

**UPSC**

**Contemporary  
Issues  
&  
Current Affairs  
November 2018**

By Jawwad Kazi

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# **UPSC**

## **Contemporary Issues & Current Affairs November - 2018**

### **(Study Material)**

**By Jawwad Kazi**

*<https://t.me/jawwadkazicurrentaffairs>*

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## 1

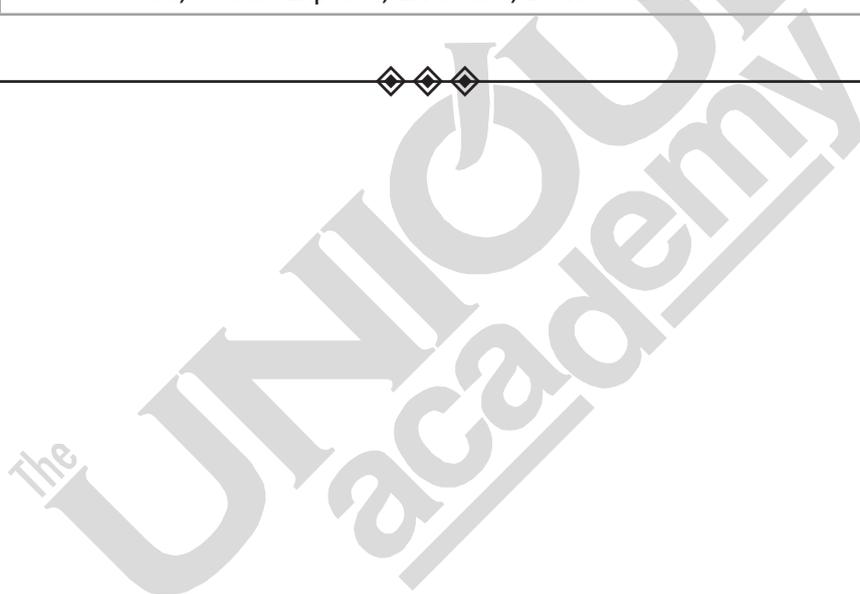
## Ganga Rejuvenation

<p><b>Why is it in the news ?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The India Rivers Week 2018 was held in New Delhi with '<b>Can India Rejuvenate Ganga</b>' as the theme.</li> <li>● During the event, environmentalists claimed that as many as 940 <b>dams built on Ganga</b> are restricting its flow and hindering its rejuvenation.</li> <li>● <b>G.D. Agarwal</b>, a well-known crusader for the river, recently passed away during his fast to protest against the government's inadequate efforts at cleaning the Ganga.</li> </ul>
<p><b>More in the news</b></p>	<p><b><u>Outcomes/Demands of India River Week (IRW)-2018 :</u></b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Central Water Commission(CWC):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Central Water Commission (CWC) should be disbanded as it is doing <b>multiple jobs</b>, which it is not capable of doing so.</li> <li>➤ Example -collecting data, making policies, giving technical and financial approvals to various projects, monitoring etc.</li> <li>➤ Also the data given by CWC is not up to the mark and it lobbies for dams.</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. <b>Environmental flow(e-Flow) :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The activists rejected the Union government's e-flow notification for being woefully inadequate for the Ganga and for <b>lacking scientific basis</b>.</li> <li>➤ For restoring the e-flows, the experts demanded that all proposed <b>projects</b> in the Ganga River Basin be <b>cancelled</b>.</li> <li>➤ Among medium-term measures, experts said old dams should be decommissioned.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. <b>Inter-Linking of rivers :</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Interlinking of the rivers are <b>doing no good</b> to them, especially the Ganga and its tributaries.</li> <li>➤ The urban and industry usages, groundwater recharge and other such factors are hardly looked into. So the basin from which water is diverted suffers.</li> <li>➤ <b>Inland waterways</b> project should be <b>withdrawn</b> as they were harming the Ganga.</li> </ul> </li> <li>4. <b>Illegal mining:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In most of the places where mining was happening, it was reducing the Ganga to a mere stream.</li> <li>➤ The experts demanded that <b>no use of machinery to extract sand and other boulders</b> from the riverbed.</li> </ul> </li> <li>5. <b>Other suggestions given by the experts and the activists are:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Reducing <b>groundwater</b> extraction from the Ganga.</li> <li>➤ Promoting <b>rainwater harvesting</b>.</li> <li>➤ Ensuring better functioning of existing <b>sewage treatment plants</b>.</li> <li>➤ Establishment of an <b>autonomous institute for the Ganga</b>.</li> <li>➤ Formation of <b>national river policy</b> and a separate <b>national urban water policy</b> to govern the urban use of water resources.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

<p><b>What were Mr. G.D Agarwal's demands?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● One demand was to <b>ensure environmental flow.</b></li> <li>● The second demand was to <b>bring a legislation to protect Ganga.</b></li> <li>● He had also sought a <b>ban on all proposed dams</b> on the upper reaches of the Ganga.</li> <li>● <b>Ban on sand mining</b> along the river.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The pollution level in Ganga river</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Contamination levels have increased at many places since 2013, even though Rs 5,523 crore was released for cleaning the Ganga between 2014 and June 2018.</li> <li>● Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data -             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ the amount of Biochemical Oxygen Demand (<b>BOD</b>) in the Ganga river was very high in 2017.</li> <li>➤ the quantity of <b>Dissolved Oxygen (DO)</b> is continuously decreasing at most places.</li> <li>➤ From Haridwar onwards the level of pollution is very high in water.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● (BOD is the amount of oxygen needed by biological organisms to break down non-essential organic material in the water. The higher the BOD level, the faster oxygen present in water would deplete. A high BOD level is harmful for both the river and the organisms that live in it. Dissolved oxygen in another parameter used to measure pollution. A high DO level means the water is less polluted.)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Causes of Pollution in Ganga</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Urbanisation:</b> With rising urbanization, the river has become more exposed to pollution.</li> <li>● <b>Sewage:</b> Only one-third of the sewage that is generated along the basin gets treated while the rest finds its way into the river.</li> <li>● <b>Industries:</b> Nearly 20% of the toxic pollutants that flow into the river, come from industries.</li> <li>● Further sources of pollution include:-<b>Agricultural runoff, Animal carcasses, Floral offerings, Plastic waste and Open-defecation along the river.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Background and the Developments</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In 1986, the then government had launched the first phase of the <b>Ganga Action Plan (GAP) and second phase in 1993.</b></li> <li>● In 2009, the <b>National Ganga River Basin Authority (NGRBA)</b> was constituted.</li> <li>● The <b>NamamiGange mission</b> was launched to address the shortcomings of GAP.</li> <li>● The National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has been given the task of implementation by the NGRBA.</li> <li>● The centre also <b>renamed the water resources ministry</b> as the Ministry of Water resources, River development and Ganga Rejuvenation.</li> <li>● Now the project is being headed by <b>National Ganga Council</b> that replaced the National Ganga River Basin Authority as the apex body. It is <b>headed by the Prime Minister.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>The NamamiGange Mission</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NamamiGange is an <b>Integrated Conservation Mission</b> with an initial outlay of Rs <b>20,000 Crore</b> launched in 2014.</li> <li>● The project comes under the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.</li> <li>● The objective of the programme was <b>to reduce pollution of the basin by adopting a river-basin approach</b> for comprehensive planning.</li> <li>● The project also aims <b>to maintain minimum ecological flow</b> in the river, conserve and rejuvenate it.</li> <li>● The Vision for Ganga Rejuvenation includes restoring the <b>“AviralDhara”</b> (Continuous Flow”) and <b>“Nirmal Dhara”</b>(“Unpolluted Flow”).</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● According to mission, NamamiGange has focused on the followings:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) River Surface Cleaning.</li> <li>(2) Crematoria modernization.</li> <li>(3) Ghat repair.</li> <li>(4) Rural Sanitation.</li> <li>(5) Municipal Sewage Management.</li> <li>(5) Afforestation.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Initiatives taken under NamamiGange</b>	<p><b>Skimmers :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 20 trash skimmers will be put in operation along the entire stretch of the River Ganga in addition to the five skimmers in operation.</li> <li>● <b>Plantation:</b></li> <li>● Trees will be planted in 2700 hectare areas along the River.</li> <li>● <b>Monitoring:</b></li> <li>● Industrial Effluent monitoring by real time effluent monitoring stations.</li> <li>● <b>Biodiversity Centres:</b></li> <li>● Eight biodiversity centres will be developed along the Ganga for conservation of dolphins, turtles and different varieties of fish.</li> <li>● <b>Institutional Participation:</b></li> <li>● Thirteen IITs have adopted five villages each.</li> <li>● <b>Community Participation:</b></li> <li>● Public outreach to encourage community participation.</li> <li>● <b>Ganga Gram:</b></li> <li>● Making villages along the river, open-defecation free by encouraging construction of toilets.</li> </ul>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Power Projects:</b> Constructions of the Hydro power projects are leading to loss of s biodiversity.</li> <li>● <b>Irrigation:</b> Large amount of Ganga water used for irrigation is killing the Ganga downstream.</li> <li>● <b>Waterways:</b> The constructions of inland waterways is leading to increased pollution and killing aquatic life.</li> <li>● Farakka Barrage is leading to salt water ingress in Bengal, and floods in Bihar.</li> <li>● <b>Untreated sewage:</b> Sewage, solid waste and tanneries are the main problems causing pollution of the Ganga.</li> <li>● Only one-third of the sewage that is generated along the basin gets treated while the rest finds its way into the river.</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Huge area:</b> It stretches across 26% of the country and covers nearly 11 states.</li> <li>● <b>No progress on sewage plants:</b> Despite sanctioning Rs 6,000 crore on more than 100 projects hardly any work on the ground has been visible.</li> <li>● <b>Slow Implementation:</b> Attributable to delays in tendering, non- availability of land, legal issues, pending approvals etc.</li> <li>● <b>No synergy:</b> Lack of “effective coordination and good synergy between multiple authorities” is causing delays in completion of the projects.</li> <li>● <b>Inadequate staff</b> – The implementation of the program lacks the sanctioned strength and officers also juggle between different roles and duties.</li> <li>● <b>Waste Management</b> – Inadequate finances and resources with local bodies cripple their ability to treat sewage produced in cities.</li> </ul>

