



MONTHLY GK DIGEST

OCTOBER 2018

RAMANDEEP SINGH
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MONTHLY GK DIGEST: OCTOBER 2018

#LOOREVIEW CAMPAIGN: GOVT. AND GOOGLE LAUNCH CAMPAIGN

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has partnered with Google to launch Loo Review campaign on Google Map.
- The joint campaign has been launched under the aegis of Swachh Bharat Mission- Urban (SBM-U).
- It will run throughout October and November 2018 in an effort to increase awareness and ease of locating public toilets across India.

ABOUT THE LOO REVIEW CAMPAIGN:

- This campaign aims to encourage all local guides in India to rate and review public toilets on Google Maps.
- It is a part of a feature which allows all citizens to locate public toilets in their cities on Google Maps, Search and Assistant and also provide feedback on the same.
- 500 plus cities in India with more than 30,000 toilets with name of "SBM Toilet" are currently live on Google Maps.
- The campaign will involve and engage Local Guides in India to rate and review public toilets on Google Maps.
- Besides, use of hashtag #LooReview will give a chance to the users to be featured on Google Local Guides' social channels.
- Local Guides are people who share reviews, photos, and knowledge on Google Maps to help people explore the world.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- One of the objectives of the Swachh Bharat Mission- Urban (SBM- U) is to provide sanitation coverage through public toilet facilities across cities in India for achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status.

- With around 3400 cities across the country already have achieved ODF status and other cities gearing up towards the same.
- This campaign will address need for ensuring ODF status is sustained through continuous usage and proper maintenance of public toilets.

GOVERNMENT SETS UP INJETI SRINIVAS HIGH LEVEL COMMITTEE

- The Union Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has constituted a High Level Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility- 2018 (HLC-2018) under the Chairmanship of Injeti Srinivas, Secretary, MCA.
- It will review the existing framework and guide, and formulate a roadmap for coherent policy on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).

ABOUT COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCE:

- **It will review the existing CSR framework as per Act, Rules and Circulars issued from time to time and recommend guidelines for better enforcement of CSR provisions.**
- It will analyze the outcomes of CSR activities, programmes and projects and suggest measures for effective monitoring and evaluation of CSR by companies.
- **It will also give suggestions on innovative solutions, use of technology, platform to connect stakeholders, and social audit.**
- It will submit its report to Government within three months from date of holding its first meeting.

ABOUT CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY (CSR):

- **CSR is referred as an initiative undertaken by CST to assess and take responsibility for company's effects on environment and impact on social welfare and to promote positive social and environmental change.**
- Its basic philosophy is that income is earned only from the society and therefore it should be given back.
- **Thus, CSR aims at promoting responsible and sustainable business through inclusive growth.**
- The provisions of section 135 of Companies Act, 2013 (Act) pertains to CSR.
- The existing provisions of in Companies Act, 2013 fully empower the Board of Company to decide on their CSR Policy, approve projects and oversee implementation.
- **Under this Act, any company with net worth of Rs 500 crore or more or turnover of Rs 1000 crore or more or net profit of Rs 5 crore or more has to spend at least 2% of last 3 years average net profits on CSR activities as specified in Schedule VII of the Act.**

NITI AAYOG INKS SOI FOR COLLABORATION AGAINST COUNTERFEIT DRUGS

- NITI Aayog has signed a Statement of Intent (SoI) with Oracle to pilot a real drug supply-chain using blockchain distributed ledger and Internet of Things (IoT) software to fight the growing problem of counterfeit drugs in India.
- Strides Pharma Sciences and Apollo Hospitals will partner in this effort.

- Oracle is a US multinational computer technology corporation that specializes primarily in developing and marketing database software and technology, cloud engineered systems, and enterprise software products.

NEED FOR THIS COLLABORATION:

- **The problem of fake and counterfeit drugs is a major issue, costing Indian pharma industry billions.**
- **At the same time, it is also putting patients at higher risk.**
- This agreement with Oracle, will help ensure that Indian drug manufacturers and healthcare experts have access to standards-based, modern technology platform- blockchain and Internet of Things (IoT) to help eliminate fake drug distribution.

ABOUT BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY IN DRUG SUPPLY-CHAIN:

- **Blockchain technology will help to permanently register a drug's record in the manufacturer's drug supply chain (serial number, scanning, labelling).**
- **This will leave no scope for record tampering.**
- At every point of hand change of drug, it records drug's movement from manufacturer to logistics, stockiest, hospital or pharmacy to consumer.
- **In case of a fake drug, software will detect irregularity.**
- Additionally, critical information such as chemical ingredients of the drug or maintenance of temperature control in case of life saving drugs or vaccines, can also be tracked.

MAJOR ADVANTAGES OF BLOCKCHAIN SOFTWARE:

- **It will allow sharing of information across drug supply chain securely with every exchange of information getting recorded.**
- This system cannot be tampered with a record of drug movement.
- Besides being a decentralized database, it has the inability to delete any records so there can be no dispute, if offender is caught.

SECOND ANNIVERSARY OF SURGICAL STRIKE WAS CELEBRATED AS PARAKRAM PARV

- **Second Anniversary of Surgical Strike was celebrated as Parakram Parv or Surgical Strike Day on September 29-30, 2018 by Indian Army to showcase the gallant action of brave Armymen in the conduct of Surgical Strikes on September 29, 2016.**
- This day was also marked to remember the sacrifice of soldiers during 'Uri incident'.

ABOUT THE CELEBRATIONS:

- **The Parakram Parv celebrations were inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at 'Combined Commanders' Conference in Jodhpur, Rajasthan.**

- Exhibition to highlight the valour and accomplishments of the Indian Army was also organised by Konark Corps at the Jodhpur Military station.

A LOOK INTO THE HISTORY:

- **Indian Army had carried out a Surgical strike on the night of September 28-29, 2016 in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK), 11 days after the Uri attack claimed 18 soldiers.**
- **It was carried out by Para (Special Forces), commonly known as Para SF, which is the special force unit of the Indian Army's Parachute Regiments.**
- The four hour surgical strike had inflicted heavy casualties on terrorists along with those protecting them, sending across a message of change of stand on the rules of engagement on the disputed Line of Control (LoC).
- **The strike was conducted to prevent terrorists who were prepping to infiltrate and attack the Kashmir region and metros.**
- It was claimed to be first-of-its-kind strike across the Pakistani border and was based on specific intelligence reports.

WHAT IS A SURGICAL STRIKE?

- **It is essentially a swift and targeted attack on specific target that aims to neutralise them** while ensuring minimum collateral damage to surrounding areas, general public infrastructure, vehicles, buildings, utilities and most importantly civilians.
- Neutralisation of targets with surgical strikes also prevents escalation to a full blown war between two countries.
- **Surgical strikes are part of India's Cold Start doctrine** and have proved effective in foiling new infiltration bid by terrorists groups across LoC from Pakistani side who mainly attack several locations in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and other metro cities in India.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES RAIL HERITAGE DIGITISATION PROJECT

- **Union Railway Ministry has launched the Rail Heritage Digitisation Project in collaboration with Google Arts and Culture Association.**
- **It can be accessed at: <https://artsandculture.google.com/project/indian-railways>**
- It is first-of-its-kind project that aims to showcase India's rail heritage to the national and international audience in an online story-telling platform.
- It is also the largest cultural heritage digitisation project in India and possibly in entire Asia Pacific Region.

DETAILS:

- **The collaboration of Google Art and Culture and Indian Railways under this project was able to digitise the National Rail Museum, Rewari Steam Centre, three World Heritage Railways, CSMT Mumbai building and other prominent aspects of country's rail heritage.**
- **The project was completed after almost 2 years of hard work, research, inquiry and execution.**

- Digitization of rail heritage will make India's rich rail-heritage and legacy digitally accessible to people in India and around the world.
- **It will also provide an opportunity to contextualize artifact and other heritage assets with stories for next generation.**
- **Digital heritage provides a universal access to large repository of knowledge and thus removes the bottleneck of being physically there.**
- It will also bring alive lost stories and heroic efforts of people like track-man, station master and workshop engineers to celebrate their contribution.

ABOUT INDIAN RAILWAYS:

- **Indian Railway is one of the most celebrated railway networks in the world with over 151,000 kilometres of track, 7,000 stations, 1.3 million employees and 160 years of history.**
- The first railway in India was started on 16th April, 1853 between Bori bunder and Thane.
- Since then it has expanded to become one of largest networks in the world and also significantly contributed to social, technological and economic development of the country.

AICTE TO ESTABLISH COUNTRY'S FIRST AICTE TRAINING AND LEARNING ACADEMY

- **All India Council for Technical Education will establish country's first AICTE Training and Learning (ATAL) Academy in Jaipur, capital of Rajasthan.**
- Moreover, three more ATAL academies will come at Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), Guwahati (Assam) and Baroda (Gujarat) by next year.

ABOUT ATAL ACADEMY:

- **These academies will provide upgraded teaching methods and modules to make technical education more effective and accountable.**
- **Faculties will be trained on the eight-module course in these academies in five months.**
- The training will be mandatory for new teachers from 2019 and it will be necessary for existing teachers and assistant teachers while applying for promotions.
- For building these academies states had provided infrastructure and land for free of cost.

ABOUT AICTE:

- **AICTE is a statutory body established in November 1945.**
- **It comes under the aegis of Department of Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resources Development.**
- It is a national-level council for technical education responsible for planning and coordination of technical education and management of education system in the country.
- **It accredits graduate and post graduate programs at Indian institutions.**
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.

GOVT. CONSTITUTES INJETI SRINIVAS COMPETITION LAW REVIEW COMMITTEE

- **Union Finance Ministry has constituted nine-member Competition Law Review Committee to ensure that the legislation is in tune with changing business environment.**
- **It will be chaired by Corporate Affairs Secretary Injeti Srinivas and includes Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) Chairperson M S Sahoo and Competition Commission of India (CCI) Chairperson as members.**
- The committee was constituted in pursuance of the Government's objective of ensuring that the legislation is in sync with needs of strong economic fundamentals.

ABOUT THE COMMITTEE'S TERMS OF REFERENCES:

- **The committee will review competition regulations in view of changing business environment and suggest the necessary changes to strengthen and re-calibrate existing law to promote best practices.**
- It will also look into international best practices in competition field with a thrust on anti-trust laws, merger guidelines and handling cross-border competition issues.
- It will also study other regulatory regimes, institutional mechanisms and government policies which overlap with the Competition Act.
- **It will submit its report within three months of the date of its first meeting.**

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **The Competition Act was passed in 2002 and the Competition Commission of India (CCI) was set up in 2009.**
- However, since inception of the commission, the size of the economy has grown immensely making it one of the fifth largest economies in the world.
- In this context, it was seen necessary that Competition Law is strengthened and re-calibrated to promote best practices which will result in the citizens of this country achieving their aspirations and value for money.

INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY: SEPTEMBER 30

- **The second International Translation Day was observed by United Nations on 30 September 2018.**
- **Observance of this day seeks to recognize contribution of unsung heroes behind international diplomacy who work as language professionals to facilitate dialogue and contribute to development and strengthens world peace and security.**
- It also recognises the transposition of literary or scientific work from one language into another language as indispensable to preserve clarity, climate and productiveness in international public communication.

A LOOK INTO THE HISTORY:

- **The International Translation Day was instituted by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in May 2017** by adopting resolution 71/288 after considering importance of role played by language professionals role in bringing nations together, facilitating dialogue, understanding and cooperation, contributing to development and strengthening world peace and security.
- **The date 30 September was chosen to celebrate the feast of Bible translator St Jerome, who is considered as the patron Saint of translators.**

INTERNATIONAL COFFEE DAY: OCTOBER 1

- **The International Coffee Day is observed every year on October 1 to promote and celebrate coffee as a beverage.**
- Observance of this day marks global celebration of coffee's journey from farm to your local shop and opportunity to honour the men and women who grow and harvest coffee.
- **This year, the International Coffee Organization had chosen a special theme: 'Women in Coffee'.**
- It was aimed at highlighting the important role played by women in the whole coffee chain as men, from planting seeds to processing to trading to brewing and drinking it.
- It also highlights the need for equity and equality in coffee sector from bean to cup and that can only be achieved by empowering women to benefit from the whole coffee sector.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **The exact origin of the International Coffee Day is unknown.**
- **An event was first promoted in Japan in 1983 by The All Japan Coffee Association.**
- The official date was agreed by the International Coffee Organization and was launched in Milan, Italy in 2015 to promote fair trade of coffee and to raise awareness for the plight of coffee growers.

ABOUT COFFEE PRODUCTION IN INDIA:

- **India is the 6th largest coffee producer in the world with 4% share after Brazil, Vietnam, Colombia, Indonesia and Ethiopia.**
- **In India, coffee is cultivated in about 4.54 lakh hectares by 3.66 lakh coffee farmers and 98% of them are small farmers.**
- Karnataka (54%), Kerala (19%) and Tamil Nadu (8%) are the largest coffee producing states.
- India accounts for only 4-5% of world's coffee output, but exports 70-80% of its produce.
- **Italy, Russia and Germany are the top three buyers of Indian coffee.**
- In India, two coffee varieties robusta (or Coffea canephora) and Coffea arabica are grown on large scale.

NIWARI ANNOUNCED AS 52ND DISTRICT OF MADYA PRADESH

- **Madhya Pradesh Government has announced creation of a new district- Niwari.**
- **It will be the 52nd district of the state and will come into effect from October 1, 2018.**

- The proposal to this effect was cleared by state Cabinet chaired by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

DETAILS:

- **Niwari district has been carved out of the Tikamgarh district.**
- **It will include three tehsils of present Tikamgarh district viz. Niwari, Orchha and Prithvipur.**
- IAS officer Akshay Kumar Singh (2010 Batch) will hold interim charge as the first District Collector of the new district.
- The decision of forming a new district comes ahead of Madhya Pradesh assembly elections, which are scheduled to be held by year end.

BSE BECOMES FIRST STOCK EXCHANGE TO LAUNCH COMMODITY DERIVATIVE CONTRACTS

- **India's leading bourse Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) became the first stock exchange in the country to launch commodity derivative contracts.**
- **It has launched contracts in popular commodities like gold (1kg) and silver (30kg).**
- This launch comes after unified exchange regime kicked off from 1 October 2018.
- The launch of commodity derivatives platform on BSE will help efficient price discovery, reduce timelines and make it cost effective.
- **BSE has also applied for launching of crude oil and copper commodity contracts with capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).**
- Subsequently, it is also planning to launch more agri commodities contracts.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **So far, commodity contracts were only available on commodity exchanges like MCX and NCDEX, the two specialised commodity derivatives exchanges in in the country.**
- Recently SEBI has allowed India's top two stock exchanges BSE and NSE to launch commodity derivatives trading under unified exchange regime wherein stock exchanges will be allowed to offer trading in commodities derivatives.

ABOUT THE BOMBAY STOCK EXCHANGE (BSE):

- **BSE is the oldest stock exchange in Asia formed by eight native stock brokers association in 1875 located at Dalal Street, Mumbai.**
- It had received temporary approval from Bombay government in 1927 and permanent approval by Indian Government on 31 Aug 1957.
- **Today it is 10th largest stock market in the world by market capitalization at \$1.7 trillion and has more than 5,000 companies listed on it.**
- Its iconic building named Phiroze Jeejeebhoy Towers, Dalal Street in Mumbai, Maharashtra has received an image trademark under the Trade Marks Act, 1999.

JAMES P. ALLISON AND TASUKU HONJO AWARDED 2018 NOBEL PRIZE

- The 2018 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine was jointly awarded to two immunologists James P. Allison (US) and Tasuku Honjo (Japan) for their discovery of Immune checkpoint therapy i.e. cancer therapy by inhibition of negative immune regulation.
- It was announced by the Nobel Assembly at Sweden's Karolinska Institute.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THEIR DISCOVERY?

- Both immunologists had figured out an entirely new principle for cancer therapy by stimulating the ability of immune system to attack tumour or cancer cells more quickly, unlike traditional forms of cancer treatment that directly target cancer cells.
- Their discovery has led to treatments targeting proteins made by some immune system cells that act as brake on body's natural defences killing cancer cells.
- **This therapy is a landmark in the fight against cancer and has revolutionised cancer treatment.**
- It has also fundamentally changed the way to manage cancer.

ABOUT THE NOBEL PRIZE IN PHYSIOLOGY OR MEDICINE:

- The Nobel award for physiology or medicine is given to persons whose discoveries have significantly enhanced understanding of life or practice of medicine.
- The winners are chosen by the Nobel Assembly at Karolinska Institute.
- The prestigious award carries a prize money of 8 million Swedish Kroner (US \$1.1 million).
- Medicine is first of the Nobel Prizes awarded each year.
- **It is one of five Nobel Prizes established by Swedish chemist Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite in 1895 in his will.**
- **German physiologist Emil von Behring was the first recipient of this award in 1901** for his work on serum therapy and development of vaccine against diphtheria.
- **Gerty Cori was the first woman to receive a Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1947** for her role in elucidating metabolism of glucose.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES SATAT INITIATIVE TO PROMOTE BIO-GAS PRODUCTION

- Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has launched Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT) aimed at providing sustainable alternative towards affordable transportation.
- The initiative was launched with PSU Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs i.e. IOC, BPCL and HPCL).

ABOUT THE SATAT INITIATIVE:

- **The SATAT initiative has the potential to boost availability of more affordable transport fuels, better use of agricultural residue, cattle dung and municipal solid waste, as well as provide additional revenue source to farmers.**
- It will also benefit vehicle-users as well as farmers and entrepreneurs.
- Under it, Expression of Interest (EoI) have been invited from potential entrepreneurs to set up **Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) production plants** and make biogas available in the market for use in automotive fuels.

BENEFITS OF THIS INITIATIVE:

- **It will boost the availability of more affordable transport fuels and enable better use of agricultural residue, cattle dung and municipal solid waste.**
- It will pave the way for a efficient municipal solid waste management and help in tackling problem of polluted urban air due to farm stubble-burning and carbon emissions.
- **It will boost the entrepreneurship, rural economy and employment and provide additional source of revenue to farmers.**
- **It will also help achieve nation's climate change goals and bring down dependency on natural gas and crude oil imports and act as a buffer against crude oil and gas price fluctuations.**
- It will also help to integrated CBS networks with city gas distribution (CGD) networks to boost supplies to domestic and retail users in existing and upcoming markets.
- Besides retailing from OMC fuel stations, CBS can at later date be injected into CGD pipelines too for efficient distribution and optimised access of cleaner and more affordable fuel.

INDIAN-AMERICAN GITA GOPINATH APPOINTED AS CHIEF ECONOMIST OF IMF

- **India-born economist Gita Gopinath was appointed the Chief Economist of International Monetary Fund (IMF).**
- She will take over as IMF chief economist after Maurice Obstfeld retires in December 2018.
- It makes her second Indian after former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan to hold the position.

ABOUT GITA GOPINATH:

- **Gita Gopinath was born and brought up in India.**
- **She is a US citizen and an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI).**
- She had received her Ph.D in economics from Princeton University in 2001 after earning BA from Delhi University and MA degrees from both Delhi School of Economics and University of Washington.
- **She joined the University of Chicago in 2001 as an Assistant Professor before moving to Harvard in 2005.**
- She became tenured Professor there in 2010.
- **She is John Zwaanstra Professor of International Studies and of Economics at Harvard University.**
- Her research focuses on International Finance and Macroeconomics.
- She is a co-director of International Finance and Macroeconomics program at National Bureau of Economic Research, visiting scholar at Federal Reserve Bank of Boston, member of economic advisory

panel of Federal Reserve Bank of New York, co-editor of American Economic Review, co-editor of current Handbook of International Economics.

- She was managing editor of Review of Economic Studies.
- **She is currently the Economic Adviser to Chief Minister of Kerala and had also served on advisory panel for G-20 issues for India's Ministry of Finance.**
- In 2014, she had made into IMF's list of 25 economists under 45.
- She was also chosen as Young Global Leader by World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2011.

WORLD HABITAT DAY OBSERVED ON OCTOBER 1

- **The World Habitat Day is observed every year on the first Monday in October all over the world.**
- **This year it was observed on 1 October 2018 with theme 'Municipal Solid Waste Management'.**
- **The purpose of the day is to reflect on the state of cities and towns and basic human right to adequate shelter.**
- It also aims to remind the world of its collective responsibility for habitat of future generations.
- **This year's theme aims to highlight the issue of solid waste management as a global issue that affects everyone.**
- It seeks to bring change in public attitudes to minimize waste and stop littering, regularization of informal waste pickers, increase recycling and reusing, solid waste planning including adequate landfill sites to improve current state of solid waste management in cities across the world and save money to become 'Waste-Wise Cities'.

A LOOK IN THE HISTORY:

- **The United Nations has designated the first Monday of October of every year as World Habitat Day.**
- **The day was established by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) through Resolution 40/202 in 1985 and was first celebrated in 1986.**
- Since then it is observed each year with a new theme to promote sustainable development policies that ensure adequate shelter for all.

MADAN BHIMARAO LOKUR APPOINTED EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN OF NALSA

- **President Ramnath Kovind has appointed senior judge of Supreme Court Madan Bhimaroo Lokur (64) as Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority of India (NALSA).**
- He was appointed by the President in exercise of power conferred under Clause (b) of sub-section (2) of Section 3 of the Legal Authorities Act, 1987.

ABOUT MADAN BHIMARAO LOKUR:

- He is an alumnus of Delhi's Moden School and St. Stephen's College.
- **He had enrolled as an advocate in 1977.**
- He has a vast experience in Civil, Criminal, Constitutional, Revenue and Service laws.
- **He got enrolled as an Advocate-on-Record in the Supreme Court in 1981.**

- **He had served as the Additional Solicitor General of India from July 1998 to February 1999.**
- He was appointed as the additional Judge of Delhi High Court in February 1999.
- He also functioned as Chief Justice of Gauhati High Court from June 2010 to November 2011 and then as Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court.
- **He was appointed as Judge of the Supreme Court in June 2012.**

ABOUT NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY OF INDIA (NALSA):

- **NALSA provides for free legal aid inter-alia to all persons in custody.**
- It has been constituted under Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.
- **It provides services of free legal aid in civil and criminal matters for poor and marginalised people who cannot afford services of a lawyer in any court or tribunal.**
- **NALSA aims to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reasons of economic or other disabilities.**
- It also identifies specific categories of marginalised and excluded groups and formulates various schemes for implementation of legal service programmes.
- **It also organises Lok Adalats for amicable and speedy resolution or settlement of disputes.**

NAREDCO SIGNS MOU WITH HOUSING MINISTRY

- **Realtors body National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to provide skill training and jobs in the construction sector for 2.5 lakh poor people.**
- The partnership will strengthen skill trainings and employment opportunities in the construction sector for urban poor under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission.

DETAILS:

- **The two objectives of this MoU are to provide employment to urban poor waiting to enter construction sector and up-skill the semi-skilled construction workers working on construction sites to skilled category.**
- NAREDCO will ensure implementation of this initiative through training providers.
- It will deliver majority of fresh and upskilling training programme at the construction sites.
- The training curriculum under this initiative will range from minimum 10 days (80 hours) to maximum of 6 months.
- Through this collaboration around 2,50,000 urban poor will be trained.

ABOUT NATIONAL REAL ESTATE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (NAREDCO):

- It is an autonomous self-regulatory body under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- It was established in 1998 and is headquartered in New Delhi.
- **It serves as the apex national body for real estate industry and provides single platform for Government, industry and public to discuss various problems and opportunities face to face for speedy resolution of issues.**

- Its mandate also includes to induce transparency and ethics in the real estate business and transform unorganized Indian real estate sector into a matured and globally competitive business sector.

WORLD'S LARGEST DOME INAUGURATED IN PUNE

- **The world's largest dome was inaugurated at Maharashtra Institute of Technology (MIT)'s World Peace University (MIT-WPU) campus at Loni Kalbhor, Pune (Maharashtra).**
- It was inaugurated by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu at the Peace Center on the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

ABOUT WORLD PEACE MONUMENT DOME:

- The dome has been built atop MIT World Peace Library and World Peace Prayer Hall, which are named after 13th century poet-saint and philosopher Dhyaneswar who was a pivotal figure of Bhakti movement in Maharashtra.
- **The dome has a diameter of 160 feet, overtaking earlier record holding Vatican Dome having diameter of 139.6 feet.**
- **It stands 263 feet tall with a bell hanging from centre and has a prayer hall with area of around 30,000 sq ft.**
- It is supported by 24 massive columns, each 63 feet tall.
- The periphery of the dome and underneath- inside and outside has bronze statues of 54 of biggest names in world history stand, irrespective of nationality or religion.

WHO LAUNCHES FIRST GLOBAL GUIDELINES ON SANITATION AND HEALTH

- **The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched first global guidelines on sanitation and health.**
- These guidelines summarize evidence on effectiveness of range of sanitation interventions.
- They also articulate role of health sector in maximizing health impact of sanitation interventions.

SALIENT FEATURES OF WHO GUIDELINES:

- **WHO's Sanitation and Health Guidelines are aimed at securing health and wellbeing for everyone, everywhere by considering sanitation as the fundamental foundation of human health and development.**
- These guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for health-protecting sanitation, covering policy and governance measures, implementation of sanitation technologies, systems and behavioural interventions, risk-based management, and monitoring approaches.
- **They also identify gaps in evidence-base to guide future research efforts to improve the effectiveness of sanitation interventions.**
- **By adopting these new guidelines, countries can significantly reduce diarrhoeal deaths due to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene.**
- For every US \$1 invested in sanitation, it is estimated nearly six-fold return as measured by lower health costs, increased productivity and fewer premature deaths.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW:

- According to WHO, 2.3 billion people worldwide lack basic sanitation and almost half of the world population is forced to defecate in the open.
- They are among 4.5 billion people without access to safely managed sanitation services i.e. do not have toilet connected to sewer or pit or septic tank that treats human waste.
- Without proper access to sanitation, millions of people across the world over are deprived of dignity, safety and convenience of a decent toilet.
- Poor sanitation is also a major factor responsible for transmission of neglected tropical diseases.

ABOUT WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO):

- WHO is a specialized agency of United Nations that acts as a coordinating authority on international public health.
- It was established on 7 April 1948, it succeeded the Health Organization, which was an agency of the League of Nations.
- It is a member of UN Development Group (UNDP).
- It is headquartered at Geneva.
- WHO flag features the Rod of Asclepius as a symbol for healing.

ASHKIN, MOUROU AND STRICKLAND WIN 2018 NOBEL PHYSICS PRIZE

- The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has selected three scientists Arthur Ashkin (USA), Gerard Mourou (France) and Donna Strickland (Canada) for the 2018 Nobel Prize in Physics.
- They were selected for groundbreaking inventions in the field of laser physics.
- Arthur Ashkin (91) received the half prize and remaining half was shared equally by Gérard Mourou and Donna Strickland.

ABOUT ARTHUR ASHKIN:

- He is 96 years old which makes him the oldest scientist ever to be awarded a Nobel Prize.
- He received the prize for optical tweezers and their application to biological systems.
- His optical tweezers are able to grab particles, atoms, viruses and other living cells with their laser beam fingers, allowing use of radiation pressure of light to move physical objects.

ABOUT GERARD MOUROU AND DONNA STRICKLAND:

- They were jointly awarded for their method of generating high-intensity, ultra-short optical pulses.
- They have created ultrashort high-intensity laser pulses without destroying the amplifying material, thus paving a way towards shortest and most intense laser pulses ever created by mankind.
- Their innovative technique is known as 'chirped pulse amplification' (CPA) and has now become standard for high-intensity lasers, including ultra-sharp beams used in corrective eye surgeries.
- **Note:** With this, Strickland (59) became third woman to have received Nobel Prize in Physics, after Marie Curie in 1903 and Maria Goeppert Mayer in 1963.

PM NARENDRA MODI CONFERRED UNEP CHAMPIONS OF EARTH AWARD 2018

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi was conferred with United Nation's Champions of the Earth Award by UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres at a ceremony in Delhi.
- He is among the six winners who received this award.
- PM Modi was jointly awarded this award along with French President Emmanuel Macron under the 'Political Leadership' category for their work in championing International Solar Alliance (ISA) and promoting new areas of cooperation on environmental action.

