI had announced to set up PCR for India with a view to address information asymmetry, foster access to credit and strengthen the credit culture in the economy.
- This decision was taken based on the recommendation of a high-level task force (HTF) i.e. YM Deosthalee committee which was constituted by RBI to review current availability of information on credit, adequacy of existing information utilities, and identify gaps that could be filled by PCR.
- Currently, there are multiple granular credit information repositories in India, with each having somewhat distinct objectives and coverage.
- Within RBI, CRILC is the borrower level supervisory dataset with threshold in aggregate exposure of Rs 5 crore.
- Moreover, there are four privately owned credit information companies (CICs) operating in India.
- RBI has mandated all its regulated entities to submit credit information individually to all four CICs.

INDIA, SOUTH KOREA INK MOU ON SPORTS COOPERATION

- India and South Korea have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on sports cooperation.
- The MoU was signed between Union Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in New Delhi.

DETAILS:

- The objective of this MoU is to establish a framework to facilitate and promote cooperation between two countries on basis of reciprocity and mutual benefit.
- Under this MoU, the two countries will encourage exchanges and cooperative actions between sports authorities, sports federations and other sports bodies in different areas of cooperation, as jointly decided.

COOPERATION UNDER THIS MOU MAY INCLUDE AREAS LIKE:

- Joint training for athletes and officials.
- Exchange of coaches, athletes, experts.
- Exchange of scientific and methodical materials.
- Participation in sports event, seminars, symposia and conferences organized by either country etc.

WORLD TSUNAMI AWARENESS DAY: NOVEMBER 5

- The World Tsunami Awareness Day is observed every year across the world on 5 November to spread awareness among people across the world about Tsunami.
- This year, it was the third edition of World Tsunami Awareness Day after it was instituted in 2015.
- 2018 World Tsunami Awareness Day is aligned with International Day for Disaster Reduction (observed on 13 October) and "Sendai Seven Campaign".
- It focused on Target "c" of Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction which aims at reducing direct disaster economic loss in relation to GDP.

AIM OF THE DAY:

- To spread awareness among people across the world in matters related to the dangers of Tsunami.
- To stress on importance of early warning systems in order to mitigate damage from the devastating natural calamity.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- The World Tsunami Awareness Day was designated by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by adopting a resolution in December 2015.
- The proposal was first mooted by Japan after the 3rd UN Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai (Japan) in March 2015.
- This day coincides with the annual anniversary of the 1854 Inamura-no-hi (Fire of Inamura) event.
- On this day in 1854, a villager in Wakayama Prefecture in Japan through his quick action had saved countless lives after he had set fire to sheaves of rice on the top of a hill, thus warning people of the imminent danger of a Tsunami.
- This was the first documented instance of a Tsunami early warning.

ABOUT TSUNAMI:

- Tsunamis are large waves that approach crashing on coasts due to seafloor movement, majorly associated with landslides or earthquakes.
- The word "Tsunami" gets its name from the Japanese words- "Tsu" means harbor and "Nami" means wave.
- Tsunami is a chain of huge waves created by disturbance underwater.
- These waves are normally associated with earthquakes taking place under or around the ocean.
- Other causes of Tsunami may be submarine landslides, coastal rock falls, volcanic eruptions or extraterrestrial collision.

- Like many other natural disasters, it is difficult to predict Tsunamis but it can be suggested that seismically active areas are more at risk.
- Tsunami waves are highly dangerous and generally look like strong walls of water.
- The strong waves can attack seashore for hours, thereby destructing thousands of lives.

HOME MINISTRY RELEASES RS. 113 CRORE TO SIX BORDER STATES UNDER BORDER AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- Union Home Ministry has released more than Rs. 113 crore to six border states under Border Area Development Programme (BADP) as part of its plan to ameliorate the problems of people living in isolated locations.
- These six states are Assam, Nagaland, Sikkim, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand.

DETAILS:

- Till now, Home Ministry has released total of Rs. 637.98 crore during 2018-19 period to states having International Border.
- The funds released are in addition to the Rs. 1,100-crore released in 2017-18 for the all-round development of villages located along International Border in 17 states.
- India shares land border with seven neighbouring countries viz. Bangladesh (4,096 km), China (3,488 km), Pakistan (3,323 km), Nepal (1,751 km), Myanmar (1,643 km), Bhutan (699 km) and Afghanistan (106km in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir).

ABOUT BORDER AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (BADP):

- The umbrella BADP scheme is being implemented by Union Home Ministry in 367 border blocks of 104 border districts in 17 states.
- Its objective is to meet special developmental needs and well-being of people living in remote and inaccessible areas situated near international border areas.
- It also seeks to saturate border areas with entire essential infrastructure through convergence of Union, state, BADP, local schemes and participatory approach.
- Sub-schemes under it include construction of primary health centres (PHCs), connectivity, schools, supply of drinking water, community centres, drainage to enable sustainable living in border areas.
- It also covers schemes or activities relating to skill development programmes, promotion of sports activities in border areas, promotion of rural tourism, border tourism, protection of heritage sites, Swachhta Abhiyan, construction of helipads in remote and inaccessible hilly areas, which do not have road connectivity.
- Skill development training to farmers for use of modern and scientific techniques in agriculture, organic farming is also now a part of BADP.
- As many as 61 model villages are being developed under BADP to improve the quality of life for people living near border areas.
- A total of Rs 13,400 crore so far have been released since BADP programme was initiated in 1986-87.

INDIA, SOUTH KOREA SIGN MOU FOR STRENGTHENING COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF TOURISM

- India and South Korea have signed a Memorandum of Understanding for strengthening cooperation in the field of Tourism.
- The MoU was signed between Union Ministry of Tourism and South Korea's Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism in New Delhi.
- It was signed during the official four-day visit of First Lady of South Korea Kim Jung-sook (wife of incumbent South Korean President Moon Jae-in) to India.
- First Lady Kim was Chief Guest at the Deepotsav event organized by Uttar Pradesh Government in Ayodhya and at the ceremony of inaugurating new Memorial of Queen Suriratna (Heo Hwang-ok) in Ayodhya.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- Ayodhya and Korea have historical connections.
- It is believed that Ayodhya's legendary Princess Suriratna had traveled to Korea in 48 AD and married Korean King Suro.

DETAILS:

- South Korea is one of the leading tourists generating market for India from the East Asia region.
- Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTAs) from South Korea Republic in 2017 were 1,42,383 and during January-September were 1,08,901.
- The signing of this MoU will be instrumental in increasing tourist arrivals to India from this source market.
- It will expand bilateral cooperation in tourism sector, increase exchange of information and data related to tourism and encourage cooperation between tourism stakeholders including Hotels and Tour Operators.
- It will also encourage Investment in the Tourism and Hospitality sectors and promote safe, honorable and sustainable tourism.

NUCLEAR SUBMARINE INS ARIHANT COMPLETES FIRST DETERRENCE PATROL

- India's first indigenous nuclear submarine INS Arihant has successfully completed its first deterrence patrol.
- The development signifies that the underwater warship has completed its maiden long-range mission with live nuclear-tipped missiles.
- During deterrence patrol, a nuclear submarine carries nuclear missiles on board, where command and control protocols for its operations are fully tested by its crew.
- The term deterrence patrol is meant to deter an adversary from launching a first nuclear-strike since SSBN (Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear) can launch retaliatory strike within minutes.

- With this, India completed its survivable nuclear triad by adding maritime strike capability to land and air-based delivery platforms for nuclear weapons.
- It makes India the sixth country- after US, Russia, UK, France and China to have a fully operational nuclear triad.

ABOUT INS ARIHANT:

- INS Arihant is India's first indigenously-designed, developed and manufactured nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, and three more such submarines are reportedly under various stages of construction.
- It was designed in the 1990s and its development project was officially acknowledged in 1998.
- Its design is based on the Russian Akula-1 class submarine.
- It was launched in 2009 and its nuclear reactor went critical in 2013 and it was commissioned in 2016.
- It is a strategic asset developed for over two decades with Russia's help under Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) programme, which comes directly under Nuclear Command Authority headed by the Prime Minister.
- INS Arihant is 6,000-tonne submarine with length of 110 metres and breadth of 11 metres.
- It is powered by 83 MW pressurised light water nuclear reactor with enriched uranium fuel.
- It can carry 12 Sagarika K 15 submarine launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs) having range of over 700 km.
- As it powered by a nuclear reactor it can function submerged for months without having to surface.
- This feature allows it to travel further and with greater stealth capability.
- It assures second strike capability to India i.e. capability to strike back after being hit by a nuclear weapons first.
- In case of India, second strike capability is important as it had committed to 'No-First-Use' policy as part of its nuclear doctrine.

NUCLEAR TRIAD CAPABILITY OF INDIA:

- India is sixth Nation in the world (after US, Russia, France, China and UK) to possess Nuclear Triad.
- It means that India is capable of delivering nuclear weapons by aircraft, land based ballistic missiles and submarine launched missiles.
- India Army has a strong arsenal of land based ICBMs (Inter-Continental Ballistic Missiles).
- It includes Agni series, Prithvi series, Prahar Missile, Shaurya Missile, supersonic Brahmos and subsonic Nirbhay missiles.
- Indian Airforce (IAF) operates Jaguar aircrafts which are designed for deep penetration strike and can carry nuclear bombs.
- Besides, IAF also has SU 30 MKI and Rafale aircrafts which can also be used to deliver nuclear weapons.
- Indian Navy now has its own nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine INS Arihant capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

GOVERNMENT APPROVES OPERATIONALISATION STRATEGY FOR OPERATION GREENS

- Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) approved operationalisation strategy for Operation Greens.
- Operation Greens was announced by Union Government in Budget 2018-19 to stabilise supply of Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP) crops.
- It is aimed at ensuring availability of TOP crops throughout the country round the year without price volatility.

MEASURES COMPRISING THE STRATEGY:

SHORT TERM PRICE STABILISATION MEASURES:

- National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) will be the nodal agency to implement price stabilisation measures.
- MoFPI will provide 50% of subsidy two components of transportation of TOP Crops from production to storage and hiring of appropriate storage facilities for TOP crops.

LONG TERM INTEGRATED VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS:

- Capacity Building of FPOs & their consortium
- Quality production
- Post-harvest processing facilities
- Agri-Logistics
- Marketing / Consumption Points
- Creation and Management of e-platform for demand and supply management of TOP Crops
- Assistance and eligibility

The assistance under this strategy will comprise of grants-in-aid at rate of 50% of the eligible project cost in all areas, subject to maximum Rs 50 crores per project. Eligible organisations under it will include State Agriculture and other Marketing Federations, cooperatives, companies, Farmer Producer Organizations (FPO), Self-help groups (SHGs), food processors, logistic operators, supply chain operators, retail and wholesale chains and central and state governments.

ABOUT OPERATION GREENS:

- It was announced in Union Budget 2018-19 on the line of Operation Flood to promote FPOs, agri-logistics, processing facilities and professional management.
- It aims to promote farmer producers organisations, processing facilities, agri-logistics and professional management.
- It also aims to aid farmers and help control and limit erratic fluctuations in the prices of tomatoes, onions and potatoes (TOP).
- It is essentially a price fixation scheme that aims to ensure farmers are given the right price for their produce.
- The idea behind it is to double the income of farmers by the end of 2022.

MAJOR OBJECTIVES OF OPERATION GREENS ARE:

- Price stabilisation for producers and consumers by proper production planning in TOP clusters .
- Reduction in post-harvest losses by creation of farm gate infrastructure, development of suitable agro-logistics, and creation of appropriate storage capacity linking consumption centres.
- Enhance value realisation of TOP farmers by targeted interventions to strengthen TOP production clusters and their FPOs.
- Increase in food processing capacities and value addition in TOP value chain.
- Set up of market intelligence network to collect and collate real time data on demand and supply and price of TOP crops.

UNITED NATIONS POSTAL SYSTEM ISSUES SPECIAL POSTAL STAMPS TO MARK DIWALI CELEBRATION

- United Nations Postal Administration (UNPA) has issued special stamps with Diyas lamps (special event sheet) to commemorate Indian Hindu festival of Diwali.
- These stamps are available at UN headquarters post office in New York, US and also online.

DETAILS:

- The special event sheet (stamps) issued by UNPA are in denomination of US \$1.15.
- It contains ten stamps and tabs featuring festive lights and symbolic lamps known as diyas.
- The background of sheet features United Nations Headquarters building illuminated with message of "Happy Diwali" to celebrate the spirit of the festival.
- The description accompanying information about stamps mentioned that Diwali, also known as Deepawali is a joyous and popular festival of lights, which is celebrated in India and by followers of many faiths across the world.
- It also said that during the celebration, clay lamps known as diyas are lit to signify the victory of good over evil.
- The festival also symbolises start of new year for many communities.

INTERESTED TO KNOW:

- United States Postal Service (USPS) in October 2016 had launched commemorative stamp in honour of the festival of Diwali.
- It was issued after seven-years-long efforts and advocacy by Indian-American community and several Congressional resolutions by influential American lawmakers such as Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney.

ABOUT UNITED NATIONS POSTAL ADMINISTRATION (UNPA):

- It is the postal agency of United Nations.
- It issues postage stamps and postal stationery, denominated in United States dollars for United Nations offices in New York, in Swiss francs for offices in Geneva and in euros for the offices in Vienna.
- Postage rates charged are identical to those of the host nation.

UN WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME, ALIBABA GROUP FORM STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO ELIMINATE HUNGER

- United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group have formed a strategic partnership to support efforts to eliminate hunger globally by 2030.
- The agreement was signed between WFP Executive Director David Beasley and Alibaba Partner and Chairman of Alibaba Foundation Sun Lijun at Alibaba's headquarters in Hangzhou, China.

DETAILS:

- Under this agreement, Alibaba will lend its cutting-edge technology and resources to support digital transformation of WFP's operations.
- In particular, Alibaba Cloud, the cloud computing arm of Alibaba will work with WFP to develop a digital "World Hunger Map".
- The map will help to monitor global hunger and operations to end scourge by 2030 which is one of UN's key Sustainable Development goals.
- It also aims to boost efficiency of interventions and shorten emergency response times.

ABOUT WORLD FOOD PROGRAMME (WFP):

- The WFP is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations.
- It is the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.
- It works to help people who cannot produce or obtain enough food for themselves and their families.
- It is a member of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and part of its Executive Committee.
- It was established in 1961 after 1960 Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) Conference.
- It is headquartered in Rome (Italy) and has more than 80 country offices around the world.
- It provides food assistance to an average of 80 million people in 75 countries each year.

NASA PROBE 'RALPH' SET TO VISIT JUPITER'S TROJAN ASTEROIDS

- NASA's Ralph- a space instrument that has travelled as far as Pluto- is set to explore Jupiter's Trojan asteroids, which are remnants from the early days of the solar system.
- Ralph was first launched aboard the New Horizons spacecraft in 2006 and obtained stunning flyby images of Jupiter and its moons.
- This was followed by a visit to Pluto where Ralph took the first high-definition pictures of the iconic minor planet.

MORE DETAILS:

- In 2021, Ralph is set to journey with the Lucy mission to Jupiter's Trojan asteroids.
- The instrument will fly by another Kuiper Belt object called 2014 MU69- nicknamed Ultima Thule- in January 2019.
- Ralph's observations of 2014 MU69 will provide unique insights into this small, icy world.

- The Lucy spacecraft carries a near-twin of Ralph, called L'Ralph, which will investigate Jupiter's Trojan asteroids.
- The L'Ralph instrument suite will study this diverse group of bodies.
- Lucy will fly by six Trojans and one Main Belt asteroid- more than any other previous asteroid mission.
- L'Ralph will detect the Trojan asteroids' chemical fingerprints.
- L'Ralph allows scientists to interpret data provided by the Sun's reflected light that are the fingerprints of different elements and compounds.
- These data could provide clues about how organic molecules form in primitive bodies, a process that might also have led to the emergence of life on Earth.

PARKER SOLAR PROBE 'ALIVE' AFTER BEING CLOSEST EVER TO SUN: NASA

- Parker Solar Probe, NASA's historic mission to solve the mysteries of the Sun, is alive and well after skimming by the Sun at just 15 million miles from its surface.
- This is far closer than any spacecraft has ever gone.
- The previous record was set by Helios B in 1976 and broken by Parker on October 29.
- This manoeuvre has exposed the spacecraft to intense heat and solar radiation in a complex solar wind environment, NASA said in a statement on Thursday.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- On November 5, the spacecraft made the closest approach, called perihelion.
- Parker Solar Probe reached a top speed of 213,200 miles per hour, setting a new record for spacecraft speed.
- At this distance, the intense sunlight heated the Sun-facing side of Probe's heat shield, called the Thermal Protection System, to about 820 degrees Fahrenheit.
- This temperature will climb up to 2,500 Fahrenheit as the spacecraft makes closer approaches to the Sun, NASA said.
- On November 7, mission controllers at the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Lab received the status beacon from the spacecraft at 4:46 p.m. (EST).
- The beacon indicated status "A" - the best of all four possible status signals, meaning that Parker Solar Probe is operating well with all instruments running and collecting science data and, if there were any minor issues, they were resolved autonomously by the spacecraft.

MORE DETAILS:

- Parker is the culmination of six decades of scientific progress.
- Parker Solar Probe's first solar encounter phase began on October 31, and the spacecraft will continue collecting science data through the end of the solar encounter phase on November 11.
- It will be several weeks after the end of the solar encounter phase before the science data begins downlinking to Earth.
- The spacecraft will repeatedly break its own speed record as its orbit draws closer to the star and the spacecraft travels faster and faster at perihelion.

US EXEMPTS INDIA FROM IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS DEVELOPMENT OF CHABAHAHAR PORT IN IRAN

- United States has exempted India from imposition of certain sanctions for development of strategically-located Chabahar port in Iran, along with the construction of a railway line connecting it with the landlocked Afghanistan.
- The decision comes after US imposed toughest ever sanctions on Iran under Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act, 2012.

DETAILS:

- The exemptions to India are with respect to development of Chabahar port, construction of associated railway and for shipment of non-sanctionable goods through the port for Afghanistan's use, as well as the country's continued imports of Iranian petroleum products.
- This exception relates to the reconstruction assistance and economic development for Afghanistan.
- These activities are vital for ongoing support of Afghanistan's growth and humanitarian relief.
- It is also a part of US President Donald Trump's South Asia strategy which underscores US's ongoing support of Afghanistan's economic growth and development as well as a close partnership with India.
- This strategy states that India has a major role in bringing peace and development in Afghanistan.

ABOUT THE SANCTIONS:

- US has imposed toughest ever sanctions on Iran aimed at altering the Iranian regime's "behaviour".
- The sanctions cover Iran's banking and energy sectors and reinstate penalties for countries and companies in Europe, Asia and elsewhere that do not halt Iranian oil imports.
- However, eight countries- India, China, Italy, Greece, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey- were temporarily allowed to continue buying Iranian oil as they showed significant reduction in oil purchase from Iran.