<b>Way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Sewage Treatment:</b> Attracting corporates to operate sewage treatment plants, encouraging composting to reduce waste generation.</li><li>● <b>Finance of Local Bodies:</b> Augmenting finances of local bodies so as to improve their capacity in waste management.</li><li>● <b>Managing rural waste:</b> Community participation, waste segregation, composting and treatment of waste-water through oxidation.</li><li>● <b>Checking Industrial effluents:</b> Strengthening CPCB for enforcement of pollution norms and encouraging industries to install Common effluent treatment plants.</li><li>● Relocating industries from severely polluted stretches is also a need of the hour.</li><li>● <b>Study:</b> Hydroelectric projects and river-linking projects planned on the basin should be undertaken after comprehensive basin study and should not impact the flow in the river basin.</li><li>● To <b>stop agriculture runoff</b> and Promoting <b>organic farming</b>.</li><li>● <b>Conservation:</b> Reclamation, restoration, prevention of encroachment and conservation of wetlands along the Ganges basin.</li><li>● This will restore the river ecology and also ensure ecosystem services.</li><li>● <b>Groundwater Recharge:</b> to promote groundwater recharge so as to reduce the pressure on the river.</li></ul>
Source	The Hindu, Indian Express, LiveMint, DownToEarth.



## 2

## RBI Autonomy

<b>Why is it in the news ?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The recent <b>RBI Board meeting</b> concluded with the government and the RBI found a middle ground.</li> <li>● The long tussle between the RBI and the government had brought again the <b>question of RBI's autonomy</b> at centre stage.</li> <li>● RBI deputy governor Viral Acharya had hinted at government's interference in the working of the central bank.</li> <li>● Government's stand - RBI's autonomy is "nurtured and respected", but is within the framework of the RBI Act.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes of the Board meeting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Board of the Reserve Bank of India <b>agreed to ease liquidity</b> for the financial sector and increase credit to small businesses.</li> <li>● The board has advised RBI to let banks recast loans up to Rs.25 crore given to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).</li> <li>● Some contentious issues like <b>transfer of surplus reserves</b> and <b>relaxing norms for weak banks</b> were referred to newly formed committees.</li> <li>● The issues left undecided are: <b>Special liquidity window for NBFCs</b> and <b>Fixing issues of governance in RBI</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● RBI's main function is <b>Monetary policy</b> - managing the interest rate and influencing the money supply.</li> <li>● Government's function is <b>Fiscal policy</b> - managing tax rates and levels of government spending to influence aggregate demand in the economy.</li> <li>● Disagreements and differences between the central bank and the Centre are natural and often seen as inevitable.</li> <li>● The government wants RBI to relax rules and move ahead rather than undertaking the much needed reforms in the banking sector.</li> </ul>
<b>Recent events of disagreement</b>	<p><b>Regulation of PSBs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The influence or non-influence of the RBI over public sector banks (PSBs) has been a contentious issue.</li> <li>● Example : Punjab National Bank scam where Government believed RBI was responsible and latter felt Government being the owner of PNB was responsible.</li> <li>● <b>Diluting PCA framework</b></li> <li>● The 'prompt corrective action' (PCA) framework, is a set of rules that central bank applies for weaker banks that have serious or structural problems.</li> <li>● 11 state-owned lenders are under the PCA framework preventing from accepting new deposits or or giving out fresh loans.</li> <li>● The Centre wants weaker banks are allowed to lend again, it could boost credit growth in certain areas of the Indian economy.</li> <li>● The RBI at other hand wants Centre to infuse more capital, which the government is reluctant.</li> <li>● <b>NPA Rules:</b></li> <li>● RBI and the Centre have issues over the central bank's measures on resolving</li> </ul>

	<p>distressed assets.</p> <p><b>An independent payments regulator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government wants to set up an independent “payment regulatory board”, outside the jurisdiction of the RBI.</li> <li>● The central bank currently manages all payment systems and opposes this as it will take away the powers of RBI.</li> <li>● <b>Section 7 of the RBI Act:</b></li> <li>● The section 7 of RBI Act was in news as reported that government has invoked section 7.</li> <li>● Section 7 allows the government to give directions to the central bank “in public interest”.</li> </ul>
<b>Issue of RBI's reserves and Surplus</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Every year the central bank transfers the balance of its profits to its owner, the government, as per the RBI Act.</li> <li>● The average amount of money RBI gives to government from the surplus is around Rs. 55,000. (except in demonetization year, then it was Rs.30,659)</li> <li>● It has been reported that government wants the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to transfer Rs <b>3.6 lakh crore of its total “reserves” of nearly Rs 9.6 lakh crore, and RBI refused.</b></li> <li>● Thus government wants more surplus; the RBI wants to make more reserves from profits for unforeseen risks.</li> <li>● RBI noted that having “adequate reserves and capital” is crucial to maintaining confidence in the central bank.</li> </ul>
<b>Autonomy for RBI</b>	<p><b>Arguments in favour for autonomy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Enables RBI to effectively manage Money, credit and exchange rates without any pressure.</li> <li>● It helps check populist pressure from the political leadership.</li> <li>● Efficient functioning of modern economics can best be achieved if professional central bankers with long term perspective is given charge.</li> <li>● It increases confidence in foreign investors.</li> </ul> <p><b>Arguments against the autonomy:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Democratic systems are run with elected government with cabinet and parliament making all important policies.</li> <li>● Monetary policy is integral to overall economic policy and hence RBI has to subordinate itself to Government.</li> </ul>
<b>Way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The way forward is to have a dialogue, without creating a crisis or using a Sec 7 that is best suited when it remains on the statute books.</li> <li>● Extensive consultations on many issues, where there are differences, make eminent sense.</li> <li>● The government and the Central Bank, in their functioning, must be guided by public interest and the requirement of the Indian economy.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu, The Wire, Economic Times, LiveMint.