ABOUT THE CHAMPIONS OF EARTH AWARD:

- It is UN's highest environmental recognition celebrating exceptional figures from public and private sectors and from civil society, whose actions have had transformative positive impact on the environment.
- It was established in 2005 by United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment).
- This award programme is a successor to UNEP's Global 500 Roll of Honour.
- Past laureates include: Afroz Shah, who led world's largest beach cleanup (2016), Rwandan President Paul Kagame (2016), Ocean Cleanup CEO Boyan Slat (2014), scientist-explorer Bertrand Piccard, developer of Google Earth Brian McClendon (2013), and former US Vice-President Al Gore (2007).

JUSTICE RANJAN GOGOI SWORN IN AS 46TH CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

- Justice Ranjan Gogoi was sworn-in as the 46th Chief Justice of India.
- He was administered oath of the office by President Ram Nath Kovind.
- With this, Justice Ranjan Gogoi is the first Chief Justice of India from the north-east.
- He succeeded CJ Dipak Misra who retired from the office.
- He will have a tenure of about 13 months, from October 3, 2018 till his retirement on November 17, 2019.

ABOUT JUSTICE RANJAN GOGOI:

- Justice Gogoi was born on November 18, 1954.
- He is a native of Assam and is the son of former Assam Chief Minister Keshab Chandra Gogoi.
- He had joined Bar in 1978 and practiced mainly in Gauhati High Court.
- He was appointed as a permanent judge of High Court in February 2001.
- He was transferred to Punjab and Haryana High Court in September 2010 and was appointed its Chief Justice in February 2011.
- He was elevated to the Supreme Court in April 2012.
- In Supreme Court, Justice Gogoi had led important benches that have dealt largely with the issue of corruption in politics and public life.
- He has led apex court bench which ordered Centre to set up special courts to exclusively try MPs and MLAs as means to de-criminalise politics.
- His Bench is also monitoring progress made by government in appointment of anti-corruption ombudsman Lokpal.

- Justice Gogoi was one of the four most senior Supreme Court judges (along with Justices J Chelameswar, M B Lokur and Kurian Joseph) who held January 12, 2018 press conference bringing up issue of selective assignment of sensitive cases by recent CJs to certain judges in the Supreme Court.

SIDBI LAUNCHES ENTREPRENEURSHIP AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

- **Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has launched Udyam Abhilasha (उद्यम अभिलाषा), a national level entrepreneurship awareness campaign.**
- It was launched in 115 Aspirational Districts identified by NITI Aayog in 28 States.

ABOUT UDYAM ABHILASHA:

- **The campaign will run from 3 October to 8 October, 2018 across India and reach out to around 15,000 youth.**
- **It will create and strengthen a cadre of more than 800 trainers to provide entrepreneurship training to aspiring youths across these districts to enter admired segment of entrepreneurs.**
- For implementing this campaign, SIDBI has partnered with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle, (CSC SPV) under Ministry of Electronics & IT through their CSCs.
- It will also tie-up with Banks, NABARD, NBFCs, SFBs, District Industries Centres, State Government etc.
- **CSC Village Level entrepreneurs (VLEs) will play the role of catalyst under this campaign for these aspiring entrepreneurs.**
- **VLEs will provide training, support aspirants to establish new units, assisting them in availing loans and make them aware about various Government initiatives like Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, SUI etc. and educate them in business literacy.**

OBJECTIVES OF UDYAM ABHILASHA:

- Inspire rural youth in the aspirational districts to be entrepreneurs by assisting them to set up their own enterprise.
- **Impart trainings through digital medium across the country.**
- **Create business opportunities for CSC-VLEs.**
- Focus on women aspirants in aspirational districts to encourage women entrepreneurship.
- Assist participants to become bankable and avail credit facility from banks to set up their own enterprise.

ABOUT SMALL INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT BANK OF INDIA (SIDBI):

- **SIDBI is the principal development financial institution for promotion, financing and development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in India.**
- It was established on April 2, 1990 through an Act of Parliament (thus, it is a statutory body).
- **It is headquartered in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.**
- **It facilitates and strengthens credit flow to MSMEs and address both financial and developmental gaps in the MSME eco-system across the country.**

IAF SUCCESSFULLY CONDUCTS TRIALS OF ASTRA BVR-AAM

- **Indian Air Force (IAF) has successfully undertaken a series of flight trials of Astra Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVR-AAM) from September 26 to October 3, 2018.**
- The tests were conducted at Integrated Test Range (ITR), Balasore, Odisha as part of the final development trials of the missile.

ABOUT THE TEST:

- **The missile was tested in a combination of complex tests for engagement of pilotless target in different modes of manoeuvring, off-boresight, medium and long ranges.**
- These tests make the missile ready for induction in service in 2019.

ABOUT THE ASTRA MISSILE:

- **Astra is an air to air beyond visual range air-to-air indigenously developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).**
- More than 50 private and public sector industries are involved in development and production of different sub-systems of the missile.
- **It is one of the smallest weapon system developed by DRDO, having a length of 3.8-metre and weighing 154kg.**
- **It is a single stage solid fuelled missile and has a payload capacity of 15 kg conventional explosives.**
- It can be launched from different altitudes and is capable of engaging targets at varying range and altitudes at both short-range targets (up to 20 km) in tail-chase mode and long-range targets (up to 80 km) in head-on mode.
- It is a radar homing supersonic missile having a maximum speed of Mach 4 (four times speed of sound).
- **It possesses high Single Shot Kill Probability (SSKP), making it highly reliable.**
- **It is an all-weather missile with active radar terminal guidance, excellent electronic counter-counter measure (ECCM) features, smokeless propulsion and process improved effectiveness in a multi-target scenario.**
- It has an advance on-board electronic counter-measures that jam the radar signals from enemy radar, making tracking of the missile difficult.
- It is fitted with terminal active radar-seeker and an updated mid-course internal guidance system that helps missile to locate and track targets.
- **The missile can be integrated with all fighter aircraft of IAF including Sukhoi-30 MKI, Mirage-2000, MiG-29, Jaguar and the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA).**

GOVT. INKS \$150 MILLION LOAN AGREEMENT WITH ADB

- **Government has inked a US \$150 million loan agreement with multilateral lender Asian Development Bank (ADB) for establishing India's first Global Skills Park in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.**
- **It will have training facilities focusing on skills for manufacturing, service and advanced agricultural jobs, benefitting about 20,000 trainees and trainers.**

ABOUT THE GLOBAL SKILLS PARK (GSP):

- **It will be equipped with international training facilities to enhance the quality of Madhya Pradesh's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system.**
- It will engage international TVET partners to support advanced training by bringing global best practices in TVET management, training infrastructure, industry cooperation and quality assurance.
- The campus will consist of core Advanced Training Institutes including Center for Advanced Agricultural Training and Center for Occupational Skills Acquisition as well as other support services focusing on entrepreneurship, training of trainers and skill-related research.
- **It will also help in modernizing 10 industrial training institutes across the state by renovating training infrastructure and upgrading skills courses to align with industry and market needs.**
- **It will improve the quality and relevance of state's TVET programs and will help impart advanced job-ready skills training of international standards.**

ARNOLD, GEORGE SMITH & GREGORY WINTER WIN 2018 NOBEL CHEMISTRY PRIZE

- **The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has selected US scientists Frances Arnold and George Smith and British researcher Gregory Winter for the 2018 Nobel Prize in Chemistry.**
- **They were selected for harnessing the power of evolution to develop enzymes and antibodies that have led to new pharmaceuticals and biofuels.**
- Chemistry was third of this year's Nobel Prizes.
- Frances Arnold shared the half price and George Smith and Gregory Winter shared other half of the prize.

ABOUT FRANCES ARNOLD:

- **She was awarded for conducting the first directed evolution of enzymes, leading to more environmentally friendly manufacturing of chemicals, including drugs, and in the production of renewable fuels.**

IT MUST BE NOTED THAT:

- **She is the fifth woman to win a chemistry Nobel in the prize's 117-year history.**
- Earlier recipients are Skłodowska-Curie, Irène Joliot-Curie (1935), Dorothy Hodgkin (1964) and Ada Yonath (2009).

ABOUT GEORGE SMITH AND GREGORY WINTER:

- **Smith had developed a new way to evolve proteins and Winter had used a method for evolving antibodies with an aim of producing new drugs.**
- These antibodies can neutralize toxins, counteract autoimmune diseases and cure metastatic cancer.

INDIA LAUNCHES OPERATION SAMUDRA MAITRI

- **India has launched a massive humanitarian operation "Samudra Maitri" to provide assistance to earthquake and tsunami victims in Indonesia.**

- The operation was launched after a telephonic conversation between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Indonesian President Joko Widodo and following Indonesia's acceptance of international aid.

ABOUT OPERATION SAMUDRA MAITRI:

- Under this operation, India has dispatched two aircrafts C-130J and C-17 and three naval ships carrying relief materials and personnel to the country.
- C-130J aircraft had carried a medical team along with tents and equipments to set up a field hospital.
- C-17 aircraft is carrying medicines, generators, tents and water to provide immediate assistance.
- Three Indian Navy ships were deployed: INS Tir, INS Sujatha and INS Shardul to carry out humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR).

ABOUT THE EARTHQUAKE:

- A shallow earthquake of magnitude 7.5 (richter scale) had struck in the neck of Minahasa Peninsula, Indonesia on 28 September with its epicentre located in mountainous Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi.
- The earthquake was located 77 km away from provincial capital Palu.
- This event was preceded by a sequence of foreshocks, largest of which was a magnitude 6.1 tremor and followed by localised tsunami which had struck Palu, sweeping shore-lying houses and buildings on its way.
- The combined effects of the earthquake and tsunami had led to deaths of at least 1,424 people and injured further 2,549.
- It was the deadliest earthquake to strike Indonesia since 2006 Yogyakarta earthquake, as well as the deadliest earthquake worldwide so far in 2018.
- The earthquake had also caused major soil liquefaction in areas in and around Palu.

R N RAVI APPOINTED DEPUTY NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR

- The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has redesignated R N Ravi, Chairman of Joint Intelligence Committee as the Deputy National Security Advisor (Internal Affairs).
- He will be the third deputy NSA to National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval after former Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) chief, Rajinder Khanna and serving diplomat Pankaj Saran.

ABOUT R N RAVI:

- Ravi is a 1976-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of the Kerala cadre.
- He is also the government's interlocutor for ongoing talks with Naga insurgent group National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) and the man shaping the Naga peace accord.
- He has played a vital role in ensuring that insurgency groups from North East come to the talking table.

THREE-TIER INTERNAL SECURITY STRUCTURE:

- At present, India has a three-tier internal security structure which includes National Security Council (NSC), headed by the Prime Minister, Strategic Policy Group (SPG) and a National Security Advisory Board (NSAB).
- PM-headed NSC is an apex body and the National Security Advisor (NSA) works as its secretary.
- The SPG is headed by the Cabinet Secretary and it has Chiefs of Armed Forces, Intelligence Bureau (IB) and RAW as its members.
- It is responsible for policy-making and for follow up action in matters of national security.
- The NSAB does long term analysis and provides perspectives on issues of national security.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR (NSA):

- NSA is the chief executive of National Security Council (NSC) and primary advisor to the Prime Minister on national and international security and oversees strategic issues.
- It is NSA to whom intelligence agencies such as Research & Analysis Wing (RAW) and Intelligence Bureau (IB) report, rather than directly to the Prime Minister.
- Due to such vested powers, NSA is a prominent and powerful office in the bureaucracy.
- NSA is assisted by a Deputy NSA.
- The post was created in November 1998 by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government.
- Brajesh Mishra was the first to be appointed as NSA of India.
- Since the inception of the post, all NSAs appointed belong to Indian Foreign Service (IFS) except M K Narayanan and incumbent, Ajit Doval, who belong to Indian Police Service.

4TH INDIA INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL-2018 HELD IN LUCKNOW

Let's Celebrate Science!

- The fourth India International Science Festival 2018 (IISF 2018) is being held in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh from October 5 to 8, 2018.
- It is being organized by Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Earth Sciences in association with Vijnana Bharati at Indira Gandhi Pratishthan, Lucknow.
- This is for the first time, ISSF is being organized in Uttar Pradesh.
- It was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind.
- The theme of this edition of the Science Festival is "Science for Transformation".

DETAILS:

- More than 8,000 delegates from across the country will take part in the fourth edition of this mega science expo.
- About 800 women scientists and entrepreneurs are expected to take part in it.
- At this event, an attempt will be made by about 500 students to isolate DNA.
- As part of the event, "Science Village" will be set up at the National Botanical Garden in Lucknow where people will get to know about the progress of science.

ABOUT THE INDIA INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL (IISF):

- IISF is conceivably the biggest platform in India that brings together students, researchers, artists and general public to celebrate nation's achievement.

- It serves as a medium to encourage young minds towards the field of science and to promote networking of stakeholders working towards the propagation of science.
- **The 1st IISF was held at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) New Delhi in December, 2015.**
- **The 2nd IISF was held at the CSIR-National Physical Laboratory, New Delhi in December, 2016 and the 3rd was held in October 2017, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.**

SAHYOG HOP TAC -2018: INDIA-VIETNAM COAST GUARDS EXERCISE

- **The maiden joint exercise of the Coast Guards of India and Vietnam "Sahyog HOP TAC -2018" was held in the Bay of Bengal, off the Chennai coast, Tamil Nadu.**
- It was aimed at strengthening the working level relationship between the coast guards of both navies.

ABOUT SAHYOG HOP TAC-2018:

- The exercise was aimed at acquainting the coast guards of both countries with each others' capabilities and strengthening working level relationship to rescue lives at sea.
- **It encompassed the scenario of hijacking of an oil tanker and subsequent rescue of its crew in a coordinated anti-piracy joint operation as well as preventive efforts for marine environment protection.**
- Moreover, it also included interdiction of pirated vessels, coordinated joint boarding operation and external fire-fighting to salvage burning ships.
- **From the Indian side, Coast Guard ships Shaurya, Arnvesh and interceptor boat C-431 along with Dornier aircraft and Chetak helicopter participated in the joint exercise.**
- It also saw the participation of Sagar Manjusa vessel of the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT).

REINVEST- 2018: 2ND GLOBAL RENEWABLE ENERGY INVESTMENT MEETING

- **The second Global Renewable Energy Investment Meeting and Expo (REINVEST- 2018) was organised by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy in Greater Noida from October 3 to 5, 2018.**
- **It was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the presence of Secretary General of United Nations- Antonio Guterres.**
- 2nd Global RE-INVEST also hosted the First Assembly of International Solar Alliance (ISA) and a Meeting of the Energy Ministers of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) countries.

ABOUT THE 2ND RE-INVEST:

- The 2nd RE-INVEST was aimed at accelerating worldwide effort to scale up renewable energy and connect global investment community with Indian energy stakeholders.
- **It included a three-day Conference on renewables, cleantech and future energy choices and expo of renewables-related manufacturers, developers, investors and innovators.**
- **The 2nd RE-INVEST provided a great opportunity to various organisations to showcase their business strategies, achievements and expectations.**

- It also facilitated a collaboration and cooperation with key stakeholders in India, which have emerged as one of the world's largest renewable energy markets.
- **It was attended by Ministerial Delegations from across the world, including ISA and IORA Member Countries, over 600 global industry leaders, and 10,000 delegates.**

ABOUT RE-INVEST:

- **It is a global platform to explore strategies for development and deployment of renewables.**
- **It was built upon the success of RE-Invest 2015** and was organized by Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE).
- It provides an international forum to established players as well as new segments of investors and entrepreneurs to engage, ideate and innovate.

DIGI YATRA: GOVERNMENT RELEASES POLICY FOR PASSENGERS AT AIRPORTS

- **Union Ministry of Civil Aviation has released a policy on biometric based digital processing of passengers at airports called Digi Yatra.**
- The initiative seeks to promote paperless and hassle-free air travel.
- **It will be operational by end of February, 2019 at Bengaluru and Hyderabad airports.**
- In later phase, Airports Authority of India (AAI) will roll out this initiative at Kolkata, Varanasi, Pune and Vijayawada airports by April 2019.

ABOUT DIGI YATRA?

- Under this initiative, there will be a one-time verification at the departure airport while travelling for the first time using Digi Yatra ID.
- **After successful verification, facial recognition biometric will be captured and stored in Digi Yatra ID.**
- **With this initiative, ticket booking, airport entry and boarding pass security check-in will be made digital.**
- For this system, passengers will be registered through a centralized system and will be given a Digi Travel ID.
- **This ID will include details such as names of passengers, their e-mail id, mobile number and details of any identity proof, including Aadhaar.**
- **Travelers can also use this ID when booking tickets.**
- This initiative will bring benefits to passengers and all stakeholders involved in the process including airport operator who will be having the travel information in advance for better resource planning and real-time data of passengers within terminal.
- **This will enable the operator to take proactive action to avoid congestion.**

21 IORA COUNTRIES ADOPT DELHI DECLARATION ON RENEWABLE ENERGY

- **21 countries in Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) adopted Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy in Indian Ocean Region.**

- It was adopted at the 2nd IORA Renewable Energy Ministerial Meeting held at the 2nd Global Re-Invest India-ISA Partnership Renewable Energy Investor's Meet & Expo in Greater Noida.

ABOUT THE DELHI DECLARATION ON RENEWABLE ENERGY:

- **It calls for collaboration among IORA member states in meeting the growing demand for renewable energy in Indian Ocean littorals, development of a common renewable energy agenda for Indian Ocean region (IOR) and promote regional capacity building.**
- It also calls for promotion of technology development and transfer, strengthening of public private partnerships (PPP) in renewable energy and collaboration among IORA member states and member nations of International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- IORA member countries also resolved to collaborate with International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA).
- They will also collaborate with ISA member nations to exchange knowledge and share views and potential interests in renewable energy sector paved by MoU signed between IORA and ISA with focus on joint capacity-building programs, R&D activities in solar energy and exchange of best practices.
- IORA member nations and IRENA also agreed to undertake expansion of Global Renewable Energy Atlas, world's largest-ever joint renewable resource data project, coordinated by IRENA.
- **This will help in creating Indian Ocean region's first and most comprehensive map and database which can be used to tap sizable renewable energy potential of the region and collaborate on opportunities available under International Renewable Energy Learning Platform (IRELP).**

ABOUT THE INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA):

- **IORA is an international organisation consisting of coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean, established in 1997 to promote cooperation in IOR.**
- It is a regional forum, tripartite in nature, bringing together representatives of Government, Academia and Business for promoting co-operation and closer interaction among them.
- It is based on the principles of Open Regionalism for strengthening Economic Cooperation particularly on Trade Facilitation and Investment, Promotion as well as Social Development of the region.
- **IORA comprises 21 member states (including India) and 7 dialogue partners.**
- Besides, Indian Ocean Research Group and Indian Ocean Tourism Organisation have observer status.

PANKAJ SHARMA APPOINTED INDIA'S AMBASSADOR TO UN CONFERENCE

- **Pankaj Sharma has been appointed as the ambassador and India's permanent representative to United Nations Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.**
- **He will replace Amandeep Gill.**
- Sharma is currently joint secretary (Disarmament and International Security Division) in Ministry of External Affairs (MEA).

ABOUT UN CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT:

- **UN Conference on Disarmament (CD) is not formally a United Nations (UN) organization.**
- It is linked to UN through the personal representative of UN Secretary-General.

- **It is a multilateral forum established in 1979 by the international community to negotiate multilateral arms control and disarmament agreements.**
- **It is headquartered in Palais des Nations, Geneva, Switzerland.**
- The conference has 65 members representing all areas of the world, including all known nuclear-weapon states (including India, Pakistan, Israel and North Korea).
- Resolutions adopted by UN General Assembly often request the conference to consider specific disarmament matters.
- In turn, the conference annually reports its activities to UNGA.
- In the 1990s, the Conference had held intensive efforts to draft CTBT text and its two annexes, but it did not succeed in reaching consensus on the adoption of the text.
- **Currently UNCD conducts discussion on Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT), a pact to prevent an arms race in outer space, nuclear disarmament and negative security assurances (NSA).**

ALPHONSO MANGO GETS GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION TAG

- **Chennai based Geographical Indication Registry and Intellectual Property India has granted Alphonso Mango from 5 districts of Maharashtra- Geographical Indication (GI) tag.**
- **These five districts Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Palghar, Thane and Raigad are from western Konkan coastal region of the State.**
- With this recognition, Alphonso has joined the list of 325 products from India with GI tag.

ABOUT ALPHONSO MANGO:

- **Alphonso, better known as 'Hapus' in Maharashtra is considered as the king of mangoes.**
- **It is best known for its taste and also for pleasant fragrance and vibrant colour.**
- It is in demand in domestic and international markets.
- **It has long been one of world's most popular fruits and is exported to various countries including Japan, Korea, Europe, US and Australia.**

ABOUT GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI):

- **GI is an indication used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.**
- It is primarily given to agricultural, natural and manufactured goods having special quality and established reputation.
- The goods and products having the tag are recognised for their origin, quality and reputation and gives it the required edge in global market.
- **It also ensures that none can use their name, giving them exclusivity.**
- **GI is covered as an element of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under Paris Convention for Protection of Industrial Property.**
- At the international level, GI is governed by WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- In India, GI tag Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999 governs it.
- This Act is administered by Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, who is also the Registrar of Geographical Indications and is based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

- It comes under Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- **The registration of GI is valid for 10 years after which it needs to be renewed.**
- **Violation of GI tags is a punishable offence under law.**
- The purpose of GI tag enables stakeholders to authenticate their production while earning a premium and derive an improved livelihood.
- The first GI in India was given to Darjeeling tea in 2004.
- **Tirupathi Laddu, Kangra Paintings, Nagpur Orange and Kashmir Pashmina are among registered GIs in India.**
- Karnataka tops with 38 GI products, followed by Maharashtra which has 33 GI products.
- Tamil Nadu comes third with 25 GI products.

INDIA'S AND ASIA'S FIRST DOLPHIN RESEARCH CENTRE TO COME UP SOON IN PATNA

- **National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC) will be set up on the banks of the Ganga river in Patna University campus in Patna, Bihar.**
- **It will be India's and Asia's first Dolphin research centre.**
- The announcement for the centre was made on the occasion of Dolphin day (October 5), observed in Bihar for protection and conservation of Gangetic river dolphin to create awareness to save the endangered species.
- NDRC will play an important role in strengthening conservation efforts and research to save the endangered mammal whose population is decreasing.
- **Bihar is home to around half of the country's estimated 3,000 dolphin population.**

ABOUT THE GANGETIC RIVER DOLPHIN:

- **Gangetic river dolphin (scientific name: Platanista gangetica) is one of the four freshwater dolphin species in the world.**
- **The other three are found in Yangtze river, Indus river in Pakistan and Amazon river.**
- **Gangetic river dolphin species are found in India, Bangladesh and Nepal.**
- Gangetic river dolphin is India's national aquatic animal.
- It is almost completely blind and finds its way and prey using ultrasonic echoes, with sound being everything for them to navigate, feed, escape danger, find mates, breed, nurse babies and play.
- Gangetic Dolphin's presence signals healthy river ecosystem.
- **Dolphins prefer water that is at least 5-8 feet deep and are usually found in turbulent waters where there is enough fish for them to feed on.**
- They prefer deep water with adjoining shallow water and live in a zone where there is little or no current that helps them save energy.

THREATS:

- **Entanglement in fishing nets, hunting for their oil and meat, poisoning of water supply of river from industrial and agricultural chemicals.**
- They are facing the most significant threat from building of dams along the upper course of their habitable rivers.

- It is causing the segregation of populations and has a narrowed gene pool in which dolphins can breed.

PROTECTION STATUS:

- **Gangetic river dolphins fall under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act** and have been declared an endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

CONSERVATION PROGRAM:

- **Environment Ministry had launched Ganges River Dolphin Conservation Programme in 1997 to build scientific database** of their population status and also study the habitat quality of the dolphins' distribution range.
- Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary located in Bihar's Bhagalpur district of Bihar is India's only dolphin sanctuary and is spread over 50 km along the Ganges.

MUKWEGE, MURAD JOINTLY AWARDED 2018 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

- **Norwegian Nobel Committee has selected Dr. Denis Mukwege (63) & Nadia Murad (25) and jointly awarded them the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize.**
- They were given award for their efforts to end use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict.

ABOUT DR. DENIS MUKWEGE:

- He is a Congolese gynecological surgeon.
- **He was awarded the prize for defending victims of war-time sexual violence.**
- **He has been involved in helping victims of sexual violence in the African nation of Democratic Republic of Congo.**
- Mukwege along with his staff have treated thousands of war-time sexual assault victims.

ABOUT NADIA MURAD:

- **She was one of the thousand Yazidi women who were abducted, abused and raped by IS (Islamic State) and kept in captivity.**
- Following her escape from IS, Nadia Murad spoke about the assault faced by her.
- **She was one of the rape victim who came out in public and told about the abuse she and other women underwent.**
- **She has shown uncommon courage in recounting her own sufferings and speaking up on behalf of other victims.**
- In 2016, Murad was named UN's first Goodwill Ambassador for Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking.

ISRO, ROSCOSMOS TO WORK TOGETHER FOR FIRST INDIAN MANNED MISSION

- **Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Russia's federal space agency Roscosmos State Corporation for Space Activities (ROSCOSMOS) have agreed to work together for India's first manned space mission- Gaganyaan.**
- In this regard, both space agencies have signed MoU at end of delegation level talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin in New Delhi.

DETAILS:

- **Under the MoU on Joint Activities in the field of Human Spaceflight Programme, ROSCOSMOS has offered a ride to Indian astronaut for a short visit to International Space Station (ISS) on board Soyuz spacecraft for a short training mission in 2022.**
- ISS is a habitable artificial satellite in the low Earth orbit.
- Russia had first made the offer to train an Indian astronaut for the mission when External Affairs minister Sushma Swaraj had visited Russia in September.
- **Historically, India-Russia space cooperation was very strong, with Soviet Union being one of the three partners who helped India get off the ground with its space programme.**
- This has continued for several decades including sending an Indian cosmonaut in a Soviet Soyuz mission in 1982.
- **Former Indian Air Force (IAF) pilot Rakesh Sharma was the first Indian to travel to space.**
- He was part of Soviet Union's Soyuz T-11 expedition, launched on April 2, 1984 of the Intercosmos programme.

ABOUT THE GAGANYAAN MISSION:

- **It is India's first manned space mission.**
- **Under this mission, India is planning to send three humans (Gaganyatris) into space in low earth orbit (LEO) by 2022 i.e. by 75th Independence Day for a period of five to seven days.**
- The mission was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his 72nd Independence Day speech.
- Under this mission, crew of three astronauts will conduct experiments on microgravity in space.
- **The crew will be selected jointly by Indian Air Force (IAF) and ISRO after which they will undergo training for two-three years.**
- This mission will make India the fourth nation in the world after USA, Russia and China to launch human spaceflight mission.

OBJECTIVES OF THE GAGANYAAN MISSION:

- Enhancement of science and technology levels in the country.
- To serve as a national project involving several institutes, academia and industry.
- Improvement of industrial growth.
- To inspire the youth.
- Develop technology for social benefits.
- Improve international collaboration.

GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP TASK FORCE

- **Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has launched the "Closing the Skills Gap Task Force" in India in collaboration with World Economic (WEF).**
- It will be co-chaired by Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship Dharmendra Pradhan along with Salil Parekh, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Infosys.

ABOUT CLOSING THE SKILLS GAP TASK FORCE:

- **The goal of the Task Force is to develop an action plan to address skills gaps in India and make Indian workforce ready for jobs of future.**
- It will bring together leaders from business, Government, civil society, and the education and training sectors to accelerate future-proofing of education and training systems in the country.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **More than half of India's population is in the working age, thus skills development is critical to sustaining inclusive growth and development in the country.**
- The task force will be a significant step to accelerate the impact on skills development already achieved by bringing together relevant stakeholders to act collectively.
- **It will be the second country-led public-private collaboration of WEF's Closing the Skills Gap Project after South Africa.**

PARKER SOLAR PROBE COMPLETES FIRST VENUS FLYBY: NASA

- **NASA's Parker Solar Probe has successfully completed a flyby of Venus at a distance of about 2,415 kilometres during its first gravity assist from the planet.**
- These gravity assists will help the spacecraft tighten its orbit closer to Sun over the course of the mission.