CABINET APPROVES INDIA AND MOROCCO AGREEMENT MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN CIVIL AND COMMERCIAL MATTERS

- Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved an Agreement between India and Morocco on Mutual Legal Assistance in Civil and Commercial Matters.
- The Agreement will be beneficial for citizens of both the countries.
- It will also fulfill desire of both countries to strengthen bonds of friendship and fruitful cooperation in Civil and Commercial matters.
- It will also enhance co-operation in the service of summons, judicial documents, letters of request and the execution of judgments decrees and arbitral awards.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE AGREEMENT:

- Service of summons and other judicial documents or processes.

- Taking of evidence in civil matters.
- Production, identification or examination of documents and recordings.
- Execution of Letter of Request for taking of evidence in civil matters.
- Recognition and enforcement of arbitral awards.

CABINET APPROVES SIGNING AND RATIFYING EXTRADITION AGREEMENT BETWEEN INDIA AND MOROCCO

- Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved signing and ratifying an Extradition Agreement between India and Morocco.
- The agreement will be signed during proposed VIP visit from Morocco in November 2018.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE AGREEMENT?

- It will provide a strong legal base for extradition of fugitive offenders who are accused of economic offences, terrorism and other serious offences in one Contracting State and found in another Contracting State.
- It will also strengthen bilateral relations to deal with criminal elements acting against national interest of both India and Morocco.

CABINET APPROVES SETTING UP OF CENTRAL TRIBAL UNIVERSITY IN ANDHRA PRADESH

- Union Cabinet has approved setting up of a Central Tribal University in Andhra Pradesh.
- The Union Cabinet meeting was chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi.
- The proposed university will come up after necessary amendment in the Central Universities Act, 2009.

ABOUT THE CENTRAL TRIBAL UNIVERSITY:

- It will be set up in Relli village of Vizianagaram District of Andhra Pradesh.
- It will be established under Thirteenth Schedule to Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 (No. 6 of 2014).
- Cabinet has also approved provision of funds of Rs. 420 crore for the first phase of expenditure towards establishment of Central Tribal University.

CABINET APPROVES FILLING OF PADUR STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVES IN KARNATAKA

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the filling of Padur Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) in Karnataka by overseas National Oil Companies (NOCs).
- The filling of the SPR will be under PPP model and is being undertaken to reduce budgetary support of Union Government.

- The SPR facility at Padur is an underground rock cavern with total capacity of 2.5 million metric tonnes (MMT) having four compartments of 0.625 MMT each.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd. (ISPRL) has constructed and commissioned underground rock caverns for storage of total 5.33 MMT of crude oil at three locations namely Mangalore (1.5 MMT), Vishakhapatnam (1.33 MMT), and Padur (2.5 MMT).
- The total 5.33 MMT capacity under Phase-I of the SPR programme is currently estimated to supply approximately 9.5 days of India's crude requirement.
- Government has also given 'in principle' approval for establishing additional 6.5 MMT SPR facilities at Chandikhol in Odisha and Padur in Karnataka in phase II which is expected to augment India's energy security by 11.5 days according the consumption data for FY 2017-18.

INDIA OVERTAKES US TO BECOME 2ND LARGEST SMARTPHONE MARKET BEHIND CHINA

- According to research firm Canalys, India has overtaken US to become second largest smartphone market in the July-September 2018 quarter.
- India saw a shipment of 40.4 million units during third quarter and was second to China where 100.6 million smartphones were shipped.
- Smartphone shipment in US was at 40 million units.

DETAILS:

- Worldwide smartphone shipments fell by 7.2% year-on-year to 348.9 million units during July-September 2018, a fourth consecutive quarter of decline.
- This was also worst third quarter performance since 2015.
- Seven of the top ten markets recorded year-on-year (y-o-y) declines, mainly caused by lengthening smartphone replacement cycles, worsening international trading conditions and competition from major Chinese vendors.
- The three markets (among top 10) that registered growth were Indonesia (13.2% increase y-o-y to 8.9 million units), Russia (11.5% jump y-o-y to 8.8 million units) and Germany (2.4% rise y-o-y to 5.5 million units).
- China's smartphone shipment declined 15.2% y-o-y, India by 1.1% and US by 0.4% in September 2018 quarter.
- Samsung led vendor tally with 20.4% share in said quarter, followed by Huawei (14.9%), Apple (13.4%), Xiaomi (9.6%), and Oppo (8.9%).
- The worldwide smartphone market faces unprecedented challenge, while its dynamics are changing rapidly at both vendor and country level.
- This is providing growth opportunities for aggressive vendors with speed to respond quickly to market changes.

DEFENCE MINISTRY ENHANCES FINANCIAL POWERS OF VICE CHIEFS OF THREE SERVICES

- Union Defence Ministry has enhanced financial powers of three vice chiefs of the armed forces from Rs 100 crore to Rs 500 crore i.e. five times.
- This comes after Vice Chiefs were granted additional powers to carry out specific procurement to ensure operational preparedness in March 2018.

DETAILS:

- The decision to enhance financial powers of three Vice Chiefs of the armed forces was taken to give fillip to procurement of arms and ammunition and upgrade of defence preparedness.
- With the new delegation, the Vice Chiefs will be now able to exercise financial powers upto five times more than existing powers with enhanced ceiling.
- A number of initiatives have been taken by the Defence Ministry in the recent past to simplify and streamline the procedures and decentralise the decision-making through delegation of powers.

VICE CHIEFS OF THE TRI-SERVICES:

- Vice Chief of the Army Staff - Lieutenant General Devraj Anbu
- Vice Chief of the Naval Staff - Vice Admiral Ajit Kumar
- Vice Chief of the Air Staff - Air Marshal Anil Khosla

CABINET APPROVES LEASING OUT SIX AIRPORTS THROUGH PPP

- Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved leasing out six airports of Airports Authority of India (AAI) for operation, management and development under Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the first phase.
- This will be done through Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee (PPPAC).

BENEFITS OF THE PPP MODEL:

- PPP in infrastructure projects brings efficiency in service delivery, enterprise, expertise and professionalism apart from harnessing needed investments in public sector.
- The PPP in airport infrastructure projects has brought world class infrastructure at airports, delivery of efficient and timely services to airport passengers, augmenting revenue stream to AAI without making any investment, etc. of these, for development of Greenfield Airports.
- Presently, Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad and Cochin airports are being managed under PPP model.
- PPP airports in India have been ranked among top 5 in their respective categories by Airports Council International (ACI) in terms of Airport Service Quality (ASQ).
- These PPP experiments have helped to create world class airports and also helped AAI in enhancing its revenues and focusing on developing airports and air navigation infrastructure in rest of the country.

JAWAHAR LAL SARIN PRESENTED WITH FRANCE'S HIGHEST CIVILIAN HONOUR

- Renowned French scholar Jawahar Lal Sarin was presented with France's highest civilian honour Chevalier de la Lgion d'Honneur.
- He was presented with this award in recognition of his outstanding contribution to enhancing Indo-French cultural cooperation and promoting French language.
- Jawahar Lal Sarin is the president of Alliance française de Delhi's governing body.
- He had studied French for five years at the Punjab University, Chandigarh, and later at the Sorbonne University, Paris.

ABOUT LEGION D'HONNEUR (LEGION OF HONOUR):

- It is the highest civilian award given by the French Government to a person for his/her outstanding service to France, regardless of the nationality.
- It was instituted in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte.
- The order (merit for both military and civil merits) is divided into five degrees of increasing distinction: Chevalier (Knight), Officier (Officer), Commandeur (Commander), Grand officier (Grand Officer), and Grand-croix (Grand Cross).
- Actors Amitabh Bachchan and Shahrukh Khan were also awarded in 2007 and 2014.
- Other Indians who were also awarded in the past are: Amartya Sen, Pandit Ravi Shankar, Zubin Mehta, Lata Mangeshkar, JRD Tata and Ratan Tata among others.

CCEA APPROVES STRATEGIC SALE OF GOVERNMENT EQUITY IN DREDGING CORPORATION OF INDIA

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved strategic disinvestment of 100% Government of India's shares in Dredging Corporation of India Limited (DCIL) to a consortium of four ports.
- Presently, Central Government holds 73.44% shares in DCIL.
- The consortium of four ports consists of Vishakhapatnam Port Trust (Andhra Pradesh), Paradeep Port Trust (Odisha), Jawahar Lal Nehru Port Trust (Maharashtra) and Kandla Port Trust (Gujarat).
- The Government's divestment target for fiscal 2018-19 was Rs 80,000 crore and so far it has garnered over Rs 15,000 crore from PSU stake sales.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STAKE SALE?

- Strategic sale of DCIL will further facilitate linkage of dredging activities with ports, keeping in view the role of DCIL in expansion of dredging activity in the country as well as potential scope for diversification of ports into third party dredging.
- The co-sharing of facilities between company as well as ports shall lead to savings for ports.
- This will also further provide opportunities for larger investment in DCIL as integration with ports shall help ineffective vertical linkage in value chain.

ABOUT DREDGING CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED (DCIL):

- It is a miniratna public sector unit (PSU) engaged in the business of dredging.
- It does dredging for Indian seaports exclusively.
- It is involved in capital dredging, beach nourishment, and land reclamation.
- It was established in March 1976 and is headquartered in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh.
- It reports to the Ministry of Shipping.
- Almost all maintenance dredging in Indian seaports is carried out by DCI.
- It also occasionally dredges at foreign seaports in countries such as Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Dubai.

NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES DAY: NOVEMBER 9

- National Legal Services Day (NLSD) is observed every year in India on 9th November to spread awareness for ensuring reasonable fair and justice procedure for all citizens.
- The aim of celebrating this day is to offer free of charge, proficient and legal services to the people belonging to weaker sections of society.
- It also seeks to make sure availability of free services to weaker section people as well as making them conscious about their rights.
- On this day, Lok Adalats are organized across the country to make safe the legal system operations and encourages righteousness of people on the equal.
- Besides, variety of legal literacy camps and functions are also organized to increase awareness of free legal aid towards every weak citizen of the country.

ABOUT NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES DAY (NLSD):

- It was started by the Supreme Court of India in 1995 to provide help and support to poor and weaker sections of the society.
- It was established with a mandate to offer help and support to weaker and poor group of sections of people which may be women, disabled persons, Scheduled Tribes (STs), children, Scheduled Castes (SCs), human trafficking victims as well as natural calamities victims.

PK DASH, AKHILESH RANJAN AND NEENA KUMAR INDUCTED AS MEMBERS OF CBDT

- Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed three senior IRS officers K Dash, Akhilesh Ranjan and Neena Kumar as new members of Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).
- All three members belong to 1982-batch of the Indian Revenue Service (IRS).
- Prior to this appointment, Dash was serving as principal chief commissioner of I-T (PCCIT) in Bhopal, Ranjan and Kumar were serving as PCCsIT in Delhi.
- With these three new joinings, CBDT now has a full house strength of five members and chairman.
- The two other members of CBDT are IRS officers Aditya Vikram and P C Mody while the board's Chairman is Sushil Chandra.

ABOUT CENTRAL BOARD OF DIRECT TAXES (CBDT):

- CBDT is the nodal policy-making body of Income Tax (IT) department under Finance Ministry.

- It is a statutory authority established under The Central Board of Revenue Act, 1963.
- It is the supreme body in India for framing policies related to direct taxes and is also tasked to enforce direct tax laws in the country.
- The composition of CBDT includes a Chairman and six members.

CIMAP SIGNS AGREEMENT WITH US-BASED RIFM FOR IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF FRAGRANT OILS

- Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) has signed a MoU with US-based Research Institute for Fragrant Materials (RIFM) for improving the quality of fragrant oils.
- It was signed at conclusion of two-day annual conference of International Fragrance Association (IFA) in Paris, capital city of France.
- Team of RIFM had visited the Lucknow headquarter of CIMAP earlier in 2018 to increase the acceptability and demand of Indian fragrances on a global level.
- The deliberations during the visit resulted in signing of the MoU.

BENEFITS OF THIS MOU:

- It will go long way in standardizing fragrant material produced in India and bring it to an international level.
- It will give a big boost to fragrance quality in India as RIFM internationally standardizes the quality of fragrant materials.
- It will give impetus to aroma mission of Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR) which aims at enhancing production of fragrant materials.

ABOUT CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF MEDICINAL AND AROMATIC PLANTS (CIMAP):

- Central Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (CIMAP) is a frontier plant research laboratory of CSIR.
- It was originally established as Central Indian Medicinal Plants Organisation (CIMPO) in 1959.
- It is headquartered in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- It has four research centers situated in Bangalore, Hyderabad, Pantnagar and Purara (near Bageshwar, Uttarakhand).
- It is engaged in the field of science and business of medicinal and aromatic plants (MAPs).
- It steers multidisciplinary high quality research in biological and chemical sciences and extending technologies and services to farmers and entrepreneurs of MAPs.

SIMBEX: SINGAPORE-INDIA MARITIME BILATERAL EXERCISE TO BE HELD OFF ANDAMAN SEA AND BAY OF BENGAL

- India and Singapore will hold 25th joint naval exercise SIMBEX, acronym for Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise from November 10 to 21 in India off the Andaman Sea and the Bay of Bengal.
- SIMBEX 2018 will mark silver jubilee of the exercise and will be the largest edition since 1994 in terms of scale and complexity.

ABOUT SIMBEX 2018:

- It will witness diverse range of exercises at sea such as live weapon drills including multiple missile firings, heavy weight torpedo (HWT) and medium range gun and anti-submarine rocket firings; advanced anti-submarine warfare (ASW) exercises, submarine rescue demonstrations; integrated surface and anti-air warfare (AAW); unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) operations and cross deck helicopter flying among others.
- The initial first harbour phase of the exercise will be held at Port Blair followed by the Sea Phase in the Andaman Sea.
- Second harbour phase will be held at Visakhapatnam.
- Final sea phase will be held in the Bay of Bengal.
- The number of missiles and torpedo firings in this exercise will be the largest ever undertaken by Indian Navy with any foreign Navy till date.
- It will also witness highest numbers and variety of platforms fielded by both sides.
- Indian Navy for this exercise will be deploying Ranvir class destroyer - INS Ranvijay, two Project 17 multirole stealth frigates - INS Satpura and INS Sahyadri, Project 28 ASW corvette - INS Kadmat, Project 25A missile corvettes, INS Kirch, OPVs INS Sumedha and INS Sukanya, Fleet Support Ship, INS Shakti, Sindhughosh Class submarine, INS Sindhukirti, P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol and ASW aircraft from INAS 312, Dornier 228 Maritime Patrol aircraft from INAS 311, Mk 132 Hawk AJTs from INAS 551 and integral helicopters such as the UH3H, Seaking 42 B, Seaking 42C and Chetak utility helicopters.
- Singapore Navy will be deploying two Formidable Class stealth frigates - RSS Formidable and RSS Steadfast, two Missile Corvettes, RSS Vigour and RSS Valiant, one Littoral Mission Vessel - RSS Unity, Archer class Submarine, RSS Swordsman, 'Swift Rescue' Deep Sea Rescue Vehicle (DSRV), Fokker F50 maritime reconnaissance aircraft, embarked S70B helicopters and Scan Eagle unmanned aerial systems.

ASHOK KUMAR GUPTA APPOINTED AS CHAIRPERSON OF COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA

- Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appointed former IAS officer Ashok Kumar Gupta as Chairperson Competition Commission of India (CCI).
- He replaces acting Chairperson Sudhir Mittal.
- He will be in office till October 25, 2022 i.e. till he attains age of 65 years or until further orders, whichever is the earliest.
- Gupta is a former IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre.

ABOUT COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA (CCI):

- CCI is a quasi-judicial statutory body established under The Competition Act, 2002.
- It was established in October 2003 and became fully functional in May 2009.
- Section 8(1) of the Act provides CCI shall consist of Chairperson and not less than two and not more than six Members.
- Presently, Chairperson and four Members are in position.

- It has been functioning as a collegium right from its inception.
- It functions under Ministry of Cooperate Affairs.
- Its seeks to eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in markets of India.
- It also gives opinion on competition issues on reference received from statutory authority established under any law and undertakes competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.

INDIAN ARMY INDUCTS 3 ARTILLERY GUN SYSTEM

- Indian Army inducted three major globally combat proven artillery gun system viz. M777 A2 ultra light howitzers (ULH), K-9 Vajra-tracked self-propelled guns and Composite Gun Towing Vehicle at Deolali Field Firing Range in Maharashtra.
- These are the first artillery gun systems to be inducted by Indian Army in three decades.
- Last inducted was Bofors artillery gun system, procured from Sweden in early 1980s.

DETAILS:

M777 A2 ULTRA LIGHT HOWITZERS:

- It is a 155mm, 39 Calibre ULHs towed artillery gun, with maximum range of 24-30km procured from US.
- It being versatile and light weight can be heli-lifted, thus providing employment flexibility in different terrains.
- It will be procured under the India-US deal signed in November 2016 for 145 M777 Ultra-Light Howitzers.
- Under this deal, 25 guns will be imported and rest will be assembled in India by BAE Systems in partnership with Mahindra Defense.
- Deliveries will be completed by mid-2021.
- The gun systems induction gives a major impetus to the Make In India initiative.
- It will bring a new level of capability to the artillery unit by offering rapid deployment and extreme accuracy.

K9 VAJRA GUNS:

- It is a 155-mm, 52-calibre self-propelled gun with maximum range of 40 km.
- It will be imported from South Korea.
- It is the customized version of original K9 Thunder artillery gun for desert conditions.
- Total 100 units will be procured by Army, and first 10 will be imported in semi knocked down form from South Korea and assembled by L&T in India and rest 90 will be manufactured in India.
- The first regiment of K9 will be equipped by July 2019 and all 100 guns will be delivered by November 2020.

COMPOSITE GUN TOWING VEHICLE:

- It is a 6×6 field artillery tractor that is indigenously developed by Ashok Leyland.
- It has cross country capability and will replace the ageing fleet of artillery gun towing vehicles.

LONG COHABITATION IS PRESUMED MARRIAGE: SC

- Supreme Court has upheld the presumption that couple who live together as husband and wife are legally married and the woman can claim maintenance under Section 125 of Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC).
- The apex court held that law presumes in favour of marriage and against concubinage when man and woman have cohabited continuously for a number of years.

ABOUT THE COURT RULING:

- A man who has lived with a woman for a long time and even though they may not have undergone legal necessities of a valid marriage, is liable to pay the woman maintenance if he deserts her.
- In this case, the man should not be allowed to benefit from legal loopholes by enjoying advantages of de facto marriage without undertaking duties and obligations.
- Any other interpretation in this case will lead woman to vagrancy and destitution, which provision of maintenance in Section 125 of CrPC is meant to prevent.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- This judgment of SC was based on an appeal filed by a woman against Karnataka High Court decision of June 2009.
- The High Court had set aside family court order, directing man she lived with since 1998 and had two children by to pay maintenance.
- Their relationship in this case was solemnised in a temple and husband of woman had later abandoned the family.
- The family court had ordered him to pay maintenance to woman and their children on monthly basis.
- This court had held the couple is accepted as husband and wife by society.
- The man had however moved appeal in High Court, which pronounced that there was no proof that she was his legally-wedded wife.