## 3

## Issue of Polio Vaccine (IPV &amp; OPV)

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Lancet paper 2018 notes “vaccination using Oral Polio Virus(OPV) has become the main <b>source</b> of polio paralysis in the world”</li> </ul>
<b>Concept</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Polio, also known as <b>Poliomyelitis</b>, is caused by one of three poliovirus (PV) serotypes belonging to the <b>Picornaviridae</b> family.</li> <li>● It is a <b>highly contagious illness transmitted by close person to person contact</b>, mainly through the <b>oral-fecal route</b>.</li> <li>● Children younger than 5 years old are more likely to contract the virus than any other group.</li> <li>● <b>Spread of Polio :</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) An infected person who does not practice proper hand or body hygiene passes the infection to another person.</li> <li>(2) It can also spread through <b>infected saliva and respiratory system</b> secretions</li> <li>(3) Polioviruses grow in the intestinal system and are shed through faeces.</li> <li>(4) The infection typically spreads in areas <b>with poor water and sewage sanitation</b>; wild poliovirus is found in this type of environment and puts unvaccinated people at risk.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Current status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As a result of global eradication efforts, Polio is now only endemic in <b>Afghanistan, Nigeria, and Pakistan</b>.</li> <li>● However, <b>countries with low vaccination</b> rates continue to be <b>at risk</b> for re-introduction of the virus due to imported cases resulting from travel.</li> <li>● Unvaccinated <b>travellers</b>, especially children, pregnant women, and those with a weakened immune system going to areas with Polio outbreaks are at risk.</li> <li>● In March 2014, <b>India was officially declared “polio free”</b> by WHO.</li> </ul>
<b>Trivalent to Bivalent</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Earlier, trivalent polio vaccines containing type 1, 2 and 3 were in use.</li> <li>● After the <b>type 2 polio virus was eradicated worldwide</b>, governments switched to bivalent vaccines, containing only type 1 and type 3 viruses.</li> <li>● In 2016, India, in line with WHO guidance, had ordered withdrawal and destruction of all trivalent OPV stocks by April 2016.</li> </ul>
<b>OPV and IPV</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Two different kinds of vaccine are available, an <b>inactivated (killed) polio vaccine (IPV)</b> and a live attenuated <b>oral polio vaccine (OPV)</b>.</li> <li>● <b>IPV:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) It was introduced in 1955.</li> <li>(2) It uses dead virus to immunize the children.</li> <li>(3) It is an injectable vaccine, it can be administered alone or in combination with other vaccines.</li> <li>(4) The immunized child does not get paralysis, but it can't stop the circulation of wild polio viruses.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>OPV :</b></li> </ul>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) It was introduced in 1961.</li> <li>(2) Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) contains <b>weakened but live polio virus</b> that can cause paralytic polio.</li> <li>(3) Also, because the vaccine-virus is excreted by immunised children, it can move from one person to another. This makes OPV a double-edged sword.</li> <li>(4) Cost per dose of OPV is lower than that of IPV.</li> <li>(5) It is easier to administer the OPV than the IPV.</li> </ol>
<b>What is the Issue then?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Issue of OPV and VDPV:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Wild polio virus strains reduced by 99.9% since 1988, the world is inching towards eradicating polio.</li> <li>(2) But unfortunately, more children today are affected by the <b>live, weakened virus</b> contained in the <b>oral polio vaccine (OPV)</b> that is meant to protect them.</li> <li>(3) The weakened virus in the vaccine can circulate in the environment, occasionally turn neurovirulent and cause <b>vaccine-derived poliovirus (VDPV)</b> in unprotected children.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Issue of VAPP:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) While the VDPV cases are recorded and shared, little is known about <b>vaccine-associated paralytic poliomyelitis (VAPP)</b> cases, particularly in India.</li> <li>(2) VAPP occurs when the <b>virus turns virulent</b> within the body of a recently vaccinated child and causes polio.</li> <li>(3) The frequency of VAPP cases varies across countries.</li> <li>(4) The VAPP burden is concentrated in low-income countries which continue to use the OPV.</li> <li>(5) Many member countries autonomously chose the IPV over the OPV, mainly to avoid any risk of VAPP.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>The issue of switching to IPV</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Since the IPV costs more than OPV, <b>India and other low-income countries</b> continued to <b>rely on the OPV</b>.</li> <li>● India licensed the IPV only in 2006 but did not introduce it in routine immunisation.</li> <li>● The other reason for is because <b>global production of IPV was too low</b> to meet India's demand.</li> <li>● India is the largest cohort. It needs 48 million doses per year to immunise all children</li> <li>● The decision to manufacture the IPV in India was taken in 1988 and a company was eventually set up with <b>technology transfer from France</b>. But the plan was shelved.</li> </ul>
<b>Action plan of WHO</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Inactive polio vaccine (IPV) introduced during <b>2014-15</b>.</li> <li>● To replace trivalent polio vaccine with bivalent polio vaccine by <b>April 2016</b>.</li> <li>● To withdraw Oral Polio Vaccine (OPV) <b>by 2019 - 20</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Way Ahead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In India, the <b>VAPP cases can be avoided</b> once the government <b>stops using the OPV</b> to immunise children.</li> <li>● Out of the three wild-types of poliovirus that cause the disease, the transmission of one, Wild Poliovirus 2 (WPV-2), was interrupted successfully more than a decade ago.</li> <li>● The two remaining viruses, now seen in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nigeria, are WPV-1 and WPV-3.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Once we stop these two viruses in their tracks, <b>OPV will be phased out and replaced globally with IPV.</b></li></ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu, LiveMint, WHO.



## 4

## Ease of Doing Business Rankings

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● India's rank in the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business 2019 survey climbed <b>23 places to 77 among 190 countries</b> surveyed.</li> <li>● Last year, India saw a record jump of 30 places to reach the 100th position in the rankings.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● India is <b>one of the top improvers for the year.</b></li> <li>● India became the only country to rank among the top 10 improvers for the second consecutive year.</li> <li>● Out of 10 parameters, India improved on six this year.</li> <li>● Top 3- New Zealand, Singapore, and Denmark.</li> </ul>
<b>Ease of doing business report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is an aggregate figure that includes different parameters which define the ease of doing business in a country.</li> <li>● Economies are ranked on their ease of doing business, from 1–190.</li> <li>● The indicators used for devising the index are as follows:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Starting a business.</li> <li>(2) Dealing with construction permits.</li> <li>(3) Getting electricity.</li> <li>(4) Registering property.</li> <li>(5) Getting credit.</li> <li>(6) Protecting minority investors.</li> <li>(7) Paying taxes.</li> <li>(8) Trading across borders.</li> <li>(9) Enforcing contracts.</li> <li>(10) Resolving insolvency.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>The Improvements</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Introduction of <b>GST and Insolvency and Bankruptcy (IBC)</b> code helped in improving India's ranking.</li> <li>● Out of the 10 parameters, India's rank improved in six. They are as follows:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) <b>Construction Permits :</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) India's top cities managed to drastically shrink the number of days they took to give out construction permits, from 144 days last year to 95 days.</li> <li>(2) Single-window clearance for securing building permits in Delhi and a new online system in Mumbai started.</li> </ol> </li> <li>2) Trading Across Borders:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) From rank 146 to 80.                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Starting a Business:</b> rank improved from 156 to 137, as the time taken to start a new company was crunched from 30 days to 17 days.</li> <li>➤ <b>Getting Electricity:</b> Newly adopted regulations from Delhi Electricity Regulation Commission require 15 days for connection to be completed.</li> <li>➤ <b>Getting a Credit:</b> India adopted a new law on insolvency that provides a time limit and clear grounds for relief to the automatic stay for secured creditors during reorganization proceedings.</li> </ul> </li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ <b>Enforcing Contracts:</b> India slightly moves one rank up this year in enforcing the contract.</li> </ul>
<b>Significance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Environment:</b> It underlines that the country offers a favorable investment climate for private businessmen.</li> <li>● <b>FDI:</b> Helps promote the inflow of foreign investment.</li> <li>● <b>Helps small business:</b> A good ranking means easily accessible and reliable system to set up the businesses.</li> <li>● It also <b>reduces transactional cost</b>, since transactions costs form a major part of setting up shop for small and medium-sized businesses.</li> </ul>
<b>Criticism and Drawbacks</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Survey limited to fewer cities :</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) A common criticism of the ranking is that it limits its sample size to just a few major cities.</li> <li>(2) The limited sample size projects an imperfect picture of overall business conditions.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Tailoring of Policies:</b> Governments may be manipulating the rankings by tailoring their policies to specifically fit the World Bank's criteria instead of trying to enact wider structural reforms.</li> <li>● <b>Political Climate:</b> The political climate and the robustness of the institutions are not given much importance.</li> <li>● <b>Social Infrastructure:</b> The Index does not take into consideration the social and physical infrastructure as well as grievance redressal systems.</li> <li>● This Nobel Prize winner <b>Paul Romer</b> called this methodology as biased.</li> </ul>
<b>Way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Liberal Environment:</b> A liberal regulatory environment must be accompanied by transparency and consensus in policymaking.</li> <li>● <b>Reduce delay and end corruption:</b> Central and state governments need to act immediately to cut the bureaucratic delays and resulting corruption in granting permission to start a business.</li> <li>● <b>E-governance:</b> With e-governance, a single window concept can be introduced where companies can file their application online for permission to acquire land, register property, get a construction clearance, etc.</li> <li>● The other macroeconomic issues those have to be addressed are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Political and economic stability.</li> <li>(2) Law and order maintenance.</li> <li>(3) Quality physical infrastructure, and buoyancy in financial markets.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Social and Physical Infrastructure:</b> An index that takes <b>social and physical infrastructure</b>, as well as grievance redressal systems for all stakeholders into account, would be more insightful.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu, Indian Express, Economic Times, LiveMint,