ABOUT THE PARKER SOLAR PROBE MISSION:

- **Parker Solar Probe is mankind's first mission to study the outer corona of Sun.**
- It was successfully launched in August 2018 for an unprecedented seven-year long journey to unlock mysteries of Sun's fiery outer atmosphere and its effects on space weather.
- It is designed and built by NASA's Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory.
- **It is named after solar astrophysicist Eugene Parker, making it the first spacecraft of NASA to be named after a living person.**

SCIENTIFIC GOALS OF THE MISSION:

- Determine the structure and dynamics of the magnetic fields at sources of solar wind.
- **Trace the flow of energy that heats corona and accelerates solar wind.**
- Determine what mechanisms accelerate and transport energetic particles.
- Explore dusty plasma near Sun and its influence on solar wind and energetic particle formation.

MORE ABOUT THE MISSION:

- **Parker Solar Probe will explore Sun's outer atmosphere and make critical observations to answer questions about physics of stars.**
- **Its data will also be useful in improving forecasts of major eruptions on Sun and subsequent space weather events that impact technology on Earth, as well as satellites and astronauts in space.**
- The probe is designed to endure harsh environment near Sun, by approaching within 8.5 solar radii (5.9 million kilometers) to 'surface' (photosphere) of Sun where incident solar intensity is approximately 520 times the intensity at Earth orbit.
- **It will have a mission life of seven-year.**
- It is fitted with thermal protection system (TPS) or a heat shield made of reinforced carbon-carbon composite that will allow it to survive temperatures in Sun's corona.
- Its main systems and scientific instruments are located in the central portion of the shield's shadow, where direct radiation from Sun is fully blocked.

86TH AIR FORCE DAY OBSERVED

- **86th Indian Air Force (IAF) day was celebrated on 8 October 2018 to commemorate the official foundation day of the force.**
- **Celebration of the day seeks to increase the awareness about the importance of IAF as an important part of the national security.**
- It also seeks to pay rich tribute to the untiring efforts and supreme sacrifice made by air force veterans.

ABOUT THE INDIAN AIR FORCE (IAF):

- **IAF is the world's fourth largest air force** (after US, Russia and China) with primary responsibility to secure Indian airspace and to conduct aerial warfare during conflict.
- **It was officially established on October 8, 1932 as an auxiliary air force of the British Empire and the prefix Royal was added in 1945 in recognition of its services during World War II.**
- After India became independent from the United Kingdom (UK) in 1947, the Royal Indian Air Force served Dominion of India, with prefix being dropped when India became a republic in 1950.
- Since then, IAF has played pivotal roles in various operations and wars such as World War II, Operation Cactus, Sino-Indian War, Operation Vijay, Indo-Pakistani War of 1965, Kargil War, Indo-Pakistani War of 1947, Congo Crisis, Operation Poomalai and Operation Pawan.
- **Air Force Day was officially celebrated for the first time on October 8, 1932 as an auxiliary air force of Indian Empire.**

SCIENTISTS DEVELOP TINY SPHERES TO TRAP WATER CONTAMINANTS

- **Scientists at Rice University in the US have developed tiny spheres that can catch and destroy bisphenol A (BPA), a synthetic chemical used to make plastics that often contaminates water.**
- This new material helps in overcoming two significant technological barriers for photocatalytic water treatment.

ABOUT BISPHENOL A (BPA):

- BPA is commonly used to coat insides of food cans, bottle tops and water supply lines.
- **BPA that seeps into food and drink is considered safe in low doses, but prolonged exposure is suspected of affecting the health of children and contributing to high blood pressure.**

WHAT ARE TINY SPHERES?

- **The micron-sized spheres resemble Venus' flytrap (a carnivorous plant) of particles and has tiny flower-like collections of titanium dioxide petals of less than 100 nanometers size.**
- It has a two-faced structure, with hydrophobic (water-avoiding) cavity and hydrophilic (water-attracting) outer surface.
- BPA is hydrophobic and naturally attracted to the cavity.
- **Once trapped, reactive oxygen species (ROS) produced by the spheres degrades BPA into harmless chemicals.**

ODISHA GOVERNMENT LAUNCHES NIRMAN KUSUMA PROGRAMME

- **Odisha Government has launched 'Nirman Kusuma' programme for providing financial assistance to the children of construction workers for their technical education in the state.**
- The scheme was launched by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik in Bhubaneswar, the state capital.

ABOUT THE NIRMAN KUSUMA PROGRAMME:

- **The scheme aims to help fulfil dreams of construction workers' children by providing financial assistance for their education in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and polytechnics.**
- Under this programme, ITI student is entitled to get financial assistance of Rs. 23,600 and diploma student to get Rs. 26,300 per annum.
- Total of 1,878 students from the state will get benefit from the programme.
- Besides this programme, state government has also increased financial assistance for girl students by 20%.
- **Female students from standard 6th to post graduation level will be provided financial assistance.**
- State government has also doubled death benefits for the construction workers.
- **The families of construction workers will now get a compensation of Rs. 2 lakh, increased from earlier Rs. 1 lakh.**
- **Similarly, accidental benefit for construction workers has also been doubled from Rs. 2 lakh to Rs. 4 lakh.**

CII, UN ENVIRONMENT INKS MOU FOR ENVIRONMENTAL COOPERATION

- **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with UN Environment for coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.**

DETAILS OF THE MOU:

- **The MoU aims to cover all major interest common areas of both CII and UN Environment.**
- It also aims to provide framework of cooperation and facilitate cooperation in areas including environment, renewable energy, climate change, resource conservation and management, energy efficiency, water sanitation, smart cities and urban infrastructure.
- **The major activity planned by CII and UN Environment under this MoU includes #Un-plastic Initiative.**
- **It will begin with 'Call to Action' which will include commitments by industry to take action to curb plastic pollution.**
- Further, CII will work towards voluntary codes in Indian industry on issue of plastics.
- Outside India on a global scenario, CII will engage with industry forums in different countries to which it is linked, especially in Africa through its annual CII-Africa Conclave.

ABOUT UN ENVIRONMENT:

- UN Environment (or UNEP) is a leading global environmental authority that sets global environmental agenda, promotes coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development within the United Nations system, and serves as authoritative advocate for global environment.
- **It was established in June 1972.**
- **It is headquartered in Nairobi, Kenya.**

GOVT. RECONSTITUTES ENVIRONMENT POLLUTION AUTHORITY

- **Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has reconstituted Supreme Court-empowered Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA).**
- This comes after tenure of the last EPCA expired on October 3, 2018.

DETAILS:

- **Former IAS officer Bhure Lal will continue to be Chairman of reconstituted EPCA.**
- The other members of the 20-member re-constituted EPCA include Ajay Mathur, Director General of The Energy Research Institute (TERI); Arunabha Ghosh, Chief Executive Officer of Centre for Energy Environment and Water; Navroz K. Dubash, Senior Fellow for the Centre for Policy Research.
- Others members include Vishnu Mathur, Director General, Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers; Krishna Dhawan, Chief Executive Officer, Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation, New Delhi and Arvind Kumar, former professor of surgery, AIIMS in New Delhi and among others.

ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT POLLUTION CONTROL AUTHORITY (EPCA):

- **EPCA is Supreme Court mandated body tasked with taking various measures to tackle air pollution in the National Capital Region.**
- It was notified in 1998 by Environment Ministry under Environment Protection Act, 1986.
- Its mandate is to protect and improve quality of environment and prevent and control environmental pollution in National Capital Region.
- It is also mandated to enforce Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in NCR as per the pollution levels.

- In November 2017, EPCA had enforced several measures, including ban on brick kilns, closure of Badarpur thermal power plant, hot mix plants and stone crushers, and construction activities in NCR.

WEIGHTLIFTER JEREMY LALRINUNGA WINS INDIA'S GOLD MEDAL

Teenager Lifts for Gold!

- Weightlifter **Jeremy Lalrinnunga** (15) won **India's maiden gold medal** at **2018 Youth Olympic Games** being held in **Buenos Aires**, capital of Argentina.
- **He won the medal in the men's 62 kg category by lifting total of 274 kg (124 kg +150 kg) weight to finish on top.**
- **The silver medal was won by Turkey's Toptas Caner, who lifted 263 kg (122 kg + 141 kg) and bronze medal to Colombia's Villar Estiven Jose who lifted 260 kg (115 kg + 143 kg).**
- So far this was India's fourth medal in the ongoing 2018 Youth Olympic Games, which include three silver medals earlier won by Tushar Mane (10m Air Rifle), Tababi Devi (44kg Judo) and Mehuli Ghosh (10m Air Rifle).

ABOUT JEREMY LALRINUNGA:

- He was born on 26 October 2002 in Aizwal, Mizoram.
- **He had started weightlifting at the age of 10.**
- **He had started his training with the Indian Army at the Army Sports Institute in Pune, Maharashtra.**
- In 2018, he broke two National Records claiming Bronze medal (Junior) and Silver medal (Youth) in the Asian Championships.

HIS ACHIEVEMENTS:

- **2017:** Gold (Commonwealth Youth Championships Gold Coast)
- **2017:** Gold (Commonwealth Junior Championship Gold Coast)
- **2016:** Silver (IWF Youth World Championships Penang)

THANGJAM TABABI DEVI CLINCHES INDIA'S FIRST JUDO MEDAL

- **Thangjam Tababi Devi (16) became India's first Judo medallist at the Olympic level.**
- **She achieved this feat after winning silver medal at the ongoing Youth Olympics Games in Buenos Aires, capital of Argentina.**
- She won the medal after losing to Venezuela's Maria Giminez in the finals of the women's 44kg category.
- Prior to this, India had never won an Olympic medal in Judo either at senior or youth level.
- At the ongoing games shooter Tushar Mane had also won silver medal (second position) in men's 10m air rifle competition.
- **Tababi Devi hails from northeastern state of Manipur.**

ABOUT THE YOUTH OLYMPIC GAMES (YOG):

- It is an international multi-sport event organized by International Olympic Committee (IOC).

- **The age limitation of the athletes participating in it is 14 to 18.**
- The games are held every four years in staggered summer and winter events consistent with the current senior level Olympic Games format.
- The first summer version was held in Singapore from 14 to 26 August 2010 while first winter version was held in Innsbruck, Austria from 13 to 22 January 2012.
- India had won just two medals, silver and bronze in the last Youth Olympics in 2014 held in Nanjing, China.
- **India's best performance at this games came in the inaugural edition in 2010 when it had won six silver and two bronze medals.**
- **In this edition of games (Buenos Aires YOG 2018), India is being represented by 47 athletes, its biggest ever contingent.**

BANGLADESH ENACTS DIGITAL SECURITY BILL, 2018

- **Bangladesh's President Abdul Hamid has given his assent to the controversial Digital Security Bill, 2018, by enacting it as a law.**
- This new law combines previous colonial-era Official Secrets Act with tough new provisions such as arrests without warrant.
- Bangladesh Government led by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina (Bangladesh Awami League) has defended the digital law as necessary to combat cybercrime.

ABOUT THE DIGITAL SECURITY BILL 2018:

- **It was passed by Bangladesh's Parliament to deal with cybercrimes, including hurting religious sentiment, spreading negative propaganda against 1971 Liberation War and Bangabandhu (Sheikh Mujibur Rahman).**
- It also covers illegal activities in e-transactions and spreading defamatory data under its ambit.
- It provides for a minimum of 7 years and a maximum of 14 years' imprisonment, as well as monetary fines of a minimum of Taka 25 lakh maximum of Taka 1 crore, or both for illegal access and destruction of any important information related to state affairs.

OPPOSITION TO THE LAW:

- **The law has faced a widespread vocal opposition from rights groups and journalists that it could endanger freedom of speech-especially on social media.**
- These groups are saying that this law will create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation, which will make journalism and especially investigative journal, virtually impossible.
- Opponents have also criticized the digital law as latest authoritarian move by Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina.
- **The law has also drawn opposition internationally including from US ambassador to Bangladesh, Marcia Bernicat who had quoted that this law could be used to suppress and criminalise free speech which inturn could be detrimental to Bangladesh's democracy, development and prosperity.**

ESIC WINS ISSA GOOD PRACTICE AWARD, ASIA AND PACIFIC 2018

- **Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) was awarded ISSA (International Social Security Association) Good Practice Award for Administrative Solution for Coverage Extension** at Regional Social Security Forum for Asia and Pacific held at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.
- The award was given to ESIC in recognition of its measures taken for extension of coverage Scheme for Promoting Registration of Employers and Employees (SPREE), reduced rate of contribution rates for 24 months in newly implemented areas and raising wage limit for coverage under ESI Act, etc.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **Regional Social Security Forum for Asia and the Pacific is a triennial (held every three years) forum that provides unique opportunities to CEOs and Managers of ISSA Member Institutions to discuss key social security challenges and share their experiences.**
- It is the most important social security event in Asia-Pacific region.
- For this forum, ISSA invites submissions for ISSA Good Practices Award for Asia and Pacific Regions.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY ASSOCIATION (ISSA):

- **It is the principal international organization for Social Security Organizations, Governments and Departments of Social Security.**
- It was founded in 1927 under the auspices of International Labour Organization (ILO).
- **It has its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland in ILO.**
- **Its mandate is to promote excellence in social security administration through professional guidelines, expert knowledge, services and support to enable its members to develop dynamic social security systems.**
- ISSA has more than 330 member organizations in 158 countries.

ABOUT EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION (ESIC):

- **ESIC is an autonomous corporation under Union Ministry of Labour and Employment, which manages employees' state insurance i.e. self-financing social security and health insurance scheme for Indian workers.**
- It is a statutory body established under Employees State Insurance Act, 1948.
- **It is headquartered in New Delhi.**
- **ESIC hosts the ISSA Liaison Office for South Asia in New Delhi.**
- This liaison office coordinates with member countries and social security institutions in Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Iran on activities of ISSA related to social security.

WILLIAM NORDHAUS, PAUL ROMER AWARDED 2018 NOBEL PRIZE

- **American economists William Nordhaus and Paul Romer were jointly awarded 2018 Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for integrating climate change and technological innovation into macroeconomic analysis.**
- **Their findings have significantly broadened the scope of economic analysis** by constructing models that explain how market economy interacts with nature and knowledge.
- Their studies has helped to address some of current time's most basic and pressing questions about creating long-term sustained and sustainable growth.

ABOUT WILLIAM NORDHAUS:

- He is a professor at Yale University.
- He was the first person to create an economic model that describes the global interplay between economy and the climate in the 1990s.
- This model had showed that the most efficient remedy for problems caused by greenhouse gases is a global scheme of universally imposed carbon taxes.

ABOUT PAUL ROMER:

- He is a professor at New York University's Stern School of Business.
- He has showed that how economic forces govern willingness of firms to produce new ideas and innovations.
- This had laid foundations for a new model for development, known as the endogenous growth theory.

ABOUT THE NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMIC SCIENCES:

- Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences is officially called Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in the Memory of Alfred Nobel.
- It was not part of the original group of awards (Chemistry, Literature, Peace, Physics, and Physiology or Medicine) set out in dynamite tycoon Alfred Nobel's 1895 will.
- It was instituted in 1968 by Sveriges Riksbank (Sweden's central bank).
- It is awarded annually by the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences according to the same principles as for Nobel Prizes.
- The five Nobel Prizes are based on a fund set up from the wealth bequeathed by Alfred Nobel, whereas Economic Prize is based on the donation received by the Nobel Foundation in 1968 from Sveriges Riksbank.
- Although not a Nobel Prize, this award is recognised as most prestigious award in the subject.
- It has been awarded 50 times since 1969.
- Indian economist Amartya Sen is the only Indian so far to win this prize in 1998 for his contributions to welfare economics.
- Elinor Ostrom is the only woman to win this award so far in 2009, she had shared it with fellow-American Paul Krugman.

WORLD POST DAY: OCTOBER 9

- World Post Day is observed every year on October 9 to spread awareness about the postal services and their role in the everyday lives of people and businesses.
- The day is celebrated to mark the anniversary of establishment of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1874 in the Swiss Capital, Bern.
- The 2018 theme is: "Imagine you are a letter travelling through time. What message do you wish to convey to your readers?"
- World Post Day was instituted at the Universal Postal Union (UPU) Congress held in Tokyo, Japan in 1969.

- In India, this day is celebrated by Department of Posts.
- For more than 150 years, India Post has been the backbone of the country's communication network.
- It is the largest postal network in the world providing mail parcel, banking, money transfer, insurance and retail services.

ABOUT THE UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION (UPU):

- **UPU is a specialized agency of United Nations that coordinates the postal policies among member nations, in addition to worldwide postal system.**
- It was established in 1874 and is the second oldest international organization worldwide after International Telecommunication Union (ITU) which was established in 1865.
- **It is headquartered in Bern, Switzerland.**
- It has 192 member countries.
- UPU is the primary forum for cooperation between postal sector players among member countries.
- It helps to ensure a truly universal network of up-to-date products and services.
- **It sets rules for international mail exchanges and makes recommendations for growth in mail, financial and parcel services volumes and also to improve the quality of service for customers.**

PM UNVEILS 64-FOOT-TALL STATUE OF PEASANT LEADER CHHOTU RAM

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has unveiled a 64 feet tall statue of peasant leader Sir Chhotu Ram at his native village Sampla in Rohtak district of Haryana.
- **The statue has been sculpted by renowned sculptor and Padma Bhushan-recipient Ram Vanji Sutar.**
- **Around 5,500 farmers from Haryana had donated iron metal, ranging from from half-a-kg to two kgs for construction of the statue.**

ABOUT SIR CHHOTU RAM:

- **Born on November 24, 1881 as Ram Richpal in Garhi-Sampla, Rohtak in then Punjab, British India (now in Haryana) and died on 9 January 1945 (aged 63) in Lahore, then Punjab, British India (now in Pakistan).**
- He is regarded as the messiah of peasants and was instrumental in empowering farmers in pre-Independence era and getting pro-farmers law enacted.
- He had fought for farmers' rights during the British rule.
- **He was the ideologue of peasants of pre-Independent India and championed the interest and cause of oppressed peasants of the Indian Sub-continent.**
- **For this feat, he was knighted (given title of Sir) in 1937.**
- On political front, he was co-founder of National Unionist Party (Zamindara League) which ruled United Panjab Province in pre Independent India and kept Congress and Muslim League away from power.
- **He was popularly known as Deen Bandhu (in Urdu as Rahbare Azam, which translates as messiah of poor).**

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS MINISTRY LAUNCHES 'INDIA FOR HUMANITY' INITIATIVE

- **Union Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has launched 'India for Humanity' initiative to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and honour of his service to humanity.**
- It will feature an year-long series of artificial limb fitment camps in a number of countries spanning the globe.

ABOUT INDIA FOR HUMANITY INITIATIVE:

- **The larger aim of this initiative is to provide physical, economic and social rehabilitation of differently-abled around the world by helping them regain their mobility and dignity to become self-respecting and productive members of society.**
- It focuses on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of compassion, caring and service to humanity.
- **For this initiative, MEA has collaborated with renowned charitable organisation Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS).**
- The artificial limb fitment camps under this initiative will be initially held in 12 countries identified through missions with financial support of central government.
- It will be fully sponsored by the MEA.

ABOUT BHAGWAN MAHAVEER VIKLANG SAHAYATA SAMITI (BMVSS):

- **It is a non-profit organization founded by DR Mehta in 1975.**
- **It is better known by its trademark limb 'Jaipur Foot'.**
- It is the world's largest organization for the handicapped in terms of fitment of artificial limb, calipers etc, providing them with artificial limbs, crutches, calipers, ambulatory aids like wheel chairs, and other aids and appliances totally free of cost.
- It has served over 1.73 million amputees till date.

CHINA TO SELL 48 WING LOONG II MILITARY DRONES TO PAKISTAN

- **China has agreed to sell 48 Wing Loong II high-end armed drones to its all-weather ally Pakistan.**
- This is China's largest export deal for drones to date to any country.
- **The cost of this deal with Pakistan and or when the drones will be delivered were not revealed.**
- **Total of 48 Wing Loong II UAVs will be jointly built by China's Chengdu Aircraft Corp (CAC) and Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) Karma.**
- China also has reportedly sold this unmanned aerial system to countries like UAE and Egypt at estimated \$1 million per unit.
- It has also sold the Wing Loong I to Indonesia, Kazakhstan and the United Arab Emirates.

ABOUT WING LOONG II:

- **It is a high-end reconnaissance, strike and multi-role endurance unmanned aerial system, capable of being fitted with air-to-surface weapons.**

- **It is manufactured by Chengdu Aircraft Industrial (Group) Company.**
- It had made its maiden flight in February 2017.
- It is the upgraded version of Wing Loong I unmanned aerial system.
- It is designed for both reconnaissance and strike missions.
- It is 11 metres long and has a wingspan of 20.5 metres.
- It can payload up to 480kg (1,060lbs), including 12 laser guided missiles or YJ-9E anti-ship missiles.
- **It is powered by turboprops and can fly for up to 20 hours at speeds of 150-370km/h.**
- **It can fly at a maximum altitude of 9,000 metres (29,500 feet).**
- It has a capability to attack and destroy stationary targets, moving targets, time sensitive targets and air-ground coordination.
- It is roughly equivalent to the American MQ-9 Reaper drone.
- But US drones like MQ-1 Predator and MQ-9 Reaper are technologically more advanced compared to this Chinese drone.

ABOUT CHINA-PAKISTAN DEFENCE RELATIONS:

- **China is the largest supplier of weapon systems to the Pakistan Army.**
- It accounted for 70% of Pakistan's arms purchases in 2013-17 period, up from 45% in the previous five years, although sales by volume changed little.
- **Both countries also jointly manufacture JF-Thunder a single engine multi-role combat aircraft.**
- This aircraft has been in mass production in Pakistan and sold to Myanmar and Nigeria.
- Pakistan has also produced its own drone named Burraq which had made its first flight in 2015 and is believed to have been based on China's multi-purpose medium-range CH-3 drone system.

IAF LAUNCHES MEDWATCH MOBILE HEALTH APP

- **Indian Air Force (IAF) has launched 'MedWatch' mobile health app to provide health information to users, including first-aid and other health and nutrition topics.**
- **It was launched on 8 October on the occasion of IAF's 85th anniversary.**
- It is first of its kind mobile health app built by any of the three armed forces.

ABOUT THE MEDWATCH APP:

- **The app was conceived by doctors of IAF and developed in-house by Directorate of Information Technology (DIT) with Zero financial outlay.**
- **It will provide correct, scientific and authentic health information to air warriors and all citizens of India.**
- It comprises a host of features like information on basic First Aid, health topics and nutritional facts, reminders for timely medical review, vaccination and utility tools like Health Record Card, BMI calculator, helpline numbers and web links.
- The app is available on www.apps.mgov.gov.in

SCIENTISTS DEVELOP WORLD'S FIRST BIOELECTRONIC MEDICINE

- **Scientists from US claimed that they have developed world's first bioelectronic medicine which is an implantable, biodegradable wireless device that speeds nerve regeneration and improves healing of damaged nerve.**
- The device has not been tested on humans, but its successful testing on animals (rats) offer promise as future therapeutic option for nerve injury patients.

DETAILS:

- **The bioelectronic medicine device is wireless and is powered** and controlled wirelessly by a transmitter outside the body that acts much like a cellphone-charging mat.
- It operates for about two weeks before naturally absorbing into the body.
- It has the size of a dime and thickness of a sheet of paper.
- **During its animal test on rats with injured sciatic nerves**, it was found that this bioelectronic medicine device delivers regular pulses of electricity to damaged peripheral nerves in rats after surgical repair process.
- **This results in accelerating the regrowth of nerves in their legs and enhances ultimate recovery of muscle strength and control.**

ADVANTAGES OF BIOELECTRONIC MEDICINE:

- **This biomedical technology provides therapy** and treatment over a clinically relevant period of time and directly at site where it is needed, thereby reducing the side effects or risks associated with conventional, permanent implants.
- Moreover, these engineered systems provide active, therapeutic function in programmable, dosed format and then naturally disappear into body, without trace.
- **With this device, it has been shown that electrical stimulation given on scheduled basis during surgery can further enhance nerve recovery.**
- **No adverse biological effects from the device and its reabsorption were found.**
- Researchers envision that such transient engineered technologies one day can complement or replace pharmaceutical treatments for a variety of medical conditions in humans.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE GIRL CHILD: OCTOBER 11

- **The International Day of the Girl Child is observed every year across world on October 11 to recognize girls' rights and unique challenges faced by girls around the world.**
- Observance of the day seeks to increase awareness of gender inequality faced by girls worldwide based upon their gender and supports more opportunity for girls.
- This year it was the seventh edition of this day after it was observed for the first time in 2012.
- **The theme was 'With Her: A Skilled Girl Force'.**
- It seeks to bring together partners and stakeholders to advocate for, and draw attention and investments to most pressing needs and opportunities for girls to attain skills for employability.

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL DAY OF GIRL CHILD (IDGC):

- **The International Day of Girl Child (IDGC) was instituted by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by adopting Resolution moved by Canada in December 2011.**

- **The observation of day supports more opportunity for girls.**
- It also increases awareness of gender inequality faced by girls worldwide based upon their gender.
- This inequality includes areas such as right to education, nutrition, medical care, legal rights and protection from discrimination, violence and child marriage.
- It also calls for empowerment and improved rights of the world's 1.1 billion girls.

UNION CABINET APPROVES PRODUCTIVITY LINKED BONUS

- **Union Cabinet has approved the payment of Productivity Linked Bonus (PLB) equivalent to 78 days' wages for financial year 2017-18 for all eligible non-gazetted Railway employees.**
- It will be not available to **Railway Protection Force (RPF)** personnel.
- This decision will benefit about 11.91 lakh non-gazetted Railway employees.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTIVITY LINKED BONUS:

- It covers all non-gazetted railway employees (excluding RPF personnel) who are spread over entire country.
- **The eligible railway employees will be paid this bonus each year before Dusshera/ Puja holidays.**
- **This bonus is expected to motivate employees for working towards improving the performance of Railways.**

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **Indian Railways was the first departmental undertaking of Central Government to adopt the concept of PLB in 1979-80.**
- The main consideration for introduction of PLB at that time was because of the important role of Railways as infrastructural support in performance of economy as whole.
- In the overall context of Indian Railways' working, PLB was introduced as against the concept of bonus on lines of 'The Payment of Bonus Act – 1965'.

TUSHAR MEHTA APPOINTED AS NEW SOLICITOR GENERAL OF INDIA

- **The Appointments Committee of Union Cabinet has approved the appointment of Tushar Mehta as the new Solicitor General of India.**
- He will replace Ranjit Kumar, who had stepped down sometime back and shall hold office till June 30, 2020.
- **Prior to this appointment he was Additional Solicitor General.**

ABOUT TUSHAR MEHTA:

- **He had started his legal career as an advocate in 1987.**
- He was designated as senior advocate by Gujarat High Court in 2007.
- He was made Gujarat's Additional Advocate General in 2008 and represented the state government led by the then Chief Minister Narendra Modi in many crucial cases.
- **He was appointed as Additional Solicitor General in June 2014.**

WHO IS THE SOLICITOR GENERAL OF INDIA?

- Solicitor General is the second highest law officer in the country.
- **He is a subordinate to the Attorney General of India, the highest law officer and works under him.**
- **He also advises the government in legal matters.**
- Solicitor general is appointed for period of three years by Appointment Committee of Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister.

IMPORTANT TO NOTE:

- Office and duties of Attorney General is created by Constitution under Article 76.
- While, Solicitor General and Additional Solicitor Generals' office and duties are governed by Law Officers (Conditions of Service) Rules, 1987 and not by Constitution (thus they are statutory posts and not constitutional).
- **Moreover, attorney generals has the right to participate in the proceedings of Parliament, but cannot vote.**
- **Whereas, Solicitor General and Additional Solicitor Generals do not have these rights with respect to participation in parliament.**

CABINET APPROVES ESTABLISHMENT OF PERMANENT CAMPUSES OF IISERS

- **Union Cabinet has approved establishment and operationalisation of two new permanent campuses of the Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISER) in Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh) and Behrampur (Odisha).**
- Cabinet also has approved creation of two posts of Registrar, one in each IISER.