LADAKH RESTORATION PROJECT WINS 2018 UNESCO ASIA-PACIFIC AWARD FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION

- The restoration of an aristocratic house project from partial ruin state in Ladakh undertaken by LAMO (Ladakh Arts and Media Organisation) Center has won 2018 UNESCO Asia-Pacific award for Cultural Heritage conservation in Award of Distinction category.
- LAMO is public charitable trust established to articulate an alternative vision for the arts and media in Ladakh.

DETAILS:.

- The restored structure is strategically located at the foot of Leh palace, contributes to continuity of historic townscape of 17th century.
- Its recovery establishes precedent for conserving non-monumental urban fabric of Leh Old Town.
- Under restoration project, LAMO had used salvaged and local building materials and indigenous construction techniques and skillfully introduced modern amenities to assure its ongoing use.

OTHER CATEGORY AWARDEES:

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE:

- It was awarded to restoration project of early 20th-century Shijo-cho Ofune-hoko Float Machiya in Japan.
- It celebrates Kyoto culture by safeguarding city's endangered wooden townhouse typology as well as iconic annual Gion Festival.

AWARD OF DISTINCTION:

- LAMO Center, Ladakh, India.

AWARD OF MERIT:

- 5 Martin Place, Sydney (Australia); Aijing Zhuang, Fujian (China); Commercial Bank of Honjo Warehouse, Saitama (Japan).

HONOURABLE MENTION:

- Hengdaohezi Town, Heilongjiang (China), Rajabai Clock Tower & University of Mumbai Library Building, Mumbai (India), Ruttonsee Muljee Jetha Fountain, Mumbai (India).

NEW DESIGN IN HERITAGE CONTEXTS:

- Kaomai Estate 1955, Chiang Mai (Thailand) and Harts Mill, Port Adelaide, (Australia).

ABOUT UNESCO ASIA-PACIFIC AWARDS FOR CULTURAL HERITAGE CONSERVATION:

- It was established in 2000.
- It recognizes efforts of private individuals and organizations that have successfully conserved structures and buildings of heritage value in the region.
- It aims to encourage other property owners to undertake conservation projects within their communities, either independently or by seeking PPP (public-private partnerships).

GLOBAL IT CHALLENGE FOR YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES HELD IN NEW DELHI

- The Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities (GITC) 2018 was held in New Delhi from November 9 to 11, 2018.

- It was co-hosted by Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of Korea and its organising partners namely Rehabilitation International Korea and LG Group.

DETAILS:

- GICT is being held every year in Asia-Pacific region and such events were held in past in countries like South Korea, China, Thailand, Vietnam etc.
- The objective of GICT was to leverage IT skills among youth with disabilities and also to spread awareness about application of Information and Computer Technology in enhancing the quality of life of persons with disabilities.
- The event saw participation of around 300 participants including 120 Youth with disabilities from 24 Asia Pacific countries.
- It also had an IT Forum in which countries presented their work and achievement in ensuring accessibility to persons with disabilities in IT sector.

SRI LANKAN PM LEAVES PRESIDENTS PARTY, JOINS NEWLY-FORMED SRI LANKA PEOPLE'S PARTY

- Newly appointed Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa ended his five-decade-long association with Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and joined newly-formed Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP).
- SLFP was founded by his father Don Alwin Rajapaksa in 1951.
- Rajapaksa's joining SLPP signals that he will contest snap polls, under his own party banner and not that of President Maithripala Sirisena's Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP).
- SLPP was formed in 2017 by Rajapaksa's supporters as platform for his re-entry into politics.
- In February 2018 local council elections SLPP won two-third of total 340 seats.

ABOUT THE SRI LANKAN POLITICAL AND CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS:

- In January 2015 Presidential election, then President Mahinda Rajapaksa (who was in office for a decade from 2005) was unexpectedly defeated by his then deputy Sirisena with support from Ranil Wickremesinghe's United National Party (UNP).
- But, power-sharing arrangement between President Sirisena and PM Wickremesinghe in later times became increasingly uncertain on several policy matters, mainly on economy and security.
- Further rift had developed between them over policy towards China and India, with Wickremesinghe favouring Indian investment as counter to Chinese inroads in Sri Lankan infrastructure projects and Sirisena's intention to contest 2020 presidential election under Mr Wickremesinghe's party.
- In October 2018 Sirisena had abruptly removed Wickremesinghe and replaced with Rajapaksa, a pro-China strongman as new Prime Minister.
- This move had plunged Sri Lanka into political and constitutional crisis.
- Sirisena had suspended parliamentary proceedings and later dissolved it, after it became evident that there is not enough support in House to prove Rajapaksa's premiership.

NATIONAL EDUCATION DAY: 11 NOVEMBER

- National Education Day of India is celebrated every year on 11 November to commemorate the birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of independent India.
- This year, it was the 130th birth anniversary of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad.
- As first education minister of India, Azad had oversaw establishment of national education system with free primary education and modern institutions of higher education.
- He is also credited with the establishment of Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and laid foundation of University Grants Commission, an important institution to supervise and advance higher education throughout the country.

DETAILS:

- National Education Day was instituted by Union Ministry of Human Resource Development in 2008 announced to commemorate the birthday of Maulana Abul Kalam Azad for recalling his contribution to cause of education in India.
- Its objective is to strengthen educational institutions and to raise quality of education to greater heights.
- It also seeks to remember Maulana Azad's contribution in laying the foundations of education system in an independent India as well as to evaluate our current performance in this field.

ABOUT MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD:

- He was born on 11 November 1888 and died on 22 February 1958.
- He was a senior Muslim leader of Indian National Congress during Indian independence movement.
- He is commonly remembered as Maulana Azad (word Maulana is honorific meaning 'Our Master') and he had adopted Azad (Free) as his pen name.
- He had played an important role in foundation of Jamia Millia Islamia at Aligarh in Uttar Pradesh.
- He assisted in shifting campus of university from Aligarh to New Delhi in 1934.

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD AND THE FREEDOM MOVEMENT:

- During his young age, he rose to prominence through his work as a journalist, publishing works critical of British Raj and espousing causes of Indian nationalism.
- He became the leader of Khilafat Movement, during which he came into close contact with Mahatma Gandhi.
- He later became an enthusiastic supporter of Gandhi's ideas of non-violent civil disobedience and worked to organise the non-co-operation movement in protest of the 1919 Rowlatt Acts.
- He was committed to Gandhi's ideals, including promoting Swadeshi (indigenous) products and cause of Swaraj (Self-rule) for India.
- In 1923, at the age of 35, he became youngest person to serve as President of Indian National Congress.
- He was one of main organizers of the Dharasana Satyagraha in 1931 and emerged as one of the most important national leaders of the time, prominently leading causes of Hindu-Muslim unity as well as espousing secularism and socialism.
- He served as Congress president from 1940 to 1945, during which Quit India rebellion was launched.
- He also worked for Hindu-Muslim unity through the Al-Hilal newspaper.

ADB TO PROVIDE US \$13 MILLION LOAN TO EESL TO PROMOTE EFFICIENT ENERGY USAGE IN INDIA

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide US \$13 million loan to Energy Efficiency Services (EESL) to promote efficient energy usage in India.
- It will be provided by Global Environment Facility (GEF) as part of US \$200 million ADB-financed Demand-Side Energy Efficiency Sector Project.

DETAILS:

- ADB funding is helping EESL finance energy service utilities for installing established energy-efficient technologies such as light-emitting diode (LED) street-lights with municipalities, while exploring newer technologies and their self-sustaining business models.
- The additional financing for project through GEF grant will be used by EESL for making investments in new and emerging technologies, including trigeneration, efficient motors and air-conditioners, smart meters/grids and associated new business models to expand use of such innovations.

ABOUT ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK (ADB):

- ADB is a regional development bank based out of Asia.
- It aims to promote social and economic development in Asia by achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.
- It was established in December 1966.
- It is headquartered at Ortigas Centre in Manila, Philippines.
- It has total 67 members, of which 48 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.

INSPIRE 2018 ORGANIZED IN NEW DELHI BY EESL AND WORLD BANK

- The second edition of International Symposium to Promote Innovation & Research in Energy Efficiency (INSPIRE 2018) was launched in New Delhi.
- It was jointly organised by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) and World Bank.
- The three-day symposium focused on enhancing grid management, e-Mobility, financial instruments and technologies for energy efficiency in India.
- Moreover awards to four pathbreaking innovations in clean energy and energy efficiency were also given as part of #InnovateToINSPIRE, a first-of-its-kind energy innovation challenge.

DETAILS:

- #InnovateToINSPIRE challenge was organized by EESL and World resources Institute (WRI) in August-October 2018 in run-up to INSPIRE 2018.
- The challenge had invited participants to submit sustainable and scalable solutions to seven specific challenges spanning grid management, e-Mobility, energy efficient technologies and financial instruments.
- Four winners were selected from 94 entries by eminent jury comprised of Indian and international experts in the field of energy.

- The winning entries received award of Rs. 5 lakhs, each, along with mentoring and guidance from EESL to help them bring their solutions to market.

ABOUT ENERGY EFFICIENCY SERVICES LIMITED (EESL):

- EESL was set up under Union Ministry of Power to facilitate implementation of energy efficiency projects.
- It is a joint venture of NTPC Limited, Power Finance Corporation (PFC), Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) and POWERGRID.
- It leads market-related actions of National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency (NMEEE).
- It also acts as the resource centre for capacity building of State DISCOMs.
- It is also implementing the world's largest energy efficiency portfolio in the country.

SPINNAKER: LARGEST BRAIN-MIMICKING SUPERCOMPUTER SWITCHED ON

The world's largest supercomputer Spiking Neural Network Architecture (SpiNNaker) machine designed to work in the same way as human brain was switched on for the first time.

ABOUT SPINNAKER:

- It is designed and built at University of Manchester in UK.
- It can model more biological neurons in real time than any other machine on planet.
- Biological neurons are basic brain cells present in nervous system that communicate by emitting 'spikes' of pure electro-chemical energy.
- It is neuromorphic computing that uses large scale computer systems containing electronic circuits to mimic these spikes in a machine.
- It is capable of completing more than 200 million million actions per second, with each of its chips having 100 million transistors.
- It is unique as it mimics the massively parallel communication architecture of brain, sending billions of small amounts of information simultaneously to thousands of different destinations.
- It is also unique because, unlike traditional computers, it does not communicate by sending large amounts of information from point A to B via standard network.

POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS:

- It has a massive potential for neurological breakthroughs in science such as pharmaceutical testing.
- It can be used to control a robot which can interpret real-time visual information and navigate towards certain objects while ignoring others.
- It can also help to unlock some of the secrets of how human brain works by running unprecedentedly large scale simulations.
- It will allow roboticists to design large scale neural networks into mobile robots so they can walk, talk and move with flexibility and low power.

IIT-MADRAS DEVELOPS PORTABLE COLD STORAGE DEVICE

- Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Madras has developed a portable solar-powered Cold Storage device with 500 kg capacity for storing vegetables and fruits, among other items.
- The device will help farmers store their produce for sufficient time so that it does not get spoilt before it is sold, thereby preventing wastage of agricultural produce.
- The first unit of the device was deployed at a farm in Madurantakam in the Kancheepuram district in Tamil Nadu.

ABOUT THE SOLAR-POWERED COLD STORAGE DEVICE:

- It has been developed under a project funded by Department of Science and Technology (Ministry of Science and Technology) and IIT-M.
- It provides storage facility with temperature ranging between 4 and 10 Degrees Celsius.
- Vegetables, leaves, flowers and fruits can be stored for 24 hours in the device.
- Each device is enough for 5 or 6 acres of land or for a group of three to four farmers.
- The unit uses thermal energy storage.
- The photovoltaic-powered refrigeration system is used to charge the indoor thermal battery in the form of latent heat during day time and used to maintain a temperature of 10 Degrees Celcius for 20-24 hours.
- Each unit costs between Rs 5.5 to Rs 6 lakh and the storage capacity could be scaled down based on requirement.

WORLD PNEUMONIA DAY: NOVEMBER 12

- World Pneumonia Day is observed globally every year on November 12 to generate awareness about 'Pneumonia' disease.
- The observance of this day aims to highlight the severity of Pneumonia and bring together people from all over world to promote the prevention and treatment of the disease.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DAY:

- Raise awareness about Pneumonia, the world's leading killer of children under the age of five.
- Promote interventions to protect against, prevent and treat Pneumonia.
- Generate action to combat Pneumonia.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- World Pneumonia Day was first observed in 2009 after more than 100 organisations joined together form Global Coalition against Child Pneumonia.
- At present, global coalition comprises of over 140 NGOs, academic institutions, government agencies and foundations.

WHAT IS PNEUMONIA?

- Pneumonia is a form of acute respiratory infection that affects the lungs.
- It is caused by inflammation of the airspaces in the lungs.

- Lungs are made up of small sacs called alveoli, which are filled with air when a healthy person breathes.
- When an individual has Pneumonia, alveoli are filled with pus and fluid, which makes breathing painful and limits oxygen intake.

CAUSES:

- It is caused by a number of infectious agents, including viruses, bacteria and fungi.
- The most common are *Streptococcus pneumoniae* (most common cause of bacterial Pneumonia in children), *Haemophilus influenzae* type b (Hib) (second most common cause of bacterial Pneumonia), Respiratory syncytial virus is the most common viral cause of Pneumonia.

TREATMENT:

- Vaccinations are available against several common organisms that are known to cause Pneumonia.
- Besides, antibiotics can also treat Pneumonia by controlling the bacterial or fungal infection.

PUBLIC SERVICE BROADCASTING DAY: NOVEMBER 12

- Public Service Broadcasting Day is observed every year across India on November 12 to commemorate the first and last visit of Mahatma Gandhi (Father of the Nation) to All India Radio Studio (AIR), New Delhi in 1947.
- On this occasion, artistes of Akashvani Bhawan, Delhi performed Vaishnav Jan Toh and other bhajans and school children performed Rabindra sangeet.

DETAILS:

- Gandhiji had visited AIR studio to address displaced people from Pakistan who were temporarily settled in Kurukshetra, Haryana after the partition of Indian subcontinent.
- It was his first and last live broadcast.
- In this broadcast, Gandhiji had decided to convey his message through radio, as he couldn't visit refugees of Partition, stationed at Kurukshetra in Haryana.
- This day was instituted in 2000 as Jan Prasaran Diwas (Public Service Broadcasting Day) after it was conceptualised by Suhas Borker, Convenor of Jan Prasar.
- This day seeks to spread Gandhiji's belief that the aim of media was public service.
- Accordingly, he used to run several newspapers and understood power of media.
- He was completely against commercial ads and believed that only those non-commercial ads should be accepted that serve some public purpose.

INDIA AND MOROCCO SIGN AN AGREEMENT ON MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN CRIMINAL MATTERS

- India and Morocco have signed an agreement on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, mainly aimed at containing menace of terrorists funding.
- It was signed in New Delhi by Union Minister of State (MoS) for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju from the Indian side while Minister of Justice Mohamed Aujjar signed on behalf of Morocco Government.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE AGREEMENT?

- The agreement will help to strengthen bilateral cooperation between India and Morocco.
- It will enhance effectiveness and provide a broad legal framework for prevention, investigation and prosecution of crimes as well as in tracing, restraint and confiscation of funds meant to finance terrorist acts.
- It will help in countering threats posed by organized crime and terrorism.

TWITTER LAUNCHES #POWEROF18 CAMPAIGN TO BOOST YOUTH ENGAGEMENT FOR 2019 POLLS

- Twitter India has launched #PowerOf18 campaign aimed at encouraging youth to contribute in public debates and participate in civic engagement for the 2019 general elections.
- The initiative was launched by Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey and Maya Hari, Vice-President and Managing Director, Asia Pacific, Twitter during a townhall chat with the students of IIT Delhi.

ABOUT THE #POWEROF18 CAMPAIGN:

- The campaign will serve as a resource for young Indians to find more information about elections, support social causes they are passionate about and join public conversation.
- It is supported by Twitter's mission to serve the public conversation and work with more like-minded partners and personalities to create awareness of importance of voting.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- In a nationwide survey conducted with 3,622 youth respondents from India, Twitter found rising importance of social media for information consumption.
- It found that an overwhelming 94% of respondents indicated that they would vote in the upcoming elections.
- Nearly 60% of youth surveyed would turn to social media to find out what's happening in India and around world, a percentage higher than all other mediums including newspapers.

INDIAN HEALTH FUND: 4 INNOVATORS SELECTED FOR EARLY DETECTION OF TB, MALARIA BY TATA TRUST AND THE GLOBAL FUND

- Tata Trust and The Global Fund backed Indian Health Fund (IHF) has chosen four innovators for early detection of Tuberculosis (TB) and Malaria to effectively tackle & eradicate these diseases.
- Three selected innovators are related to TB and one to Malaria.
- They were selected from proposals received for its second Request for Proposals.

DETAILS:

- The aim for selecting these innovators is at leveraging technology for improving early detection and prompt treatment along with promoting diagnostics feasible for primary health care facilities.

- It also aims to supporting national efforts to effectively tackle & eradicate these diseases which are crucial health challenges in India.
- Government has set a target of eliminating TB by 2025 and Malaria by 2030.
- India contributes to 27% of the global TB burden and 68% of all Malaria cases in the Southeast Asia region.

ABOUT INDIAN HEALTH FUND (IHF):

- IHF was launched in 2016 by Tata Trusts in collaboration with The Global Fund, to drive innovations towards key infectious disease challenges in India.
- It supports individuals and organisations with already germinated innovative strategies, services, products, such that they become sustainable and scalable solutions in addressing TB and Malaria.
- The initiative is not a fellowship programme to do research from scratch.
- It is a long-term exercise aligned with the country's goal of eliminating TB by 2025 and Malaria by 2030.
- It will promote innovative solutions such that they are widely accessible and are affordable.

GLOBAL COOLING INNOVATION SUMMIT HELD IN NEW DELHI

- The first Global Cooling Innovation Summit was held in New Delhi.
- It was inaugurated by Union Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan.
- It was jointly organised by Department of Science and Technology along with Alliance for An Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE), Rocky Mountain Institute, Conservation X Labs and CEPT University.

ABOUT GLOBAL COOLING INNOVATION SUMMIT:

- The two-day summit was first-of-its-kind solutions-focused event organised to explore concrete means and pathways to address climate threat that comes from the growing demand from room air conditioners.
- It witnessed participation from distinguished speakers from around world, including innovators, philanthropists, venture capitalists, and other industry leaders.
- The launch Global Cooling Prize was also announced on the sidelines of this summit.
- It will be an international competition to incentivise development of residential cooling technology that will have five times less climate impact in comparison to standard Room Air Conditioning (RAC) units sold currently.