# 5

## India and Global Hunger Index (GHI)

<p><b>Why is it in the news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recently Global Hunger Report prepared by <b>Welthungerhilfe</b> and <b>Concern Worldwide</b> was published.</li> <li>● India has been ranked <b>103rd out of 119 countries</b>. India is placed among the 45 countries that have “<b>serious levels of hunger</b>”.</li> </ul>
<p><b>More in the news</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The GHI captures the multidimensional nature of hunger based on four indicators –             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Undernourishment</b> (share of the population with insufficient calorific intake).</li> <li>(2) Under-5 child <b>wasting</b> (Low weight for height).</li> <li>(3) Under-5 child <b>stunting</b> (low height for age).</li> <li>(4) Under-5 child <b>mortality</b>.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Findings of the report:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) At least one in five Indian children under the age of five are 'wasted', reflecting acute undernutrition.</li> <li>(2) India has shown improvement in three of the indicators over the comparable reference years.                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) The <b>percentage of undernourished</b> people in the population has dropped from 18.2% in 2000 to <b>14.8% in 2018</b>.</li> <li>(b) The <b>child mortality rate</b> has halved from <b>9.2% to 4.3%</b>.</li> <li>(c) Child <b>stunting</b> has dropped from 54.2% to <b>38.4%</b> over the same period.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>About Global Hunger Index</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>The GHI is designed to :</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Raise <b>awareness</b> and understanding of the struggle against hunger.</li> <li>(2) Provide a way to <b>compare</b> the levels of hunger between countries and regions.</li> <li>(3) Call <b>attention to those areas</b> of the world where hunger levels are highest and where the need for additional efforts to eliminate hunger is greatest.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● The report is jointly published by <b>Concern Worldwide</b> and <b>Welthungerhilfe</b>.</li> <li>● The <b>International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)</b> has stepped aside from its involvement in the report. The reports prior to this year used to be published by IFPRI.</li> </ul>
<p><b>India's Paradoxical Story</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Gross Domestic Product has increased by 4.5 times</b> and <b>per capita</b> consumption has <b>increased 3 times</b>.</li> <li>● However, while India produces sufficient food to feed its population, it is unable to provide access to food to a large number of people, especially women and children.</li> <li>● About 14.8% of the population is undernourished in India.</li> <li>● About <b>51.4% of women in reproductive age</b> between 15 to 49 years are <b>anaemic</b>.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Causes behind Hunger in India</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Poverty :</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Persistence of a huge number of people below the poverty line is the major reason behind the alarming levels of hunger.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<p>(2) Poverty restricts the food choices and has been the causative factor of hunger-related deaths.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Multidimensional Factors:</b> Hunger and the related undernutrition is the result of various associated factors ranging from unemployment, lack of education, lack of access to nutritious food and safe water, poor sanitation, etc.</li> <li>● <b>Demographic Factors:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. A person's 'nutritional quotient' is also dependent demographic factors like gender, caste, age, etc.</li> <li>2. For instance, the nutritional needs of girl child's and elderly are not adequately addressed in our society.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Failure of food schemes:</b> A disparity between the real execution of schemes for the greater good of citizens.</li> </ul>
<b>Concerns and Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Lack of will:</b> There is little institutional will to execute reforms that lead to better food delivery nationally, despite extensive legislation.</li> <li>● <b>Mismanagement:</b> India's food policy has focused on making cereals widely available even as the Food Corporation of India's(FCI) warehouses continue to leak away from the agricultural surplus.</li> <li>● <b>Leakages:</b> the leakages of FCI can run up to 90% due to a range of factors, including <b>poor quality wagons</b> and <b>inadequate security</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Corruption:</b> The challenge is one of getting more grains to the poor while eliminating wastage and corruption along the way.</li> <li>● <b>Women's status:</b> The low social status of women has kept them ill-nourished. This also affects the health of newborn child.</li> <li>● <b>Low Nutrients:</b> Millions in India rely on rice and wheat to fill their stomachs, but those staple foods lack crucial vitamins and minerals.</li> <li>● <b>Climate change</b> is a multiplier of existing factors causing food insecurity, hunger, and under-nutrition, and affects the poorest of the poor most directly.</li> </ul>
<b>Government Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>The National Food Security Act 2013</b> aims to address the hunger and nutrition challenge by ensuring greater access to adequate quantity of quality food at affordable prices(<b>PDS system</b>).</li> <li>● <b>Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS):</b> Scheme was launched with the objectives to improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age-group 0-6 years.</li> <li>● <b>National Health Mission:</b> It envisages the achievement of universal access to equitable, affordable &amp; quality health care services that are accountable and responsive to people's needs.</li> <li>● <b>Midday meal scheme:</b> Its key objectives include Protecting children from classroom hunger, Increasing school enrolment and attendance and addressing malnutrition.</li> <li>● <b>PoshanAbhiyaan</b> has specified three-year targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition and low birth weight by 2% each year, and to reduce anaemia by 3% each year.</li> </ul>
<b>Way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Providing healthy and nutritious food to its citizens is a liability of any government.</li> <li>● The priority programs should be:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Awareness:</b> It should be mandatory to not waste food and offenders must be fined.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<p>(2) <b>Moral Cause:</b> Food is a luxury to people who cannot afford it. It is advisable to not waste food.</p> <p>(3) <b>Inclusive Growth:</b> Unless economic growth improves social and human development, it cannot be sustained.</p> <p>(4) <b>Implementation Problem:</b> Proper and time-bound implementation must become a reality.</p> <p>(5) <b>Role of Private sector and Civil society:</b> Role of the private sector, development agencies, and civil society are must realizing the goals.</p> <p>(6) The approach, commitment, and resources, have to be <b>inter-generational, multi-sector, multi-dimensional and multi-year.</b></p>
Source	The Hindu, Indian Express, PIB.