DETAILS:

- **IISERs will provide top quality science education at undergraduate and postgraduate level, PHDs and Integrated PHDs levels.**
- Both IISERs will be constructed on campuses having area of 1,17,000 sqm and shall be completed by December, 2021.
- **They will have complete infrastructural facilities for 1,855 students each.**
- IISERs will be carrying out research in frontier areas of science and will enable India move towards knowledge economy by attracting best scientific talent as faculty and prepare a strong base of scientific manpower in India.

ABOUT INSTITUTES OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH (IISER):

- IISERs are a group of most premier statutory science education and research institutes in India of national importance.
- **IISERs are envisioned to be the IITs of Basics Sciences.**
- These institutes were created under The National Institutes of Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2010 (which had amended National Institutes of Technology Act, 2007).

- **So far seven IISERs have been established across the country**, namely IISER Kolkata (West Bengal), IISER Pune (Maharashtra), IISER Mohali (Punjab), IISER Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), IISER Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), IISER Tirupati (Andhra Pradesh) and IISER Berhampur (Odisha).

CABINET APPROVES ESTABLISHMENT OF NCVET

- **Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET).**
- It will be set up by merging existing regulatory institutions in the skills space – National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) and National Skill Development Agency (NSDA).

ABOUT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (NCVET):

- **NCVET will regulate functioning of entities engaged in vocational education and training, both long-term and short-term.**
- It will also establish minimum standards for functioning of such entities.
- **It will be headed by a Chairperson and will have Executive and Non-Executive Members.**
- It will follow best practices of regulatory processes and ensure that it performs its functions professionally and as per applicable laws.
- **It will utilize the existing infrastructure and resources of NCVT and NSDA.**

PRIMARY FUNCTIONS OF NCVET:

- Recognize and regulate awarding bodies, assessment bodies and skill related information providers.
- Approve qualifications developed by awarding bodies and Sector Skill Councils (SSCs).
- Indirectly regulate vocational training institutes through awarding bodies and assessment agencies.
- Conduct Research and disseminate information.
- Redress Grievances.

WHAT WILL BE THE BENEFITS OF NCVET?

- **The establishment of NCVET by merging NCVT and NSDA will lead to improvement in quality and market relevance of skill development programs.**
- **It will also improve credibility of vocational education and training by encouraging greater private investment and employer participation in the skills space.**
- It will help achieve twin objectives of enhancing aspirational value of vocational education and increasing skilled manpower furthering Government's agenda of making India, skill capital of the world.
- It is also expected to facilitate ease of doing business by providing steady supply of skilled workforce to the industry and services.

IWAI LAUNCHES RO-RO SERVICE FROM NEAMATI TO MANJULI ISLAND

- **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) in collaboration with Assam Government has launched new Roll on-Roll off (Ro-Ro) facility connecting Neamati to Manjuli Island in Assam.**

- The Ro-Ro facility will cut down circuitous road route of 423 km that trucks take from Neamati to Majuli Island via Tezpur Road Bridge.
- **It will limit distance between these points to only 12.7 km with use of the river route.**
- **For this, IWAI has procured a new vessel "MV Bhupen Hazarika" and is also providing needed terminal infrastructure.**
- The vessel is 46.5-metre-long, 13.3-metre-wide and has a carrying capacity of eight trucks and 100 passengers.
- The commencement of Ro-Ro services to Majuli island would be a landmark event towards augmenting connectivity not only in Assam but the entire North Eastern Region.

MORE ABOUT THE RO-RO FERRY SERVICE:

- It refers to vessels used to carry wheeled cargo like cars, semi-trailer trucks, trucks, trailers, and railroad cars that are driven on (rolled on) and off (rolled off) ferry on their own wheels or using a platform vehicle.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **Manjuli is world's largest riverine islands located on Brahmaputra River.**
- It has 144 villages with a population of over 1,50,000.
- The habitants of the island are facing serious challenges of connectivity.
- They cross the river using conventional ferry service at various locations for their day to day needs.
- **In absence of adequate number of bridges, cargo and passenger movement takes through longer road routes leading to critical loss of time and money.**
- **Earlier, IWAI had started similar Ro-Ro service between Dhubri and Hatsingimari which had reduced the travel distance by 190 kms.**
- A permanent Ro-Ro terminal was constructed at Dhubri for the purpose.
- **It has also constructed floating terminals at 11 locations along the length of Brahmaputra waterway.**

ABOUT INLAND WATERWAYS AUTHORITY OF INDIA (IWAI):

- **IWAI 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, UP.**
- 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 the grant received from Ministry of Shipping.

CABINET APPROVES MOC BETWEEN INDIA AND FINLAND

- **Union Cabinet has approved a Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) between India and Finland on Environmental Cooperation.**
- **The MoC will enable establishment and promotion of closer and long-term cooperation between the two countries in the field of environment protection and management of natural resources on the basis of equity, reciprocity and mutual benefits.**

- For this, it will take into account applicable laws and legal provisions in each country.
- It is also expected to bring in latest technologies and best practices suited for bringing about better environment protection, better conservation and better management of climate change and wildlife protection and conservation.

FOLLOWING ARE THE AREAS OF CO-OPERATION UNDER THE MOC:

- **Climate change.**
- **Conservation of Marine and Coastal Resources.**
- **Waste management and waste-to-energy technologies.**
- Integrated water management of Oceanic and Sea Islands.
- Environmental and Forest monitoring and data management.
- Air and water pollution prevention and purification, remediation of contaminated soils.
- Promotion of circular economy, sustainable management of natural resources and low-carbon solutions.
- Any other areas jointly decided upon.

HEALTH MINISTRY CONFIRMS 22 ZIKA CASES IN RAJASTHAN

- **Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has confirmed 22 positive laboratory-confirmed cases of Zika virus in Rajasthan's capital Jaipur.**
- It was detected through the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) surveillance system and all suspected cases are in a defined area and mosquito samples are being tested.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES BEING TAKEN:

- **Health Ministry has taken precautionary measures followed by daily monitoring.**
- **It has activated a control room at the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) to undertake regular monitoring of the situation.**
- Moreover, a 7-member Central team has also been deputed to Jaipur following detection of the first case.
- **State government has also been supplied with IEC material prepared to create awareness about zika virus disease and its prevention strategies.**
- Besides, extensive surveillance and vector control measures are also being undertaken in the area as per protocol by the state government.

WHAT IS THE ZIKA VIRUS DISEASE?

- **Zika virus Disease is a mosquito-borne virus transmitted by Aedes aegypti mosquitoes** which also transmit three other vector-borne diseases Chikungunya, dengue and yellow fever.
- The virus belongs to the family- Flaviviridae and Genus Flavivirus.
- **It was first identified in 1947 in Zika Forest, Uganda from where it derives its name.**
- Now it is an emerging disease currently being reported by 86 countries worldwide.

TRANSMISSION:

- It is transmitted primarily by infected *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, which also transmits dengue.
- It can also spread through blood transfusion and sexual contact.

SYMPTOMS:

- They are similar to other viral infections such as dengue, and include fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, and headache.

THREATS:

- Pregnant women infected with Zika virus may give birth to babies with severe brain damage or serious birth defects i.e. **neurological disorders and foetal deformation known as Microcephaly** in which infants are born with abnormally smaller heads.
- Besides, a possible link between the virus and Guillain-Barré syndrome (a condition in which the body's immune system attacks part of the nervous system) is also suspected.

TREATMENT AND PREVENTION:

- **There is no specific treatment or vaccine currently available to treat Zika.**
- **The best form of prevention is protection against mosquito bites and clearing stagnant water where mosquitoes breed.**

PREVIOUS OUTBREAKS IN INDIA:

- First outbreak of Zika Virus was reported in Ahmedabad, Gujarat in January/February 2017 and second outbreak in July 2017 from Krishnagiri District in Tamilnadu.
- Both these outbreaks were successfully contained through intensive surveillance and vector management.

ISRO SIGNS MOU WITH CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF JAMMU

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Central University of Jammu (CUJ) in Jammu for setting up of Satish Dhawan Center for Space Science in the University.
- It will be the first of its kind institute coming up in Jammu and Kashmir.

ABOUT SATISH DHAWAN CENTER FOR SPACE SCIENCE:

- **The centre is named after Satish Dhawan, father of experimental fluid dynamics research in India and former Chairman of ISRO (1971-84).**
- He was born in Srinagar and played a leading role in the successful and indigenous development of Indian space programme.
- **The centre will have facilities for Geospatial Data analysis that will help in sustainable use of natural resources and planning land-use pattern.**

- It will also have ground-based observations for atmospheric studies, research lab for astrophysics, atmospheric sensing and glacier studies lab for better use of large quantity of water stored in the form of seasonal snow, ice and glaciers in the rivers of North India.
- **It will also have a Disaster Management Center to take up research in the area of different disasters like flood, landslides, forest fires, drought and climate change.**
- **Materials Sciences Lab for space applications will also be established for synthesizing and designing new sensors and materials for space applications.**

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS SPACE SCIENCE CENTER:

- It will help in tapping the potential of Space Applications for the region of J&K in various fields like disaster management, health, education, communication weather forecasting, land use planning, etc.
- **It will also provide an opportunity to youth of the region to contribute to the field of space science as well as to the nation.**
- It will also take care of the emerging Geospatial and Space Technology requirements for development of the region as its economy and habitations are affected by vegetation cover, forest area, snow, landslides, avalanches, ground water, cloud cover, atmospheric conditions etc.

IND-INDO CORPAT: 32ND EDITION OF INDIA-INDONESIA COORDINATED PATROL

- **The 32nd edition of India-Indonesia coordinated patrol (IND-INDO CORPAT) is being held in Belawan, Indonesia from 11 – 27 October 2018.**
- In this exercise, ships and aircraft from both countries will undertake patrolling on respective sides of 236 nautical miles long International Maritime Boundary Line.

ABOUT THE IND-INDO CORPAT 2018:

- **The patrolling will be conducted in three phases, followed by a closing ceremony at Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Island.**
- Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kulish, a Kora class missile corvette and Dornier naval maritime patrol aircraft from Andaman and Nicobar command are participating.
- This deployment is expected to contribute towards Indian Navy's effort to forge strong bonds of friendship across seas and consolidate inter-operability.
- **It also seeks to emphasize India's peaceful presence and solidarity with friendly countries towards ensuring good order in maritime domain, consolidate interoperability and strengthen existing bonds of friendship between the two countries.**

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **Under the strategic partnership between India and Indonesia, navies of both countries have been carrying out coordinated patrolling twice a year since 2002 near International Maritime Boundary Line** in an effort to keep Indian Ocean region (IOR) safe and secure for commercial shipping and international trade.
- The coordinated patrol reflects shared concerns between two countries for peaceful Indian Ocean for benefit of international community.

- It also enhances mutual understanding and inter-operability between the two navies.
- **Moreover, as part of Central Government's vision of SAGAR (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and 'Act East policy' Indian Navy has increasingly deployed to address maritime concerns of the IOR and also been involved in assisting countries in IOR with EEZ Surveillance, Search and Rescue, other capacity -building and capability-enhancement activities.**

WORLD OBESITY DAY: 11 OCTOBER

- **The World Obesity Day is observed globally every year on 11 October to promote practical solutions to end the global obesity crisis.**
- **It also aims to lead and drive global efforts to reduce, prevent and treat obesity.**
- It is organised by World Obesity Federation, a non-profit body which is in official relations with World Health Organisation (WHO) and is the collaborating body on Lancet Commission on Obesity.
- The theme for this year is "**It's time to End Weight Stigma!**"
- Weight stigma is one of last socially accepted forms of discrimination and this year's aim to change this and end obesity stigma once and for all.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **The first World Obesity Day took place in 2015.**
- The second took place in 2016 and focused on childhood obesity which was aligned with WHO Commission report on Ending Childhood Obesity.
- The theme of World Obesity Day 2017 was "Treat obesity now and avoid the consequences later."
- **It had called for investment in treatment services to support people affected by obesity, early intervention to improve the success of treatment, and prevention to reduce the need for treatment.**

WEF LAUNCHES CENTRE FOR FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION IN INDIA

- **The World Economic Forum (WEF) has announced its new Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution in India.**
- **The Centre will be based in Maharashtra.**
- It was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a function held in New Delhi.
- It will be the fourth center in chain-ones as part of WEF's global network along with San Francisco (US), Tokyo (Japan) and Beijing (China) are already functioning.

ABOUT THE CENTRE FOR FOURTH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION:

- The centre will facilitate to bring together government and business leaders to pilot emerging technology policies.
- **It has selected drones, artificial intelligence and blockchain as the first three project areas.**
- The centre will work in collaboration with government on national level to co-design new policy frameworks and protocols for emerging technology alongside leaders from business, academia, start-ups and international organizations.

- **NITI Aayog will coordinate partnership on behalf of Government and work of centre among multiple Ministries.**
- The initial efforts at national level are focused on two emerging technology areas AI and machine learning and blockchain and distributed ledger technology.
- **The first project will focus on expanding access to data to accelerate adoption of AI in socio-economic areas like education, healthcare and agriculture.**
- The second will focus on application of smart contracts to boost productivity and transparency while reducing inefficiency.
- At state level, Maharashtra Government in collaboration with Centre is planning to undertake a drone mapping operation in the agriculture sector.
- These projects will be scaled across India and globally.

ABOUT WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM (WEF):

- **It is an international institution founded by Klaus Schwab that works to improve the state of the world through public-private cooperation.**
- **It was established in 1971 and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.**
- It serves as an independent not-for-profit organization that works closely with other international organizations.
- It also works with leaders in the field of politics, business, academia to set global, regional and industrial agenda.

INDIA REMAINS POLIO FREE: UNICEF, WHO

- **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and World Health Organization (WHO) have reiterated India's status as polio-free country.**
- This comes in backdrop of some oral polio vaccine vials being found contaminated with the type-2 polio virus.

DETAILS:

- The two global agencies held that risk of children getting vaccine derived poliovirus was minimal in India because of high routine immunisation coverage in the country.
- They also asserted that all vaccines provided under Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) are safe and urged people to get their children vaccinated not only for their protection but also to keep Indian polio free.
- Type 2 poliovirus containing vaccine has been phased out globally, and in India, in April 2016, as a part of the polio endgame strategy.
- Like in other countries, India has also replaced trivalent OPV oral polio vaccine (tOPV) with bivalent OPV (bOPV) in all polio campaigns and routine immunization.
- It also continues to conduct mass vaccination campaigns against polio, using bivalent oral polio vaccine (bOPV), to maintain high immunity.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- India was certified polio-free in March 2014 and it still continues to remain vigilant against all three types of polioviruses.
- The last polio case due to wild poliovirus in the country was detected on 13 January 2011.
- Recently, type 2 polio vaccine virus was found in some sewage and stool samples.
- It was from few vials of bOPV supplied by one manufacturer in India which were found to contain traces of Type 2 polio vaccine virus.
- After that Health Ministry had taken immediate and decisive action withdrawing vaccine supplied by this manufacturer from all states that it was supplied to.

ABOUT POLIO:

- Polio (Poliomyelitis) is a highly infectious viral disease, which mainly affects young children below the age of 5.
- It is transmitted from person-to-person.
- It mainly spreads through faecal-oral route (e.g. contaminated water or food).
- After entering body, it multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis.
- Its initial symptoms include fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in the neck, and pain in limbs.
- In some cases, it causes permanent paralysis.
- There is no cure for polio, it can only be prevented by immunization.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY NAMED WORLD'S MOST INNOVATIVE UNIVERSITY: REUTERS

- **Stanford University was named as World's Most Innovative University by Reuters news agency rankings.**
- No Indian university was able to make it to the list.
- The Reuters' top 100 World's Most Innovative University ranking recognises universities from across the world for their work in inventing new technologies, advance science and power new markets and industries.
- It was first published in 2015, since then there has been no mention of any Indian university in the list.

DETAILS:

- **In this top 100 list, 48 universities from North America find mention on the list, 23 Asian universities, 27 from Europe and 2 from the Middle East.**
- The list has no mention of universities from South America, Africa and Oceania countries that include Australasia, Melanesia, Micronesia and Polynesia.
- **US dominated the list with 46 universities among the top 100.**
- **This year Chinese varsities have increased their presence in this with total five universities.**
- The key factor for this year's ranking was Geopolitical trends.
- **Stanford University from US has topped this list for four consecutive years.**
- The second and third spots have been held by US's Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) and Harvard University respectively.

TOP 10 INNOVATIVE UNIVERSITIES:

1. Stanford University, US
2. Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), US
3. Harvard University, US
4. University of Pennsylvania, US
5. University of Washington, US
6. University of Texas System, US
7. KU Leuven, Belgium
8. Imperial College London, United Kingdom
9. University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, US
10. 10.Vanderbilt University, US

MALAYSIA TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY FOR ALL CRIME

- **Malaysia's Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has agreed to abolish death penalty for all crimes and halt pending executions.**
- This decision was taken in pursuance of strong domestic opposition to colonial practice for being barbarous and unimaginably cruel which has put terrible stain on the country's human rights record.
- It is also in line with a move away from capital punishment in the rest of the world.

DETAILS:

- **Currently capital punishment in Malaysia is mandatory for murder, kidnapping, possession of firearms, treason and drug trafficking, among other crimes.**
- **The death penalty in Malaysia is exclusively carried out by hanging** and has been a legacy of British colonial rule.
- More than 1200 people are on death row in Malaysia.

ONE MUST KNOW THAT:

- **At present, the sentence of death penalty has been abolished in 103 countries, while penalty of capital punishment is still in 56 countries.**
- There are still provisions for capital punishment in countries like China, India, America, Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Japan and Sri Lanka.
- **United Nations General Assembly passed the resolution in 62nd session in 2007** to impose universal restrictions on the death penalty.

MARYSE CONDE WINS ALTERNATIVE NOBEL LITERATURE PRIZE

- **Guadeloupean author Maryse Conde (81) was awarded the New Academy Prize in Literature, an alternative award formed in protest to Nobel Literature Prize.**
- **She was selected from 47 authors who were nominated by Swedish librarians and voted on by nearly 33,000 people from around the world.**
- Conde is author of some 20 novels, including Desirada, Segu and Crossing the Mangrove.

- She is considered as a grand storyteller who belongs to world literature.
- Her writings mostly describe ravages of colonialism and post-colonial chaos in language which is both precise and overwhelming.

ABOUT THE NEW ACADEMY PRIZE IN LITERATURE:

- **New Academy Prize in Literature was formed by New Academy consisting of more than 100 Swedish writers, artists and journalists in protest to denounce what its founders called bias, arrogance and sexism of Swedish Academy, which selects Nobel laureates.**
- The Swedish Academy was plunged into turmoil in 2017 over its ties to Frenchman Jean-Claude Arnault, who was jailed for two years in early October for rape after the scandal came into light as part of the #MeToo movement.

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR DISASTER REDUCTION: OCTOBER 13

- **International Day for Disaster Reduction (IDDR) is observed every year on October 13 to promote a global culture of risk-awareness and disaster reduction.**
- The observance of day seeks to encourage citizens and governments to take part in building more disaster resilient communities and nations.
- **It also celebrates how people and communities around world are reducing their exposure to disasters and raising awareness about the importance of reining in risks that they face.**
- It also seeks to spread awareness about reining risks of disasters around world and also reduce exposure of people and communities to disasters.
- **The theme of 2018 International Day for Disaster Reduction was 'Reducing Disaster Economic Losses'.**
- It focuses on Target C of Sendai Framework, which aims at 'reducing disaster economic losses in relation to global GDP by 2030'.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **UN General Assembly (UNGA) in 1989 had instituted International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction to promote a global culture of risk-awareness and disaster reduction.**
- Earlier, this day was celebrated annually on the second Wednesday of October.
- But in 2009, the UNGA formally designated 13 October and changed its name to International Day for Disaster Reduction by adopting Resolution 64/200.

ABOUT THE SENDAI FRAMEWORK FOR DISASTER RISK REDUCTION (SFDRR) 2015-30:

- **SFDRR is an international Treaty that was approved by UN member states in March 2015 at the Third World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction held in Sendai, Japan.**
- It is a voluntary and non-binding treaty which recognizes that UN member State has a primary role to reduce disaster risk.
- **It has a framework for 15-year (2015 to 2030).**

- It calls for sharing the responsibility with other stakeholders including local government, the private sector and other stakeholders.
- **It is a successor of the Hyogo Framework for Action (2005–2015), which had been the most encompassing international accord on disaster risk reduction.**

INDIA-AZERBAIJAN SIGN PROTOCOL ON TRADE AND ECONOMIC COOPERATION

- **India and Azerbaijan have signed a protocol on trade and economic, science and technology cooperation.**
- It was signed at the 5th meeting of India-Azerbaijan Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade and Economic, Science and Technology Cooperation (IA-IGC) held on 11-12 October, 2018 in New Delhi.
- The meeting was co-chaired by Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation Suresh Prabhu and Azerbaijan's Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources Mukhtar Babayev.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING:

- **Both countries exchanged views on current economic situation and reviewed current status of bilateral trade, investment and their cooperation in fields of trade, economy, science and technology.**
- They also emphasised to further strengthen and expand their cooperation in trade and investment, energy and hydro-carbons, transportation, SMEs, agriculture, food safety and environmental protection, tourism, culture, health and pharmaceuticals, space technology, education and scientific research chemicals and petrochemicals and mining.
- **Both sides also felt that bilateral trade was far below potential and there is need to step up cooperation to enlarge trade basket and increase bilateral trade and investment.**
- Currently trade turnover between India and Azerbaijan in January-August 2018 was US \$657.9 million.
- Both sides also agreed to take measures to enhance trade relations and expand business relations between the two countries.
- They also decided to send trade delegations to raise awareness regarding economic developments and reforms in two countries and have regular exchange of information about trade exhibitions, fairs, conferences and other business events.
- **They also agreed to convene next meeting of IA-IGC in Baku, capital of Azerbaijan.**

SIKKIM AWARDED FAO'S FUTURE POLICY GOLD AWARD

- **Sikkim was awarded UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) Future Policy Gold Award (Gold Prize) for its achievement in becoming the world's first totally organic agriculture state.**
- Sikkim beat out 51 other nominees from around the world for the award.

ABOUT THE FUTURE POLICY GOLD AWARD:

- **The prize honours exceptional policies adopted by political leaders who have decided to act, no longer accepting widespread hunger, poverty or environmental degradation.**
- This award is nicknamed the "Oscar for best policies".
- Previously it was honoured for policies combating desertification, violence against women and girls, nuclear weapons and pollution of the oceans.
- This year's award was based on central focus of agroecology policies and was co-organised by FAO, World Future Council (WFC) and IFOAM – Organics International.
- **Agroecology has the potential to increase farmers' earnings and make farms more resilient to climate change as erratic rainfall and extended dry periods hamper food production.**

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **Sikkim is the first organic state in the world and all farmlands in the state are certified organic.**
- State's policy approach reaches beyond organic production and has proven transformational for its citizens.
- **It primarily focuses on socioeconomic aspects such as consumption and market expansion, cultural aspects as well as health, education, rural development and sustainable tourism.**
- **The policy implemented by the state, of organic farming has phased out chemical fertilisers and pesticides, and achieved a total ban on sale and use of chemical pesticides in the state.**
- The transition has benefitted more than 66000 farming families in the state.
- **Transition to 100% organic state has also greatly benefited its tourism sector the numbers of tourists have increased by over 50% between 2014 and 2017.**
- With this Sikkim has set an excellent example for other Indian states and countries worldwide to successfully upscale agroecology.

ABOUT FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION (FAO):

- **It is a specialised agency of UN that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.**
- **Its parent organization is UN Economic and Social Council (UNESCO).**
- It was established on 16 October 1945 and its headquarters are in Rome.
- It has 194 member states, along with European Union (member organization).

NITI AAYOG, MICROSOFT SIGN AGREEMENT TO BRING IN AI TOOLS

- **Government's premier think tank NITI Aayog has inked an agreement with Microsoft India to deploy artificial intelligence (AI) technologies to address challenges in agriculture and healthcare and promote adoption of local language computing among others.**

DETAILS:

- **Under the agreement, Microsoft will provide NITI Aayog advanced AI-based solutions to address challenges in agriculture and healthcare** including farm advisory services, healthcare screening models at Primary Health Centres (PHCs) and build capacity for AI through education among others.
- It will also support NITI Aayog by combining cloud, AI, research and its vertical expertise for new initiatives and solutions across several core areas.

- **Microsoft will also accelerate use of AI for development and adoption of local language computing, in addition to building capacity for AI among workforce through education.**
- Additionally, it will also promote STEM education in areas of AI studies and data sciences for young women in institutes identified by NITI Aayog.

13TH CONVENTION OF CENTRAL INFORMATION COMMISSION

- **The 13th Convention of Central Information Commission was held in New Delhi.**
- **It was inaugurated by President Ram Nath Kovind.**
- It was attended by Chief Information Commissioner, Information Commissioners, State Information Commissioners, former information Commissioners, Central Public information officer, NGOs and other stake holders.

ABOUT CENTRAL INFORMATION COMMISSION (CIC):

- **CIC was established in 2005 by Central Government under provisions of Right to Information (RTI) Act (2005).**
- It plays an important role in maintaining transparency in the system of governance essential for healthy democracy.
- Such kind of transparency check aims to curb corruption, nepotism, oppression and misuse or abuse of the authority.
- **CIS is the designated statutory authority to receive and inquire into complaint from any person.**
- The general superintendence, direction and management of affairs of Commission are vested in Chief Information Commissioner who is assisted by Information Commissioner who is assisted by Information Commissioners.
- **CIC submits annual report to Union government on the implementation of the provisions of RTI Act.**
- **The central government in turn places this report before each house of Parliament.**

FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF CIC:

- **It can order inquiry into any matter if there are reasonable grounds.**
- **It can secure compliance of its decisions from the public authority.**
- It can recommend steps to be taken for promoting such conformity, if public authority does not conform to provisions of RTI Act.
- It examines any record which is under control of the public authority and which may be withheld from it on any grounds during the enquiry.

INDIA ELECTED TO UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

- **India was elected to United Nations 'Human Rights Council', the main body of UN charged with promoting and monitoring human rights for a period of three years beginning January 1, 2019.**
- **In this secret ballot election held in 193-member UN General Assembly (UNGA) India secured 188 votes in Asia-Pacific category, the highest number of among all candidates.**
- Total 18 new members in the five regional categories were elected by absolute majority (i.e. minimum of 97 votes are required to get elected through secret ballot).

- From Asia-Pacific region category, Fiji with 187 and Bangladesh 178 votes were also elected along with India.
- **This was fifth time India has been elected to UNHRC, previously was elected 2006-2009, 2011-2014 and 2014-2017.**

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL (UNHRC):

- **UNHRC is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system.**
- It is responsible for strengthening promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them.
- It was created by UNGA on 15 March 2006 by adopting resolution 60/251 to promote human rights globally.
- **It had replaced former UN Commission on Human Rights.**
- **It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.**

MEMBERS:

- UNHRC is made up of 47 UN member states which are elected by UN General Assembly (UNGA) with specific number of seats allocated for each five region of the globe viz. African States (13 seats), Asia-Pacific States (13 seats), Eastern European States (6 seats), Latin American and Caribbean States (8 seats) and Western European and other States(7 seats).
- Members serve for three-year terms and can serve only two terms in a row.

FUNCTIONS:

- Members of the council work to engage countries on improving human rights.
- They make decisions ranging from exposing violations to recommending that UN Security Council make referral to International Criminal Court (ICC).
- UNHRC does not have authority to take action but can exert significant pressure on violating country.
- It can also set up special rapporteurs with mandate to investigate and report human-rights violations and abuses.

IMPORTANT TO KNOW:

- United States under President Donald Trump Administration had withdrawn from UNHRC earlier this year after it questioned legitimacy of the council because of presence of several dictatorial regimes violating human rights on it.

NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION CELEBRATES SILVER JUBILEE

- **National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) celebrated Silver Jubilee (25 years) on October 12, 2018.**
- NHRC was set up on October 12, 1993.
- **The silver Jubilee celebrations were held in New Delhi.**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed the function and appreciated role of NHRC.
- NHRC also released special silver jubilee logo and commissioned documentary titled 'NHRC: 25 years, Billion Hopes' capturing the 25 years of its journey.