PM INAUGURATES COUNTRY'S FIRST MULTI-MODAL TERMINAL CONSTRUCTED ON RIVER GANGA IN VARANASI

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated India's first Inland Multi-Modal Terminal Port on river Ganga at Ramnagar in Varanasi and received first container cargo belonging to PepsiCo.
- It is the first of four Multi-Modal Terminals being constructed on National Waterways-I (NW1) on River Ganga as part of World Bank-aided Jal Marg Vikas project of Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).
- The other three terminals are under construction at Sahibganj, Haldia and Gazipur.
- It enables commercial navigation of vessels with capacity of 1500-2,000 DWT on river Ganga.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- The Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) was approved in January 2017 for capacity augmentation of navigation on NW-1.
- It was approved at a cost of Rs 5369.18 crore with technical assistance and investment support of World Bank.
- Following this, IWA in February 2018 had signed project agreement with World Bank for Jal Marg Vikas Project.
- World Bank provided \$375 million loan for the project.

ABOUT THE JAL MARG VIKAS PROJECT (JMVP):

- The project aims to enable commercial navigation of vessels with capacity of 1500 - 2000 tons on NW1.
- It includes development of fairway, multi-modal terminals at Varanasi, Haldia and Sahibganj, modern River Information System (RIS), strong river navigation system, Digital Global Positioning System (DGPS), night navigation facilities, construction of navigational lock at Farakka.
- It will result in environment-friendly, fuel-efficient and cost-effective alternative mode of transportation, especially for bulk, hazardous goods and over-dimensional cargo.
- Its development and operations will provide direct employment generation to 46000 people and indirect employment of 84000 in states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, West Bengal.

ISPRL SIGNS MOU WITH ADNOC TO EXPLORE STORAGE OF CRUDE OIL AT PADUR UNDERGROUND FACILITY IN KARNATAKA

- Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd. (ISPRL) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Abu Dhabi National Oil Company (ADNOC) to explore storage of crude oil at Padur underground facility in Karnataka.
- This follows arrival of final shipment of initial delivery of ADNOC crude to be stored in another ISPRL underground facility in Mangaluru, which will store 5.86 million barrels.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- ISPRL is Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV), which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB) under Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

DETAILS OF THE MOU:

- The MoU mandates ADNOC to store crude oil at the Padur Strategic Petroleum Reserve which has a storage capacity 2.5 million-tonne (~17 million barrels) capacity for emergency needs.
- ADNOC will store crude in two compartments at Padur.
- ADNOC is the only foreign oil and gas company, so far to invest, by way of crude oil in India's strategic petroleum reserves program.
- This will help to ensure energy security to India and enable ADNOC to efficiently and competitively meet Indian market demand.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- Under the Phase I of Strategic Petroleum Reserves Program, SPRL has already built 5.33 million tons of underground storage capacity at three locations, Visakhapatnam (1.33 million tons), Mangalore (1.5 million tons) and Padur (2.5 million tons), that can meet around 10 days of the country's oil needs.
- In June 2018, Government announced phase II of program for creation of two new reserves, a 4-million-tons storage facility at Chandikhol in Odisha, and an additional 2.5-million-tons facility at Padur.
- The combined strategic reserve capacity of existing and newly announced facilities will be 15.33 million tons and will provide around 22 days of emergency coverage for India's crude oil requirements.

6TH INDIAN SOCIAL WORK CONGRESS IN NEW DELHI

- The 6th Indian Social Work Congress was held in New Delhi.
- It was jointly organized by National Association of Professional Social Workers in India (NAPSWI) and Department of Social Work (Delhi School of Social Work), University of Delhi.
- Dr. Martha Farrell was posthumously honoured with Lifetime Achievement Award during this edition of congress for her lifelong work towards gender equality, women's empowerment and prevention of sexual harassment at workplace.

DETAILS:

- The theme of 6th ISWC 2018 was "Human Development and Social Inclusion: Imperatives for Social Work Education and Practice".
- This theme takes into consideration contemporary concerns of local to international community within present context and in consonance with the social work value framework.

THE 6TH ISWC2016 AIMED TO:

- Provide a platform to social work professionals to discuss and deliberate on issues related to human development.
- Engage with issues related to Social Justice and Inclusion, within context of social work education, research and practice.
- Address diverse issues and challenges pertaining to human development and social justice vis-à-vis social work profession in rapidly transforming socio-political and economic landscape.
- Exchange experiences of social work educators, researchers and development practitioners to augment networks and coalitions of social workers for invigorating social work profession.

UP CABINET APPROVES RENAMING OF FAIZABAD AS AYODHYA, ALLAHABAD AS PRAYAGRAJ

- Uttar Pradesh Government has approved renaming of Faizabad and Allahabad divisions as Ayodhya and Prayagraj respectively.

- The decision was taken at the meeting of State Cabinet presided over by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath in state capital Lucknow.
- Now, the proposal will now go to the Central Government before the city is officially renamed.
- Prayagraj division will comprise Prayagraj, Kaushambi, Fatehpur and Pratapgarh districts.
- Ayodhya division will include Ayodhya, Ambedkarnagar, Sultanpur, Amethi and Barabanki districts.

DETAILS:

- Government has justified the name changes across Uttar Pradesh, saying they are merely restoring older names and correcting historical distortions.
- Allahabad's ancient name was 'Prayag', but was changed after 16th-century Mughal emperor Akbar built fort near 'Sangam', the holy confluence of three rivers viz. Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati.
- Akbar named the fort and its neighbourhood 'Ilahabad'.
- Later, Akbar's grandson Shah Jahan renamed the entire city as 'Allahabad'.
- But the area near the 'Sangam', the site of the Kumbh Mela, continues to be known as 'Prayag'.
- The reason cited for renaming Faizabad is that Ayodhya was the capital of 'Ikshvaku dynasty', to which the Hindu God Raam belonged, and that it is known as His birthplace.
- Ayodhya has been the capital of many estates and dynasties in different time periods.

WORLD DIABETES DAY: 14 NOVEMBER

- World Diabetes Day is observed every year across the world on 14 November to raise awareness about diabetes.
- Observance of this day aims to pursue multilateral efforts to promote and improve human health and provide access to health-care treatment and education.
- The theme for World Diabetes Day 2018 and 2019 is "The Family and Diabetes".
- The two-year theme timeframe has been chosen to raise awareness of the impact that diabetes has on the family and support network of those affected and promote role of family in management, care, prevention and education of diabetes.

DETAILS:

- The World Diabetes Day was instituted by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in 2007 by passing resolution A/RES/61/225.
- The resolution had encouraged Member States to develop national policies for prevention, treatment and care of diabetes.

ABOUT DIABETES:

- Diabetes is a chronic, progressive non-communicable disease (NCD) characterized by elevated levels of blood sugar (blood glucose).
- It occurs when:
- the pancreas does not produce enough of the insulin hormone, which regulates blood sugar.
- the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces.

- Type 1 diabetes occurs when the body doesn't make enough insulin, and type 2 diabetes occurs when the body doesn't make or use insulin very well, causing glucose to remain in the blood, which can lead to serious problems.
- The main symptom of diabetes is excess fatigue, frequent urination, dysentery, excessive thirst, etc.
- Diabetes can also be genetic, but its main cause is obesity, lack of adequate nutrition, etc.
- Insulin injection is given to the patient suffering from type 1 diabetes.
- Prevention of type 2 diabetes is quite possible.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL IN SHILLONG FROM NOV 14 TO 17

- India International Cherry Blossom festival is scheduled to be held from November 14 to 17 in Shillong, Meghalaya.
- This festival is the world's only autumn cherry blossom festival.
- The festival is organised by Government of Meghalaya's Forest & Environment Department as well as by the Institute of Bioresources & Sustainable Development (IBSD) in collaboration with Indian Council for Cultural Relations (ICCR).

WHAT IS THE AIM OF THE FESTIVAL?

- The aim of the festival is to celebrate the unique autumn flowering of Himalayan Cherry Blossoms.
- The Cherry Blossom tree flowers only for a short period in a year.
- The festival will showcase full pink and white cherry blossoms found all along the roadside of the famous Ward Lake.
- Alongside, the festival will also showcase the region's food, wine and crafts in addition with several cultural events.

IMPORTANCE OF JAPAN'S PARTICIPATION:

- The main highlight of the festival will be the exposition of Japanese cultural events and cuisine.
- Embassy of Japan is a strategic partner for the festival.
- There will be several cultural events showcasing Japanese cultural and cuisine.
- The festival in a way will act as a channel to deepen and strengthen the connections with the Government of Japan.
- The tradition of planting Cherry Blossoms, also called Sakura, was first begun by Japan.
- In fact, Japan has been celebrating the Sakura Festival from the 3rd century and it continues till date.

ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE OF THE FESTIVAL:

- The cherry blossom festivals are being celebrated by around 28 countries across the world including India.
- The other countries that celebrate this festival include Holland, United States of America, and South Korea.
- This festival generates huge employment opportunities and generates a lot of revenue as it attracts lakhs of visitors from across the world.

- Last year, the festival boosted the local economy of Meghalaya by 300%.
- The festival is also likely to promote sustainable tourism in the northeast.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- Meghalaya is the home to 5,538 species of fauna and about 3,128 species of flowering plants.
- It accounts for 18% of India's total floral wealth.
- Also, Meghalaya is the home to the country's only two species of true apes.

GOVERNMENT TO RELEASE RS 75 COMMEMORATIVE COIN TO MARK 75TH ANNIVERSARY OF TRICOLOUR HOISTING BY BOSE

- Union Ministry of Finance has announced to release Rs 75 commemorative coin on the occasion of 75th anniversary of hoisting of the Tricolour for the first time by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose at Cellular Jail, Port Blair on December 30, 1943.
- Earlier on October 21, 2018, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had hoisted the National Flag at Red Fort and unveiled plaque to commemorate 75th Anniversary of formation of Azad Hind Government, formed by Bose.

FEATURES OF THE COIN:

- The 35-gram coin will be composed of 50% silver, 40% copper, and 5% each of nickel and zinc.
- It will bear the portrait of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose saluting the flag on background of Cellular Jail.
- It will have the numeral 75th along with an inscription "anniversary" depicted below the portrait.
- It will also have an inscription in both Devanagari script and English saying 'First Flag Hoisting Day'.

FIRST FLAG HOISTING BY NETAJI SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE:

- Subhash Chandra Bose on December 30, 1943 had hoisted the Tricolor for the first time on free Indian soil at Cellular Jail of Port Blair during his visit to Andaman and declaring the island as free territory from the British rule.
- It was much before India attained Independence in 1947.
- On same occasion, he had announced freedom of Andaman & Nicobar Islands (making it first Indian Territory) from the British rule and renamed them as "Shaheed-Dweep" (Martyr Island) and "Swaraj-Dweep" (Self-rule Island).
- The island at that time was liberated from British rule by Japan which captured it during World War- II.
- Major General Arcot Doraiswamy Loganadan of Indian National Army (INA) was made the Governor of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES LEAP AND ARPIT PROGRAMMES FOR HIGHER EDUCATION FACULTY

- Union Ministry of Human Resource Development launched two new initiatives viz. Leadership for Academicians Programme (LEAP) and Annual Refresher Programme In Teaching (ARPIT) for higher education faculty.
- ARPIT is a unique initiative of online professional development of 15 lakh higher education faculty.
- LEAP is a three weeks flagship leadership development training programme for second level academic functionaries in higher education institutions.

ABOUT LEADERSHIP FOR ACADEMICIANS PROGRAMME (LEAP):

- It is a three weeks (2 weeks domestic and 1 week foreign training) flagship leadership development training programme for second level academic functionaries in public funded higher education institutions.
- Its main objective is to prepare second tier academic heads who are potentially likely to assume leadership roles in the future.
- It will make Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) perform their roles of developing better students who will be future torch bearers.
- It will provide senior faculty required leadership and managerial skills including skills of problem-solving, team building work, handling stress, communication, conflict management, understanding complexity and challenges of governance in HEIs and general administration.
- It will be implemented through 15 National Institute Ranking Framework (NIRF) top ranked Indian Institutions namely, IIT Bombay, IIT Kanpur, IIT Kharagpur, IIT Roorkee, IISER Kolkata, NIT Trichy, JNU; IIT (BHU), Delhi University, TISS Mumbai, University of Hyderabad, NIEPA, Jamia Milia Islamia, BHU and AMU.
- The foreign universities identified for training collaboration are also within top 100 in world global rankings.
- It includes University of Michigan, Harvard University, Oxford University, University of Cambridge, Purdue University, University of Chicago, NTU Singapore, Monash University, University of Pennsylvania and University of Virginia.

ABOUT ANNUAL REFRESHER PROGRAMME IN TEACHING (ARPIT):

- It is a major and unique initiative of online professional development of 15 lakh higher education faculty using Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) platform SWAYAM.
- Under this initiative, 75 discipline-specific institutions are identified and notified as National Resource Centres (NRCs) in Phase I.
- These institutions will be tasked to prepare online training material with focus on latest developments in discipline, methodologies for transacting revised curriculum and pedagogical improvements.
- The courses will cover diverse range of topics.
- Each course will be 40 hour module with 20 hours of video content and 20 hours of non-video content.
- It will also have built-in assessment exercises and activities as part of the academic progression.
- There will be a terminal assessment either online or written examination at end of the course.
- All faculties after successfully completing the online refresher course will be certified.
- All in-service teachers, irrespective of their subject and seniority will register and complete these refresher courses which will help them in career advancement.

- ARPIT will be every year exercise and NRCs will continuously develop new refresher module in their earmarked discipline each year.
- The training materials will be uploaded and made available through SWAYAM.
- In the inaugural year 2018 itself, NRCs are expected to cater to around 13 lakh faculty of total 15 lakh faculty in higher education.

INDRA 2018: INDIA, RUSSIA JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE HELD IN JHANSI, UP

- The joint military exercise between Indian and Russia INDRA 2018 was conducted at Babina Field Firing Ranges, Babina Military Station Jhansi, Uttar Pradesh.
- It was the tenth exercise in the series of Exercise INDRA aimed at increasing interoperability between Indian and Russian Armies.

ABOUT INDRA 2018:

- The aim of the exercise was to practice joint planning and conduct to enhance interoperability between two armies in peace keeping/enforcement environment under aegis of United Nations.
- For this exercise, India was represented by Mechanised Infantry Battalion of Indian Army, while Russia was represented by company sized contingents of 5th Army.
- It focused upon training on enhancing team building, special tactical level operations such as Cordon and Search, house intervention, handling and neutralisation of Improvised Explosive Devices and integrated employment of force multipliers.
- The primary focus of the tactical field exercise was to share best practices amongst the militaries and hone existing skills of troops.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES YUVA SAHAKAR-COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE SUPPORT AND INNOVATION SCHEME

- Union Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare Radha Mohan Singh launched Yuva Sahakar-Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme of National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).
- It is a youth-friendly scheme aimed at attracting youth to cooperative business ventures.

ABOUT YUVA SAHAKAR-COOPERATIVE ENTERPRISE SUPPORT AND INNOVATION SCHEME:

- The scheme is linked to Rs 1000 crore 'Cooperative Start-up and Innovation Fund (CSIF)' created by the NCDC.
- It aims to encourage cooperatives to venture into new and innovative areas.
- It envisages 2% less than applicable rate of interest on term loan for the project cost up to Rs 3 crore including 2 years moratorium on payment of principal.
- All types of cooperatives in operation for at least one year are eligible to avail the scheme.
- Under this scheme, more incentives will be provided for cooperatives of North Eastern region, Aspirational Districts and cooperatives with women or SC or ST members.
- The funding for the project under this scheme will be up to 80% of the project cost for these special categories against 70% for others.

REGIONAL MEETING OF WORLD CUSTOMS ORGANISATION BEING HELD IN JAIPUR

- Four-day regional meeting of World Customs Organisation (WCO) was held in Jaipur, capital city of Rajasthan.
- It was attended by representatives of 33 member countries of Asia.
- The meeting was jointly chaired by WCO Deputy Secretary General Ricardo Travino and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs Chairman S Ramesh.

DETAILS:

- The meeting deliberated upon various issues including the steps required for the capacity building and reforms in customs.
- It also discussed and deliberated upon the amended Kyoto protocol, digital customs, e-commerce among other issues.
- Summary of various efforts made by National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) for trade facilitation was also tabled in the meeting.

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 the international Customs community.
- It represents 182 Customs administrations across the globe that collectively process approximately 98% of world trade.
- It is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.
- It plays a leading role in discussion, development, promotion and implementation of modern customs systems and procedures.

OBJECTIVES:

- 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.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE:

- 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.

FUNCTIONS:

- 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 a 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.

INDIA AND UK SIGN MOU FOR COLLABORATION IN CANCER RESEARCH

- India and United Kingdom have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for collaboration in cancer research.
- It is a follow-up to the joint statement issued by Prime Ministers of India and UK during the visit of PM Narendra Modi to the UK in April 2018.

DETAILS:

- The MoU was signed between Department of Biotechnology (DBT) and Cancer Research UK (CRUK) for India-UK Cancer Research Initiative for collaboration in cancer research for the next five years.
- Under the MoU, both CRUK and DBT will invest 5 million pounds each in this five-year pilot project and seek further investment from other potential funding partners.
- India-UK Cancer Research Initiative will identify core set of research challenges that address issues of affordability, prevention and care of cancer patients by bringing together leading Indian and UK experts in clinical research, demographic research, new technologies and physical sciences.
- The initiative will provide funding to develop new research alliances and undertake impactful research to enable significant progress against cancer outcomes.
- It will also provide a catalysing platform for scientists and researchers in India and UK to co-create solutions for affordable cancer care that will improve cancer outcomes around the globe.

GOVERNMENT TO REFUND EMPLOYERS FOR SEVEN WEEKS OF MATERNITY LEAVE TO EMPLOYEES: WCD MINISTRY

- Union Ministry of Women and Child Development has announced that the Government will pay employers, salaries for first seven of 26 weeks of maternity leave for women earning more than Rs 15,000 month.
- The announcement comes in wake of complaints that many companies were reluctant to hire pregnant women after maternity leave was extended from 12 to 26 weeks and some were even firing women employees.
- The decision covers both the government as well as private sector.
- This decision was taken after WCD Ministry had talks with Union Labour Ministry that 7 of 26 weeks of maternity leave for all women employees in private and government sector getting more than Rs 15,000 a month will be paid from that fund.

- For paying employers, Government has decided to utilise funds lying in labour welfare cess with the Government to pay employers.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- Government had increased maternity leave for pregnant women was extended from 12 weeks to 26 weeks in 2017 after Parliament had passed Maternity Benefits (Amendment) Bill, 2016.
- This law had paved way for doubling of the maternity leave from 12 weeks to 26 weeks for two surviving children.
- This benefitted about 1.8 million women in the organised sector and raised India's position to the third place in terms of the number of weeks given for maternity leave after Canada (50 weeks) and Norway (44).

SHRI RAMAYANA EXPRESS FLAGGED OFF FROM SAFDARJUNG RAILWAY STATION IN DELHI

- Shri Ramayana Express, a special tourist train to run on the Ramayana circuit to cover major spots related to the Hindu epic was flagged off by Indian Railways from Safdarjung Railway Station, New Delhi.
- The pilgrimage circuit of Shri Ramayana Yatra will have two travel components - one each in India and Sri Lanka.