## 6

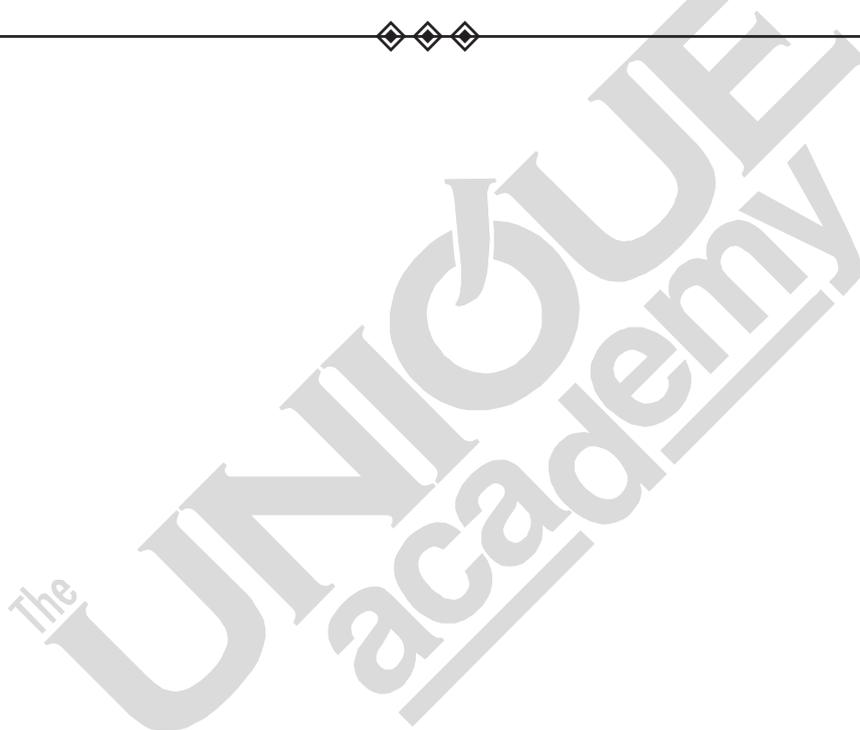
## India's nuclear doctrine

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There have been calls from various intellectuals, journalists and politicians to revise India's nuclear doctrine.</li> <li>● There have been significant changes globally as well as in our neighbourhood which warrant such a revision.</li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>First nuclear test-</u></b></li> <li>● First nuclear test conducted in May 1974 during the government of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi under codename "<b>Smiling Buddha</b>".</li> <li>● <b><u>Pokhran-II test-</u></b></li> <li>● It was a part of the series of <b>five nuclear tests conducted between 11 and 13 May, 1998 in the Pokhran test range.</b></li> <li>● India became the first nuclear powered country without signing the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT).</li> <li>● After the nuclear tests, many sanctions were imposed on India.</li> <li>● India through its policy framework and commitments proved that it is nuclear responsible nation.</li> </ul>
<b>India's nuclear doctrine</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Building and maintaining a <b>credible minimum deterrent.</b></li> <li>● <b>"No First Use"</b> - nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere.</li> <li>● Nuclear <b>retaliation to a first strike</b> will be massive and designed to inflict heavy damage.</li> <li>● Nuclear retaliatory attacks can only be authorised by the civilian political leadership through the <b>Nuclear Command Authority.</b></li> <li>● <b>Non-use</b> of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.</li> <li>● But in the event of a major attack against India, or Indian forces anywhere, by <b>biological or chemical weapons, India will retain the option</b> of retaliating with nuclear weapons;</li> <li>● A continuance of <b>strict controls on export</b> of nuclear and missile related materials and technologies, participation in the Fissile Material Cut off Treaty negotiations, and continued observance of the <b>moratorium</b> on nuclear tests.</li> <li>● Continued commitment to the <b>goal of a nuclear weapon free world</b>, through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.</li> </ul>
<b>Issue over no First Use policy</b>	<p><b><u>Arguments against No First Use-</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Increasing multi-pronged security concerns facing India-</u></b></li> <li>● No-first-use policy was formulated by the Government in 1998.</li> <li>● The NFU policy, as it stands today has been criticized as unsuited to the times.</li> <li>● <b><u>Pakistan's growing nuclear arsenal-</u></b></li> <li>● Pakistan is reportedly in possession of 100 to 110 nuclear warheads, which makes it double India's nuclear stockpile of approximately 50 to 60 warheads.</li> <li>● It is rapidly adding to its nuclear inventory.</li> <li>● <b><u>High initial casualties and damage-</u></b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NFU may result into high damage to extend that it may not be able to retaliate as said.</li> <li>● <b><u>Strong retaliation needed-</u></b></li> <li>● A sophisticated infrastructure, ballistic missile defense (BMD) system would be required to defend against a first strike.</li> <li>● <b><u>Arguments supporting No First Use-</u></b></li> <li>● <b><u>Losing gains under NFU-</u></b></li> <li>● Agreements with NPT countries signed till date by India may stand cancelled. Thus, India may lose all gains made under these agreements signed over several years.</li> <li>● <b><u>Prior system readiness-</u></b></li> <li>● Sophisticated intelligence, surveillance, technology and reconnaissance systems are necessary for a first-use posture.</li> <li>● <b><u>Losing opportunity to engage in conventional warfare-</u></b></li> <li>● A first-use posture will deny India the opportunity to engage in conventional warfare below the nuclear threshold.</li> <li>● <b><u>Arms race in neighbourhood-</u></b></li> <li>● It may lead to arms race and destabilization of neighbourhood, south Asia.</li> </ul>
<p><b>INS Arihant</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recently, INS Arihant, India's first nuclear ballistic missile submarine, has completed its <b>first "deterrence patrol"</b>.</li> <li>● It also takes India into a club of a handful of countries which have the capability to design, construct and operate such a submarine.</li> <li>● It marks the first actual deployment of ready-to-fire nuclear warheads in South Asia.</li> <li>● <b><u>INS Arihant-</u></b></li> <li>● India's first indigenous nuclear submarine.</li> <li>● Launched on 26 July 2009, the anniversary of Vijay Diwas (Kargil War Victory Day).</li> <li>● Armed with-</li> <li>● Four K-4 submarine launched ballistic missile with a range of 3,500 km.</li> <li>● 12 K-15 missiles with a range of 750 km.</li> <li>● <b>Nuclear triad</b> – India is ready with capability of firing nuclear weapons from land, air and sea.</li> <li>● <b>Foreign assistance-</b> Russia has provided extensive design assistance in the development of the INS Arihant.</li> <li>● INS Arihant is a part of Indian Navy's <b>secretive Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) project</b> operated <b>under the supervision of the Prime Minister's Office</b>.</li> <li>● It is closely monitored by agencies such as the Department of Atomic Energy and the Submarine Design Group of the Directorate of Naval Design.</li> <li>● <b>Elite club-</b> India has now become part of an <b>elite club of countries</b> - Russia, the US, China, France and the UK that possess nuclear ballistic missile submarines.</li> <li>● <b>INS Chakra-</b></li> <li>● India also operates the Russian-origin nuclear-powered submarine <b>INS Chakra</b>, which it had leased for 10 years from Russia in 2012.</li> <li>● This is a nuclear powered fast attack submarine and cannot fire ballistic missiles.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Future plans-</u></b></li> <li>● <b>INS Arighat-</b> Work on a second nuclear reactor began and the second boat, INS Arighat is being prepared for sea trials.</li> <li>● <b>S4 (codenamed)-</b> Under construction.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Institutional setup</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>Nuclear Command Authority</b> comprises of a Political Council and an Executive Council.</li> <li>● <b><u>Political Council-</u></b></li> <li>● <b>Chairman-</b> Prime Minister.</li> <li>● It is the only body which can authorize the use of nuclear weapons.</li> <li>● <b><u>Executive Council-</u></b></li> <li>● <b>Chairman-</b> National Security Advisor.</li> <li>● The inputs for decision making by the Nuclear Command Authority is given by the Executive council.</li> <li>● It is also involved in executing the directives given by the political council.</li> <li>● <b><u>Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS)-</u></b></li> <li>● The progress in operationalizing of India's nuclear doctrine was reviewed by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).</li> <li>● The CCS reviewed-</li> <li>● The existing command and control structures,</li> <li>● The state of readiness,</li> <li>● The targeting strategy for a retaliatory attack, and</li> <li>● Operating procedures for various stages of alert and launch.</li> <li>● Appointment of a Commander-in-Chief, Strategic Forces Command, to manage and administer all Strategic Forces has been approved by CCS.</li> <li>● Arrangements for alternate chains of command for retaliatory nuclear strikes in all eventualities is also reviewed and approved by CCS.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Hague Code of Conduct</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A voluntary, non-binding (legally), multilateral body.</li> <li>● It is against Ballistic Missile Proliferation.</li> <li>● India signed it. Signatories must give pre-launch notifications on ballistic missiles, space launch vehicles, and test flights.</li> <li>● Annual declaration on policy of satellite launch vehicles and ballistic missiles must also be submitted.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Export control regimes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are four export control regimes in the world- Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), the Australia Group and the Wassenaar Arrangement.</li> <li>● <b><u>Benefits of membership-</u></b></li> <li>● <b><u>Entry into NSG-</u></b> It will support India's effort to gain entry into NSG. India thus can get access to nuclear material for civilian use.</li> <li>● <b><u>Strengthen fight against terrorism-</u></b> It will additionally provide access to predator drones, remote-controlled aerial vehicles from U.S. which are useful to fight against terrorism.</li> <li>● <b><u>Boost to Military export-</u></b> It will facilitate export of the <b>together</b> developed supersonic missile BrahMos (by <b>Asian country</b> and Russia) to interest countries <b>like</b> Vietnam.</li> <li>● <b><u>Access to high end technology-</u></b></li> <li>● It will provide access to high finish missile technologies from technologically developed countries.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b><u>Role in rule and decision making -</u></b><ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(a) India will become part of the rule and decision making system.</li><li>(b) It will help in checking proliferation of missile technology to terrorism groups.</li></ul></li></ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b><u>Sufficiency and capability factor-</u></b></li><li>● No-first-use policy is based upon an assured second strike capability.</li><li>● It is to survive a first strike and retain sufficient warheads to launch massive retaliation upon the adversary.</li><li>● As long as this second strike capability is not degraded there is no reason to abandon the NFU posture.</li><li>● <b><u>Pakistan factor-</u></b></li><li>● At present, there is no evidence to suggest that the expansion of Pakistan's nuclear stockpile has degraded India's nuclear retaliation capability.</li><li>● India should therefore retain its no-first-use doctrine.</li></ul>
<b>Sources</b>	The Hindu, Indian express, The Diplomat, IDSA