- It also organized 'Human Rights Mela' and 'Human Rights Street Theatre Festival' in New Delhi.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION (NHRC):

- NHRC is an apex statutory watchdog of human rights in the country, i.e. the rights related to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution or embodied in the international conventions.
- It was established on October 12, 1993 as per the statutory provisions of Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993.
- **It is a multimember body consisting of Chairman and four members.**
- **President appoints Chairman and members of NHRC on recommendation of high-powered committee headed by the Prime Minister.**
- Its headquarter is located in New Delhi.
- **NHRC can either take suo motu cognisance of cases through media reports or complaint filed by victim or any other person on his or her behalf or on basis of reports received from the police department.**

FUNCTIONS OF NHRC:

- Investigate violations of human rights committed by the government.
- Intervene in legal proceedings related to human rights.
- Recommend to provide relief to the victims and their families.
- Review protection provided by Constitution.
- Study international treaties related to human rights, etc. and recommend for effective implementation on its basis.
- Promote research in the field of human rights.
- Spread human rights education in different sections of the society.

SHEKHAR MANDE APPOINTED AS DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF CSIR

- **Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed Dr. Shekhar Mande as the Director General of Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and Secretary of the Department of Scientific and Research (DSIR).**
- He will succeed Girish Sahni who superannuated in August 2018.

ABOUT DR. SHEKHAR MANDE:

- **Dr. Mande, a structural biologist is the Director of National Centre for Cell Sciences, Pune.**
- **He has worked at the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad.**
- He is also a top functionary of Vijnana Bharati, a swadeshi science movement affiliated with Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).
- He is a fellow of all three major science academies and recipient of the coveted SS Bhatnagar Prize (2005), the most prestigious science honour in the country.

ABOUT THE COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC & INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH (CSIR):

- **CSIR is an autonomous body and India's premier research and development (R&D) organisation.**
- It was established in 1942.
- It operates as an autonomous body registered under the Registration of Societies Act of 1860.
- **It is mainly funded by the Union Ministry of Science and Technology.**
- **Prime Minister is the chairman of CSIR.**
- It has been ranked 9th in the world amongst 1207 government institutions, with overall global ranking of 75 in world, covering 5250 institutions.
- It runs a chain of 38 national research labs.
- **It is headquartered in New Delhi.**

INDIA INTERNATIONAL SILK FAIR 2018 HELD IN NEW DELHI

- **The 6th edition of India International Silk Fair (IISF) was held at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi.**
- **It was inaugurated by Union Minister of Textiles Smriti Irani.**
- The three day event was organised by Indian Silk Export Promotion Council (ISEPC).
- Over 108 exhibitors of silk and blended silk products manufactured in different parts of the country displayed their produce during this event.
- Over 218 buyers from various countries also participated in the fair.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **India is the 2nd largest producer of silk in the world after China.**
- The silk industry is agriculture based and labour intensive and provides gainful employment to around 8 million artisans and weavers in rural areas.
- **In India, four varieties of silk are produced, viz. Mulberry, Eri, Tasar and Muga.**
- About 80% of silk produced is of mulberry silk, majority of which is produced in three southern States of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.
- **About 97% of raw silk in India is produced in five Indian states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Jammu and Kashmir.**

INDIAN NAVY INDUCTS ITS FIRST DEEP SUBMERGENCE RESCUE VEHICLE

- **Indian Navy has inducted its first Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) which is deployed to rescue downed or disaster-struck submarines at high sea.**
- It will be based in Mumbai, Maharashtra and enhance Navy's operational capabilities.
- With this, India joined select list of international navies (United States, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Singapore UK, Sweden and Australia) with ability to search, locate and provide assistance to downed or disaster-struck or distressed submarines at high sea.
- **The second DSRV is expected to be inducted at Visakhapatnam in 2019.**

DETAILS:

- The DSRVs, complete with associated kit in fly away configuration, can be crucial in quickly locating submarines through vast expanse of sea and can be mobilised by air and water for rapid rescue.
- **Thus, it can be deployed at short notice for providing assistance to submarines in distress.**
- Some DSRV vessels are air transportable in very large military cargo.
- **DSRVs can also be deployed for various other missions including to lay cables on the sea bed.**

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **The induction of DSRV is a part of Indian Navy's efforts to enhance operational capabilities when China has been ramping up its maritime presence in critical sea lanes especially in Indian Ocean Region (IOR) which are of strategic importance to India.**
- Earlier in 2017, Indian Navy also had operationalised new concept of deployment of warships in IOR to effectively counter China's growing presence in the strategically key waters.
- The new mission-based deployment involves deploying mission-ready ships and aircraft along critical sea lanes of communications.

GOVT. OPENS NEW SERIES OF SOVEREIGN GOLD BONDS SCHEME

- **Union Government has opened a new series of sovereign gold bonds scheme for subscription.**
- Under this scheme, sovereign gold bonds will be issued every month from October 2018 to February 2019.
- **This bond will be sold through Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited, Post Office, Stock Exchange (NSE and BSE).**

ABOUT THE SOVEREIGN GOLD BOND (SGB) SCHEME:

- **It is aimed at providing alternative to buying physical gold.**
- **Under this scheme, bonds are denominated in units of one gram of gold and multiples thereof.**
- These gold denominated bonds are restricted for sale to resident Indian entities, including individuals, Hindu undivided families (HUF), trusts, universities and charitable institutions.
- **The minimum subscription for individual and HUF is 1 gram and maximum is 4 kg.**
- For trusts and similar entities, maximum subscription is 20 kg per fiscal.
- Price of bond is fixed in rupees on basis of simple average of closing price of gold of 999 purity published by India Bullion and Jewellers Association Limited for last 3 working days of week preceding the subscription period.
- **The tenor of SGB bonds is 8 years with provision of premature cancellation after 5 years on interest payment dates.**
- Investors in SGB bonds have been provided with option of holding them in physical or dematerialised form.
- **RBI has notified rate of interest of 2.50% per annum on SGB bonds is payable on half yearly basis.**
- The bonds can be used as collateral for loans and loan-to-value ratio is set equal to ordinary gold loan mandated by RBI from time to time.
- Individual investing in it are exempted from capital gains tax arising on redemption of SGB.
- **The indexation benefits are also provided to long-term capital gains arising to any person on transfer of bond.**

6TH RCEP INTER-SESSIONAL MINISTERIAL MEETING HELD IN SINGAPORE

- **The 6th Inter-sessional Ministerial Meeting of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was held in Singapore.**
- The meeting was reviewed after 6th RCEP ministerial meeting held in August 2018.
- In this meeting, all partner countries agreed to finalize trading deal by the end of this year.
- From Indian side, Minister of State (MoS) for Commerce & Industry and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution C. R. Chaudhary had attended the meeting.

ABOUT REGIONAL COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP (RCEP):

- **RCEP is a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) or comprehensive regional economic integration agreement between the 10-ASEAN countries** (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and its six FTA partners (Australia, New Zealand, India, China, Japan and Korea).
- **The negotiations for this mega trade deal were formally launched at 2012 ASEAN Summit in Cambodia.**
- **It aims to cover goods, services, investments, economic and technical cooperation, competition and intellectual property rights under its ambit.**
- Till 2017, 16 RCEP member states accounted for population of 3.4 billion people with total GDP (in terms of PPP) of \$49.5 trillion, approximately 38% of the world's GDP (combined GDPs of China and India makes up more than half that amount) and 29% of world trade.

GOVT. LAUNCHES CM'S URBAN LEADERS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME

- **Delhi government has launched Chief Minister's Urban Leaders Fellowship Programme that seeks to attract young leaders across the country to work with it on addressing some of the most pressing urban challenges.**
- It was announced by Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

ABOUT CHIEF MINISTER'S URBAN LEADERS FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME:

- **The fellowship aims to provide a unique opportunity to young leaders across India to work within the Delhi government to address some of the most pressing urban challenges in India.**
- **It also seeks to attract youth who are passionate about public service and are willing to work for two years.**
- Fellows selected under this programme will be assigned to work with ministers or senior officials across various departments Delhi government such as health, education, water, transport, art and culture.
- The fellows will be paid remuneration of Rs 1.25 lakh per month and Rs 75,000 per month to Associate Fellows.

MUSIC COMPOSER KHAYYAM WINS HRIDAYNATH AWARD

- Veteran composer, lyricist, writer and national award winning music director Mohammed Zahur Khayyam Hashmi, famously known as Khayyam has won the 2018 Hridaynath Award for Lifetime Achievement.
- The award will be conferred by Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai.
- This year, the award ceremony coincides with 81st birthday of Hridaynath Mangeshkar after whom award is named.

ABOUT KHAYYAM:

- He had started his music career in Ludhiana in 1943 at age of 17.
- Later, he had teamed up as Sharma of music-director duo 'Sharmaji-Varmaji' to compose music for films like "Heer Ranjha" (1948) and others.
- His earliest notable solo works were for Footpath (1953), "Biwi" and "Phir Subah Hogi" (1958).
- The 1961 blockbuster "Shola Aur Shabnam" had firmly established Khayyam as top-notch music director followed by films with superhit music like Mohabbat Isko Kehta Hain (1965) and Aakhri Khat (1966).
- Later, he composed music for films like "Kabhi Kabhi" (1976), "Trishul" (1978), "Noorie" (1979), "Thodisi Bewafai" (1980), "Dard" and "Ahista Ahista" (1981), "Dil, Akhir Dil Hai" and "Bazaar"(1982), "Razia Sultan" (1983).
- In 1981, he composed music for the sensitive blockbuster film "Umrao Jaan", which is considered as jewel in crown of Khayyam's compositions for which he bagged National Award and also Filmfare Award and others.

ABOUT HRIDAYNATH MANGESHKAR AWARD:

- The award was established in 2011 by Mumbai-based socio-cultural organization Hridayesh Art in honour of music composer and singer Hridaynath Mangeshkar.
- It felicitates and recognises successful individuals across country from various walks of life.
- It carries a monetary award of Rs 2 lakh and a memento.
- The previous recipients of the award include eminent personalities like Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Amitabh Bachchan, Hariprasad Chaurasia, A R Rahman.
- Hridaynath Mangeshkar is the son of renowned musician Deenanath Mangeshkar and is the younger brother of Indian music legends Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle.

FIRST INDIA-US TRI-SERVICES EXERCISE TO BE HELD IN 2019

- The first India-United States tri-services exercise is likely to take place in 2019 in India.
- It will include all services of both countries and talks are on to include special forces.
- US will be the second country after Russia with whom India will conduct tri-services exercise.

DETAILS:

- **The Indo-US joint tri-services drill was formally announced after first 2+2 dialogue between principals of External Affairs and Defence Ministries of the two countries which was held in New Delhi in September 2018.**
- The drill will focus on United Nations-based scenario and overarching mission of humanitarian assistance, disaster relief measure.
- It will be also in line with India's ambition of being natural humanitarian disaster relief hub in the Indo-Pacific region.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **The three forces of India and US already take part in multiple bilateral exercises separately.**
- **Moreover, armies of both countries are also participating in an annual drill called Yudh Ayaas, whose latest edition took place in September 2018, and Air Forces took part in a bilateral drill called Cope India.**
- Navies of both countries also participate in exercise called Malabar which also involves Japan.
- But this will be the first time, three services of India and US will participate in a drill together.
- **Indian Army has Para SF, Navy has Marcos while Air Force has Garud as their respective special forces.**

TOURISTS CAN VISIT ANDAMAN AND NICOBAR WITHOUT ANY RESTRICTIONS

- **Government has allowed foreign tourists to visit Andaman and Nicobar Islands without any restrictions.**
- In this regard, Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has modified its earlier order which made it mandatory for foreign tourists to register with Foreigners Registration Officer (FRO) within 24 hours of their arrival.

DETAILS:

- **The step was taken on suggestion made by Union Tourism Ministry to boost foreign tourist arrivals in Andaman and Nicobar Islands.**
- This order follows earlier directive which allowed foreigners to visit 29 inhabited and 11 uninhabited islands in Andaman and and Nicobar Islands, which were prohibited for visitors under Foreigners (Restricted Area) Order, 1963, without any restrictions.
- **However, citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals having their origin in these countries will continue to require Restricted Area Permit (RAP) to visit the Union Territory.**
- Moreover, separate approvals of competent authority will continue to be required for visiting reserved forests, wildlife sanctuaries and tribal reserves as at present.
- **Ministry of Tourism has also proposed that travel restrictions be removed from border areas in Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Jammu and Kashmir and Himachal Pradesh.**

ASK DISHA: IRCTC LAUNCHES AI CHATBOT TO ANSWER USER QUERIES

- **Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered chatbot- Ask Disha (Digital Interaction to Seek Help Anytime), to help its users with various queries.**
- The chatbot is a special computer programme designed to simulate conversation with users, especially over the internet.
- It has gone live on IRCTC's next-gen e ticketing website and soon will be integrated on the IRCTC Rail Connect Android app.

ABOUT ASK DISHA:

- **The first-of-its-kind initiative by IRCTC is aimed at facilitating accessibility by answering users' queries pertaining to various services offered to railway passengers.**
- The chatbot is voice enabled and will support several regional languages in the near future.
- It will offer greatly improved and intuitive customer support by answering customer queries pertaining to all aspects of the services that IRCTC provides.
- **Users can also ask questions to AI chatbot by visiting the IRCTC website.**
- **As soon as the users start typing their queries, AI chatbot automatically starts showing some options based on typed phrases.**
- Users can then either pick one of the queries from displayed options or type in the complete question if their query is not being displayed on the screen.
- The essential features of AskDisha include ability to quickly answer to customer queries, ability to provide round-the-clock customer support, ability to multitask, zero waiting time for query to get answered and overall ability to provide customer with stress-free experience and overall customer satisfaction.

GOVT. LAUNCHES YOUTH ROAD SAFETY LEARNERS LICENCE PROGRAMME

- **Union Ministry of Road Transport & Highways has launched Youth Road Safety Learners Licence programme in New Delhi.**
- **It is a Public-private partnership (PPP) initiative in collaboration with Diageo India and Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE).**

ABOUT YOUTH ROAD SAFETY LEARNERS LICENCE PROGRAMME:

- **It is a first-of-its-kind training programme in the country.**
- **It attempts to bring formal and structured training program for young, first-time drivers as they apply for learner's license.**
- Its long-term objective is at improving road safety awareness amongst young adults by inculcating behavioural change and creating awareness about responsible driving habits.
- This programme will help Government to achieve its target of reducing road accidents by 50% by 2020.
- **It will help to main-stream road safety in formal education system.**

- The programme has immersive and interactive module led by senior faculty members of IRTE covering varied aspects of responsible driving including defensive driving, ill effects of driving under influence of alcohol, speeding and wearing of helmets spread over two days.

UNFORTUNATE FACTS:

- **India accounts for 12.5% (over 1.45 lakh fatalities a year) of global road accidents, with one road accident occurring every four minutes.**
- Alarming, 72% victims involved in such road mishaps are between age groups of 15-44 years with speeding, reckless and drunk driving being the top reason accounting for 1.5% of road traffic accidents and 4.6% of fatalities.

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF RURAL WOMEN: OCTOBER 15

- **The International Day of Rural Women is observed every year on October 15 to recognize the crucial role and contribution of rural women.**
- **The 2018 theme of the day was "Sustainable infrastructure, services and social protection for gender equality and the empowerment of rural women and girls".**
- The observance of day highlights role and contribution of rural women, including indigenous women in enhancing rural and agricultural development, eradicating rural poverty and improving food security and ensuring sustainability of rural households and communities, improving rural livelihoods and overall wellbeing.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **The International Day of Rural Women was instituted by the UN General Assembly (UNGA) by passing resolution 62/136 in December 2007.**
- **It was first observed on 15 October 2008.**
- According to UN, empowerment of rural women is a pre-requisite for fulfilling vision of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which aims at ending poverty and hunger, achieve food security and empower all women and girls.
- Rural women, make up over a quarter of the total world population.
- Majority of them depend on natural resources and agriculture for their livelihood.
- **They produce, prepare and process much of the food available, thereby giving them primary responsibility for food security.**
- Thus, International Day of Rural Women recognizes the contribution and significant role played by these rural women in food security and poverty elevation.

RBI ISSUES GUIDELINES FOR MONEY TRANSFER AMONG E-WALLETS

- **Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued guidelines for interoperability among prepaid instruments (PPI) such as e-wallets.**
- Inter-operability is technical compatibility that enables payment system to be used in conjunction with other payment systems.

ABOUT RBI GUIDELINES:

- **The guidelines are aimed at promoting money transfer between e-wallets and digital transactions.**
- They also elaborate requirements for achieving interoperability for mobile wallets, cards and norms for customer protection and grievance redressal.
- The interoperability will be achieved in a phased manner i.e. initially inter-operability of PPIs issued in form of wallets through UPI, and later between wallets and bank accounts through UPI, and interoperability for PPIs issued in form of cards through card networks.
- The interoperability between mobile wallets and between bank accounts and e-wallets will be enabled through Unified Payments Interface (UPI) system.
- It will be facilitated to all KYC-compliant PPI accounts and entire acceptance infrastructure.
- In case where PPIs are issued in form of cards, then cards will be affiliated to authorised card networks.
- PPI issuers must have board approved policy for achieving PPI inter-operability.
- This will allow PPI issuers, system providers and system participants in different systems to undertake, clear and settle payment transactions across systems without participating in multiple systems.
- **Card networks are also allowed to onboard PPI issuers to join their network.**
- **Non-bank PPI issuers are permitted to participate as members/associate members of authorised card networks.**

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS INTEROPERABILITY:

- **The interoperability of PPIs will allow transfer from one wallet to another through UPI.**
- **It will also allow transfer from wallets to bank also through UPI.**
- Moreover, wallet companies can now issue cards and for this they don't need to partner with banks for UPI and card issuance.
- It will thus boost digital payments, improve financial penetration in long term.

OCTOBER 17: INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ERADICATION OF POVERTY

- **The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) is observed every year on October 17 to raise people's awareness of the need to eradicate poverty and destitution worldwide, particularly in developing countries.**
- The 2018 theme was 'Coming together with those furthest behind to build an inclusive world of universal respect for human rights and dignity'.

ABOUT THIS YEAR'S SIGNIFICANCE:

- **This year marks the 25th anniversary of institution of this day, through declaration by UN General Assembly (UNGA) in its resolution 47/196 in December 1992.**
- This year also marks the 30th anniversary of Call to Action by Father Joseph Wresinski which inspired observance of October 17 as the World Day for Overcoming Extreme Poverty and recognition of this day by UN as International Day for the Eradication of Poverty.
- **This year also marks the 70th anniversary of proclamation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.**

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **The International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (IDEP) was instituted by UNGA by adopting a resolution on 22 December 1992 to promote awareness among people to eradicate poverty and destitution around the world particularly in developing countries.**
- It was observed for the first time in 1993.

GOVT. LAUNCHES SWASTH BHARAT YATRA NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

- **The Union Government has launched a national campaign 'Swasth Bharat Yatra' on occasion of World Food Day that is observed on 16 October to sensitise people about eating safe food and be healthy.**
- The campaign has been launched in association with states and led by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

ABOUT THE SWASTH BHARAT YATRA NATIONAL CAMPAIGN:

- **Under this campaign, a pan-India cycle rally is being organized to create consumer awareness about eating safe and nutritious food for becoming healthy and combating food adulteration.**
- In this rally, about 7,500 cyclists are expected to participate in over 18,000 km travelling across six tracks through almost every state and UT over 100 days to propagate a powerful message 'Eat Right India'.
- **The cyclathon will culminate in the national capital on January 27, 2019.**
- This campaign will not only mobilise masses but also create a large pool of local community to sustain this movement.

WORLD FOOD DAY: OCTOBER 16

- **The World Food Day is observed globally on 16 October to mark the foundation of Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations in 1945.**
- It is observed as a day of action dedicated to tackling global hunger and aims to raise public awareness about hunger challenges and encourage people around world to take action in fight against hunger.
- It also shows commitment to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2- to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030.
- Events organised to celebrate this day promotes worldwide awareness and action for those who suffer from hunger and for need to ensure food security and nutritious diets for all.
- **The theme for this year was: 'Our actions are our future- A zero hunger world by 2030 is possible'.**

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **World Food Day was instituted in November 1979 by FAO's Member Countries at its 20th General Conference of to raise awareness of issues behind poverty and hunger.**
- The day was observed for the first time on 16 October 1981 and the idea of celebrating the WFD worldwide was mooted by Hungarian Delegation to FAO.

ABOUT FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANISATION (FAO):

- **FAO is a specialised agency of the United Nations that leads international efforts to defeat hunger.**
- **Its parent organization is UN Economic and Social Council (UNESCO).**
- It is a neutral forum serving both developed and developing countries where all nations meet as equals to negotiate agreements and debate policy.
- **It was established on 16 October 1945 and its headquarters are in Rome, Italy.**
- **Its motto is "Let there be bread".**
- It has 194 member states, along with the European Union (member organization).
- **FAO meet the demands posed by major global trends in agricultural development and challenges faced by member nations.**
- **It helps countries in transition modernize and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices, ensuring good nutrition and food security for all.**

ICFRE INKS TWO MOUS TO LAUNCH PRAKRITI PROGRAMME

- **Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Dehradun has signed two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS) and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) to launch 'Prakriti' programme.**
- **The two MoUs have been signed for a period of 10 years.**

ABOUT THE MOUS SIGNED:

- **These MoUs aim to make Indian youth more sensitive towards national and global issues of environment and help them become responsible citizens.**
- **It also seeks to mobilise cadre of youth for raising a peoples' movement, which is committed to the conservation of forest and environment.**
- **The collaboration forged through these MoUs will enable transfer of knowledge to students and teachers of KVS and NVS on environment, forest, environmental services and contemporary areas of forestry research through lectures and interactive sessions by ICFRE scientists.**

ABOUT PRAKRITI PROGRAMME:

- **The main objective of Prakriti programme is to provide platform for school children to learn practical skills towards sustainable use of resources.**
- **It also aims to promote awareness about forests and environment and stimulate interest among students of KVS and NVS in maintaining balanced environment.**
- **It also seeks to provide students with skills that reflect care and protection towards forests, environment and society.**

ABOUT THE INDIAN COUNCIL OF FORESTRY RESEARCH AND EDUCATION (ICFRE):

- **It is an autonomous organization under Ministry of Environment and Forests.**
- **It is headquartered in Dehradun, Uttarakhand.**

- Its functions are to conduct and promote forestry research, transfer technologies developed to states of India and other user agencies and to impart forestry education.
- It has 9 research institutes and 4 advanced centres to cater to research needs of different bio-geographical regions.

PM NARENDRA MODI CHAIRS 6TH MEETING OF NDMA

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the sixth meeting of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) at New Delhi.**
- In this meeting, he reviewed activities of NDMA to effectively manage and respond to disasters affecting country.
- He also reviewed ongoing projects undertaken by NDMA.
- **During this meeting, he emphasized on need for better coordination between various stakeholders and undertake more joint exercises to bring about effective response to save life and property.**
- He also stressed upon the need to bring in global expertise in the field of disaster management.

ABOUT NATIONAL DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (NDMA):

- **It is a statutory body under the aegis of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).**
- It was established in 2009 and its provisions are envisaged in Disaster Management Act, 2005.
- Its mandate is to coordinate the response to natural or man-made disasters and capacity-building in case of disaster resiliency and crisis response.
- **It is also responsible for framing policies, laying down guidelines and best-practices and coordinating with State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) to ensure a holistic and distributed approach to disaster management.**
- It is governed by a 9 member board chaired by Prime Minister of India (thus, he is ex-officio chairman of NDMA).

FORMER UP AND UTTARAKHAND CM NARAYAN DATT TIWARI PASSES AWAY

- **Former Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand Chief Minister Narayan Dutt Tiwari passed away in New Delhi.**
- He was 93-year-old.
- **He is the only Politician who has served as CM of two states.**
- He was known as Vikas Purush and was instrumental in developing the industrial sector in Uttarakhand.

ABOUT NARAYAN DUTT TIWARI:

- **He was born on October 18, 1925 in Baluti, United Provinces in then British India (now in Uttarakhand, India).**
- **He was a three-time CM of Uttar Pradesh and was the first elected CM of Uttarakhand as well.**
- His first stint as UP CM was from January 1976 to April 1977 and then again from August 1984 to September 1985 and from June 1988 to December 1988.

- He was elected to Lok Sabha in 1980 and Rajya Sabha in 1985.
- He was also a Union minister and had held a variety of portfolios.
- He was Union Minister of External Affairs in late Rajiv Gandhi's cabinet and thereafter he became Minister for Finance and Commerce and held the ministry till June 1988.
- **He was the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand from 2002 to 2007 (after Uttarakhand was carved out of UP in November 2000).**
- **He also had served as Governor of Andhra Pradesh from 2007 to 2009.**
- **He was first elected to UP Assembly on Praja Samajwadi Party ticket from Nainital in 1952 and 1957.**
- **He joined Congress in 1963 and got elected to UP Assembly from Kashipur in 1965.**
- **He was first president of Youth Congress in 1969.**
- He had floated the All India Indira Congress (Tiwari) in 1995 along with Arjun Singh after he had left Congress.
- He had also won the Lok Sabha polls in 1996 and 1999.

DHARMA GUARDIAN: FIRST INDIA, JAPAN JOINT MILITARY EXERCISE

- **The first joint military exercise named "Dharma Guardian" between India and Japan will be held at the Army's Counter-Insurgency Warfare School at Vairengte (Mizoram) from November 1 to 14, 2018.**
- The exercise is aimed at developing mutual understanding and respect between militaries of both countries, and also facilitate tracking the 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 an urban warfare scenario.**
- Moreover, experts from both sides will also hold detailed discussions to share their expertise on varied operational aspects.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **In recent times, India and Japan have been steadily stepping up their bilateral defence ties, with more military exchanges, training programmes and top-level visits as well as collaboration in maritime security and defence production, with an eye firmly on an aggressive and expansionist China.**
- Exercise Dharma Guardian will be another step to deepen bilateral strategic ties.
- Such exercise will be an effective diplomatic tool to enhance overall strategic ties and military-to-military cooperation between both friendly countries.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAYS LAUNCHES APPS NCR RASTA & YATRI RASTA

- The North Central Railways (NCR) launched two mobile apps, NCR RASTA (Railway assets Summerised Tracking Application) and Yatri RASTA (Railway Approach to Station Tracking Application) for its employees and passengers, respectively, for locating assets and stations.

DETAILS:

- Both these apps are aimed at helping to fulfil twin objectives of better passenger service and asset maintenance by using cutting-edge technology and for handling emergencies.

NCR RASTA APP:

- **It is for use of railway officers and staff and has exact mapping of all railway assets.**
- It will enable the railway staff to reach to the desired asset using Google Navigation in case of any emergency.

YATRI RASTA APP:

- **It will allow general public to locate railway stations easily.**
- It is already available for smartphones running on Android and can be downloaded free of cost from Google Play Store.

ABOUT NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY (NCR):

- **NCR is one of the seventeen railway zones in India.**
- **It is headquartered at Allahabad and comprises three divisions Allahabad, Jhansi and Agra.**
- It is known as the Workhorse of Indian Railways and is also referred as the heartbeat of Indian Railways.
- It spans over parts of Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh with about 3062 route Km of Broad Gauge comprising predominately, double line-electrified sections defining sides and diagonals of Golden Quadrilateral.
- **The largest railway station in NCR is Kanpur Central.**

12TH ASEM SUMMIT HELD IN BRUSSELS, BELGIUM

- **The 12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) Summit was held in Brussels, Belgium. The theme of summit was 'Global Partners for Global Challenges'.**
- It was chaired by European Council President Donald Tusk.
- The summit was attended by heads of state of 51 European and Asian countries, representatives of European Union and Secretary General of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).
- **India was represented by Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu.**
- This edition of summit has prioritised issues related to trade and investment, connectivity, sustainable development, climate change, terrorism, migration, maritime security and cyberspace.