ABOUT SHRI RAMAYANA EXPRESS:

- In India, after leaving New Delhi, the 800-seat Shri Ramayana Express will make its first stop in Ayodhya followed by Hanuman Garhi Ramkot and the Kanak Bhawan temple.
- Then, it will cover important destinations of Ramayana circuit such as Nandigram, Sitamarhi, Janakpur, Varanasi, Prayag, Shringverpur, Chitrakoot, Nasik, Hampi and Rameshwaram.
- It will complete its journey till Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu in 16 days covering all important destinations associated with the life of Lord Shri Raam.
- The railways has decided the fare for the 16-day trip at Rs. 15,120 per person.
- The Sri Lanka leg of the tour will be charged separately as passengers opting for Sri Lanka leg of Ramayana Yatra package can take flight to Colombo from Chennai.
- Railways is currently offering five-night/six-day Sri Lanka tour package at a cost starting from Rs. 47,600 per person.

SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE HELD IN NEW DELHI

- South Asian Regional Conference on Urban Infrastructure: New Approaches to Public and Private Partnerships (PPPs) and Municipal Finance Innovations, was held in New Delhi.
- It was organised by National Institution for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog in partnership with United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (UNESCAP) and Asian Development Bank (ADB).

ABOUT THE SOUTH ASIAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON URBAN INFRASTRUCTURE:

- The main objective of the two day conference was to discuss the key issues, perspectives and way forward in the Urban Infrastructure.
- It was aimed to review overall issues and assess sustainability of PPPs and urban finance in South Asia, specifically India and broadening knowledge base and engaging on international best practices.
- It is first of its kind conference which saw participation of leaders from government, industry, research organisations, academia, think tanks and civil society from across South Asian region.
- The main components of conference included keynote and breakout sessions, panel discussions, presentation and a variety of stakeholder consultations.

ABOUT NATIONAL INSTITUTION FOR TRANSFORMING INDIA (NITI) AAYOG:

- NITI Aayog is the premier policy 'Think Tank' of the Union Government of India, providing both directional and policy inputs.
- It is essentially an advisory body that seeks to provide critical directional and strategic inputs across spectrum of key elements of policy to the centre.
- It was established in 2015 with aim to achieve Sustainable Development Goals and to enhance cooperative federalism by fostering the involvement of State Governments of India in the economic policy-making process using a bottom-up approach.
- It had replaced the Planning Commission which followed a top-down model.
- Prime Minister is the ex-officio chairman of NITI Aayog.
- The permanent members of its Governing Council are all the state Chief Ministers, along with Chief Ministers of Delhi and Puducherry, Lieutenant Governor of Andaman and Nicobar, and Vice Chairman nominated by the Prime Minister.

INDIAN NAVY COMPLETES REFIT OF MALDIVIAN COAST GUARD SHIP HURAVEE IN VISAKHAPATNAM

- Indian Navy has successfully completed the refit of Maldivian Coast Guard Ship (MCGS) Huravee at the Naval Dockyard Visakhapatnam and was formally handed over.
- The ship was refitted in four-months as part of Indian Navy's initiative undertaken in furtherance of its diplomatic outreach to friendly foreign navies in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

DETAILS:

- During the refit, major repairs were undertaken on MCGS Huravee's hull, main propulsion and auxiliaries.
- In addition a number of equipment and systems of the ship were upgraded for better performance and reliability.
- Moreover, all equipment were put through extensive harbour and sea trials so as to achieve full combat capability of the ship and ensure its continuous availability for operations to Maldives Coast Guard for the next operational cycle.

ABOUT MCGS HURAVEE:

- It was originally commissioned as INS Tillanchang, a Trinkat class patrol vessel built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata in March 2001.
- It was subsequently gifted to Maldives by Government of India in April 2006 to strengthen strategic partnership between two nations and work together to ensure maritime safety of the IOR.
- The Indian Government through Indian Navy has undertaken such diplomatic courtesies previously when it undertook refit of a ship in 2015.

2ND MEGA FOOD PARK IN MAHARASHTRA INAUGURATED IN AURANGABAD

- Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated 2nd Mega Food Park in Maharashtra, in Wahegaon and Dhangaon village in Paithan taluka of Aurangabad district.
- It was launched under the Mega Food Park Scheme and is promoted by Paithan Mega Food Park Pvt Ltd.
- The first park was inaugurated in Satara district in March 2018.
- Third Mega Food Park has been sanctioned by Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries in Maharashtra in Wardha district.

ABOUT PAITHAN MEGA FOOD PARK:

- It has been set up in 102 acre of land at a cost of Rs 124.52 crore.
- The facilities at Central Processing Centre (CPC) of this mega food park include dry warehouse of 10,000 metric tonne (MT), cold storage (1,000 MT), pre-cooling facility (10 MT), ripening chambers (400 MT), individual quick freezing (IQF) facility (1.5 metric tonne per hour).
- It also has a freezer room (1,000 MT), five MTPH juice line (1.5 MTPH each) of aseptic packaging line, steam sterilisation and generation unit of 4 MTPH, food testing labs reefer vans of 30 MT and milk tankers of 50 MT, milk processing facility of 1,00,000 litre per day (LPD) with bulk milk chilling of 20,000 litre and other food processing facilities.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS MEGA FOOD PARK?

- The modern infrastructure for food processing created at the Mega Food Park will benefit the farmers, growers, processors and consumers of Maharashtra and adjoining areas immensely and prove to be big boost to growth of food processing sector in Maharashtra.
- This mega food park will benefit the people of Aurangabad district as well as nearby districts of Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Buldhana, Jalna, Bid and Ahmednagar.
- It will provide direct and indirect employment to 5,000 persons and benefit about 25,000 farmers in CPC catchment areas.

ABOUT THE MEGA FOOD PARK SCHEME:

- It is implemented by Ministry of Food Processing Industries to give a major fillip to food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of supply chain with particular focus on perishables.
- It aims to create modern infrastructure facilities for food processing along with value chain from farm to market with strong forward and backward linkages through cluster based approach.

- Projects under this scheme are merged under the comprehensive flagship scheme of 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana'.
- Under this scheme, common facilities and enabling infrastructure is created at Central Processing Centre (CPCs) and facilities for primary processing and storage is created near farm in the form of PPCs and CCs.
- For this scheme, Government provides financial assistance upto Rs. 50.00 Crore per Mega Food Park project.

NITI AAYOG CONSTITUTES HIMALAYAN STATE REGIONAL COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENT OF HIMALAYAN REGION

- NITI Aayog has constituted the Himalayan State Regional Council to ensure sustainable development of the Indian Himalayan region.
- It will be chaired by Dr VK Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog and will consist of Chief Secretaries of Himalayan States as well as Secretaries of key Central Ministries, senior officers of NITI Aayog as well as special invitees.

DETAILS:

- The Council has been constituted to review and implement identified action points based on Reports of five Working Groups, which were established along thematic areas to prepare a roadmap for action.
- It will be the nodal agency for Sustainable development in the Himalayan Region which consists of 12 States namely Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, two districts of Assam namely Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong and Darjeeling and Kalimpong in West Bengal.

ROLE OF THE COUNCIL:

- It will monitor implementation of action points for Central Ministries, Institutions and 12 Himalayan State Governments in Indian Himalayan Region which include regional cooperation and river basin development, spring mapping and revival across Himalayas in phased manner for water security.
- It will develop, implement and monitor tourism sector standards as well as bring policy coherence, strengthen skill and entrepreneurship with focus on identified priority sectors, among other action points.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- Earlier in June 2017, NITI Aayog had set up 5 Working Groups to prepare a roadmap for actions in 5 thematic areas that are quite significant for the Himalayas.
- These areas were Inventory and Revival of Springs in Himalayas for Water Security; Sustainable Tourism in Indian Himalayan Region; Transformative Approach to Shifting Cultivation; Strengthening Skill & Entrepreneurship Landscape in Himalayas; Data/Information for Informed Decision Making.
- These working groups were constituted after NITI Aayog recognised that mountains require specific solutions for resilience building that address socio-economic and environmental challenges in the mountain setting.

9TH ANNUAL DEFENCE AND SECURITY DIALOGUE BETWEEN INDIA AND CHINA HELD IN BEIJING

- The 9th Annual Defence and Security Dialogue between India and China was held in Beijing.
- It was held between the two defence delegations headed by Defence Secretary Sanjay Mitra and China's Deputy Chief of Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission.
- Mitra was accompanied by senior officials of Ministry of Defence and Indian Army, Navy and Air Force.
- The defence dialogue was also held ahead of the 21st round of border talks between the special representatives of the two countries in Chinese city of Dujiangyan on November 23-24, 2018.
- National security advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval and Chinese State Councillor and Foreign minister Wang Yi are designated special representatives for the border talks.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- The 9th Annual Defence and Security Dialogue was held after a one-year gap due to the Doklam standoff.
- It had not taken place last year following the 73-day tense standoff between the Indian and Chinese militaries at Doklam.
- The standoff was triggered by Chinese PLA's plan to build road close strategically narrow 'Chicken's Neck' corridor (or Siliguri corridor) connecting India's northeastern states in an area also claimed by Bhutan besides China.
- It ended after Chinese troops stopped road construction after which both countries stepped up efforts to normalise relations leading to the informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping at Wuhan in April 2018.

WHAT IS THE OUTCOME OF THE 9TH DIALOGUE?

- Both sides agreed to enhance exchanges and interactions through reciprocal high-level visits between the two Ministries of Defence as well as between military commands, joint training exercises and mutual visits by defence personnel including mid-level and cadet officers were also agreed upon.
- They also reiterated the importance of maintaining peace and tranquillity in border areas, implementing (Wuhan) consensus reached between PM Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping and specific additional confidence-building measures at the operational level.
- They underlined importance of this dialogue as an important mechanism between the two countries for consultations on defence and security matters.
- They emphasised need to further strengthen military-to-military ties in order to strengthen political and strategic mutual trust between the two countries.
- Both sides also had an exchange of views on regional and global issues.
- Both sides agreed to hold the next round of the dialogue at a mutually convenient time in India in 2019.

INDIA AND ADB SIGN \$169 MILLION LOAN TO PROVIDE WATER AND SANITATION SERVICES IN TAMIL NADU

- Union Government has inked a \$169 Million Loan Agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Tamil Nadu Urban Flagship Investment Program.
- It is the first tranche of \$500 million multi-tranche financing to provide water and sanitation services in Tamil Nadu.

ABOUT TAMIL NADU URBAN FLAGSHIP INVESTMENT PROGRAM:

- The program will develop climate-resilient sewerage collection and treatment and drainage systems in 10 cities.
- Under this program, country's first solar-powered sewage treatment plant will be installed.
- Moreover, smart water management systems will be introduced to reduce non-revenue water and strengthen operational efficiency.
- It will help to address complex urban challenges through innovative and climate-resilient investment and deeper institutional support.
- It will boost institutional capacity, public awareness, and urban governance as part of comprehensive approach for developing livable cities.
- It will benefit around 4 million people from piped water and sewerage connections and improved drainage.
- The first tranche of ABD loan will target cities of Chennai, Coimbatore, Rajapalayam, Tiruchirappalli, Tirunelveli, and Vellore.
- Moreover, \$2 million grant from Asian Clean Energy Fund, established by Government of Japan will fund the solar energy pilot project.
- Besides, ADB technical assistance grant of \$1 million will accompany the program to support capacity building.

INDIA'S FIRST SPECIALIZED HOSPITAL FOR ELEPHANTS OPENED IN MATHURA

- India's first specialized hospital for Elephants was formally opened in Churmura village in Mathura district of Uttar Pradesh.
- It is promoted by Wildlife SOS which had established the first Elephant Conservation and Care Centre in 2010 and is currently looking after 20 elephants requiring specialized treatment.

DETAILS:

- The unique medical centre offers wireless digital X-ray, dental X-ray, laser treatment, thermal imaging, ultrasonography, hydrotherapy and quarantine facilities.
- The hospital is located close to the Elephant Conservation and Care Centre.
- It is designed to treat injured, sick or geriatric elephants.
- It is equipped with medical hoist for lifting elephants.
- It also has elephant restraining device with dedicated indoor treatment enclosure for long duration medical procedures.
- It also has an observation deck that allows veterinary students and interns to observe elephants' behavior.

ABOUT WILDLIFE SOS (WSOS):

- It is a conservation non-profit organisation.
- It was established in 1995 with primary objective of rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife in distress in country and preserving India's natural heritage.
- It is currently one of the largest Wildlife Organisations in South Asia.
- WSOS is also known for their efforts at rescue and rehabilitation of sloth bears and more recently elephants.
- It also runs active projects focused on mitigation of human wildlife conflict with regard to species.
- In addition, its work is also targeted at biodiversity and habitat conservation, awareness workshops and anti-poaching operations, as well as rehabilitation of communities dependent on performing or working animals for their livelihood.

GOVERNMENT INKS \$300 MILLION LOAN AGREEMENT WITH ADB TO SUPPORT IIFCL

- Union Government has inked a \$300 million Loan Agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) to support lending by India Infrastructure Finance Company Limited (IIFCL).
- The loan will enhance availability of long-term finance for PPP projects, improve operational capacity of IIFCL.
- It will expand portfolio of infrastructure financing instruments available to IIFCL.
- It is expected to compliment Government's infrastructure building efforts.

DETAILS:

- ADB funding is expected to fund at least 13 sub-projects through IIFCL, involving roads and renewable power generation, under the last tranche.
- It expected to help catalyze the financial closing of \$2.4 billion in investments.
- In addition, attached technical assistance will support IIFCL capacity development and will focus on IIFCL's financial management and social and environmental safeguards.
- It will support renewed effort of Central Government in accelerating infrastructure growth through increased Private Sector investment.
- The Project undertaken will be relevant and responsive to constraints to bank based infrastructure financing, fiscal space creation, and repercussions on GDP growth.

ABOUT INDIA INFRASTRUCTURE FINANCE COMPANY LIMITED (IIFCL):

- It was set up in 2006 to provide long term debt for infrastructure projects.
- It provides financial assistance to commercially viable projects, which includes projects implemented by public sector company, private sector company; or private sector company selected under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) initiative.
- IIFCL raises funds from domestic as well as external markets on the strength of government guarantees.

Following sectors projects are eligible for financing from IIFCL:

- Power
- Warehouses
- Gas pipelines
- Cold storage chains
- Fertilizer Manufacturing Industry
- Infrastructure projects in Special Economic Zones
- International convention centres and other tourism infrastructure projects.
- Road and bridges, seaports, railways, airports, inland waterways and other transportation projects.
- Urban transport, water supply, sewage, solid waste management and other physical infrastructure in urban areas.

INDIA'S ANKITA RAINA AND KARMAN KAUR THANDI WIN WOMEN'S DOUBLES TITLE AT TAIPEI OEC OPEN TENNIS

- India's Ankita Raina and Karman Kaur Thandi, playing together for the first time, won doubles title at the Taipei Open.
- In the final match, they defeated Russian pair of Olga Doroshina and Natela Dzalamidze 6-3, 5-7, 12-12 score.
- The champions collected \$5,500 in prize money and earned 160 points, which is expected to push both within 200 of WTA world rankings.
- In the semi-finals, they had defeated third seeds Misaki Doi and Danka Kovinic by 6-7 (2), 6-4, 10-8 score.
- This win marks the first WTA title for an Indian since Sania Mirza became a success on WTA Tour and Grand Slam stage.

ABOUT THE TAIPEI OPEN:

- It is a tournament for female professional tennis players played on indoor carpet courts.
- It is currently classified as a WTA 125K tournament.
- It is being held annually in November in Taipei City, Taiwan.
- In 2012, it was upgraded from a \$100,000 ITF tournament to a WTA Challenger tournament.

IIT KHARAGPUR RESEARCHERS DEVISE DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM (DCS) TO HELP MAXIMISE LPG CONNECTIONS IN BPL HOUSEHOLDS

- Researchers from IIT Kharagpur have devised a decision support system (DCS) to help maximise LPG connections in BPL (below poverty line) households under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana.
- It is a first of its kind for analysis of national level energy policy.
- This kind of DSS can be developed for various central and state level policies for various commodities like agricultural commodities, solar panels distributions and so on.

ABOUT THE DECISION SUPPORT SYSTEM (DSS):

- It is a computer programme that helps in making sound rational decisions using mathematical programming and operation research techniques.
- It can provide exact values of important parameters over prescribed policy time period, which in turn will help to take important measures to ascertain proper functioning (monitoring) of policy towards the desired goal.
- It uses mixed integer linear programming to mathematically formulate policy using input parameters, decision variables and their relationships.
- This mathematical model has found optimum number of total BPL connections required in the region, number of dealerships that need to be commissioned in the region over the policy time frame.
- The sensitivity analysis with this mathematical model can easily change in decision variable with respect to change in a parameter.
- With this, it is easy to predict not only how the number of household connections that can be increased but also the critical region that contributes most in each zone of LPG distribution.

AYUSH MINISTRY OBSERVES THE FIRST NATUROPATHY DAY ON NOVEMBER 18

- Union Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) Ministry celebrated first Naturopathy Day on Sunday with an aim of promoting drug-less system of medicine to prevent diseases by altering diet and lifestyle.
- Till now, there was a day to celebrate all streams of traditional medicine except Naturopathy.
- On this day, Central Council for Research in Yoga and Naturopathy is organising health camps, workshops and exhibitions in association with local naturopathy centres and hospitals.
- Naturopathy plays an important role as many diseases can be prevented with these practices especially non-communicable diseases which have seen increase, mainly owing to changes in lifestyle.
- It is a drug-less system and is very cost effective.
- It can be easily integrated with any other system of healthcare as lifestyle intervention.
- These practices are being promoted in wellness centres along with allopathic medicine so that we get best of all systems of medicine.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- India has a long history and culture running over 5000 years of using traditional medicines for health care and developing them with modern scientific outlook.
- AYUSH is an acronym of tradition medical systems that are being practiced in India such as Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy.
- International Day of Yoga has been celebrated annually on June 21 since 2015.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has first proposed the idea in his first United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) speech in 2014.
- Ayurveda Day, which is marked on November 5 every year, was first celebrated in 2016.
- In 2017, Unani Day was established which is celebrated on February 11.
- The declaration of January 4 as Siddha Day and November 18 as Naturopathy Day was made in January 2018, thus all six systems are having their separate annual celebration day.

PUNJAB BECOMES 3RD STATE TO BAN HOOKAH BARS OR LOUNGES

- Punjab becomes third state in the country after Maharashtra and Gujarat to ban hookah bars or lounges.
- The ban was announced through a law after President Ram Nath Kovind gave assent to Cigarettes and other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) (Punjab Amendment) Bill, 2018.
- The objective of this law is to check the use of tobacco in various forms and prevent diseases caused by use of the tobacco products.

DETAILS:

- The Bill was introduced in the Punjab State Assembly in March this year with an aim to bring the law in force to check the use of tobacco in various forms and prevent diseases caused by the use of tobacco.
- The law was enacted to check the unregulated growth these hookah parlours and the rapid increase in the trend of 'hookah-sheesha' smoking in the state.
- Moreover, there were complaints of drug consumption in these hookah bars across the state.

WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF SMOKING HOOKAH ON HEALTH?

- Smoking of hookah increases health risks, which includes exposure to toxic chemicals that are not filtered out by water.
- It also results in transmission or risk of infectious disease like tuberculosis (TB) from sharing a hookah.
- As per a study, an hour's average of hookah includes 20-200 puffs, delivering 50 litres of smoke containing hazardous and carcinogenic chemicals.

LAKSHYA SEN WINS BRONZE MEDAL IN MEN'S SINGLES AT WORLD JUNIOR BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIP

- India's top junior shuttler Lakshya Sen (17) has won bronze medal at the Li Ning BWF World Junior Badminton Championships 2018 held at Markham, Canada.
- In the singles semi-final match, he lost to top seed and world junior number one Kunlavut Vitidsarn of Thailand by 22-20, 16-21, 13-21 score.
- This was Sen's first medal from this prestigious tournament in three attempts.

INDIA'S PERFORMANCE AT THE BWF WORLD JUNIOR BADMINTON CHAMPIONSHIPS:

- This was overall India's fifth boys singles bronze medal at the BWF World Junior Championships and the only medal India got at this year's Championships.
- Previously, RMV Gurusaidutt (2008), B Sai Praneeth (2010), HS Prannoy (2010) and Sameer Verma (2011) have won bronze medal.
- Siril Verma (2015) is India's only boys singles silver-medallist at the World Junior Championships.
- Saina Nehwal (2008) is India's sole gold medallist at the BWF World Junior Championships.
- She has also won silver in 2006 in girls singles.

SANJAY KUMAR MISHRA APPOINTED DIRECTOR OF ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi headed Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed Senior IRS officer Sanjay Kumar Mishra as the full-time Director of the Enforcement Directorate (ED).
- He will have a tenure of two-years from the date of assumption of the charge of the post or until further orders, whichever is earlier.
- The post of ED director is an Additional Secretary rank post in the Union Government.

WHO IS SANJAY KUMAR MISHRA?

- Mishra is a 1984-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer of Income Tax cadre.
- Prior to this appointment he was Principal Special Director in EB appointed in October 2018 and was entrusted with the additional charge of ED Director for three months.
- Before ED appointment, he was posted as Chief Commissioner of Income Tax Department in Delhi.

ABOUT ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE (ED):

- It is an economic intelligence and law enforcement agency responsible for enforcing economic laws and fighting economic crime in India.
- It functions under the aegis of Department of Revenue, Union Ministry of Finance.
- Its prime objective is enforcement of two key Acts of Government of India namely Foreign Exchange Management Act 1999 (FEMA) and Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002 (PMLA) to check money laundering by curbing black money and hawala trade cases.
- It is composed of officers from the Indian Revenue Service, Indian Police Service and the Indian Administrative Service.
- It was established in 1956 as 'Enforcement Unit' in Department of Economic Affairs.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.

GOVERNMENT TO SET UP FIRST NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF INTER-FAITH STUDIES IN PUNJAB

- Union Government will set up a first-of-its-kind institute of Inter-Faith Studies in Punjab to promote brotherhood and diversity.
- It is being established as part of year-long activities to commemorate 550th birth anniversary of first Sikh Guru and founder of Sikh religion- Guru Nanak Dev Ji.
- The institute will be set up on lines of teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji who preached qualities of brotherhood, diversity and the concept of unity in diversity.
- Government will engage experts and form committees to oversee and finalise concept of this institute.

GURU NANAK DEV JI:

- He was a Nirguna Bhakti Saint and a social reformer.
- He was born at Rai Bhoi Ki Talvandi near Lahore in April 15, 1469 AD.
- He was the first Sikh Guru and founder of Sikhism.
- The verses composed by Him were collected in Adi Granth, written in the Gurmukhi script.

VAJRA PRAHAR: INDIA-USA JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE COMMENCES IN JAIPUR

- India, US Joint Special Forces Exercise 2018 named Vajra Prahar commenced at the Mahajan Field Firing Range (MFFR), Bikaner in Rajasthan.
- The exercise was called between Special Forces of both countries to deal with operations for counter-terrorism and is being done at unit as well as sub-unit levels.

DETAILS:

- For this exercise, US Army is represented by a contingent of one officer and 10 Other Ranks from Special Forces Group of United States Pacific Command.
- They will carry out 12 days rigorous joint training in semi desert and rural terrain with an aim to enhance inter-operability of the two armed forces and further military to military co-operation.
- The contingents of both countries in this exercise, will train on aspects such as hostage rescue, building intervention, desert survival, medical aid and combat firing.
- At the end of training, they will undertake a three-day outdoor exercise to validate their best practices.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES CHATBOT LOADED AIRSEWA DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR AIR PASSENGERS

- Union Civil Aviation Ministry launched the upgraded version of AirSewa 2.0 web portal and mobile app for air passengers in New Delhi.
- Major improvements in the upgraded version of the web portal include features such as secure sign-up and log-in with social media, chatbot for travellers support, improved grievance management including social media grievances.

ABOUT THE UPGRADED AIRSEWA 2.0

- The upgraded version of AirSewa operates through interactive web portal as well as through mobile app for both Android and iOS platforms.
- It will offer passengers convenient and hassle-free air travel experience.
- It will allow flyers to register their complaints through social media using hashtag (#) AirSewa.
- It will provide all required information about operating from various airports across country including real-time flight status and details of flight schedule.
- It will provide all facilities and services including assistance to disabled or unaccompanied minor that are available at airports across India.
- It will also help capture air travellers' feedback for policy interventions.

SULABH INTERNATIONAL INTRODUCES INDIA'S FIRST SEWER CLEANING MACHINE TO END UNSAFE MANUAL SCAVENGING

- Sulabh International has introduced India's first sewer cleaning machine to reduce sewer deaths and put an end to unsafe practice of manual scavenging.

- The machine was unveiled on the occasion of World Toilet Day 2018 (observed on 19 November) by mayors of all three Municipal Corporations of Delhi (MCD) in the presence founder of Sulabh International Bindeshwar Pathak.

ABOUT SULABH SEWER CLEANING MACHINE:

- The machine will do away with 99% of manual scavenging in the country.
- With the help of it, manual cleaner (safai karamchari) does not have to enter sewers.
- But if need arises and person has to go, then machine is fully equipped with a gas checking machine, protective gears and dress to protect workers from harmful gases.
- It is electro-hydraulically operated, with personal protective devices and a quick-view pipe inspection camera which extends up to 20 feet.
- The quick-view pipe view camera is designed to facilitate inspection of sewer, manholes, tunnels, tanks, mainline and other lateral pipeline facilities with outstanding zoom function (industrial HD camera), scalable carbon fibre rods and sunlight presentable controller.
- The new machine which costs Rs. 43 lakh is ideal for periodic mechanical desilting of manholes and to flush out sewer lines using powerful jetting pump capable of producing 150 bar operating pressure and flow of 150 litres per minute.
- It is also capable of de-choking sewer lines using specially designed flexible steel rods.
- The machine will ensure that no safai karamchari dies inside the sewer and will bring huge relief to manual scavengers.

ABOUT SULABH INTERNATIONAL:

- It is a social service organization that works to promote human rights, environmental sanitation, non-conventional sources of energy, waste management and social reforms through education.
- It is the largest nonprofit organization in India.
- It was founded by social activist Bindeshwar Pathak in 1970.

AAI INKS AGREEMENT WITH US TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT AGENCY TO PREPARE MODERNISATION ROADMAP

- State-run Airports Authority of India (AAI) has inked an agreement with US Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) to develop a roadmap for modernisation of its air traffic services.
- Air traffic services (ATS) comprises Air Traffic Management (ATM) and Communication, Navigation and Surveillance (CNS).

DETAILS:

- The collaboration is aimed at developing CNS/ATM roadmap for the AAI for modernisation of the national airspace system (NAS).

- Under the agreement, US aircraft manufacturer Boeing will provide technical assistance, thus create a roadmap to enhance communications, expand existing systems and airspace capacity and invest in CNS/ATM facilities.
- It will help in improving safety and reducing congestion for flights in India.
- At the same time, it will create market access for high quality US exports that can advance India's aviation goals.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- The double-digit growth in air passenger traffic over last 49 months in India has brought several challenges with it, including maintaining safe and efficient aircraft operations.
- In this backdrop, AAI has decided to draw robust roadmap for sustained ANS infrastructure to meet the growth challenges in a planned way.
- By utilising global and regional best practices as benchmark technical help will recommend roadmap and implementation plan to AAI for improving airspace utilisation and implement CNS/ATM air and ground equipage in short, medium and long term.

ABOUT AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA (AAI):

- It is a statutory body under the aegis of Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- It is responsible for creating, upgrading, maintaining and managing civil aviation infrastructure in India.
- It was founded in 1995 and is headquartered in New Delhi.
- It also provides Air traffic management (ATM) services over Indian airspace and adjoining oceanic areas.
- It manages around 125 airports in India, which include 18 International Airport, 07 Customs Airports, 78 Domestic Airports and 26 Civil Enclaves at Defense airfields.

JALAJ SRIVASTAVA APPOINTED CHAIRMAN OF INLAND WATERWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

- Union Government has appointed senior IAS officer Jalaj Srivastava as the Chairman of Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI).
- IWAI comes under Union Ministry of Shipping, Road Transport and Highways, currently headed by Nitin Gadkari.

ABOUT JALAJ SRIVASTAVA:

- He is a 1984 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer.
- Prior to this appointment he was Additional Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture.
- Earlier he had also served as Chairman of New Delhi Municipal Corporation (NDMC) and Principal Secretary, Department of VAT, Delhi government.
- He is credited with launch of various programmes and schemes including Wi-Fi in the market areas.
- He is also known for launching "Shakti Cab" project and "URJA" project for women when he was with the Delhi Government.

- He is also considered as the man behind the start of "Rahagiri" event that takes place every Sunday in national capital to promote culture and sports.
- Similarly some of his other initiatives were green waste management, outdoor gymnasium in parks and gardens and rooftop solar city projects.
- He is also the writer of a crime thriller novel titled 'The Perfect Suicide'.

ABOUT INLAND WATERWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA (IWAI):

- It is a nodal statutory body in charge of development and regulation of inland waterways for shipping and navigation.
- It was established in October 1986 and is headquartered in Noida, Uttar Pradesh.
- Its main function is to build necessary infrastructure in inland waterways, surveying economic feasibility of new projects and also carrying out administration and regulation.
- It undertakes projects for development and maintenance of IWT infrastructure on national waterways through grant received from Ministry of Shipping.

FOUR NEW HORNED FROGS DISCOVERED IN NORTHEAST HIMALAYAS

- A Team of biologists has discovered four new species of Indian Horned Frogs from the Himalayan regions of Northeast India.
- The team also comprised of S D Biju, famously known as the 'Frogman of India'.
- Horned Frogs get their name from fleshy horn-like projection on upper eyelids of some species.

ABOUT THE FOUR NEW SPECIES OF HORNED FROGS:

- They were discovered in the forests of Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh.
- Scientists have named them as Himalayan horned frog (*Megophrys himalayana*), Garo white-lipped horned frog (*Megophrys oreocrypta*); Yellow spotted white-lipped horned frog (*Megophrys flavipunctata*) and Giant Himalayan horned frog (*Megophrys periosa*).
- These frogs vary in size - yellow spotted white-lipped horned frog measures about 5.7-7.5 cm and is the smallest among four.
- The Giant Himalayan horned frog measures about 7.1 to 11.2 cm, making it largest of the 15 horned frog species found in Northeast India.

FORMER JNU PROFESSOR S.P. GANGULY AWARDED MEXICAN ORDER OF AZTEC EAGLE

- Mexican government has honoured Indian academician Shyama Prasad Ganguly with "Orden Mexicana del Águila Azteca" (Mexican Order of the Aztec Eagle), the highest civilian honour given to a foreigner by Mexico.
- He was awarded for disseminating Spanish language and Mexican culture to strengthen Mexico-India cultural relations.
- He is the first Indian Academician to get this award.

ABOUT SHYAMA PRASAD GANGULY:

- He is a former professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU).
- He belonged to the first generation of a handful of Indian academics who actually made everybody else interested in Spanish.
- He has authored, edited and translated over 25 books in an academic career spanning 40 years.

ABOUT THE ORDER OF AZTEC EAGLE:

- It is a part of Mexican Honours System and is the highest Mexican Order awarded to foreigners in the country.
- It was created by decree in December 1933 by President Abelardo L. Rodríguez as reward to services given to Mexico or humankind by foreigners.
- It corresponds to similar distinctions given to Mexican citizens such as Condecoración Miguel Hidalgo or Belisario Domínguez Medal of Honor.
- It is given by office of the Foreign Minister on instructions of the Council established for this purpose headed by the President, who signs each honour.
- This Order stands for friendship of Mexico with nations of world and is a means to express respect and admiration of the Mexican people.
- Its previous recipients include Microsoft founder Bill Gates, Nobel Economics Laureate Amartya Sen, writer and Nobel Literature Laureate Nadine Gordimer.
- Royal Eagle is Mexico's national animal and was considered sacred for Aztecs.

THE 49TH INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA OPENS IN PANAJI, GOA

- The 49th International Film Festival of India began in Panaji, capital of Goa.
- The theme of for this year's film festival is New India through a variety of genres of cinema, including history, action, romance and sports.
- Jharkhand is the focus state for this year, with Jharkhand Day being celebrated on 24th November as part of the festival.
- The focus country is Israel.

DETAILS:

- This edition of the festival will showcase 212 films from over 68 countries which reflects diversity of taste.
- International Competition section has 15 films out of which 3 are Indian.
- Competition section represents films produced and co-produced by 22 countries.
- 26 feature and 21 non - feature Indian films will be screened in Indian Panorama section.
- The opening film of the festival was "The Aspern Papers", which tells story of obsession, grandeur lost and dreams of Byronic adventures.
- This year as an extension of Khelo India Branding, Indian Sports Biopics will also be screened including Mary Kom, Bhaag Milkha Bhaag and MSD: The untold story.
- The festival will also include a tribute to Iron Man of India - Sardar Patel.

- The Homage section of this festival will pay tribute to Shashi Kapoor, Sridevi, Karunanidhi and Kalpana Lajmi.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL OF INDIA (IFFI):

- It is the biggest state-backed film festival and conducted jointly by Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Directorate of Film Festivals and Government of Goa.
- It was founded in 1952 and since then held annually in Goa.
- It aims at providing a common platform for cinemas of world to project the excellence of the film art.
- It also seeks to contribute to create awareness for understanding and appreciation of film cultures of different nations in context of their social and cultural ethos and promote friendship and cooperation among people of the world.

IIT-HYDERABAD RESEARCHERS DEVELOP SMARTPHONE-BASED SYSTEM TO DETECT ADULTERATION IN MILK

- Researchers from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Hyderabad have developed a smartphone-based sensor to detect adulteration in milk.
- They have developed a detector system which can measure the level of acidity in milk using an indicator paper.
- They have also developed algorithms that can be incorporated in smartphone to accurately detect change in acidity.
- The sensor-chip based method measures pH, which is an indicator of the acidity and colour of paper indicates different pH levels.

DETAILS:

- In this adulteration detection system, researchers have used a process called 'electrospinning' to produce paper-like material made of nanosized fibres of nylon, loaded with combination of three dyes.
- The paper is halochromic i.e. it changes color in response to changes in acidity.
- Researchers developed prototype smart phone-based algorithm in which colours of sensor strips after dipping in milk are captured using camera of phone and data is transformed into pH (acidity) ranges.
- They have used three machine-learning algorithms and compared their detection efficiencies in classifying colour of indicator strips.
- On testing this system with milk spiked with various combinations of contaminants, it found near-perfect classification with an accuracy of 99.71%.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- According to a recent report by Animal Welfare Board (statutory advisory body under Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change) shows that 68.7% of milk and milk by-products in the country are adulterated with products such as detergent, glucose, urea, caustic soda, white paint and oil.
- Chemicals such as formalin, boric acid, hydrogen peroxide and antibiotics are also added to milk to increase shelf life.

- Regular consumption of adulterated milk can cause heart diseases (such as high or low blood pressure, cardiac arrhythmia, premature ventricular contraction etc), kidney diseases, poor eyesight, loss of memory, cancer, skin diseases, eye diseases, gastrointestinal diseases such as ulcers.

JOYCE MSUYA APPOINTED AS ACTING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UNEP

- Tanzanian national Joyce Msuya was appointed as acting Executive Director of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) following resignation of the Executive Director Erik Solheim.
- Solheim had quit in wake of an internal audit report that accused him of breaking UNEP rules.
- The report has accused him of gobbling up \$500,000 in unnecessary and budgeted travel expenses in just 22 months.

ABOUT THE UNITED NATIONS ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME (UNEP):

- UNEP is the voice for environment within the United Nations system.
- It was founded as a 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.
- It is the leading global environmental authority that sets global environmental agenda, promotes coherent implementation of environmental dimension of sustainable development within United Nations system, and serves as an authoritative advocate for the global environment.
- It acts as catalyst, advocate, educator and facilitator to promote wise use and sustainable development of global environment.
- It works with a wide range of partners, including UN entities, international organizations, national governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector and civil society.

27TH BASIC MINISTERIAL MEETING ON CLIMATE CHANGE HELD IN NEW DELHI

- 27th BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change held in New Delhi has urged advanced countries to enhance their support to developing nations in effectively implementing Paris Agreement to combat climate change.
- BASIC countries comprise Brazil, South Africa, India and China.
- This comes ahead of the UN Conference of Parties (COP) scheduled to be held in December 2018 in Katowice, Poland.

WHAT CAME OUT FROM THE MEETING?

- Participating BASIC countries reaffirmed that Paris Agreement is a significant step to advance global action against climate change, recognising needs and special circumstances of developing countries.
- They also reaffirmed member countries' commitment to implement UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) its Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement.
- It resolved to promote low carbon transition to safeguard future of mankind.
- As a group they will continue to push for developed countries on their earlier commitment to providing \$100 billion annually from 2020.

- They also urged developed countries to take urgent actions to close pre-2020 implementation gaps by 2023 which they said can be a useful input for first Global Stocktake (GST).
- Brazil will host the next BASIC meeting in 2019.

ABOUT GLOBAL STOCKTAKE (GST):

- GST refers to proposed five-yearly-review of the impact of climate change action undertaken by countries.
- Under the Paris Agreement, each country has to present a climate action plan every five years.
- Under the Paris Agreement, the first global stocktake will happen in 2023.
- It will help the world to determine whether it needs to do more and how much more.
- India has demanded for a 10-year period for GST, while EU and some others have demanded a five-year cycle.
- India argues that five years is too short a time to assess whether the actions were having the desired impacts.