## 7

# Army Reforms

<b>Why it is news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recently Army Commander's Conference was held where decisions <b>to reform operational, administrative and human resource challenges</b> facing the Indian Army were approved.</li> </ul>
<b>What are decisions taken?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The decisions were taken on the basis of four major studies currently underway. This measure studies include.</li> <li>● <b>Re-organisation and Rightsizing of the Indian Army:</b></li> <li>● It is focused on the operational structures to make them efficient, future ready by taking into account the operational situation on Western and Northern Borders.</li> <li>● <b>Re-organisation of the Army Headquarters:</b></li> <li>● It is aimed at integration and prevent the redundancies in various offices.</li> <li>● <b>Cadre Review of Officers:</b></li> <li>● It is aimed to incorporate the proposed reorganization, restructuring and to maintain balanced cadre to meet the aspirations of the officers' cadre.</li> <li>● <b>Review of Terms of Engagement of Rank and File:</b></li> <li>● It is aimed to harness the higher life expectancy, ensure younger profile and ensure due motivation.</li> <li>● The Army Commanders' Conference has concluded that the above studies will be implemented progressively in a phased manner.</li> </ul>
<b>D B Shekatkar Committee:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The DB Shekatkar was constituted by Defence Ministry to recommend measures <b>to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure</b> of the armed forces which submitted its recommendation in 2016.</li> <li>● It recommended that Defence Budget for Capital Expenditure must not lapse and must be allowed to carry forward for the next year.</li> <li>● It has suggested right sizing of the armed forces to improve the teeth to tail ratio.</li> <li>● Strict audit of the performance of non-fighting wings of the armed forces must be carried out and rationalization done wherever required.</li> <li>● A joint War College for mid-level officials must be created to establish joint operability and synergy among the 3 wings of the armed forces.</li> <li>● Better utilization of Supply and Transport echelons and Animal Transport Units.</li> <li>● Optimization of Signals Establishment.</li> <li>● Increasing the efficiency of Ordnance divisions.</li> <li>● Enhancing standards of clerical division of the Army.</li> <li>● Improving efficiency of NCC and bringing it under Min of HRD.</li> <li>● The savings of implementing these recommendations shall be to the tune of Rs. 25000 cr.</li> </ul>
<b>Need for Army Reforms:</b>	<p><b>(1) Integrated Theatre :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ it is unified command of the three Services, under a single commander. The commander of such a force will be able to bring to bear all resources at his disposal from the IAF, the Army and the Navy, with seamless efficacy.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>(2) Budget Allocation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ India's defence budget is 4th largest after the US, China and the UK.</li> <li>➤ But manpower costs for 83 % of overall defence budget and most of this goes to meeting the pay and allowances of the.</li> <li>➤ Also the budgetary allocations for Defence as a percentage of GDP stand close to what they were in the early years after independence.</li> </ul> <p><b>(3) Two Front Battle :</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ India may have to fight a Two Front Battle with Pakistan and China. This will need the reorganization of Army.</li> </ul> <p><b>(4) Other Challenges:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Apart from conventional warfare the army also faces increasingly complex challenges such as terrorism, militancy, disaster management, cyber threats etc.</li> <li>➤ <b>Net Security Provider:</b></li> <li>➤ Many countries in South Asia and South East Asia see India as a Net Security Provider in the region due to increasing aggressiveness of China.</li> <li>➤ This is opportunity for India to create its influence in India Ocean region.</li> <li>➤ <b>India's aspiration to Become Global Power:</b></li> <li>➤ India aspires to become global super power. For this India needs to have a strong and efficient Army.</li> <li>➤ <b>Outdated War Arsenal:</b> The inventory of the army is reported to be of old make and thus becoming obsolete.</li> <li>➤ <b>Procurement policy:</b></li> <li>➤ Though Defence Procurement Policy 2015 is in place yet the Rafale controversy hints that there is need reform it. Important acquisitions such as those of big artillery guns took a long time to be processed leading to weakness in Indian the fighting arm.</li> <li>➤ <b>Corruption in Officers Ranks:</b></li> <li>➤ In recent times there have been growing incidents of corruption in Military administration.</li> <li>➤ But due to opaqueness of Military Administration, these cases go undetected.</li> <li>➤ Long standing issues such as Low teeth-tail ratio, unfulfilled vacancies, etc. deters the credible military capacity.</li> <li>➤ The <b>Sahayak system (50000 Sahayaks)</b>, opposed by the rank and file, erodes the dignity and prestige of jawans thus impacting their morale.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cold Start doctrine:</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Meaning -</b></li> <li>● The Cold Start doctrine envisages swift deployment of troops on the western border within days if a situation of a full-blown war arises.</li> <li>● The operation would be carried out by a <b>unified battle group</b> involving various branches of India's military.</li> <li>● <b>Beginning of concept-</b></li> <li>● After the conclusion of <b>Operation Parakram</b> in the year 2002 the 'Cold Start' doctrine gained traction.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) In the 2002 standoff the Indian Army took almost two months to be able to mobilise and deploy troops on the Pakistan border.</li> <li>(2) Cold Start would enable deploying a full-strength invasion force within a few days' notice.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Difference from earlier strategies-</u></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) This doctrine moved away from the defensive strategies employed earlier. It aimed at reducing the time required to mobilise troops</li> <li>(2) Develop a network-centric warfare to ensure well-planned geographical distribution of forces. Also, the combat strategy was to involve limited armoured thrusts with infantry and necessary air support.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Steps taken by government:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government adopted major recommendation of Shekatkar Committee.</li> <li>● <b>The Andaman &amp; Nicobar Command</b> has been created to exercise command and control over tri-Service and Coast Guard assets deployed in the Andaman &amp; Nicobar Islands.</li> <li>● India participates in many bilateral, trilateral or multilateral exercise to improve its capacity.</li> <li>● Major recommendations of Kargil Review Committee such as of Long-Term Plans, force capabilities, joint training, intelligence, capital acquisition, joint doctrines, etc. have been accepted by government.</li> </ul>
<b>Way Forward:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● New Technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, cloud computing holds various possibilities and should be included in Army Reform strategy.</li> <li>● The spending on Defence must be enhanced in terms of percentage of GDP.</li> <li>● Synergy between the 3 wings must be enhance by creating integrated structures at the highest level.</li> <li>● Delays in key acquisitions hurt the preparedness and morale and must be avoided by necessary changes in Procurement policy.</li> <li>● The rank and file of the army are important and adequate steps must be taken for their better training and after service careers.</li> </ul>



## 8

# Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty)

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● U.S. President had announced that he would terminate the INF Treaty.</li> </ul>
<b>Historical Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● INF treaty was a bilateral agreement between Washington and Moscow signed in 1987.</li> <li>● It is hailed as one of the most important arms control agreements between Washington and Moscow.</li> <li>● The INF treaty helped address the fears of an imminent nuclear war in Europe and also built some trust between Washington and Moscow.</li> <li>● The treaty also established a forum known as the <b>Special Verification Commission</b> for parties to address and resolve compliance concerns and has met regularly and as late as 2017.</li> <li>● While the treaty required the elimination of missile bodies and launchers, it did not result in the elimination of nuclear warheads.</li> <li>● <b>Provisions of the INF treaty -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) U.S and Soviet Union agreed not to develop, produce, possess or deploy any ground-based ballistic and cruise missiles (both conventional or nuclear) that have a range between 500 and 5,500 km.</li> <li>(2) It exempted the air-launched and sea-based missile systems.</li> <li>(3) It was the first agreement of its kind to reduce nuclear missile stocks instead of merely establishing a limit on arsenals.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Reasons for U.S withdrawal from INF Treaty</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Alleged Non-Compliance of Russia -</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The United States first alleged non-compliance in it's 2014 Compliance Report.</li> <li>(2) Subsequent State Department assessments in 2015, 2016, and 2017 repeated these allegations.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Russia Denial to U.S allegations-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Russia denies that it is in violation of the agreement.</li> <li>(2) In 2017, the Trump administration released a strategy to counter alleged Russian violations of the Treaty.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Loopholes in INF Treaty-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) It left the other nuclear weapon powers free to develop ground-based intermediate-range forces.</li> <li>(2) Since then many countries have developed missiles in the range of 500 to 5,500 km, including India, Pakistan, and North Korea.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>China factor into the INF debate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Increase in China's military capabilities-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) In recent years both the United States and Russia have become wary of China's military capabilities.</li> <li>(2) China's growing nuclear and conventional missile inventory is mostly composed of systems in the INF Treaty-prohibited range of 500 to 5,500 kilometers (95% of its stockpile).</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