ABOUT ASIA-EUROPE MEETING SUMMIT (ASEM):

- **ASEM is an informal political dialogue and cooperation forum that brings 53 entities- including 51 countries (including India) from Asia and Europe and two regional bodies European Union (EU) and ASEAN.**
- It represents around 62.3% of the world's population, 57.2% of the global GDP and almost 60% of the world's trade.
- **ASEM was officially established in March 1996 at the first summit in Bangkok, Thailand.**
- **The dialogue addresses political, economic and cultural issues between the two regions.**
- It also seeks to strengthen relationship between the two regions in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership.
- **Three main pillars ASEM process are Political & Security, Economic & Financial and Social, Cultural & Educational.**

BIHAR'S SHAHI LITCHI GETS GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION TAG

- **Shahi Litchi from Bihar has received Geographical Indication (GI) tag from Chennai based Geographical Indication Registry and Intellectual Property India.**
- The GI registration was done in the name of Muzaffarpur-based Litchi Growers Association of Bihar, which had applied for the tag.
- Shahi Litchi which is famous for its sweet, juicy, unique flavour and aroma is mostly grown in Muzaffarpur and adjoining areas of East Champaran, Vaishali, Samastipur and Begusarai districts of state.
- Bihar produces 40% of the litchis grown in India on 38% of the area.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS:

- **The GI tag for Shahi Litchi will improve demand for the fruit and reduce the fear of fake and poor quality litchis.**
- **It will also help and benefit thousands of litchi growers who will gain access to more markets and get better price for their produce in the country and abroad.**
- Shahi Litchi is the fourth agricultural product from Bihar after Katrani rice, Jardalu mango and Magahi paan (betel vine), to get GI tag.
- **In addition to four GI tags in agricultural field, some art form from Bihar such as Madhubani painting, applique- Khatwa patch work, Sikki grass work, Sujini embroidery work and Bhagalpur silk have also been accorded GI tag under the handicraft category.**

ABOUT GEOGRAPHICAL INDICATION (GI):

- **GI tag is a name or sign used on certain products which correspond to specific geographical location or origin.**
- **It is used for agricultural, natural and manufactured goods having a special quality and established reputation.**
- **The goods and products having tag are recognised for their origin, quality and reputation and gives it the required edge in the global market.**
- **It also ensures that none can use their name, giving them exclusivity.**
- **The registration of GI is valid for 10 years after which it needs to be renewed.**
- **Violation of GI tags is punishable offence under law.**

- The purpose of GI tag enables the stakeholders to authenticate their production while earning a premium and derive an improved livelihood.
- GI is covered as an element of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under Paris Convention for Protection of Industrial Property.
- At international level, GI is governed by WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- In India, GI tag Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999 governs it.
- This Act is administered by Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, who is also Registrar of Geographical Indications and is based in Chennai, Tamil Nadu.

SAJJAN JINDAL ELECTED AS TREASURER OF WORLD STEEL ASSOCIATION

- **JSW Steel CMD Sajjan Jindal was elected as the treasurer of World Steel Association (WSA).** He was appointed for one-year period (2018/2019) by Board of Directors of WSA at Worldsteel General Assembly held in Toyko, Japan.
- The board has also appointed Tata Steel MD T V Narendran and Arcelor Mittal Chief L N Mittal as its members.
- Andre Johannpeter, Executive VC of Gerdau S A was elected as the Chairman.
- YU Yong (Chairman HBIS Group) and Kosei Shindo (Representative Director, Nippon Steel and Sumitomo Metal Corporation) were elected as Vice-Chairman.

ABOUT WORLD STEEL ASSOCIATION (WSA):

- **WSA is a non-profit organisation and is one of the largest industry associations in world.**
- **It was founded in July 1967 and is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.**
- **Its members represent approximately 85% of the world's steel production.**
- **It includes over 160 steel producers with 9 of the 10 largest steel companies, national and regional steel industry associations, and steel research institutes.**

NCW LAUNCHES E-MAIL ID TO REPORT INSTANCES OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AT WORKPLACE

- **The National Commission for Women (NCW) has come out with a dedicated e-mail address (ncw.metoo@gmail.com) to report instances of sexual harassment at workplace.**
- On receiving complaint mail, NCW will take forward complaints of sexual harassment at workplace received so that appropriate action may be taken, as per law.

DETAILS:

- **The launch of dedicated e-mail address comes after several such complaints were made by women from various fields to NCW by women who have narrated their ordeal under the '#Metoo' movement on social media.**
- It is also in pursuance of NCW's objective of zero tolerance of sexual harassment of women at all workplaces and commitment to ensure safety and dignity of women including at all workplaces.

- Recently NCW had received many formal written complaints from various women about instances of sexual harassment at their workplace.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR WOMEN (NCW):

- **NCW is a statutory body established under the National Commission for Women Act, 1990.**
- It was established in January 1992 to review the constitutional and legal safeguards for women.
- **It recommends remedial legislative measures, advise Government on all policy matters affecting women and facilitate redressal of grievances related to women.**

MINAL PATEL DAVIS HONOURED WITH PRESIDENTIAL MEDAL

- **Indian-American Minal Patel Davis was honoured in US with the Presidential Medal for Combating Human Trafficking.**
- She was presented with the award by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for her extraordinary contribution towards combating human trafficking.
- It is US's highest honour in the field.

ABOUT MINAL PATEL DAVIS:

- **She is the special advisor on Human Trafficking to Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner.**
- She was appointed to this post in July 2015 and since then she has made a local impact on human trafficking in America's fourth largest city.
- She has achieved this from a policy-level perspective and helped in advancing systems change.
- **She is currently implementing Mayor Turner's Anti-Human Trafficking Strategic Plan, which is a first comprehensive municipal response to human trafficking by a US city.**
- She was also the past speaker at United Nations World Humanitarian Summit.
- She holds MBA from the University of Connecticut and BA from New York University.

7TH MEETING OF EDUCATION MINISTERS OF SCO MEMBER STATES HELD

- **The seventh meeting of education ministers of member states of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) was held in Astana, capital city of Kazakhstan.**
- The meeting was organised with assistance of Kazakhstan Government and its Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Rector's Office of University of SCO (USCO).
- Participants in the meeting included education ministers from India, Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- **India was represented by Minister of State (MoS) Human Resource Development Satyapal Singh.**
- During the meeting, heads of delegations focused on ensuring implementation of agreements reached in June 2018 at Qingdao SCO Heads of State Council summit, with aim of further expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation as regards exchanges of lecturers and students, joint research projects, academic visits, language studies, professional education and youth exchanges.

ABOUT SHANGHAI COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (SCO):

- **SCO is a Eurasian economic, political and security organisation headquartered in Beijing, China.**
- The declaration on establishment of SCO was signed in Shanghai (China) in June 2001 by six founding states- Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
- The main objective of SCO is military cooperation between members.
- It also works towards intelligence-sharing, counter-terrorism operations in Central Asia.
- It is primarily centred on its member nations' Central Asian security-related concerns, often describing main threats it confronts as being terrorism, separatism and extremism.
- **The full members of the organization are China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, India and Pakistan.**
- **India and Pakistan were granted SCO membership in June 2017.**
- Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia currently enjoy the observer status of SCO.
- Sri Lanka, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia and Nepal are dialogue partners of SCO.

BHUTAN GENERAL ELECTIONS: DRUK NYAMRUP TSHOGPA PARTY GOT MAJORITY

- **Dravk Nyamrup Tshogpa Party has won the recent general elections held in Bhutan.** The party won 30 of the National Assembly's 47 seats.
- The National Assembly is the Lower House of Bhutan Parliament.
- This was overall the third general election since democracy was adopted in Bhutan in 2008 and the first general elections held same year itself.

DETAILS:

- **In 2018 general elections of Bhutan, Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa emerged largest single majority party by winning 30 seats, while Druk Fenasum Tsogoga got only 17 seats.**
- **Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay of ruling People's Democratic Party was defeated in this election.**
- In this general election, there was 71% voter turnout.
- This poll percentage was higher than 66% in 2013.
- **Lotay Tshering, President of Druk Nyamrup Tshogpa, will be the next Prime Minister of Bhutan.**

SINGAPORE HOSTS 12TH ASEAN DEFENCE MINISTERS MEETING & 5TH ADMM-PLUS

- **The 12th ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and 5th ADMM-Plus was held on October 19 and 20, 2018 in Singapore.**
- ADMM and ADMM-Plus serves as key Ministerial-level platforms in regional security architecture for promoting strategic dialogue and practical cooperation between ASEAN and its partners.
- The conferences were attended by defence ministers from India, Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, Russia and US.
- **India was represented by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.**
- This was the second time Singapore has chaired ADMM since its establishment in 2006 and first time to chair ADMM-Plus since its establishment in 2010.

ABOUT ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS (ASEAN):

- **ASEAN is a regional intergovernmental organisation comprising 10 Southeast Asian countries, which promotes intergovernmental cooperation and facilitates economic, political, security, military, educational, and sociocultural integration.**
- 10-member ASEAN comprise of Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei and Laos.
- **India is a full dialogue partner of the ASEAN.**

ABOUT ADMM-PLUS:

- **ADMM-Plus is a platform for ASEAN and its eight dialogue partners to strengthen security and defence co-operation for peace, stability, and development in the region.**
- Its objective is to promote mutual trust and confidence between defence establishments through greater dialogue and transparency.
- **The inaugural ADMM-Plus was convened in Hanoi, Vietnam in 2010.**
- The defence ministers then had agreed on five areas of practical cooperation, including maritime security, counter-terrorism, peacekeeping operations and humanitarian assistance.

AG600: CHINA'S FIRST AMPHIBIOUS AIRCRAFT COMPLETES FIRST WATER TAKEOFF

- **China's first home-grown amphibious aircraft AG600 (code-named Kunlong) successfully carried out its first take-off and landing on water.**
- It is claimed to be as the world's largest amphibious aircraft.
- In this maiden flight, the seaplane took off from Zhanghe Reservoir in Jingmen, Hubei's province and stayed airborne for about 15 minutes.

ABOUT THE AG600 AMPHIBIOUS AIRCRAFT:

- **AG600 is the third member of China's large aircraft family following the large freighter Y-20 and large passenger aircraft C919.**
- **It has been developed and built by state-owned aircraft giant Aviation Industry Corporation of China.**
- It had made its maiden flight at the coastal city at Zhuhai in December 2017.
- **AG600 can land and take off from water.**
- It has a wingspan of 38.8 metres.
- **It is powered by four turboprop engines.**
- **It is capable of carrying 50 people and can stay airborne for 12 hours.**
- **It has an operational range of 4,500-km.**
- **This aircraft has military applications and can also be used for firefighting and marine rescue.**
- **Its flight capabilities put all of China's artificial island-building projects in disputed South China Sea (SCS) well within its range.**

US MERGES ITS EMBASSY & CONSULATE GENERAL INTO SINGLE DIPLOMATIC MISSION

- **United States has decided to merge its Consulate General with its new embassy in Israel into a single diplomatic mission in Jerusalem.**
- This decision was taken as part of US's global efforts to improve efficiency and effectiveness of its operations.
- It also comes after US under President Donald Trump administration recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in December 2017 and moved its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem in May 2018.
- The consulate general in Jerusalem was top mission of US for Palestinians, who want East Jerusalem for their capital.
- Post this merger, US will establish new Palestinian Affairs Unit inside embassy in Jerusalem to continue reporting, outreach and programming in West Bank and Gaza as well as with Palestinians in Jerusalem.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **The status of Jerusalem is one of the thorniest disputes between Israel and Palestinians.**
- **Palestinians, with broad international backing, seek East Jerusalem as capital of state that they want to establish in occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.**
- **But, Israel regards all of city, including the eastern sector it captured in 1967 Middle East war and annexed, as its eternal and indivisible capital.**

INDIA'S LONGEST RIVER BRIDGE WILL BE BUILT ON BRAHMAPUTRA RIVER

- **India's longest river bridge with a total length of 19.3 kilometers will be built on Brahmaputra river in Assam.**
- **This bridge will connect Dhubri of Assam to Fulbarani of Meghalaya.**
- This bridge will reduce the distance between these two places by 203 kms and also travel time.
- At present, India's largest river bridge is Dhola-Sadia bridge, its length is 9.15 kilometers.

DETAILS:

- **This bridge will have a total length of 19.3 kilometers and will be four-lane.**
- **Its construction will be completed by 2026-27.**
- Japanese Finance Agency (JICA) has approved the loan for this project as part of road infrastructure improvement package in the north-east after assessing the economic benefit of the big project.
- At present, the road connecting Assam and Meghalaya is about 200 kilometers long.
- **This bridge will reduce travel time to 15-20 minutes to cross the river after it becomes operational from two and a half hours.**
- The two northeastern states of Assam and Meghalaya will be connected by NH127B with the help of this bridge.
- On completion, this bridge will push economic activities and development on both sides of the river.
- It will also improve connectivity from West Bengal to Assam.

INDIA, JAPAN, US PLANNING TO HOST JOINT TRILATERAL AIR EXERCISE

- **India and US have agreed to elevate their bilateral 'Cope India' air exercise to trilateral format by including Japan.**
- The next edition of this exercise is scheduled to be held in December 2018 for which final planning conference to finalise its modalities will be held in Kalaikunda, West Bengal.

DETAILS:

- During the annual Defence Ministerial Meeting held in August 2018 between Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and her Japanese counterpart Itsunori Onodera, it was agreed that Japan will send observers for the next round of Cope India exercises between India and US to be hosted by Indian Air Force.
- **To begin with, trilateral Cope India air exercise will be a small-level exercise involving transport aircraft.**
- It will be scaled up in subsequent editions.
- **Japan will be sending observers to this exercise.**
- **The three countries already are conducting trilateral naval war games under expanded Malabar naval exercise.**
- But the level of interoperability in these exercises, both bilateral and trilateral are expected to go up after India had signed Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement with US.

ABOUT COPE INDIA:

- **It is a series of international Air Force exercises between Indian Air Force (IAF) and United States Air Force conducted on and over Indian soil.**
- The first such exercise was conducted at IAF air force station in Gwalior in February 2004.
- The exercise included flight tests, practice and demonstrations as well as lectures on subjects related to aviation.
- The exercise was repeated in 2005, 2006, and 2009.

PM ANNOUNCES NATIONAL AWARD FOR DISASTER RELIEF WORKERS

- **Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the launch of a National Award in the name of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to honour those involved in disaster response operations.**
- It was announced on the occasion of 75th anniversary of Bose's declaration of formation of Azad Hind Government, India's first independent government on October 21, 1943.

DETAILS:

- **The national award named after Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose will be given every year to police personnel who do excellent work in rescue and relief operations during any kind of disaster.**
- **It will be announced every year on January 23 i.e. on Netaji's birthday.**
- The award will help to recognize exemplary services rendered by National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) personnel in rescue and relief works during the time of any disaster.
- NDRF and SDRF are constituted with personnel from Central paramilitary forces and State police organisations respectively.

- These forces are mandated under Disaster Management Act, 2005 for effective management of disasters and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

ABOUT NETAJI SUBHASH CHANDRA BOSE:

- He was a great Indian freedom fighter born on 23 January 1897 in Cuttack, British India (now in Odisha).
- Initially, he had joined Congress and was the president of the Congress during 1938-39.
- Later, due to differences in Congress, he resigned from Congress and established Forward Bloc.
- He tried to liberate the country through the Azad Hind Fauj.
- Azad Hind Fauj was founded in Singapore on October 21, 1943.
- It was established by exiled Indians.
- The role of Ras Bihari Bose was very important in its establishment.
- It was founded by ideas of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose.
- It was an armed force, whose purpose was to free India from British control.
- Subhash Chandra Bose was the supreme commander of this army.

75TH ANNIVERSARY OF ESTABLISHMENT OF AZAD HIND GOVT. OBSERVED

- 75th anniversary of establishment of Azad Hind Government observed on October 21, 2018.
- On this occasion, Prime Minister Narendra Modi hoisted the National flag and unveiled plaque at the Red Fort, Delhi.

ABOUT AZAD HIND GOVERNMENT:

- Azad Hind Government was founded in Singapore on October 21, 1943.
- It was India's first independent government established by Indian nationalists-in-exile during latter part of WWII in Singapore with monetary, military and political assistance from Imperial Japan.
- It was a part of political freedom movement originating in 1940s outside India with purpose of allying with Axis powers during Second World War (WWII) to free India from British Rule.
- It was inspired by ideas of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, who was the leader of Azad Hind Government and also the Head of State of this Government-in-exile.
- This government was recognized by countries such as Germany, Japan, Philippines, Korea, China, Italy and Ireland.
- Japan provided the Andaman and Nicobar islands to this temporary government, later these islands were renamed Shaheed Island (Andaman) and Swaraj Island (Nicobar).
- It was also having its armed force Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army (INA), whose purpose was to free India from British control.
- Subhash Chandra Bose was the supreme commander of this army.
- Ras Bihari Bose had played important role in its establishment.
- This force had played a crucial role in bequeathing a much needed impetus to India's struggle for Independence.
- It had proclaimed authority over Indian civilian and military personnel in Southeast Asian British colonial territory and prospective authority over Indian territory to fall to Japanese forces and INA during Japanese thrust towards India during WWII.

- This government had its own currency, court and civil code.
- Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose gave a famous slogan Delhi Chalo (Come to Delhi) after formation of this government.
- Azad Hind Fauj along with this slogan reached India on March 21, 1944.

PM INAUGURATES NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL IN NEW DELHI

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated and dedicated National Police Memorial (NPM) to the nation in New Delhi on the occasion of National Police Commemoration Day (Observed on October 21).
- The memorial has been created to recognize the supreme sacrifices made by police personnel since independence.

ABOUT THE NATIONAL POLICE MEMORIAL (NPM):

- The memorial has been built on a 6.12-acre land in central Delhi's Chanakyapuri area.
- It was built a few years ago and has now been refurbished and the central structure has been enhanced by replacing the old rock structure.
- **This memorial represents all State/UT Police Forces and Central Police Organisations of the country.**
- The central sculpture of NPM is 30-foot monolith made of single piece of granite procured from Khammam district of Telangana and weighs 238 tonnes.
- **Its design was conceptualised by Advaita Gadanayak of National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA).**
- Its weight and colour symbolise gravitas and solemnity of the supreme sacrifice of police forces.
- The sculpture has a 60 foot long river at its base which reflects the continuous self-service of the policeman and woman, to maintain peace and public order.
- **Moreover, the Wall of Valour engraved on it has names of all 34,844 martyrs engraved on granite.**
- **The memorial also has the country's first national police museum which captures history, artefacts, uniform and gear of central and state police forces.**
- **The museum is an underground facility in the premises of the national police memorial.**
- The museum project was steered by Intelligence Bureau (IB) in coordination with central armed police forces (CAPFs) that function under Union Home Ministry.

27TH FUSION ENERGY CONFERENCE HELD IN GANDHINAGAR, GUJARAT

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

ABOUT FEC 2018:

- **The aim of FEC 2018 was to provide a forum for discussion of key physics and technology issues as well as innovative concepts of direct relevance to the use of nuclear fusion (reaction that powers Sun and Stars) as a source of energy.**

- **During this conference, experts from across the world discussed innovative concepts on using nuclear fusion as source of energy.**
- They also discussed new challenges being faced by fusion community in the light of a number of next-step fusion devices being implemented currently.
- Among participants included international bodies like ITER Organisation and European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom).
- The research institutes involved in developing smaller plasma devices also participated.

GCF APPROVES \$1 BILLION TO ASSIST POOR COUNTRIES TO TACKLE CLIMATE CHANGE

- **Green Climate Fund (GCF) has approved more than \$1 billion new investments for 19 new projects to help developing countries tackle climate change.**
- The decision was taken during four-day meeting of GCF in Manama, Bahrain.
- The funding was approved for projects linked to geothermal energy in Indonesia, greener cities in Europe and Middle East and protection for coastal communities in India.

ABOUT GREEN CLIMATE FUND (GCF):

- **GCF is a UN-backed fund considered as a key vehicle for climate-related development programs.**
- It is guided by the principles and provisions of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).
- **It aims to help developing countries to finance clean energy projects other mitigation efforts, practices and adaptation to counter climate change.**
- It was formally established by UNFCCC decision in Durban, South Africa in December 2011.
- **It is based in new Songdo district of Incheon, South Korea.**
- It is governed by a Board of 24 members and initially supported by a Secretariat.
- **GCF was central to the Paris climate agreement signed in 2015.**
- **GCF's assist developing countries in adaptation and mitigation practices to counter climate change by redistributing money contributed by the developed countries.**
- It supports projects, programmes, policies and other activities in developing country Parties using thematic funding windows.
- It was intended to be the centrepiece of efforts to raise Climate Finance of \$100 billion a year by 2020.

IRON MAGIC 19: UAE, US TO CONDUCT MILITARY EXERCISE NEAR DUBAI

- **The joint military exercise Iron Magic 19 between United Arab Emirates (UAE) and United States (US) kicked off near Dubai.**
- The two-week military exercise is part of a series of joint military exercises held throughout the year between UAE armed forces and the armed forces of other countries.

ABOUT IRON MAGIC 19:

- The exercise seeks to reinforce cooperation, joint actions and exchange of expertise in military areas between both countries.
- **This will contribute to maximizing combat capabilities and increasing coordination between UAE and the US armed forces.**
- **The bulk of UAE military hardware, such as F-16 fighter jets, Mirage jets and Apache Longbow attack helicopters are mostly manufactured by companies from US, Britain and France.**
- UAE, a major oil supplier, has established a growing defence industry in recent years, mainly in armoured vehicles and naval military equipment.

US TO PULL OUT OF INF TREATY SIGNED WITH RUSSIA

- **United States (US) President Donald Trump has announced that US will unilaterally pull out of three-decade-old Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty signed with Russia during Cold War.**

ABOUT INTERMEDIATE-RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES (INF) TREATY:

- **It was a crucial Cold War-era treaty banning development, testing and possession of short and medium range ground-launched nuclear missiles with a range of 500-5,000 km.**
- **The treaty was signed in December 1987 between then US President Ronald Reagan and his USSR counterpart Mikhail Gorbachev.**
- The treaty banned all nuclear and conventional missiles, as well as their launchers, with ranges of 500-1,000 km or (short-range) and 1,000-5,500 km (intermediate-range).
- This treaty was central to ending arms race between two superpowers during cold war and protected America's NATO allies in Europe from Soviet missile attacks.
- It was designed to provide a measure of some strategic stability on continent of Europe.

WHAT ARE THE REASONS OF US WITHDRAWAL?

- **US President Trump has alleged that Russia has violated the treaty and has been violating it for many years.**
- **This violation comes after Russia's alleged development and deployment of Novator 9M729 missile (also known as SSC-8), that could strike Europe at short notice.**
- Accusations of Russia violating this treaty pre-dates Trump presidency and go back to 2008 during President Obama administration.
- Under former President Barack Obama, US raised the issue of Russia testing ground-launched cruise missile with Russian President Vladimir Putin in 2014.
- But Russia had denied allegations and raised counter-allegations of the US installing missile defence systems in Europe.
- While two countries failed to find a resolution using dispute resolution mechanism in treaty, US continued to remain party to the treaty under pressure from its European allies.

WHAT WILL BE ITS IMPLICATIONS?

- The unilateral withdrawal from this treaty will allow US, new nuclear weapon options in Pacific in its efforts to counter China's growing influence.

- There are also concerns that a unilateral termination of this treaty could mark beginning of a new arms race between US and Russia.

FALI S. NARIMAN AWARDED 19TH LAL BHADUR SHASTRI NATIONAL AWARD

- **Eminent jurist Fali S. Nariman (89) was awarded 19th Lal Bahadur Shastri National Award for Excellence in Public Administration.**
- He was presented the award by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu at a function held in New Delhi.

ABOUT FALI S. NARIMAN:

- **He is one of India's most distinguished constitutional lawyers and has argued several leading cases.**
- He was the senior advocate to Supreme Court of India since 1971 and has remained the President of Bar Association of India since 1991.
- He is an internationally recognised jurist on international arbitration.
- He was the Additional Solicitor General of India from May 1972- June 1975.
- **He has been awarded Padma Bhushan (1991), Padma Vibhushan (2007) and Gruber Prize for Justice (2002).**
- He was nominated by the President as member of Rajya Sabha, the Upper House of Parliament for a single term (1999-2005).

ABOUT THE LAL BHADUR SHASTRI NATIONAL AWARD:

- **The award was instituted in 1999 by Lal Bahadur Shastri Institute of Management in memory of India's second Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri.**
- It is awarded annually to an Indian who is an exceptionally outstanding and distinguished business leader, management practitioner, public administrator, educator or institution builder for his/her sustained individual contributions and achievements.
- **The award consists of a cash award of Rs. 5,00,000 plus a citation and plaque.**
- In 2017, it was awarded to Bindeshwar Pathak, founder of Sulabh International.

GCF APPROVES \$43 MILLION TO BOOST CLIMATE RESILIENCE

- **UN-backed fund Green Climate Fund (GCF) has approved US \$43.4 million for enhancing climate resilience for millions of people living in India's coastal communities as part of its efforts to combat extreme impacts of climate change.**
- The grant is part of more than US \$1 billion approved by 21st meeting of GCF Board held in Bahrain's capital Manama for 19 new projects to help developing countries tackle climate change.

DETAILS:

- **This GCF funded multi-dimensional project in India will focus on selected vulnerable areas of Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Odisha states.**

- It will help to enhance resilience and adaptability and also lead to emissions reduction while providing support to local communities for their livelihoods.
- This project will be supported through United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).
- **The project activities will focus on restoration and conservation of over 15,000 hectares of mangroves, coral reefs, seagrasses and saltmarshes.**
- **Communities, including local youth, will be trained to work with scientists in monitoring ecosystem health and coastal ecology.**
- The innovative project will create online decision-support tool available via mobile phone for use by government officers, academic institutions, community members and scientists for strengthening climate risk-informed coastal management and infrastructure planning.
- The project will also build local knowledge of climate change and the associated risks via training and public education programmes.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROJECT?

- **It will help communities to establish more climate-resilient livelihoods, thus contribute to global efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions - over 3.5 million tonnes of CO2 will be absorbed through restored ecosystems.**
- It will also have considerable long-term environmental benefits including healthier ecosystems, better biodiversity conservation and improved buffering against climate change-driven extreme weather.
- It will be also essential step for India in reaching its goals outlined in Paris Agreement and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **India's coastal areas are quite vulnerable to climate change.**
- **Its coastline is expected to be among regions most affected by climate change globally.**
- Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea are both predicted to be subject to extreme climate variability, with extreme climate variability, with extreme weather events and frequency and intensity of cyclones projected to increase, particularly on eastern coastline.
- India has about 6,740 kms of mangroves, including some of the largest mangrove forests in the world.
- Mangrove cover along India's coastline has decreased by 50% in some areas, largely because of human pressures, including alteration of flow of freshwater from upstream.
- Sea-level rise is predicted to result in further reductions.

MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT LAUNCHES HARIT DIWALI-SWASTH DIWALI CAMPAIGN

- **Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) has launched Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign aimed to reduce adverse environmental conditions, especially pollution in the country after post Diwali celebrations due to excessive bursting of crackers which contributes significantly to air and noise pollution.**

ABOUT HARIT DIWALI-SWASTH DIWALI CAMPAIGN:

- **This campaign was initiated in 2017-18 to enlighten children about harmful fire crackers and motivate them to celebrate Diwali in environment-friendly manner** and not to buy fire crackers, instead buy gift, food items, or sweets for poor and underprivileged children living in their locality.
- Under this campaign, the MoEFCC will undertake various activities for creating awareness among various stakeholders and encourage people to participate in combating air pollution.
- **This campaign was extremely successful and the air quality had not deteriorated post Diwali in 2017 unlike what was experienced in 2016.**

2018 CAMPAIGN:

- **Following its earlier precedence, MOEFCC has initiated a similar campaign, but has extended it to pan-India.**
- **It also merged this year's campaign with "Green Good Deed" movement that has been initiated as social mobilization for conservation and protection of environment.**
- All schools and colleges have been encouraged to be a part of this campaign.