ABOUT BASIC:

- BASIC countries are bloc (geopolitical alliance) of four large newly industrialized countries - Brazil, South Africa, India and China.
- It was formed by agreement in November 2009.
- They were committed to act jointly at Copenhagen climate summit 2009, including a possible united walk-out if their common minimum position was not met by developed nations during climate talks.
- It is working to define a common position on emission reductions and climate aid money and try to convince other countries to sign up to the Copenhagen Accord.

MOHAMMED VI-B: MOROCCO LAUNCHES ITS SECOND EARTH OBSERVATION SATELLITE

- Morocco successfully launched its second earth observation satellite named Mohammed VI-B on board of an Arianespace Vega rocket from launch pad at Guiana Space Center in Kourou, French Guiana in South America.
- It will be placed at the same orbit as its twin satellite Mohammed 6-A, the first Moroccan satellite launched in November 2017 also on a Vega rocket.
- The launch completes Morocco's two-satellite constellation for Earth observation.

ABOUT MOHAMMED VI-B:

- The 1,100-kilogram satellite was developed by Thales Alenia Space and Airbus Airbus Defence and Space.
- Airbus had built the platform of the satellite while Thales Alenia Space supplied the payload and ground segment for image processing.
- It will be mainly used for mapping, land surveying, agricultural monitoring, prevention and management of natural disasters, monitoring changes in the environment and desertification as well as border and coastal surveillance.

ABOUT ARIANESPACE:

- It is a multinational company founded in 1980.
- It is the world's first commercial launch service provider.
- It has its headquarters in Courcouronnes, Essonne, France.
- It offers a number of different launch vehicles: heavy-lift Ariane 5 for dual launches to geostationary transfer orbit (GTO), Soyuz-2 as a medium-lift alternative, and solid-fueled Vega for lighter payloads.
- As of May 2017, Arianespace has launched more than 550 satellites in 254 launches over 34 years.
- It uses Guiana Space Center in French Guiana as its main launch site.
- ISRO uses Arianespace's services for launching its heavy satellites.
- Arianespace's Vega is a four-stage rocket designed by Arianespace to launch small commercial and science satellites into orbit.
- The rocket is 98 feet (30 meters) tall and can launch payloads of up to 2,500 kilograms (5,511 pounds) into orbit.

IIM CALCUTTA INNOVATION PARK, ICC SIGN MOU FOR ENERGISING STARTUP ECOSYSTEM IN EAST AND NORTHEAST INDIA

- IIM Calcutta Innovation Park and Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for energising the start-up ecosystem in East and Northeast India.
- The MoU will bring the incubator and industry together in a more formal way.
- IIM Innovation Park is currently incubating 40 start-ups with almost half from West Bengal.

DETAILS:

- ICC has a wide industry connect which will help IIM Calcutta Innovation Park to promote start-ups whom it is incubating.
- It will offer a platform for market linkage for start-ups and promote their products and services especially from eastern and northeastern region which need greater attention in the startup growth story of the country.
- ICC is currently working on a new program that aims to offer all key services under a single roof at a very low cost for start-ups beginning from initial advisory, market linkage, fundraising and legal service.

ABOUT INDIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE (ICC):

- It is a premier body of business and industry in Eastern and North-Eastern India.
- Its membership comprises several of largest corporate groups in the country, with business operations all over country and abroad.
- It was established in 1925 by a group of pioneering industrialists led by Mr G D Birla.
- It is the only National Chamber of Commerce operating from Kolkata.
- It is also the only chamber from India to win first prize in World Chambers Competition in Quebec, Canada.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES INSTITUTION'S INNOVATION COUNCIL (IIC) PROGRAM

- Institution's Innovation Council (IIC) Program of Ministry of Human Resource Development's (HRD) Innovation Cell was launched in New Delhi by Union HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar.
- HRD Ministry has established the Innovation cell at AICTE with purpose to systematically foster culture of Innovation in all Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) across the country.

ABOUT INSTITUTION'S INNOVATION COUNCIL (IIC) PROGRAM:

- IIC Program is a significant step in institutionalising innovation and developing a scientific temperament in the country.
- The purpose of formation of network of IICs is to encourage, inspire and nurture young students by exposing them to new ideas and processes resulting in innovative activities in their formative years.
- More than 1000 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) have already formed IICs in their campuses and enrolled for IIC network managed by MHRD's Innovation cell to promote innovation through multitudinous modes leading to an innovation promotion eco-system in their campuses.
- Through this initiative, India hopes to get good rank in global innovation ranking in the next 2-3 years.
- Innovation Cell has undertaken many initiatives for educational advancement in higher education for encouraging best practices in innovation and advance research.
- For this, it has implemented programs like Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievement (ARIIA), Smart India Hackathon (SIH)- 2019, etc.

PM SETS UP NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION COMMITTEE TO COMMEMORATE 550TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF GURU NANAK

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi have constituted National Implementation Committee (NIC) under the Chairmanship of Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in the country and abroad.
- Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and Minister of State for Culture Dr. Mahesh Sharma are its Members.

DETAILS:

- Union Government has decided to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak at national as well as international level.
- The yearlong celebration will include a number of commemorative as well as constructive activities that will be taken up during the commemoration period.
- Number of religious activities like kirtan, prabhat pheri, katha, langar and educational activities such as seminars, workshops, lectures etc. will be organized.
- Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee, which is the apex religious body of the Sikhs, will be the knowledge partner for the event.
- Government will also develop Sultanpur Lodhi in Punjab where Guru Nanak is believed to have spent most of his life.
- The area will be developed as a heritage city incorporating 'Pind Babe Nanak Da'.
- Moreover, a high powered telescope will be installed on the Indian side to view Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan where the first Sikh Guru spent his last days.

- Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance and Department of Posts will also release Commemorative coin and postage stamps to mark this event.
- Chairs in the name of Guru Nanak will be set up in UK and Canada.
- UNESCO will be requested to translate and publish anthology of Guru Nanak Dev's writings in world languages and publication of Gurbani in different Indian languages will be made by National Book Trust (NBT).

SCIENTISTS BUILT AND FLOWN FIRST-EVER SILENT AIRPLANE WITH NO MOVING PROPELLERS OR JET TURBINES

- Scientists from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), US have built and flown the first-ever silent airplane with no moving propellers or jet turbines .
- At present, every aircraft have moving parts such as propellers, turbine blades and fans, which are powered by the combustion of fossil fuels or by battery packs that produce a persistent, whining buzz.

DETAILS:

- MIT researchers have designed this lightweight plane weighing about five pounds with five-meter wingspan.
- It was flown at a distance of 60 meters, a feat that was repeated 10 times.
- It was the simplest possible plane design that could prove the concept that an ion plane could fly.
- It is the first-ever plane having no moving parts in the propulsion system.
- This new light aircraft does not carry propellers or turbines and also doesn't depend on fossil fuels to fly.
- It is inspired from movie and television series "Star Trek".
- It is powered by ionic wind or electrodynamic thrust, a silent but mighty flow of ions that is produced aboard plane.
- It can generate enough thrust to propel the plane over sustained, steady flight.
- Unlike propeller-driven planes, the new design is completely silent.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS AIRPLANE?

- It has potentially opened new and unexplored possibilities for aircrafts which are quieter, mechanically simpler and do not emit combustion emissions.
- In the near-term, such ion wind propulsion systems could be used to fly less noisy drones.
- Moreover, ion propulsion paired with more conventional combustion systems can create more fuel-efficient, hybrid passenger planes and other large aircrafts in the future.

IMPACT BASED FORECASTING APPROACH: IMD DEVELOPS TECHNOLOGY TO ASSESS RISE OF WATER LEVEL IN RIVERS

- India Meteorological Department (IMD) has developed a new technology called 'Impact Based Forecasting Approach' to assess rise of water level in rivers and reservoirs by rain.

- It shows a pre-event scenario that will help state governments authorities to minutely monitor impact of rainfall and take real-time decisions.
- It will help to avoid a disastrous situations similar to Kerala floods.
- It can generate scenario to help take decisions to release water or not from reservoirs after heavy downpour.
- It will be helpful for every state authority to take a decision.
- This system can be run in a pre-event scenario.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- The heavy downpour which had ravaged Kerala in August 2018, had caused death of around 500 people and economic damages worth over Rs 40,000 crore.
- Excessive rainfall had led to floods in Kerala and was the result of climate change.
- State Government had blamed IMD for lapses in its part for wrong rain forecast.
- IMD had forecasted estimated 98.5 mm rain in the state between 9 and 15 August, 2018 but Kerala received was 352.2 mm of rainfall resulting in severe flooding.

ABOUT INDIA METEOROLOGICAL DEPARTMENT (IMD):

- It is the national meteorological service of the country and chief government agency dealing in everything related to meteorology, seismology and associated subjects.
- It was formed in 1975.
- It functions under Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.

MANDATE OF IMD:

- Undertake meteorological observations and provide current information and forecasting information for most favorable operation of weather-dependent activities such as irrigation, agriculture, aviation, shipping etc.
- Offer warning against severe weather phenomenon such as tropical cyclones, norwesters, dust storms, heat waves, cold waves, heavy rains, heavy snow, etc.
- Provide met-related statistics needed for agriculture, industries, water resources management, oil exploration, and any other strategically important activities for the country.
- Engage in research in meteorology and allied subjects.
- Detect and locate earthquakes and evaluate seismicity in various parts of the country for developmental projects.

UNICEF APPOINTS SINGER NAHID AFRIN AS FIRST YOUTH ADVOCATE OF NE REGION TO FIGHT FOR CHILD RIGHTS

- United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) has appointed popular singer Nahid Afrin of Assam as the first 'Youth Advocate' of the northeastern region to fight for child rights.
- UNICEF engages 'Youth Advocates' to harness their voice as agents of change in society.

ABOUT NAHID AFRIN:

- Nahid had made her playback debut in 2016 Bollywood film 'Akira' starring Sonakshi Sinha in the lead.
- She received best female playback singer award at the Assam state Film Award 2018.

ABOUT UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF):

- UNICEF is a special program of UN devoted to aiding national efforts to improve the health, nutrition, education, and general welfare of children.
- It was created in 1946 to provide relief to children in countries devastated by World War II.
- It is headquartered in New York City.
- After 1950, it directed its efforts toward general programs for improvement of children's welfare, particularly in less-developed countries and various emergency situations.
- Its broader mission was reflected in present name adopted in 1953.
- It was awarded Nobel Prize for Peace in 1965.

CABINET APPROVES CONSTRUCTION OF KARTARPUR CORRIDOR IN GURDASPUR DISTRICT TO INTERNATIONAL BORDER

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired Union Cabinet has approved building and development of Kartarpur Corridor from Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district of Punjab to the international border with Pakistan.
- It was approved as part of the 550th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev, which falls in 2019.

ABOUT KARTARPUR:

- It is located in Shakargarh in Narowal district of the Punjab province of Pakistan.
- Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism and its first Guru had spent over 18 years of His life here.
- Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara is located about three to 4km from Indo-Pak border in Pakistan in Punjab province over there.

ABOUT THE KARTARPUR CORRIDOR:

- It will facilitate pilgrims from India who visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, Kartarpur, on the banks of the Ravi River in Pakistan every year.
- It was first proposed by then PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee in 1999.
- If connected on both sides, this could also provide a major boost to religious tourism as more pilgrims will be able to visit the Holy Shrine throughout the year.
- It will be implemented as an integrated development project with Central Government's funding.
- Central Government will put in place suitable facilities for smooth passage of pilgrims.
- It will also urge Pakistan Government to "recognise the sentiments of the Sikh community, and develop a corridor with suitable facilities in their territory as well".

KIM JONG-YANG OF SOUTH KOREA ELECTED AS THE NEW PRESIDENT OF INTERPOL

- Kim Jong Yang of South Korea was elected as the Interpol President for a two-year term by member countries at the 87th General Assembly of Interpol, held for the first time in Dubai.
- He secured at least two-thirds of votes cast at the General Assembly and defeated Russia's Alexander Prokopchuk.
- He will serve until 2020, completing the four-year mandate of his predecessor, Meng Hongwei, who was detained in China over corruption charges.

ABOUT INTERPOL:

- Interpol is a global police co-operation agency and a non-governmental organization (NGO).
- It was established as the International Criminal Police Commission (ICPC) in 1923.
- Its headquarters are located at Lyon, France.
- It is the world's largest international police organization, with 194 member countries (including India).
- It is the second-largest international organization after United Nations in terms of international representation.
- Its work focuses on public safety and battling terrorism, crimes against humanity, genocide, war crimes, environmental crime etc.
- It seeks to facilitate international police cooperation even where diplomatic relations do not exist between particular countries.
- It ensures that police around the world have access to tools and services necessary to do their jobs effectively.
- It also provides targeted training, expert investigative support, relevant data and secure communications channels.

SAMEER VERMA WINS SYED MODI INTERNATIONAL BADMINTON TITLE 2018

- India's Sameer Verma has won the Syed Modi India Grand Prix Gold badminton title 2018 in men's singles category.
- In the final match held in Lucknow, he defeated China's Lu Guangzu by 16-21, 21-19 and 21-14 score.
- Women's singles title was won by China's Han Yue after defeating India's Saina Nehwal by 21-18, 21-8 score.

ABOUT SYED MODI INTERNATIONAL INDIA OPEN GRAND PRIX CHAMPIONSHIP:

- It was launched by Uttar Pradesh Badminton Association (UPBA) in 1991 as 'Syed Modi Memorial Badminton Tournament' in the memory of Syed Modi.
- Initially, it was a national level event and in 2004 it was organized as an International event for the first time.
- In 2011, it was upgraded to BWF Grand Prix Gold tournament.
- It is held every year at Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN: NOVEMBER 25

- International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (IDEVAW) is observed every year across the world on 25 November.
- Observance of this day seeks to raise awareness about violence against women and girls and end violence against women.
- It also seeks to show that prevention is possible against violence of women.
- The UN theme for this year's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence (25 November – 10 December) under the UNiTE to End Violence against Women campaign is "Orange the World: #HearMeToo".
- It aims to reinforce UNiTE Campaign's commitment to create a world free from violence for all women and girls and reaching out to the most marginalized people including migrants, refugees, indigenous peoples, minorities and populations affected by natural disasters and conflicts.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was instituted by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by adopting resolution 54/134 passed in December 1999.
- This day is commemorated in the memory of Mirabal sisters who were the three political activists from the Dominican Republic.
- They were brutally assassinated during the Rafael Trujillo dictatorship (1930-1961) in 1960.

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN:

- Violence against women is a human rights violation.
- It is a consequence of discrimination against women, in law.
- It is also in general practice and persisting inequalities are there between men and women.
- It impedes, progress in many areas, including poverty eradication, peace and security and combating HIV/AIDS.
- Violence against women continues to be a global pandemic and is not inevitable, but prevention is possible and essential.

MARY KOM WINS RECORD SIXTH GOLD MEDAL AT WORLD BOXING CHAMPIONSHIPS

- India's boxing legend Mary Kom has won gold medal at the World Women's Boxing Championships held in New Delhi.
- It was her sixth medal in World Boxing Championships.
- In the final, she defeated 22-year-old Ukrainian boxer Hana Okhaya of Ukraine.
- Mary Kom won this medal at the age of 35 years.
- By winning this medal, Mary Kom has become the most successful boxer in world boxing history with 6 gold medals.
- In this Women's World Boxing Championships 2018, India won total four gold, three silver and three bronze medals.

ABOUT MARY KOM:

- Mary Kom's full name is Chungjijung Mary Kom Humangte.
- She was born on March 1, 1983 in Kangathei, Manipur.
- She is one of the most successful boxers of amature boxing globally.
- She is the only boxer to win medals in seven world championships including six gold medals.
- She had won gold medal at World Boxing Championships held in Antalya in 2002, Podoslovak in 2005, New Delhi in Ningbo City in 2008, Bridgetown in 2010 and in New Delhi in 2018.
- Apart from this, she had won silver medal in World Boxing Championships held in Scranton in 2001.
- She had won bronze medal in 2012 London Olympics.
- After this, in the 2018 Commonwealth Games, she had won gold medal.
- She had won gold medal in the 2014 Asian Games and bronze medal in 2010 Asian Games, making her first women boxer to win a gold medal at the Asian Games.
- In April 2016, the President had nominated her as a member of Rajya Sabha.
- She has been bestowed with Padma Bhushan (2013), Arjuna Award (2003), Padma Shri (2006) and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award (2009).

MARATHON: ROSCOSMOS TO VENTURE INTO INTERNET OF THINGS (IOT) WITH THE LAUNCH OF NEW SATELLITE SYSTEM

- Russia's state space corporation (Roscosmos) has planned to venture into Internet of things (IoT) with launch of new satellite system named 'Marathon'.
- The new satellite system will be part of Russia's Sphere satellite constellation, which will be fully established by 2026.
- The number of satellites in Marathon system are not revealed yet.
- The federation's GLONASS navigation, a satellite communication system and data relay satellite set-up will be other equipment in the constellation.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- Russian President Vladimir Putin has approved Sphere constellation project, which involves the construction and deployment of 640 satellites.
- There are several segments of the satellite communication.
- USA's Iridium has been long operating successfully on voice satellite communications market.
- OneWeb and Starlink dominate the broadband Internet segment.
- IoT is the third segment of the satellite communication.
- Work in this segment will be successful if services are provided at lowest prices as the other systems also provide such services as well.

ABOUT INTERNET OF THINGS (IOT):

- IoT is a network of devices such as smartphones, wearable devices, home appliances and vehicles, connected to internet, which enables these objects to connect and exchange data.
- Blockchain technology has the potential to address security risks to IoT as it provides a shield against data tampering by labelling each block of data.

70-FEET TALL STATUE OF LORD BUDDHA UNVEILED AT RAJGIR IN NALANDA DISTRICT OF BIHAR

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar unveiled a 70-feet tall statue of Lord Buddha at Rajgir in Nalanda district of the state.

DETAILS:

- The statue has been installed above a 16 metre radius pedestal in the middle of lake Ghora Katora.
- It has been made from 45,000 cubic foot pink sand stone.
- Ghora Katora is a natural lake surrounded by five hills.
- The area around the lake and the statue has been developed into a beautiful park from an eco-tourism point of view.
- In this area no petrol and diesel vehicles will be allowed to ply and only electronic vehicles will be allowed.

AKHILESH RANJAN APPOINTED AS CONVENOR OF TASK FORCE DRAFTING NEW DIRECT TAX LEGISLATION

- Union Finance Ministry has appointed Akhilesh Ranjan, Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) member as Convenor of Task Force that is drafting New Direct Tax Legislation (Law).
- He will replace Arbind Modi who retired in September 2018.
- The other members (composition) of the Task Force remain unchanged.
- Akhilesh Ranjan is presently serving as Member (Legislation) of CBDT.

DETAILS:

- The task force was constituted in November 2017 in order to review Income-tax Act, 1961 and to draft new direct tax law in consonance with the economic needs of the country.
- At that time, Arbind Modi, who was then Member (Legislation) of CBDT was appointed as Convener of the task force.
- The task force has been mandated to draft an appropriate Direct Tax Legislation keeping in view the direct tax system prevalent in various countries, international best practices and economic needs of the country.
- It will submit its report to the Government by February 28, 2019.
- It has set its own procedures for regulating its work.