<b>Implications on withdrawal</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Increase in the deployment of missiles-</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The United States could deploy to Europe or Asia in the near term.</li> <li>➤ Russia is in more able position to develop and deploy missiles as it has developed some missiles beforehand which are in violation of INF treaty.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <u>Split in the alliance-</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Withdrawal is likely to be controversial with U.S. allies in NATO and cause splitting the alliance.</li> <li>➤ Many Western European NATO states favor retaining the INF, in conjunction with previous U.S. policy designed to push Moscow back into compliance.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <u>Undermine New START treaty-</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Trump's move is also likely to undermine the 2010 New START treaty governing U.S. and Russian long-range nuclear systems.</li> <li>➤ The INF Treaty's demise will undercut New START by reopening questions on the relationship between intermediate and strategic systems.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Reforms-</u> Russia must stop the violations and China should join the INF treaty.</li> <li>● <u>Universal INF treaty-</u> A genuinely universal INF treaty can help bring all the parties on board.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu, Indian Express, New York times, council on foreign relations, Washingtonpost.



The UNIOU Academy

9

# INSTC

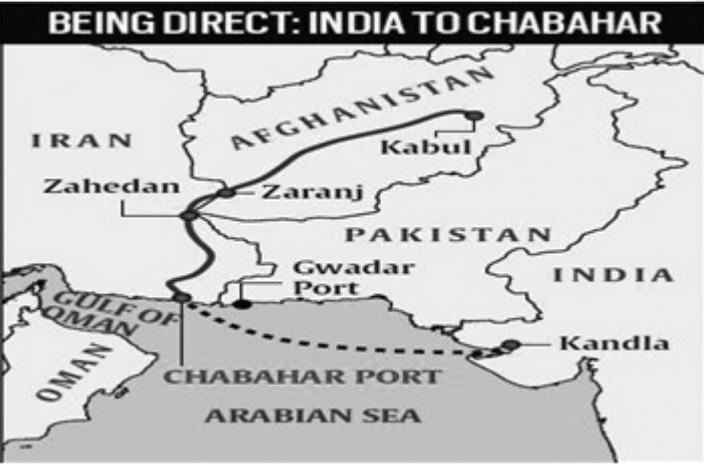
<p><b>Why is it in news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● India and Russia agreed on an early <b>operationalization of INSTC.</b></li> <li>● The <b>International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC)</b> is considered as gateway for India to expand trade and investment links with Central Asia and Eurasia.</li> </ul>
<p><b>What is INSTC?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The INSTC is a land- and sea-based multi-modal transport network.</li> <li>● It will connect the <b>Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf with the Caspian Sea</b> and then onwards to Russia and even northern Europe (which is presently being discussed).</li> <li>● The corridor, meant for both passenger and cargo transportation, is 7,200 kilometers (4,478 miles) in length between the port of Mumbai and St Petersburg.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="416 815 1217 1342" data-label="Image"> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● At present, it has 10 member <b>countries</b> further to the four (India, Iran, Russia and Azerbaijan) mentioned above, namely : <b>Belarus, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkey, Armenia, Syrian Arab Republic and Oman</b>; Bulgaria is an observer member.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Why it is important for India?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Reduction in distance to Russia:</b> INSTC will reduce the distance from JNPT port in Mumbai to Moscow via current route from 8,700 nautical miles to 2,200 nautical miles and 3000 km (over-land).</li> <li>● <b>Reduction in cost and transit time :</b> It will reduce the freight cost of a 20 feet container from USD 1400 to USD 1250.</li> <li>● It will cut the time taken from 30 days to 20 days.</li> <li>● <b>Opening of new markets:</b> Absence of a direct route is one of the factors behind the rather small trade volume between India and CIS countries. Russian and CIS economies together have GDP of more than 1.6 trillion dollars.</li> <li>● <b>Bypass of Pakistan:</b> The corridor will help India <b>bypass Pakistan</b> to reach Central Asia and Russia and potentially get a competitive advantage due to lower cost and shorter delivery time.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Access to Afghanistan:</b> India plans to develop Chabahar port in Iran, which will allow access to landlocked Afghanistan and energy-rich Central Asia.</li> <li>● <b>Natural resources access:</b> It will help India to tap the abundant natural resources potential of Central Asian countries for its energy security.</li> <li>● <b>Enhancing Security:</b> People and goods using the INSTC can travel in a more secure environment.</li> <li>● <b>Extended Neighbourhood relations:</b> Relations with Extended neighbourhood countries of India would be strengthened because of the project. It will give fillip to India's 'Connect Central Asia' policy.</li> <li>● <b>Countering Chinese influence:</b> Although the project is not a rival to OBOR, it would certainly help enhance India's ties in the context of rising Chinese influence in the region.</li> </ul>
What are impediments in INSTC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Lack of private sector participation:</b> From the time of its very conceptualisation, the INSTC has failed to secure full-fledged involvement of the private sector.</li> <li>● <b>Reasons :</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>The US sanctions on Iran:</b> The sanctions did play a role in preventing some Western multilateral companies from entering the Iranian market.</li> <li>(2) <b>Challenges in India-Iran relations:</b> bureaucratic inefficiencies, economic realities, corruption and of course, US pressure on India to limit ties with Iran.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● Given the high risks involved, many private sector players feel that the INSTC project lacks the economic merit for investment . It would allow them limited scope to participate freely in trade activities that would ensue once it gets fully constructed.</li> <li>● <b>Lack of application of digital technologies:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) It is again the private companies that have an edge in the latest technologies in the global market as compared to the public agencies.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Limitations in structural design:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The present design of the INSTC is limited in terms of territorial reach and scope of scaling up businesses.</li> <li>(2) It lays exclusive emphasis on connecting the missing links along the identified passage, while mostly ignoring the need to build infrastructure such as ports, harbours, townships and hotels, alongside that would promote and sustain the trade activities.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>No strong institutional mechanism:</b> INSTC still doesn't have a strong institutional mechanism to deal with the operational issues on the ground.</li> <li>● <b>Funding:</b> Issues relating to the funding of the infrastructure is still ambiguous.</li> <li>● <b>Security and Insurance issue:</b> Security problem emanating from Islamic insurgents of east, and west of the route. This problem would escalate the insurance burden.</li> </ul>
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Developing INSTC is crucial for India because of Hostile neighbourhood such as Pakistan. Also, INSTC is a <b>game changer for India's Eurasia policy</b>.</li> <li>● Also it will help India to tap untapped markets of CIS countries and diversify India's oil basket.</li> <li>● Sustained effort and investment will be needed for taking it to its logical end.</li> </ul>
Sources	The Hindu, IDSA, The Diplomat, Polarconnection.org.