INDIA, MYANMAR SIGN MOU ON OPERATIONALISATION OF SITTWE PORT

- **India and Myanmar inked a MoU for appointment of a private port operator for Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of Sittwe Port, Paletwa Inland Water Terminal and associated facilities included in Kaladan Multi Model Transit Transport Project.**
- The MoU was signed by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale on behalf of Government of India (GoI) and by U Win Khant, Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Transport and Communications on behalf of Myanmar Government.

DETAILS:

- **Sittwe port in Myanmar will connect India's landlocked north-east region to Bay of Bengal through Mizoram.**
- **It will also provide an alternate route to Kolkata.**
- Following this MoU, the process of identifying bidders to maintain these facilities will be initiated by floating Request for proposal (RFP).
- Subsequent to commencement of operations at this port, it will offer new infrastructure for trade including between India and Myanmar.
- **It is also a significant step in implementation of India's Act East Policy as it will boost connectivity, contributing to job creation and development in the whole region, particularly in Myanmar's strife-torn Rakhine and Chin States.**

ABOUT KALADAN MULTI-MODAL TRANSIT TRANSPORT PROJECT:

- **This project aims to connect the seaport of Kolkata (India) with Sittwe seaport in Myanmar by sea; it will then link Sittwe seaport to Lashio in Myanmar via Kaladan river boat route and then from Lashio to Mizoram in India by road transport.**

- This project will reduce distance from Kolkata to Mizoram by approximately 1000 km and cut travelling time to 3-4 days for transport of goods.
- It will provide an alternative to current route from North East to Kolkata port via chicken neck which faces heavy traffic and transportation of cargo via this route takes many days to reach the port.

WHAT ARE ITS BENEFITS TO INDIA?

- **It will provide an alternative route to India to ship goods to the landlocked north-eastern States as it will provide access to the sea to landlocked northeastern states via Myanmar.**
- It will significantly lower cost and distance of movement from Kolkata to Mizoram and beyond.
- It will also reduce dependency on only route narrow strip dubbed as Chicken's Neck in West Bengal, sandwiched between Bhutan and Bangladesh.
- **It will be also instrumental for India's Act-east policy and strengthen India's trade and transport links with Southeast Asia.**
- It will not only serve economic, commercial and strategic interest of India but also contributes to development of Myanmar and its economic integration with India.

DRUZHBA-III: RUSSIA AND PAKISTAN HOLDING MILITARY EXERCISE

- **The Druzhba 2018 (Friendship 2018) joint bilateral military exercise between Pakistan and Russian special forces has begun in Pakistan.**
- This exercise will be organized in north-western hill region in Nowshera district of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan.
- The two week long joint military exercise is aimed at bolstering and building military cooperation between the two countries.

ABOUT DRUZHBA MILITARY EXERCISE:

- **Druzhba military exercise between Russia and Pakistan was started in 2016.**
- **"Druzhba" is Russian word, which means "friendship".**
- Its first edition was held in October, 2016 at Army High Altitude School in Rattu, northern Pakistan.
- The second edition was held in Russia at Minralney Vody in North Caucasus at an altitude of 2,300 meters above sea level.

ABOUT DRUZHBA 2018:

- **This will be the third joint military drill between both countries under the bilateral training cooperation agreement.**
- In this edition of exercise, servicemen from the two countries' armed forces will perform tasks at an altitude of 1,400 meters above the sea level.
- Over 70 soldiers from Russia's southern military district are participating.
- It will also involve experience sharing and develop coordination in carrying out practice combat tasks in a mountainous environment, including operations against illegal armed groups.

ABOUT RUSSIA-PAKISTAN DEFENCE TIES:

- The relation between Russia and Pakistan has become strong in the past few years and has moved apart from their past bitter Cold War hostilities.
- **One of the main reasons for this is the tough attitude of US with Pakistan, which has led Pakistan to lean towards Russia and China.**
- Pakistan is also keen to strengthen defense relations with Russia.
- **Russia has also started selling weapons to Pakistan.**
- **It has sold four Mi-35M fighters and cargo helicopters to Pakistan.**

INDIA, CHINA SIGN AGREEMENT ON INTERNAL SECURITY COOPERATION

- **India and China have signed an agreement on Internal Security Cooperation.**
- **It is first such agreement to be signed between the two countries.**
- The agreement was signed by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh and China's State Councilor and Minister of Public Security Zhao Kezhi in New Delhi.

DETAILS:

- **The agreement on internal security cooperation aims to strengthen and consolidate assistance in counter-terrorism, organised crimes, drug control, human trafficking and exchange of information, marking a new beginning between the two countries.**
- It covers areas of intelligence sharing, exchange programme, sharing of best practices, cooperation in disaster mitigation besides others.

ABOUT THE FIRST HIGH-LEVEL MEETING:

- **The agreement followed a first high-level meeting on bilateral security cooperation co-chaired by Rajnath Singh and Zhao.**
- During this meeting, two sides discussed counter-terrorism cooperation and welcomed increased cooperation between the two countries in the area of security during the meeting.
- Zhao is heading a delegation of over 30 Chinese diplomats during his visit to India from October 21 to 25, 2018.
- As China's State Councilor and Minister of Public Security, responsible for day-to-day law enforcement in China and commands about 19 lakh personnel.
- While, India's Rajnath Singh is the head of eight central armed police forces with a combined strength of about 10 lakh personnel.

INVEST INDIA WINS UN AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PROMOTING INVESTMENTS

- **Invest India, the country's investment promotion body, has won United Nations (UN) Award for excellence in promoting investments in sustainable development.**
- The award was presented by Armenian President Armen Sarkissian to CEO of Invest India Deepak Bagla at the World Investment Forum, Geneva.

DETAILS:

- Invest India received this award for excellence in servicing and supporting a major global wind turbines company in establishment of blade manufacturing plant in India while committing to train local staff and produce 1 gigawatt (GW) of renewable energy.
- Implementation of this project is expected to reduce India's wind energy cost significantly.
- Apart from Invest India, agencies from Lesotho (Lesotho National Development Corporation -LNDC), Bahrain (Bahrain Economic Development Board-EDB Bahrain) and South Africa (Invest South Africa) also won top honours at UN Investment Promotion Awards for excellence in boosting investment into sectors having social and economic benefits and will help meet Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

ABOUT UN INVESTMENT PROMOTION AWARD:

- The awards are given annually by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) since 2002 as part of its investment promotion and facilitation programme.
- It honours investment promotion agencies (IPAs) and their governments for their achievements.
- It also seeks to showcase best practices in attracting investment into Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)-related projects that can inspire investment promotion practitioners in developing and developed countries.
- The 2017 winners were Ethiopian Investment Commission, COFIDES of Spain, and Board of Investment of Mauritius.

ABOUT INVEST INDIA:

- It is the official Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency of Central Government.
- It is mandated to facilitate investments in the country.
- It is the first stop for potential global investors in country.
- It has been set up as a non-profit venture under Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industries.
- It provides sector and state-specific inputs and other supports to investors through entire investment cycle.
- Moreover, all efforts like hand-holding and facilitation support are made by Invest India under the Make in India programme.

STAPCOR 2018: INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PROTECTION OF CORAL REEFS

- International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (STAPCOR- 2018) was held at Bangaram Island, Union Territory of Lakshadweep from 22nd to 24th October 2018.
- The theme of the conference was "Reef for Life".
- It was inaugurated by Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change Dr. Harsh Vardhan.

ABOUT STAPCOR- 2018:

- It was jointly organized by Department of Environment and Forest, Union Territory of Lakshadweep Administration with the technical support of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and in association with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), International Union for Conservation

of Nature (IUCN), Environmental Information System (ENVIS) in consonance with declaration of year 2018 as 3rd decadal International year of Reefs.

- **About 150 delegates both international and national had participated in this mega event.**
- The delegates and keynote speakers for technical deliberations in this conference were from United State of America (USA), United Kingdom (UK), Kuwait, Italy, France, Maldives and Sri Lanka.

ABOUT INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF THE REEF:

- **International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) has declared the year 2018 as International Year of the Reef (IYOR 2018).**
- It is designed to raise awareness about the threats to coral reefs and the associated ecosystem.

WHAT IS A CORAL REEF?

- **It is an underwater marine ecosystem characterized by reef-building corals.**
- Reefs are formed of colonies of coral polyps held together by calcium carbonate.
- Corals secrete hard carbonate exoskeletons that support and protect them.
- Most coral reefs are built from stony corals, whose polyps cluster in groups.
- Coral belongs to class Anthozoa in animal phylum Cnidaria, which includes sea anemones and jellyfish.
- **Corals are often called "rainforests of the sea" as they form some of Earth's most diverse ecosystems.**
- **They occupy less than 0.1% of world's ocean area, but provide a home for at least 25% of all marine species.**
- Coral reefs flourish in ocean waters that provide few nutrients.
- They are most commonly found at shallow depths in tropical waters, but deep water and cold water coral reefs exist on smaller scales in other areas.
- **Great Barrier Reef, located in Coral Sea, off the coast of Queensland in north-east Australia is the largest Coral reef in the world.**
- **The major reef formations in India are restricted to Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kachchh, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands.**
- Coral reefs are fragile, partly because they are sensitive to water conditions.

CONDITIONS REQUIRED FOR THEIR GROWTH:

- Warm tropical oceans located between 30 degree north and 25 degree south latitudes where a minimum temperature of 20 degree is found and this temperature favour the growth of coral organisms, oceanic water free of sedimentation, transparent parts of ocean bodies, relatively low salinity ocean bodies.

THREATS:

- They are under threat from excess nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus), rising temperatures due to global warming, oceanic acidification, sunscreen use. overuse, overfishing (eg. from blast fishing, cyanide fishing, spearfishing on scuba), and harmful land-use practices, including runoff and seeps (e.g. from injection wells and cesspools).

PM NARENDRA MODI AWARDED 2018 SEOUL PEACE PRIZE

- **Seoul Peace Prize Committee has decided to confer 2018 Seoul Peace Prize on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.**
- **He is the fourteenth recipient of this award.**
- **The award will be presented to him by Seoul Peace Prize Foundation at a mutually convenient time.**
- PM Modi was selected for this prestigious award in recognition of his dedication for improving international cooperation, raising global economic growth, accelerating Human Development of people in India by fostering economic growth and furthering development of democracy through anti-corruption and social integration efforts.
- It also recognized PM Modi's contributions to growth of Indian and global economies, credited 'Modinomics' for reducing social and economic disparity between rich and poor.
- It also lauded PM's initiatives to make government cleaner through anti-corruption measures and demonetization.
- It also credited PM for his contribution towards regional and global peace through proactive foreign policy with countries around the world under Modi Doctrine and Act East Policy.

ABOUT THE SEOUL PEACE PRIZE:

- **It was established in 1990 to commemorate success of the 24th Olympic Games held in Seoul, South Korea.**
- It was established to crystallize Korean people's yearning for peace on Korean Peninsula and in the rest of the world.
- It is awarded biennially to those individuals who have made their mark through contributions to harmony of mankind, reconciliation between nations and world peace.
- **The awardee receives diploma, plaque and honorarium of US \$200,000.**
- Past laureates include distinguished global personalities like German Chancellor Angela Merkel, former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and renowned international relief organizations like Doctors Without Borders and Oxfam.

CHINA OPENS WORLD'S LONGEST SEA BRIDGE

- **China inaugurated Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau Bridge, world's longest sea bridge with a total length of 55 km.**
- The new sea bridge will connect the east and west sides of Pearl River Delta of the South China Sea, connecting two Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau with Zhuhai i.e. mainland China.

ABOUT THE HONG KONG-ZHUHAI-MACAU BRIDGE:

- **It includes dual three-lane, oversea stretch (22.9 km) and undersea tunnel (6.7 km) which reaches a depth of 44 m.**
- **The rest 25.4 km of the bridge runs over land.**

- The two ends of tunnel of bridge are connected to two artificial islands, each a million sq ft, constructed in shallow areas of Pearl River Estuary to allow transit between bridge and tunnel sections.
- The 6.7 km undersea tunnel is made of chain of 33 submerged hollow blocks, each 38 m wide, 11.4 m high and weighing 80,000 tonnes.
- **The bridge contains 400,000 tonnes of steel.**
- **It is designed to withstand magnitude-8 earthquake and strikes by super-sized cargo ships.**
- The project was initially conceived in 2003, and construction began on December 2009.
- Its total cost was 120 billion yuan (\$17.3 billion).
- This has been shared in different proportions by Hong Kong, Macau and Zhuhai governments.
- It is estimated that 29,000 vehicles would cross the bridge every day.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS BRIDGE?

- **China considers this mega structure as a key component of its plans to develop the Greater Bay Area.**
- This area will be a business hub comprising Hong Kong, Macau and nine cities of Guangdong province (mainland China).
- **This bay area is being developed with an aim to rival New York (US) and Tokyo (Japan) in terms of technological innovation and economic success.**
- This bridge will play a vital role in facilitating creation of a single market.
- The bridge will put three cities within an hour's commute of each other and is expected to boost economic development.
- **It will cut the travel time from Hong Kong International Airport to Zhuhai from 4 hours to 45 minutes.**
- **It will also bring down trip between Kwai Chung Container Port (Hong Kong) and Zhuhai to 1 hour and 15 minutes from existing 3½ hours.**

ABOUT THE CRITICISMS:

- **This bridge is considered as another move of China to assert more control over Hong Kong and Macau special administrative regions.**
- Both provinces are former European colonies (Hong Kong was under British control and Macau was under Portuguese control), handed back to China in late 1990 and are run under "one country, two systems" principle, which allows them to retain their economic and democratic systems of government (multi-party system) independent of China for 50 years.
- **Concerns of affecting ecology of the area especially to White Chinese Dolphin have also been raised.**
- **Safety concerns of the bridge have also been raised after reports that artificial islands have drifted.**

INDIA, IRAN, AFGHANISTAN HOLD FIRST TRILATERAL ON CHABAHAH PORT PROJECT

- **The first trilateral meeting between India, Afghanistan and Iran of Coordination Council of Chabahar Agreement was held in Tehran, Iran.**

- India, Iran and Afghanistan in May 2016, had signed an agreement which entailed establishment of transit and transport corridor among the three countries with Chabahar Port as one of the regional hubs.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEETING:

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

ONE MUST KNOW:

- The meeting assumes significance as strategically-located Chabahar port on energy-rich Iran's southern coast was coming under ambit of US sanctions on Iran.
- **The sanctions were announced after US under President Donald Trump administration withdrew from 2015 Iran nuclear deal that lifted most of embargoes on Iran imposed for its suspected nuclear weapons programme.**
- India is committed to Chabbar project despite threat of US sanctions on nations doing business with Iran including buying oil or investing in the country.
- It also has conveyed to US importance of Chabahar project, saying it can be major link for trade with war-ravaged Afghanistan.

ABOUT THE CHABBAR PROJECT:

- **Chabahar is strategically located in the Sistan-Balochistan province on energy-rich Iran's southern coast in Gulf of Oman.**
- It is less than 100 nautical miles from Chinese built port of Gwadar in Pakistan.
- India in 2003 had first proposed developing Chabahar port.
- The port is seen as a golden gateway for India to access landlocked markets of Afghanistan and Central Asian markets bypassing Pakistan.
- India and Iran had signed a lease agreement for operation of Shahid Beheshti port or phase 1 of Chabahar in February 2018.
- **Under the terms of this agreement, India Ports Global Ltd (IPGL), an Indian company was to take over the interim operations of the port of Chabahar and operate the terminal for 18 months.**

WORLD DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION DAY: OCTOBER 24

- **World Development Information Day (WDID) is observed every year on October 24 to draw attention of the world to development problems and necessity of strengthening international cooperation to solve them.**
- This day also coincides with United Nations Day (October 24).

DETAILS:

- The UN Conference on Trade and Development on May 17, 1972 had proposed measures for information dissemination and mobilization of public opinion relative to trade and development problems.
- **These measures came to be known as resolution 3038 (XXVII), which was passed by UN General Assembly in 19, 1972 and instituted World Development Information Day on October 24.**
- It was celebrated for the first time on October 24, 1972.
- This resolution was passed by UN General Assembly (UNGA) on December 19, 1972.
- The purpose of day is to improve dissemination of information and mobilization of public opinion, particularly among young people.
- It will lead to greater awareness of problems of development, thus, promoting efforts in sphere of international cooperation for development.

ABOUT UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD):

- **UNCTAD is the principal organ of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) dealing with trade, investment, and development issues.**
- **It was established in 1964 and its permanent secretariat is in Geneva.**
- Its primary objective is to formulate policies relating to all aspects of development including trade, aid, transport, finance and technology.
- **It ordinarily meets once in four years.**

UNITED NATIONS DAY: 24 OCTOBER

- **The United Nations Day is observed every year on 24th October to mark the anniversary of entry into the force of UN Charter in 1945.**
- With ratification of this founding document by majority of its members, including five permanent members of UN Security Council, United Nations officially came into existence.
- Since then, 24th October is celebrated as UN Day.
- On this day all member states of UN contribute finances to its operation to help further its goals.

ABOUT UNITED NATIONS:

- UN is the successor of the ineffective League of Nations and was established in 1945 after World War II in order to prevent another such conflict.
- Now, it has become world's only truly universal global organization and is the foremost forum to address issues that transcend national boundaries and cannot be resolved by any one country acting alone.

- Its prime role is to maintain world peace, human rights, promote social and economic development and provide aid around the world in cases of famine, natural disaster and armed conflict.
- The main organs of UN are: General Assembly (UNGA), Security Council (UNSC), Economic and Social Council (UNESOC), International Court of Justice (ICJ), UN Secretariat, Trusteeship Council.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- United Nations Day was established by UNGA by adopting Resolution 2782 in 1971.
- The day is devoted making people aware of achievements of United Nations Organization.
- **This day is part of United Nations Week, which runs from 20 to 26 October.**

WORLD POLIO DAY: OCTOBER 24

- **The World Polio Day is observed annually across the world on 24 October to create awareness about hazards of the crippling Polio disease.**
- The day was instituted by Rotary International to commemorate birth of Jonas Salk who had led first team of researchers which had developed vaccine against poliomyelitis (polio virus).
- This development had led to widespread use of this inactivated poliovirus vaccine and subsequently use of oral poliovirus, developed by Albert Sabin.
- It also had led to establishment of Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) in 1988 which has helped to reduce polio worldwide by 99%.

ABOUT GLOBAL POLIO ERADICATION INITIATIVE (GPEI):

- GPEI launched in 1988 has played a pivotal role in eradication of wild poliovirus.
- **When it was launched, wild poliovirus existed in 125 countries.**
- **Now, it exists in two countries Pakistan and Afghanistan.**
- Till 2012, Nigeria, Africa's most populous country was reservoir of more than half of the Polio cases in the world.
- But in 2015, it was removed from list of Polio endemic countries by World Health Organization (WHO).

THE POLIOVIRUS:

- **Poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious viral disease, which mainly affects young children below age of 5.**
- **The virus is transmitted from person-to-person.**
- It mainly spreads through the faecal-oral route (e.g. contaminated water or food).
- After entering body, it multiplies in the intestine, from where it can invade the nervous system and can cause paralysis.
- Its initial symptoms include fever, fatigue, headache, vomiting, stiffness in the neck, and pain in the limbs.
- In some cases, it causes permanent paralysis.
- **There is no cure for polio, however it can only be prevented by immunization.**
- **Polio vaccine is given multiple times, almost always protects a child for life.**

INDIA MOBILE CONGRESS 2018 HELD IN NEW DELHI

- **The second edition of India Mobile Congress (IMC-2018) was held in New Delhi from October 25-27, 2018.**
- It was organised by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).
- **The theme was "New Digital Horizons. Connect. Create. Innovate".**

ABOUT IMC 2018:

- It saw participation of more than 200,000 professionals from telecom industry, encompassing 5G, start-up ecosystem, Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Smart Cities and allied industry sectors.
- **The exhibition featured more than 1,300 exhibitors.**
- It saw greater International presence with participation of policy makers and regulators from partner countries from ASEAN (Association for Southeast Asian Countries) and BIMSTEC (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation) besides US, Canada and European Union (EU).

ABOUT INDIA MOBILE CONGRESS (IMC):

- **IMC was launched in 2017 to provide a platform for policy makers, industry and regulators to engage in meaningful deliberations to drive the future direction of the telecom sector.**
- The first IMC held in September 2017 was attended by around 2,000 delegates, 32,000 visitors, 152 speakers, 100 exhibitors and 100 start-ups.

INDIA WINS CAPAM AWARD, 2018

- **India has won the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) Award, 2018.**
- The award was announced at Annual General Members Meet held at Georgetown, Guyana.
- **Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG) under Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions is institutional member of Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM).**
- Unnayan Banka initiative for reinventing education using technology of Banka District, Bihar was awarded under Category "Innovation Incubation".
- Unified Agriculture Markets of Karnataka Government was awarded in 'Innovation in Public Service Management'.
- This initiative has also been awarded overall Gold Award for CAPAM Awards, 2018.

ABOUT COMMONWEALTH ASSOCIATION FOR PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT (CAPAM):

- CAPAM is a non-profit association representing international network of over 1100 senior public servants, heads of government, leading academics and researchers located in over 50 different countries across the Commonwealth.
- It is guided by international leaders who believe in value of networking, knowledge exchange and promotion of good governance for betterment of citizens in Commonwealth countries.
- CAPAM announces its International Innovations Awards (IIA) Programme bi-annually, since 1998.
- These awards celebrate the spirit of innovation in public service by recognizing organizations that have made significant contributions to improve governance and services in the public sector.

GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCES WINNERS OF TAGORE AWARD

- Union Government (Ministry of Culture) has announced the winners of Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony for the years 2014, 2015 and 2016.
- The awardees were selected by the award jury headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and included Chief Justice of India (CJI) Ranjan Gogoi, former chief election commissioner N Gopalaswami and national vice president of BJP Vinay Sahasrabudde.

ABOUT THE AWARDEES:

2014: RAJKUMAR SINGHAJIT SINGH.

- He is the doyen of Manipuri dance.
 - He is also a teacher, performer and a choreographer.
-

2015: CHHAYANAUT.

- It is a cultural organization of Bangladesh established in 1961.
 - It has played a leading role in promoting Tagore's works in Bengali culture, music and literature not only within Bangladesh, but all across the world.
-

2016: RAM VANJI SUTAR.

- He is a renowned sculptor.
 - His first notable work was the 45-foot Chambal monument at the Gandhi Sagar Dam in Madhya Pradesh. He is also recipient of Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.
-

ABOUT TAGORE AWARD FOR CULTURAL HARMONY:

- It is an annual award instituted by Government of India in 2011 as part of commemoration of 150th Birth Anniversary of Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore.
 - The award is given for cultural harmony and carries a monetary amount of Rs. 1 crore, citation in scroll, plaque as well as an exquisite traditional handicraft or handloom item.
 - The award is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or sex.
 - It was conferred for first time on Indian Sitar Maestro Pt. Ravi Shankar in 2012 and second time on Shri Zubin Mehta in 2013.
-

KIIFB TO ISSUE MASALA BONDS WORTH RS 5,000 CRORE FOR DEVELOPMENT WORKS

- Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) is going to issue masala bonds worth Rs. 5,000 crore to mobilise funds for various development works.
- KIIFB has appointed Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings for rating the masala bonds issue.
- The bonds will be listed in London and Singapore stock exchanges.
- The funds will be raised in tranches over a period of 10 years.

ABOUT KIIFB:

- It is a Kerala government owned financial institution.
- Its mandate is to mobilize funds for infrastructure development from outside state revenue.
- It is a statutory body constituted by Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Act, 1999.

WHAT ARE MASALA BONDS?

- Masala bonds are rupee-denominated bonds through which Indian entities can raise money from foreign markets in rupee and not in foreign currency.
- Basically, it is debt instruments used by corporates to raise money from foreign investors in local currency.
- The issuance of rupee denominated bonds transfers risk associated with currency fluctuations to investors and not to the issuers.
- This is especially during the depreciation of domestic currency and when borrowing is in foreign currency, as the company has to pay more while repaying its debt, or while servicing interest on such borrowings if the rupee weakened.
- From the issuer's perspective, masala bonds provides cheaper borrowings compared to raising funds in India besides helps in diversifying its sources fund-raising.
- Besides, it also helps in internationalization of the rupee and in expansion of Indian bond markets.
- Its issuance in long term can help to check the slide of rupee and also reduce current account deficit over time.

WORLD WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS-2018

- The 2018 World Wrestling Championships were the fifteenth edition of World Wrestling Championships of combined events and were held from October 20 to 28 in Budapest, Hungary.

ABOUT UWW WORLD WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIPS:

- It is an amateur wrestling world championship event organised by the United World Wrestling.
- It was started in 1904 with the Men's Greco-Roman wrestling tournament.
- From 1951, the Men's freestyle wrestling tournament began.
- From 1987, women's freestyle championship started.

WHICH WERE THE COUNTRIES THAT WON MAXIMUM MEDALS IN THE 2018 EVENT ?

- **Japan won the most medals with 5 Gold, 1 Silver and 4 Bronze.**
- Russia came second with 8 medals.

HOW WAS INDIA'S PERFORMANCE?

- **India came at the 17th place with 2 medals – 1 Silver and 1 Bronze.**
- Bajrang Punia bagged the Silver medal.
- Pooja Dhanda won the Bronze medal and became the fourth Indian woman to win a medal at the World Wrestling Championship.

ABOUT BAJRANG PUNIA:

- **Bajrang Punia from Haryana is India's freestyle wrestler who won a Bronze medal in 2013 world wrestling championships, bagged Silver medal in 2015 commonwealth games, 2014 Asian games, and 2014 Asian wrestling championships.**
- With the 2018 win, he has total four Silvers in his kitty.
- He has also won a Gold medal at the Asian Wrestling Championship 2017, 2018 Commonwealth Games, and 2018 Asian games.

ABOUT POOJA DHANDA:

- **Pooja Dhanda from Haryana won Silver medals in the 2010 Summer Youth Olympics and 2018 Commonwealth Games.**
- With the 2018 Bronze win, she became the fourth Indian woman grappler to win a medal at the World Championship.
- Before her, Alka Tomar in 2006, Geeta Phogat and Babita Phogat in 2012 had won a Bronze medal each at the Worlds Championships.

INDIA TO BECOME THIRD LARGEST AVIATION MARKET: IATA

- **India will be among the top three aviation markets by 2024 according to International Air Transport Association (IATA) in its 20-year air passenger forecast report.**
- India is currently at seventh position in Global Aviation market.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS OF THE REPORT:

- The number of air passengers around the world will double to 8.2 billion in 2037.
- **China will displace the US as the world's largest aviation market in the mid- 2020.**
- **India will take the third place after US around 2024 surpassing UK.**
- By 2037, India is expected to add 414 million passengers to its existing 572 million passengers.
- Home passenger traffic in India that is growing at around 18.28 per cent is expected to reach 243 million in 2018-19 and will grow to 293 million in 2020.

- When it comes to International traffic, it grew by 10.43 per cent to reach 65 million in 2018 and will grow to 76 million in 2020.
- The biggest growth in terms of air traffic will come from Asia-Pacific region with more than half the number of total new passengers in next 20 years.
- The Asia-Pacific region is expected to see the fastest growth at the rate of 4.8%, followed by Africa (4.6%) and West Asia (4.4%).

ABOUT THE INTERNATIONAL AVIATION TRAFFIC ASSOCIATION (IATA):

- **It is the trade association for the world's airlines formed in 1945 and is headquartered in Montreal, Canada.**
- It represents around 280 airlines or 82% of total air traffic.
- It helps to formulate aviation sector policy and standards.
- It also provides training services in many areas of aviation.

CHALLENGES TO INDIA AVIATION SECTOR:

GROWTH POLICY:

- The growth policy of 6.1% annually is expected to result in a total market of 520 million Indian passengers in 2037.
- The protectionist and other negative policy will hold India's growth back to 4.9% and the total market will be 400 million in 2037.

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS:

- India is now at 100th position among 132 countries on World Bank's Ease of Doing Report.
- The improvement in this area will impact sustainable growth of the aviation sector.

INDIA BUILDING WORLD'S HIGHEST RAILWAY LINE

- **India railways announced its plan to link New Delhi and Ladakh by means of a railway line that will run along the India-China Border.**
- The proposed Bilaspur-Manali-Leh Line would be the world's highest railway line once launched.