FIRST-EVER INDIA RUSSIA STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DIALOGUE HELD AT ST. PETERSBURG

- The first-ever India Russia Strategic Economic Dialogue was held at St. Petersburg in Russia.
- Indian side was led by NITI Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar and Russian delegation headed by Economic Development Minister Maxim Oreshkin.

DETAILS:

- The two-day forum provided participants, a platform to discuss development of bilateral ties in trade, investment, technology and industry.
- It was aimed to bring together key business figures from both the countries.
- Transport, agriculture and agro-processing, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), digital transformation and frontier technologies and industrial cooperation were some of the key areas of focus of the forum.

ABOUT INDO-RUSSIAN STRATEGIC ECONOMIC DIALOGUE:

- It was created by PM Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin in their informal summit (held at Sochi in May 2018) to give a big push to economic partnership between both countries that has started to gain momentum since 2017.
- It aims to focus on macro picture of the economic partnership and also explore partnership and joint ventures in services and IT sectors.
- It seeks to put in place mechanism for partnership between resource-rich Russian regions and Indian states.
- In an effort to boost bilateral trade to \$30 billion by 2025, both countries have agreed to give high priority to removal of obstacles to trade in order to improve upon 21.5% growth in two-way trade recorded last year.
- India has already launched Strategic Economic Dialogue with China.

INDIA AND CHINA SIGN PROTOCOL TO DOUBLE TAXATION AVOIDANCE AGREEMENT TO PREVENT TAX EVASION

- India and China have signed a protocol to amend Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) for the avoidance of double taxation and for prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income by allowing exchange of information.
- Under Section 90 of Income-tax Act, 1961, India can enter into an agreement with a foreign country or specified territory for the avoidance of double taxation of income, for exchange of information for the prevention of evasion.

DETAILS:

- The Protocol to amend DTAA with China updates existing provisions for exchange of information to latest international standards.
- It incorporates changes required to implement treaty related minimum standards under the Action reports of Base Erosion & Profit Shifting (BEPS) Project.
- Besides minimum standards, it also brings in changes as per BEPS Action reports as agreed upon by the two sides.
- It will help prevent tax evasion by allowing the exchange of information.

SUNIL ARORA APPOINTED AS NEW CHIEF ELECTION COMMISSIONER

- President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed senior IAS officer Sunil Arora as the new Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).
- He will be the 23rd CEC and shall succeed OP Rawat who retires in December 2018.
- He will have a nearly two-and-a-half-year tenure as CEC and General Election 2019 will be conducted under his stewardship.

ABOUT SUNIL ARORA:

- He is a 1980-batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre.
- Prior to this appointment, he was Election Commissioner since September 2017.
- At the centre, he has served as skill development secretary before and was appointed as a top bureaucrat in Information & Broadcasting Ministry.
- He has also worked in ministries and departments such as Finance, Textiles and Planning Commission and was also the CMD of Indian Airlines for five years.
- In his home state, he was one of the most trusted officers of Vasundhara Raje during her earlier term as Rajasthan Chief Minister.
- He was her principal secretary from 2005 to 2008.
- He had retired from service in April 2016, following which he was appointed as advisor to Prasar Bharti and then as Director General & CEO of Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs.

ABOUT ELECTION COMMISSION OF INDIA (ECI):

It is a permanent and independent constitutional body established directly by Constitution of India to ensure fair elections in the country.

COMPOSITION:

- It is a multi-member body and currently has three members including Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two election commissioners (ECs).

SERVICE CONDITIONS AND TENURE OF OFFICE OF CEC AND ECS:

- They are determined by an act of parliament titled The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Conditions of Service) Act, 1991.
- They hold the office for a term of six years or until they attain age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.

POWERS OF CEC AND ECS:

- They have equal power and receive equal salary, allowances and other perquisites, which are similar to a judge of Supreme Court.
- In case of difference of opinion amongst CEC and Election Commissioner, matter is decided by the Commission by majority.

NAGESHWARA RAO GUNTUR APPOINTED AS CHAIRPERSON OF ATOMIC ENERGY REGULATORY BOARD

- Union Government has appointed renowned scientist Nageshwara Rao Guntur as the Chairperson of Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB).
- His appointment as the AERB chairperson will be for three years.
- Guntur is the Chairman, Project Design Safety Committee, Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) and a former distinguished scientist of the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL).

ABOUT ATOMIC ENERGY REGULATORY BOARD (AERB):

- It was established in November 1983 to carry out certain regulatory and safety functions in the fields of nuclear and radiation safety on a countrywide basis.
- It was constituted by the President of India by exercising powers conferred by Section 27 of Atomic Energy Act, 1962 to carry out certain regulatory and safety functions under the Act.
- The regulatory authority of AERB is derived from rules and notifications promulgated under Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986.
- It is headquartered in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- Its mission is to ensure that the use of ionising radiation and nuclear energy in India does not cause undue risk to health and environment.
- Currently, it consists of a full-time Chairman, an ex officio Member, three part-time Members and a Secretary.

HEALTH MINISTRY LAUNCHES HEALTH INFORMATION PLATFORM TO MONITOR PUBLIC HEALTH SURVEILLANCE

- Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has soft-launched the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) segment of the Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP) in seven states.
- It is the first one-of-its-kind initiative launched by the Central Government to monitor public health surveillance.

ABOUT INTEGRATED HEALTH INFORMATION PLATFORM (IHIP):

- It is a real time, village wise, case based electronic health information system with GIS tagging to provide prompt prevention and control of epidemic prone diseases.
- It uses the latest technologies and digital health initiatives.
- It will provide near-real-time data to policy makers for detecting outbreaks, reducing the morbidity and mortality and lessening disease burden in populations and better health systems.
- It will enable creation of interoperable health records which can be made available and accessible throughout the country.
- For effective implementation of the platform, 32,000 people at block level, 13,000 at district level and 900 at state level have been trained.
- The success of this platform will depend primarily on quality of data shared by the states.
- Adopting this platform will help states to strengthen early outbreak detection and informed public health response.

INTERNATIONAL GITA FESTIVAL, 2018 TO BE HELD IN KURUKSHETRA

- The International Gita Festival 2018 will be organised in Kurukshetra in Haryana from December 7 to 23, 2018.
- This year, it is the third year of this mega cultural event, where Mauritius is the partner country and Gujarat is the partner state.
- Gita festival will also be organised in Mauritius next February.
- The objective behind this event is to spread the message of Gita to the world.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL GITA FESTIVAL 2018:

- It is being organized to commemorate birth of 'Srimad Bhagwat Gita', the sacred scripture containing invaluable advice of Lord Krishna that he proffered to Arjuna, the third Pandava in the battlefield of Kurukshetra on the first day of the famous 18-day battle in Mahabharata.
- It is held mainly on 11th day on Shukla Paksha (waxing phase of moon) of Margashirsha month (November - December) as per the traditional Lunar calendar i.e. Shukla Paksha Ekadashi day of Margashirsha month.
- It is jointly organized by Kurukshetra Development Board, Haryana Tourism, District Administration and Information and Public Relations Department, Haryana.
- On the sidelines of this event, about 200 famous painters from across the country will draw paintings on walls of Kurukshetra on the theme of the Mahabharata under the 'paint-the-wall' competition.
- Artists from India as well from Mauritius, Indonesia, Iran, Turkmenistan and Russia will perform during the annual festival.

ABOUT THE BHAGAVAD GITA:

- It is a 700 verse Holy Hindu scripture in Sanskrit that is part of the Hindu epic- Mahabharata.
- It is set in a narrative framework of dialogue between the Pandava Prince Arjuna and his guide and charioteer- Lord Krishna.
- The Bhagavad Gita presents a synthesis of the concept of Dharma, Bhakti, Yogic ideals of Moksha through Jnana, Bhakti, Karma, and Raja Yoga and Samkhya philosophy.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES PAISA PORTAL UNDER DEENDAYAL ANTYODAYA YOJANA - NATIONAL URBAN LIVELIHOODS MISSION

Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs launched 'PAiSA' - Portal for Affordable Credit and Interest Subvention Access during the National Workshop on Municipal Finance and Urban Planning held in New Delhi.

ABOUT PAISA PORTAL:

- It is a centralised electronic platform for quicker processing of loans under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM).
- It aims to connect directly with beneficiaries and ensure that there is greater efficiency in the delivery of services.
- It has been designed and developed by Allahabad Bank, the nodal bank under the scheme.
- All 35 States and Union Territories (UTs) & all scheduled commercial banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs) and Cooperative Banks are expected to be on the PAiSA portal by the year end.

ABOUT DEEN DAYAL ANTYODAYA YOJANA-NATIONAL URBAN LIVELIHOODS MISSION (DAY-NULM):

- It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme implemented by Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation.
- Its objective is to uplift urban poor folks by enhancing sustainable livelihood opportunities through skill development.
- Its intended beneficiaries are urban poor (street vendors, slum dwellers, homeless, rag pickers); unemployed and differently abled.
- It provides for employment through Skill Training and Placement through City Livelihood Centers to reduce poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households.
- It also provides social mobilization and institution development through formation of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) for training members and hand holding, an initial support of Rs 10,000 is given for each group.
- It also provides subsidy to urban poor i.e. interest subsidy of 5% - 7% for setting up individual micro-enterprises with loan of up to 2 lakhs and for group enterprises with a loan limit of up to Rs.10 lakhs.
- It fully funds the cost of construction of shelters for urban homeless.
- It also provides for development of vendor markets and also promotion of skills for vendors through setting up infrastructure and special projects for rag pickers and differently abled etc.

SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY CONFERENCE HELD IN NAIROBI, KENYA

- The first Sustainable Blue Economy Conference was held in Nairobi, capital of Kenya.
- It was organized by Kenya and co-hosted by Japan and Canada.
- The theme of this conference was 'The Blue Economy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development'.

ABOUT SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMY CONFERENCE:

- This conference was held on momentum of UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, 2015 Climate Change Conference in Paris and UN Ocean Conference 2017 'Call to Action'.
- Over 17,000 plus participants from some 184 countries had participated in the conference.
- India was represented Union Minister for Shipping, Road Transport & Highways, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Nitin Gadkari.
- Other parties who participated in this conference are World Wildlife Fund, WWF; International Maritime Organization, IMO; International Seabed Authority, ISA; World Bank; AFRIEXIMBANK; Ocean Foundation etc.

BLUE ECONOMY:

- Blue Economy is an economic benefit and value that is realized from Earth's coastal and marine environment.
- Sustainable Blue Economy is a marine-based economy that provides social and economic benefits for current and future generations, restores, protects and maintains diversity, productivity and resilience of marine ecosystems.
- It is also based on clean technologies, renewable energy, and circular material flows.

BLUE ECONOMY AND INDIA:

- Blue Economy is very crucial for India's economic development.
- India has a strategic location in Indian Ocean region (IOR), and on this basis, it endorses growth of Blue Economy in a sustainable, inclusive and people centred manner through the framework of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA).
- India is also developing its maritime infrastructure as well as its inland waterways and coastal shipping through launch of the ambitious "Sagarmala Programme" which aims to revolutionize maritime logistics and port led developments in country.
- India's national vision about this sector is clearly articulated in term "SAGAR" - Security and Growth for All in IOR which was coined by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

MISSION RAKSHA GYAN SHAKTI LAUNCHED TO BOOST IPR CULTURE IN INDIGENOUS DEFENCE INDUSTRY

Union Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman launched 'Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti' in New Delhi to boost Intellectual Property Right (IPR) culture in indigenous defence industry.

ABOUT MISSION RAKSHA GYAN SHAKTI:

- It was instituted by Department of Defence Production as a part of the ongoing initiatives to enhance self-reliance in defence.
- It is aimed to provide a boost to IPR culture in the indigenous defence industry.
- The main objective of this programme was to inculcate IPR culture in Indian defence manufacturing ecosystem.
- Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA) was entrusted with the responsibility of coordinating and implementing the programme.
- During the event, salient inventions and innovations achieved by DRDO, Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs) and Ordnance Factories (OFs) that have resulted in successful filing of IPR applications were showcased.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- IPR has emerged as a key ingredient of an ecosystem which stimulates innovation and ingenuity.
- India has always been a knowledge hub since ancient times, but due to lack of awareness on modern legal framework for protection of IP rights, nation's knowledge and creativity have often not been utilised to its full potential.
- Spreading awareness about IPR will help in promoting culture of innovation and creation of Intellectual Property.
- Defence Ministry has established IP Facilitation Cell in April 2018 to achieve ambitious targets of training 10,000 personnel of OFB and DPSUs on IPR and facilitate filing of at least 1,000 new IPR applications.

CASIO LAUNCHES WORLD'S FIRST GST CALCULATOR

- Japanese electronics company 'CASIO' has launched world's first Goods and Services Tax (GST) calculator in India for simplifying the GST calculations for tax payers.
- The company has two variants of GST calculators MJ-120GST and MJ-12GST in the Indian market.
- These new GST calculators will provide solutions for GST based invoicing.

DETAILS:

- These GST calculators feature built-in GST tabs for all five slabs- 0%, 5%, 12%, 18% and 28%.
- It includes separate buttons for GST slabs to reduce time required for processing invoice.
- The tax slab buttons on these calculators include GST+0, GST+1, GST+2, GST+3, GST +4 and are changeable as per industry standards.
- These five buttons can store Gross value (net value+ Tax), net value and tax paid under GST slabs.
- These GST calculators also feature tax-mode application that will help taxpayers and traders to calculate base value of products by deducting tax from MRP.
- MJ-120GST calculator comes with GST+/tax- key that can calculate values in multiple formats i.e. gross value from base value in GST+ mode and base value from gross value in Tax - mode.
- GST GT key in the calculator can further determine the gross value of GST based calculation.

WIPRO CHAIRMAN AZIM PREMJI CONFERRED WITH HIGHEST FRENCH CIVILIAN HONOUR

- Chairman of IT major Wipro and philanthropist Azim Premji was bestowed with the highest French civilian distinction Chevalier de la Legion d'Honneur (Knight of the Legion of Honour).
- He was awarded for his outstanding contribution to developing information technology industry in India, his economic outreach in France and his contribution to society as a philanthropist through the Azim Premji Foundation and Azim Premji University.

ABOUT LEGION D'HONNEUR (LEGION OF HONOUR):

- It is the highest civilian award given by the French government to a person for his outstanding service to France, regardless of the nationality of the recipients.
- It was instituted in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte.
- The order (merit for both military and civil merits) is divided into five degrees of increasing distinction: Chevalier (Knight), Officier (Officer), Commandeur (Commander), Grand officier (Grand Officer), and Grand-croix (Grand Cross).
- President of France is the Grand Master of the Order of the Legion of Honour.
- Some of the past Indian recipients of this prestigious award include renowned scientist and Bharat Ratna awardee C N R Rao, superstar Shah Rukh Khan, Amitabh Bachchan, Amartya Sen, Ravi Shankar, Zubin Mehta, Lata Mangeshkar, JRD Tata and Ratan Tata among others.

ARVIND SAXENA APPOINTED AS CHAIRMAN OF UNION PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

- President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Arvind Saxena as the Chairman of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), which conducts examination to select bureaucrats, diplomats and police officers.
- He will have a tenure till August 7, 2020, when he attains the age of 65 years.
- Prior to this appointment, he was working as acting Chairman of UPSC since June 2018.
- He had joined UPSC as a member in May 2015.
- Prior to joining the UPSC, he was working as Director of the Aviation Research Centre (ARC).

ABOUT ARVIND SAXENA:

- He was a student of civil engineering from Delhi College of Engineering and holds M.Tech in systems management from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Delhi.
- He was selected for civil services and joined Indian Postal Service in 1978.
- In 1988, he started working at the Cabinet Secretariat, where he specialised in study of strategic developments in neighbouring countries.
- He has served in different countries and in states of Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.
- He is the recipient of awards for meritorious services (2005) and distinguished services (2012).

ABOUT UNION PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (UPSC):

- UPSC is a constitutional body which conducts the prestigious civil services examination to select IAS, IFS and IPS officers among others.
- It has been established under Article 315 of the Constitution and consists of the Chairman and ten Members appointed and removed by President.
- The Chairman and members of the Commission hold office for a term of six years or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- It conducts the prestigious civil services examination to select officers of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) among others.

GOVERNMENT APPOINTS AM NAIK AS CHAIRMAN OF NATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

- Union Government has appointed Anil Manibhai Naik as the Chairman of National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).
- He is currently the Group Chairman of engineering conglomerate Larsen and Toubro (L&T).
- He was awarded Padma Bhushan, India's 3rd highest civilian award in 2009 for his outstanding contribution to economic growth of the country.

ABOUT NATIONAL SKILL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (NSDC):

- NSDC is a Public Private Partnership (PPP) under Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE).
- It was founded in 2009 as a not-for-profit company by Ministry of Finance to address the need for providing skilled manpower across various industry sectors.

- Government of India (GoI) through MSDE holds 49% of share capital of NSDC, while private sector has balance 51% of the share capital.
- NSDC aims to promote skill development by catalyzing creation of large, quality and for-profit vocational institutions.
- Its objective is to create training capacity in the country; fund vocational training initiatives and create market ecosystem for skill development.
- Its mandate is to train 150 million people by 2022.
- It is also involved in re-skilling and also in catering to skilled manpower requirement of overseas markets, most notably that of Japan (under TITP) and UAE.

HIMACHAL PRADESH BECOMES FIRST STATE TO LAUNCH SINGLE EMERGENCY NUMBER 112

- Himachal Pradesh has become the first state in the country to implement Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) as Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched ERSS number 112 for the state.
- Under this system, all emergency numbers like 100 for police, 101 for fire, 102 for ambulance and disaster response have been integrated into one number 112.
- This emergency number has been introduced on basis of US emergency number 911.
- Gradually this emergency number will be started in other states of the country.

ABOUT EMERGENCY RESPONSE SUPPORT SYSTEM (ERSS):

- It will provide a single emergency response number across the country, providing 24*7 efficient and effective response system which can receive inputs from various voice and data services like voice call, SMS, e-mail and panic buttons in public transport, to attend to citizens in distress.
- It can also identify the location of persons in distress, connecting through voice or data, and immediate assistance will be provided to the affected.
- It will help in optimum utilisation of manpower and prompt action on emergency calls.
- In addition to this, problems related to coordination among police force will also be simplified.
- It has a feature of automated response system for timely dispatch of field resources (police) to the location of incidence using the system.
- It also has GPS (Global Positioning System) enabled dispatch of vehicles to locate nearest vehicles.
- It will provide standardized and easy to use mobile apps, IoT (Internet of Things) applications on Pan-India basis.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- The ERSS project was approved by Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) based on the recommendations of the Justice Verma Committee in the backdrop of the unfortunate incident of Nirbhaya in December 2012 in New Delhi.
- ERSS was earlier referred as Nationwide Emergency Response System.
- The project was approved with a budgetary provision of Rs.321.69 crore under the Nirbhaya Fund with view to introduce Pan-India Single Emergency Response Number '112' to address all kinds of distress calls such as police, fire and ambulance etc.