DETAILS OF THE PROJECT:

- **The projected cost to construct the 465 km line will be Rs 83,360 crore.**
- The railway line will be the world's highest at 5,360 metres above mean sea level which is comparable to China's Quinghai-Tibet Railway Line at 2,000 metres.
- **The project comprise of 74 tunnels, 124 major bridges, 396 minor bridges and 30 stations on the line.**
- Keylong station on the route will be constructed inside a tunnel at the height of 3000 metres which is a first in India.
- **Notably, more than half the train route would be covered through tunnels, the longest of which is 27 km.**
- **Whole length of the tunnels would be 244 km.**

- The route will link crucial locations between Bilaspur and Leh such as Sundernagar, Mandi, Manali, Keylong, Koksar, Darcha, Upshi and Karu as well as several other towns of Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir.
- **After the completion, the railway line will halve the time taken to cover the distance between Delhi and Leh from the current 40 hrs to 20 hrs.**
- In addition to providing quick all-weather access to the armed forces, the railway line will also enhance tourism in the Ladakh region that is presently connected by road and air.

MAHINDA RAJAPAKSHA SWORN IN AS PRIME MINISTER OF SRI LANKA

- **Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena has sacked Ranil Wickremesinghe, the incumbent Prime Minister of Sri Lanka and appointed former President Mahinda Rajapaksha as the new Prime Minister.**
- **In recent times, the politics of Sri Lanka is in turmoil because of the tension between President Sirisena and PM Wickramasinghe.**
- In a sudden move, the United People's Freedom Alliance (UPFA), the Political Front of President Mittipala Sirisena, withdrew support from the coalition government with Ranil Wickramasinghe's Party United National Party (UNP).
- This coalition government was formed in 2015, when Sirisena became President by the support of Ranil Wickramasinghe.
- This sudden move also indicates a constitutional crisis lurking in Sri Lanka.
- According to the 19th Amendment to the Sri Lankan Constitution, Wickramasinghe could not be removed from the post without the majority.

ABOUT MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA:

- **Mahinda Rajapaksa was born on November 18, 1949 in the southern province of British Sri Lanka.**
- He was the 18th Prime Minister of Sri Lanka from April 6, 2004 to November 19, 2005.
- After that, he was the 6th President of Sri Lanka from November 19, 2005 to January 9, 2015.

GLOBAL AGRICULTURE LEADERSHIP AWARDS- 2018

- **Since 2008, the Global Agriculture Leadership Summit & Awards are organised by Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) with support of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare; Ministry of Food Processing Industries and Ministry of Commerce.**
- **The 2018 Global Agriculture Leadership Summit was 11th in this series and it was held in Hotel Hyatt Regency, New Delhi recently in October, 2018.**

ABOUT GLOBAL AGRICULTURE LEADERSHIP AWARDS- 2018:

- **ICFA had established the Agriculture Leadership Awards in 2008 to recognize the leadership roles played by individuals and institutions positively impacting the lives of farmers and rural masses.**

- During the recent summit, the Global Agriculture Leadership Awards- 2018 were announced and presented. The winners are as follows:
- **Prof. Rudy Rabbinge, who has received International Leadership Award is Special Envoy- Food Security, Government of Netherlands.**
- He has been awarded for his contribution in the field of food security and rural development.
- **Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu** was awarded the Policy Leadership Award for his proactive policies for uplifting the farming community by focusing on irrigation, investment, global partnerships, marketing initiatives and zero budget natural farming.

BEST

S No.	Category	Awardee Name
1.	International Leadership Award	Prof. Rudy Rabbinge, Special Envoy – Food Security, Government of Netherlands
2.	Africa Leadership Award	Mr. Anthony Selorm K Morrison, President & CEO, Chamber of Agribusiness, Ghana
3.	Research Leadership Award	National Research Development Corporation
4.	Academic Leadership Award	Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad
5.	Livelihood Leadership Award	Mr. Shailendra Chaudhary, MD, NERCORMP, Shillong
6.	Farming Leadership Award	Mr. Satishbabu Gadde, Andhra Pradesh
7.	Media Leadership Award	Mr. Ammar Zaidi, National Business Editor, PTI
8.	Development Leadership Award	Dr. PK Joshi, South Asia Director, International Food Policy Research Institute
9.	Agribusiness Leadership Award	Nagarjuna Agro Chemicals P. Limited, Hyderabad
10.	Industry Leadership Award	Sonalika Group, New Delhi
11.	Global Business Leadership Award	The Weather Company, IBM
12.	Technology Leadership Award	Tirth Agro Technology Private Limited, Rajkot
13.	Corporate Sustainability Award	PepsiCo Holdings India P. Limited, Gurgaon
14.	Lifetime Achievements Award	Padamshree Dr. KH Gharda, Chairman, Gharda Chemicals Limited
15.	Policy Leadership Award	Mr. N. Chandrababu Naidu, Chief Minister, Andhra Pradesh
16.	Program Leadership Award	The State Horticulture Mission, Government of Haryana
17.	Best Fisheries State	The State of Jharkhand
18.	Best Animal Husbandry State	The State of Bihar
19.	Best Horticulture State	The State of Nagaland
20.	Best Agriculture State	The State of Gujarat

STATES IN VARIOUS FIELDS:

- **Jharkhand:** Best Fisheries State
- **Bihar:** Best Animal Husbandry State
- **Nagaland:** Best Horticultural State
- **Gujarat:** Best Agriculture State
- **Haryana:** Program Leadership Award

FIRST WORLD AGRICULTURE PRIZE – PROF. M. S. SWAMINATHAN

- The event witnessed bestowing of Prof. M. S. Swaminathan with the first World Agriculture Prize.

- This prize instituted by the Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) was presented by Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu at Vigyan Bhawan at a special session, named Swaminathan Global Dialogue on Climate Change and Food Security organised by the Indian Council of Food and Agriculture.

ABOUT PROF. M. S. SWAMINATHAN:

- **Prof. Swaminathan is known as Father of Green Revolution in India** and is renowned worldwide for his basic and applied research in genetics, cytogenetics, radiation and chemical mutagenesis, food and biodiversity conservation.
- The United Nations Environment Programme has hailed him as '**The Father of Economic Ecology**' owing to his commitment towards the ever-green revolution movement in agriculture.

ABOUT THE THE ICFA'S WORLD AGRICULTURAL PRIZE:

- The ICFA's World Agricultural Prize carries a cash component of \$1,00,000 and will recognise individuals who have served humanity through agriculture.
- It will be an annual prize and would be presented to any individual or institution, importantly from **Asian, African or Latin American countries** who have played a seminal role in transforming agriculture globally and saving humanity from the curse of hunger.

VIGILANCE AWARENESS WEEK- 2018

- The Central Vigilance Commission observes the Vigilance Awareness Week every year during the week in which birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (31st October) falls.
- The 2018 Vigilance Awareness Week is being observed from 29th October to 3rd November, 2018.

THEME OF THE WEEK:

- The theme of Vigilance Awareness Week-2018 is:
- **भ्रष्टाचार मिटाओ- नयाभारत बनाओ (Eradicate Corruption-Build a New India)**
- The CVC has asked various central government ministries and organizations to conduct relevant activities during this week.

SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE:

- Taking of Integrity Pledge by all employees.
- Distribution of pamphlets/handouts on preventive vigilance activities, whistle blower mechanism and other anti-corruption measures.
- Conducting workshops and sensitization programmes for employees and other stake holders on policies/procedures of the organization and preventive vigilance measures.
- Publication of journals/newsletters on vigilance issues, systemic improvements and good practices adopted for wider dissemination and awareness, conducting various competitions such as debates, quiz etc. for the employees and their families on issues relating to anti-corruption and the use of organizational websites for dissemination of employees/customer oriented information.
- Further, there will be outreach activities for public/citizens including display of hoardings, banners, posters and distribution of handouts etc. at prominent locations/places in offices/field units and also at

places with public interface, organization of grievance redressal camps for citizens/customers by organizations having customer oriented services/activities and the taking of the online "Integrity Pledge" developed by the Commission.

INTEGRITY CLUBS IN SCHOOLS:

- One of the highlights of the week will be establishment of Integrity Clubs in the schools and colleges to cultivate ethical values in the leaders of tomorrow.

AWARENESS GRAM SABHAS:

- **The objective of Awareness Gram Sabhas is to sensitize the rural citizens about the ill-effects of corruption.**
- In 2017, 67,131 such Gram Sabhas were organized during the Vigilance Awareness Week.

MAMMALS OF INDIA (MAOI)

- **Mammals of India (MaOI) is a new model of repository on Indian mammals by the Scientists and Researchers from the National Centers for Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bangalore.**
- It is a citizen-scientific repository initiated in September 2018.
- It is a first such repository of Mammals in India.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF MAOI:

- It is an online, freely-accessible portal whose aim is to develop individual pages for all Indian mammals covering all related information about their distribution, breeding, variation, identification and conservation.
- **The website mammalsofindia.org provides a facility to the citizen to upload photographic observations about mammals.**
- 768 images, of 161 species of mammals, have been uploaded by October 25, 2018.
- The photographs of rare species such as Red Serow from Manipur, Lynx a species of wild cat from Jammu and Kashmir, Asian Golden Cat from West Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh and Binturong, also known as bear cat, from East Kameng district of Arunachal Pradesh have been uploaded on this portal.
- **This is an exclusive portal for mammals in India which will help in having a good distribution map of mammals all around the country.**
- **MaOI is an initiative under Biodiversity Atlas project.**
- **The Biodiversity Atlas is a species-based bioinformatics platform.**
- India is a mega-diversity country with only 2.4% of the world's land area but accounts for 7-8% of all global species.
- There are about 426 species of mammals known from India, which is about 8.86% of the world species.

ABOUT CITIZEN SCIENCE PROJECTS IN CONSERVATION OF INDIAN BIODIVERSITY:

- Citizen science projects are changing the scenario of collection of scientific information about biodiversity.

- These projects enable participants to make direct contribution to collection and research on information related to environmental issues.
- Citizens are the unpaid contributors in collecting information related to bio-diversity.

FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT FUND (FAIDF)

- **To double farmers' income by 2022 the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved creation of FAIDF recently.**
- The proposal for creation of fund was made in the budget of 2018-19.

SALIENT FEATURES OF THE FUND:

- **The main aim is to boost fish production to achieve the target of producing 15 million tonnes of fish production by 2020 and 20 million tonnes by 2022-23 from current production of 11.4 million tonnes.**
- The aim to achieve this target was set under Blue Revolution.
- The nodal agencies for the fund will be National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC) and Scheduled Banks.
- The fund is being raised by nodal loaning entities (NLE).
- **The estimated fund size is about 7522 crore that will benefit country in both inland and marine fisheries areas.**
- The fund will involve in attracting private investment and technologies in creation and management of fisheries all around the country.

ABOUT THE INDIAN FISH MARKET:

- Fisheries in India is an important economic activity and emerging sector.
- India's fish production is estimated at around 12 million tonnes annually.
- **India has become the second largest fish producing and aquaculture industry in the world.**
- **In aquaculture, India is second to china with a share of 6% in global aquaculture.**
- **The fisheries sector employed over 14.5 million people directly and many more indirectly.**
- **At present, Fish production contributes to around 1% to GDP of the country and 5% to agricultural GDP of the country.**
- **India exports one tenth of its Fish produced.**
- The contribution of fish from the seas has lowered now and the share is rising from inland farming.
- The Indian government has taken a lot of other efforts to boost up Indian aquaculture market such as Integrating all the existing schemes under Blue Revolution, Establishing 'Brood bank' for commercially important species to ensure production and supply of certified broods to hatcheries in the country, developing cold water fishery, improving the manpower requirements of the fisheries programs.
- Overall, fisheries is a sunrise sector having a lot of future growth possibilities.
- All the 3 sub sectors viz. Inland, Aquaculture and Marine fisheries have a lot of scope for improvement.
- The recent step of creating FAIDF is a praised step to boost the fisheries sector to the desired level.

SBI TO ISSUE AND ENCASH ELECTORAL BONDS SOON

- **Government of India has notified the sale of electoral bond by SBI through its 29 authorized branches from 1.11.2018 to 10.11.2018 .**
- These SBI branches are in cities like New Delhi, Gandhinagar, Chandigarh, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Mumbai, Jaipur, Lucknow, Chennai, Kolkata and Guwahati.
- The concept of electoral bond was initiated in the Union Budget 2017.
- Later on Electoral bond scheme 2018 was introduced.

WHAT IS AN ELECTORAL BOND?

- **An Electoral Bond is just like a promissory note that will be payable to bearer on demand and free of interest.**
- It can be purchased by a citizen of India or anybody incorporated in India.

BENEFITS OF AN ELECTORAL BOND:

- Transparent political funding
- Protecting donors from harassment
- No disclosure of information to third parties
- Achieving Digital India vision
- Bringing donations under tax preview

ABOUT THE ELECTORAL BONDS SCHEME 2018:

- **The scheme introduced that a party registered under the Representation of People's act, 1951 and securing not less than one percent of the votes polled in the preceding election is entitled to receive the electoral bonds.**
- Electoral Bonds may be purchased only by a citizen of India.
- An individual can buy Electoral Bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals.
- The bonds can only be encashed by an eligible political party only through a bank account with the authorized bank.
- **Electoral Bonds are valid for fifteen calendar days from the date of issue.**
- **If the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period, no payment is made to any Political Party.**
- The Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account is credited on the same day.
- The bonds are issued in multiples of 1000, 10000, 1lakh, 10 lakh, 1 crore.
- The cash donation has been capped at Rs. 2000 and beyond that donations are via electoral bonds.

NORTH EAST FESTIVAL HELD IN NEW DELHI

- **The 6th edition of North East festival is being organized till October 28, 2018 in New Delhi and the 15th edition of Indian International Centre festival is to be held from 27-31 October 2018.**

KEY FEATURES OF THE NORTH EAST FESTIVAL:

- Cultural performances involving Bagrumba dance, Hozagir dance of Tripura, Bihu dance of Assam, Garo Wangla dance and Manipuri martial arts performances called Thang Ta.

- Fashion shows with traditional patterns and textiles.
- **Presentation of organic food and vegetables grown in the region.**
- 150 craft stalls displaying exotic handloom and handicrafts products of north east region.
- Agriculture, horticulture and food processing stalls.
- **There will be special performances by Nise Meruno, classical pianist and vocalist.**

KEY FEATURES OF THE INDIAN INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FESTIVAL:

- The festival is a part of Destination North East Series being organised by North Eastern Council, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER).
- **The festival is organised by Indian International Centre as 15th anniversary of its annual festivals.**
- The theme for this year is "Experiencing the North East".
- To showcase the richness of the cultural heritage of North East, there will be focus on presenting dance, music, theatre, exhibitions, and special cuisines to the visitors.
- There will be an exhibition specially focused on Bamboo products.
- **A literary event called "These hills we come from...Voices from North East" will take place focusing on literature of the region.**
- There will be a showcase of Films of the region also there in the festival.

ABOUT THANG TA AND SARIT-SARAK:

- **These two are the martial art forms from the Indian state of Manipur.**
- **In Manipuri language thang means sword and ta means spear.**
- Thang Ta is name for the ancient martial practice known as Huyen Lallong.
- The unarmed aspect of Thang Ta is named as Sarit Sarak.

RUPEE RESCUE: INDIA AND JAPAN SIGN RECORD \$75-BILLION CURRENCY SWAP DEAL

- **India and Japan on Monday signed a pact to raise the scope of a bilateral currency swap arrangement to a record \$75 billion, aimed at bringing in greater stability in the foreign exchange and capital markets, amid a slide in the rupee in recent months.**
- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley tweeted: "This swap arrangement would be 50% higher than our last swap agreement (signed in 2013). This bilateral swap reflects depth of our deeper economic relationship".
- The agreement- the latest effort to prop up the rupee- was signed during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ongoing two-day visit to Japan.

DETAILS:

- Accepting Japanese request, India agreed to do away with requirement of mandatory hedging for infrastructure ECBs of 5 years or more minimum average maturity.
- The swap agreement will enable the agreed amount of foreign capital being available to India for use as and when need arises.
- It will also help reduce the cost of capital for Indian entities as they access the overseas market.

- The arrangement means the Bank of Japan will accept rupees and give dollars to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and, similarly, the RBI will take the yen and give dollars to the Bank of Japan to stabilise each other's currency in a contingency.
- Such a deal can come handy at allaying fears that India has insufficient cushion to finance current account deficit (CAD) if the situation worsens drastically.

THE CONDITION OF RUPEE:

- The rupee has slid around 14% in the past one year, having emerged as Asia's worst-performing major currency, partly due to elevated trade and current account deficits following a spike in global oil prices.
- This has prompted authorities to step up the defence of the domestic currency through various steps, apart from exploring options to trim imports and get into barter trade system with some oil producers like Iran and Russia.

IMPORTANCE OF THIS DEAL:

- The International Monetary Fund has warned of the CAD worsening to as high as 3% of India's GDP in 2018-19, against 1.9% a year before.
- The deal is important for India for psychological reasons than its actual use as the contingency arrangement has never been used since India entered to such deals with Japan in 2008.
- **This swap deal adds to the country's forex reserves and gives sentimental boost to rupee**, which has seen continuous bouts of volatility due to global uncertainties as well as domestic worries.
- **This facility would technically lift the country's forex reserve of \$393.5 billion by \$75 billion.**

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **India's forex reserves had touched a record high of \$426 billion on April 13, 2018.**
- Since then, the forex kitty has been on a slide, largely due to interventions by the central bank to curb volatility in rupee.

DELHI'S AIR COULD TURN EVEN MORE TOXIC TODAY

- Delhi's air quality worsened on Monday when the levels of particulate matter, or tiny pollutants that trigger health hazards, shot up by up to four times above the permissible mark after a gap of four months.
- "This is the sixth consecutive day that the air quality has remained in the very poor category," said an official of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

WHAT ARE THE REASONS?

- **As the burning of crop stubble, considered one of the reasons behind the spike in pollution at this time of the year, continues in Punjab and Haryana, conditions could deteriorate further on Tuesday.**

- This warning came from Pune's Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology according to an early warning system run by them called 'Safar', which functions under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **Delhi's air quality index (AQI) on Monday was 367, which indicates very poor' air quality.**
- **On a scale of 0-500, AQI in the range of 0-50 is considered 'good', 51-100 'satisfactory', 101-200 'moderate', 201-300 'poor', 301-400 'very poor' and 401-500 'severe'.**
- **Conditions in the satellite towns of Gurugram, Noida, Faridabad, and Ghaziabad were not any better, with the air quality in Ghaziabad breaching the 'severe' level.**
- **The AQI was 430 in Ghaziabad.**
- The official said levels of PM10 and PM2.5, too, shot up alarmingly, hovering around four times the permissible limits.
- Such high levels of particulate matter were last encountered in the second week of June when a huge amount of dust gushed into Delhi-NCR after of a dust storm in Rajasthan.
- PM 2.5 and PM10 pollutants are particulate matters that have a diameter of less than 2.5 and 10 micrometers, respectively.
- Delhi's early warning system, put in place on October 15, has said northwesterly winds have already started blowing.
- Also, the ventilation index, which determines how fast pollutants get dispersed, and wind speeds are expected to remain low over the next two days.
- This might help trap pollutants in the air.
- Safar has forecast toxic fumes from stubble-burning regions of Punjab and Haryana would gush in, worsening the situation.

DONALD TRUMP UNABLE TO ATTEND REPUBLIC DAY PARADE

- **US President Donald Trump will be unable to attend the Republic Day parade on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invitation because of "scheduling constraints", the White House has said but stressed the "strong personal rapport" shared by the two leaders.**
- No explanation was offered but the Republic Day parade on January 26 is around the time when US presidents usually present their annual report to the Congress, a statement of achievements of the past year and plans for the next, called the State of the Union address.

INTERESTING TO KNOW:

- **Barack Obama, who became the first American president to attend the Republic Day parade in 2015, had moved up his address to January 20 from the usual end-of-month slot he had favoured thus far.**
- But it was not clear if Trump's "scheduling constraints" included the address.
- **A spokesperson from the White House stressed the personal rapport shared by the leaders, possibly to prevent the US' decision from being spun as a snub, as it might be given recent tensions in ties over trade and American threats of sanctions for buying Russian defence equipment and crude oil from long-time supplier Iran.**

ABOUT THE INVITATION:

- **The Indian invitation to Trump was never made public.**
- It was extended quietly as something that is called a "pre-invitation" among diplomats, an opening move to gauge the mood of the guest.
- If the response seems positive and both parties are certain of an acceptance, a formal invitation follows.
- **"A quiet pre-invitation ensures neither party- especially the host- is embarrassed and feels snubbed if the visit is not likely to work out,"** a former White House official involved with several presidential visits said on background.

SC ALLOWS STATES TO FIX DURATION TO BURST FIRECRACKERS ON DIWALI

- **The Supreme Court on October 30 modified an October 23 direction, which restricted the time for bursting crackers on Diwali and other religious festivals between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m.**
- Instead, the top court said State governments can decide when people can burst crackers on festival day, provided the total time does not cross the two-hourmark.
- This means the authorities can stagger the time-slots for bursting crackers and even make it an hour in the morning and another in the night.

DETAILS:

- **On October 23, the apex court had fixed a uniform slot for bursting crackers across the country.**
- **That is, between 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. during Diwali and other religious festivals.**
- For Christmas and New Year, the judicially-approved time for bursting crackers is between 11.55 p.m. and 12.30 a.m.
- Tuesday's (30.10.2018) modifications came after the court seemed to agree with Tamil Nadu's contention that restricting the time for bursting crackers to just two hours in the night would be a violation of religious rights of people in the southern parts of the country, where Diwali is celebrated in the morning.

ONE MUST KNOW:

- **Further, the court said its direction that only green crackers can be manufactured and sold is only applicable to Delhi and the National Capital Region areas.**
- On October 23, the court had held that only green or improved crackers would be used in religious festivals and other occasions, including even weddings.
- **The ban on toxic crackers had come on the basis of a petition filed by two infants, a six-month-old and 14-month-old, through their fathers in 2015.**
- They had said the air pollution caused by various factors, especially firecrackers, has made Delhi a gas chamber.
- They had pleaded for their right to life.
- However, firecracker manufacturers have raised doubts in court about the viability of manufacturing and selling green crackers for Diwali this year.

ODISHA GEARS UP FOR OLIVE RIDLEY NESTING

- **The Odisha government, the Coast Guard, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the police on Tuesday decided to ensure better coordination to protect the endangered Olive Ridley Turtles during the mass nesting.**
- As mating has been noticed in the deep sea, the State government has decided to impose a ban on fishing by motorised vessels and trawlers from November 1.
- The ban will be enforced within 20 km from the areas along the coast where the turtles gather and their buffer zones, including the mouths of the Dhamara, Devi and Rusikulya rivers.
- Last year, 11.10 lakh turtles came for nesting.

ABOUT THE PREPARATIONS:

- **The committee for protection and conservation of the sea turtles, chaired by Chief Secretary Aditya Prasad Padhi, will set up a central monitoring unit at the office of the principal chief conservator of forests, wildlife.**
- Berthing lots will be opened at Barunei, Gupti, Sasanapeta, Krushnapriyapur and Rajnagar for the safe custody of seized vessels.
- Sixty-two patrolling camp-sites will operate.
- Each camp will be given VHF communication devices and mobile phones.
- The Coast Guard, patrolling ships, camps and the marine police will share intelligence regularly.
- Policemen will patrol the areas.
- **Soon after the nesting, the rookeries will be fenced.**
- The DRDO's missile test range and the Dhamara, Gopalpur and Paradip ports have been asked to follow black-out procedures.
- **During the ban, the fishermen will be given support for livelihood under the Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project.**
- The support assistance will be increased for each family from ₹5,000 to ₹7,500.
- The committee also approved a plan to set up a sea turtle research centre near the Ghati Central Nursery in the Khalikot forest range of Ganjam district.

ARUNACHAL ON HIGH ALERT AFTER SECOND LANDSLIDE IN CHINA IN 13 DAYS

- **Three central Arunachal Pradesh districts have been put on high alert after China let India know about a major landslide blocking the Yaluzangbu (Yarlung Tsangpo, which becomes the Brahmaputra in India) on Monday, the second such disaster in 13 days in Tibet.**

DETAILS:

- **The Yarlung Tsangpo flows into Arunachal Pradesh at Siang and meanders through three districts- Upper Siang, Siang and East Siang- before meeting two other rivers to form the Brahmaputra in Assam downstream.**
- **In a message to the Central Water Commission on Tuesday morning, the Chinese authorities said a landslide happened on Monday at the same location where a landslide had blocked the Yarlung Tsangpo on October 17.**
- The barrier formed that day gave way two days later without causing any damage to the downstream districts of Arunachal Pradesh.

- Bidol Tayeng, the State's Disaster Management secretary said: "We have been warned of a fresh landslide that might cause a flash flood. The administrative heads of the districts flanking the Siang River have been alerted to take precautionary measures".
- The quantity of water discharged from the landslide-induced barrier in the Yarlung Tsangpo this time is less than the discharge on October 19-20, officials said.
- "The water discharge may not cause any damage or loss of lives and properties along the Siang River but the water level needs to be constantly monitored for 3-4 days from Tuesday. There may be no danger but people living along riverside should be alerted," an alert issued by Mr. Tayeng's department said.
- **It advised the people not to venture into the Siang for fishing, bathing, boating, picnic or any other activity in the river.**

CHINA PLEDGES RMB 150 MILLION ASSISTANCE TO NEPAL ARMY

- **China has pledged to provide assistance of RMB 150 million to the Nepalese Army over a period of five years for humanitarian and disaster relief equipment.**
- The Chinese assistance- equivalent to Nepalese Rs. 2.5 billion, was announced during Nepal Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Ishwor Pokhrel's visit to China.

DETAILS:

- During the visit, Mr. Pokhrel and Chinese Defence Minister Wei Fenghe signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to this effect.
- **With the latest aid, China's financial support to the Nepalese Army has increased by 50 per cent.**
- Mr. Pokhrel held separate meetings with Chinese counterpart Wei and Vice-Chairman of the Central Military Commission of China Gen Xu Qiliang.
- **Last year, China had extended RMB 100 million for humanitarian and disaster relief equipment to Nepal's Army.**
- China has hiked defence assistance to the Nepalese Army in recent years.
- **Mr. Pokhrel also attended the eighth Beijing Xiangshan Forum from October 24-26 that witnessed participation of more than 500 representatives from 67 countries and seven organisations from around the world.**
- The forum was themed 'Building a new type of security partnership of equality, mutual trust and win-win cooperation'.
- Formerly known as the Xiangshan Forum, it was launched for the first time in 2006 with the objective of promoting cooperation among security officials, armed forces, international organisations and experts.

GANDHIAN THOUGHT AND SWACHHATA SEMINAR ORGANIZED IN WARDHA

- **The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation has organised a seminar on Gandhian thoughts and Swachhta to make India a Swacch Bharat by 2019-the 150th birthday celebration of Mahatma Gandhi.**
- **It was being organized in the Wardha district of Maharashtra with a focus on achievement of the objectives of sanitation and Gandhian thoughts via Swacch Bharat Mission.**

- The topics for address in the seminar were appropriate technologies in rural sanitation, organic waste management, and preventive sanitation.
- Gandhi's concept of Swachh evam Swawalambhi Sankul was the main focus of the seminar.
- **The seminar ended with a visit to Sevagram Ashram to gain experience from Gandhiji's life.**

ABOUT THE SWACCH BHARAT MISSION:

- **It is a program launched by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make India Swacchh by 2019 which is the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.**
- **Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (SBA) was launched on 2 October 2014 with two submissions, SBA (gramin) and SBA (urban).**
- The mission is jointly managed Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS) (for gramian) and the Ministry of Urban Development (for urban).
- The mission has components like Construction of Household Toilets, Community and Public Toilets, Solid Waste Management, Information, Education & Communication (IEC) and Public Awareness, Capacity Building and Administrative & Office Expenses (A&OE).
- The mission has well managed to reach great sanitation level in three years of launch.
- It is a massive Jan Andolan (people's movement) and the rural sanitation coverage having increased from 39%, at the launch of the SBM in 2014, to over 95% today.