10

# Chabahar Port

<p><b>Why is it in news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The United States has exempted India from the imposition of sanctions for the development of the strategically-located Chabahar port in Iran, along with the construction of the railway line connecting it with Afghanistan.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Where the location of Chabahar port?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Iran's Chabahar port is located on the Gulf of Oman and is the only oceanic port of the country.</li> <li>● The port gives access to the energy-rich Persian Gulf nations' southern coast and India can bypass Pakistan with the Chabahar port becoming functional.</li> </ul> 
<p><b>What are significance of Chabahar port?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Bypassing of Pakistan:</b> Significance of the Chabahar port is the fact that India can bypass Pakistan in transporting goods to Afghanistan .</li> <li>● <b>Gateway to central Asia:</b> Chabahar port will boost India's access to Iran the key gateway to the International North-South Transport Corridor that has sea, rail and road routes between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia.</li> <li>● <b>Countering Chinese presence:</b> Chabahar port will be beneficial to India in countering Chinese presence in the Arabian Sea which China is trying to ensure by helping Pakistan develop the Gwadar port.</li> <li>● <b>Alliance with Iran:</b> With Chabahar port being developed and operated by India, Iran also becomes an important ally to India.</li> <li>● <b>Boost to import:</b> It will give a significant boost in the import of iron ore, sugar and rice to India. The import cost of oil to India will also see a considerable decline. India has already increased its crude purchase from Iran since the West imposed ban on Iran was lifted.</li> <li>● <b>Connectivity with Afghanistan :</b>Chabahar port will ensure in the establishment of a politically sustainable connectivity between India and Afghanistan.</li> <li>● The Zaranj-Delaram road constructed by India in 2009 can give access to Afghanistan's Garland Highway, setting up road access to four major cities in Afghanistan - <b>Herat, Kandahar, Kabul and Mazar-e-Sharif</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Humanitarian perspective:</b> From a diplomatic perspective, Chabahar port could be used as a point from where humanitarian operations could be coordinated.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>India's enhanced role in the Middle East:</b> India's traditional old ties with Iran and substantial investment in Chabahar port also provide India with an opportunity to become an important player in the Middle East.</li> <li>● <b>Complimentary To INSTC:</b> The port is complimentary to INSTC. It will help reduce load on Bandar Abbas port of Iran.</li> </ul>
<b>Issues in Developing Chabahar port</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Political turmoil of Middle East:</b> Political turmoil and undercurrents of economic stress continue to spread in West Asia.</li> <li>● <b>U.S factor:</b> Progress in Chabahar may depend on which way relations develop between Iran and the United States.</li> <li>● <b>Precise Balancing:</b> Relations with Iran will also require a delicate balancing act on the part of India given its own relations with countries like the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.</li> <li>● <b>Extremism:</b> The proximity of Chabahar port to areas dominated by terrorism makes it vulnerable to extremism.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In the words of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the full spectrum of connectivity agenda between Iran, Afghanistan and India should span: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● from culture to commerce;</li> <li>● from traditions to technology;</li> <li>● from Investments to IT;</li> <li>● from services to strategy; and</li> <li>● from people to politics.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
Source	PIB, TheHindu, Business line



## 11

## India-Japan Relations

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Indian Prime Minister recently visited Japan for the annual Prime Ministerial summit between the two countries.</li> <li>● Both leaders concluded a range of agreements.</li> <li>● It includes several significant measures on military cooperation and regional and global security.</li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Common cultural traditions including the heritage of <b>Buddhism</b> and a common commitment to the <b>ideals of democracy, tolerance, pluralism and open society.</b></li> <li>● <b>2 of the largest and oldest democracies</b> in Asia having a high degree of congruence of political, economic and strategic interests, view each other as partners that have responsibility for and are capable of responding to global and regional challenges.</li> <li>● India is the largest recipient of Japanese <b>official development assistance (ODA).</b></li> <li>● As of 2017-18, bilateral trade between India &amp; Japan stood at US\$15.52 billion and is 15th largest trading partner.</li> <li>● In August <b>2000</b>, both countries established "<b>Japan-India Global Partnership in the 21st Century.</b>"</li> <li>● In December 2006 signed of the "<b>Joint Statement towards Japan-India Strategic and Global Partnership</b>".</li> <li>● India-Japan <b>Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement was signed in 2011.</b></li> <li>● The <b>India-Japan Vision 2025</b> statement jointly issued by leaders of both countries in New Delhi in 2015 is the most comprehensive statement of long-term bilateral engagement defined by shared interests and values.</li> </ul>
<b>Outcomes of the Visit</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Start of negotiations on an acquisition and cross-servicing agreement (ACSA)</u></b></li> <li>● It will grant both countries armed forces <b>reciprocal access to each other's bases and military facilities.</b></li> <li>● The move crystallizes more than a decade of rapid strategic convergence between Japan and India amid mutual suspicions about China's rise.</li> <li>● <b><u>Particular attention to the Indo-Pacific-</u></b></li> <li>● Symbolically, like the 2017 joint statement, Modi and Abe gave particular attention to the <b>Indo-Pacific.</b></li> <li>● Both noted that India and Japan must endeavour to work together for-</li> <li>● Rule based and inclusive world order that fosters trust and confidence by enhancing communication and connectivity to ensure rule of law,</li> <li>● Unimpeded trade and flow of people, technology and ideas for shared prosperity.</li> <li>● <b><u>On security cooperation-</u></b></li> <li>● Special strategic and global partnership between the two countries continued to deepen.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Elevated “<b>2+2</b>” <b>defense and strategic dialogue</b> to the ministerial level.</li> <li>● Welcomed the start of <b>tri-service exercises</b>, which will involve interactions between the Indian Army, Air Force, and Navy, and Japan’s Ground, Air and Maritime Self-Defense Forces.</li> <li>● Bilateral cooperative research “in the area of Unmanned Ground Vehicle (UGV) and Robotics.”</li> <li>● Continue to make efforts with regard to cooperation on <b>US-2 amphibian aircraft</b>.</li> <li>● <b><u>Cooperation on terrorism-</u></b></li> <li>● Two sides condemned terrorism and called out Pakistan by name to hold accountable the groups behind the November 2008 Mumbai and January 2016 Pathankot terror attacks.</li> <li>● <b><u>UNSC membership-</u></b> Both Modi and Abe reaffirmed each other’s push for permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).</li> <li>● <b><u>Industry 4.0-</u></b> Visit to the FANUC facility was important in the context of India’s move towards Industry 4.0 by leveraging developments in the fields such as AI, IoT, 3D printing and robotics.</li> <li>● <b><u>Bilateral currency swap agreement-</u></b></li> <li>● India and Japan have signed a \$75 billion bilateral currency swap agreement.</li> <li>● The agreement should help bring greater stability to foreign exchange and capital markets in India.</li> <li>● <b><u>Cooperation in Medicine sector-</u></b></li> <li>● Both decided to cooperate for the first time in the areas of Indian traditional medicinal systems such as Yoga and Ayurveda.</li> <li>● It will provide holistic healthcare and wellness in both the countries.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Cooperation from Japan in projects</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Japan is the largest donor to India in areas like power, transportation, environmental projects &amp; Infrastructure development.</li> <li>● New Delhi metro network.</li> <li>● Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor.</li> <li>● Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.</li> <li>● Agreement for Cooperation in the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy.</li> <li>● To build upon cooperation in the field of smart cities.</li> <li>● Modernisation and expansion of conventional railway system in India.</li> <li>● Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor.</li> <li>● Consolidation of security and defence cooperation.</li> </ul>
<p><b>India Japan Civil Nuclear Deal, 2016</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Export and finance-</u></b> Under it, Japan will export nuclear power plant technology and provide finance for nuclear power plants in India.</li> <li>● <b><u>Responsible nuclear nation-</u></b> The agreement further confirms India’s position in front of the world as a responsible nuclear nation.</li> <li>● <b><u>Sourcing critical equipments-</u></b> Nuclear reactor programme involving companies can source the critical equipments of a reactor.</li> <li>● <b><u>Exceptional Achievement-</u></b> India is only non-NPT country having pact with Japan which has stringent nuclear policies.</li> <li>● <b><u>Towards Green growth-</u></b> It will help India’s strategy to pursue a low-carbon growth model in coming decades.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Asia Africa Growth Corridor</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Free and open Indo-Pacific region-</u></b> creating a “free and open Indo-Pacific region” by rediscovering ancient sea-routes.</li> <li>● <b><u>Act as Link-</u></b> It will link the African continent with India and countries in South-Asia and South-East Asia.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Open and inclusive programme-</u></b> Africa Growth Corridor is considered as a more open and inclusive programme than China's OBOR project.</li> </ul>
<b>China factor</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recalibration of ties - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Both India and Japan have initiated moves to recalibrate ties with China in the wake of an uncertain global order.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b><u>US uncertain moves -</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ US President's unpredictable moves such as trade sanctions on friends (such as Japan) and foes (such as China) benefitting India.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b><u>Resetting bilateral ties -</u></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Abe was in Beijing recently, his first visit since 2012. In April, Modi visited Wuhan for a summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping to reset ties.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Aggressive China - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ However, both countries are cautious about Beijing, due to its aggressive stance in the region.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Challenges/ Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Purchase of amphibious US-2 planes-</u></b> Negotiations to purchase amphibious US-2 planes have dragged on for years.</li> <li>● <b><u>Below potential Trade engagements -</u></b></li> <li>● On the list of states that India exports to, Japan is at eighteenth position within the list of prime twenty five countries.</li> <li>● On the list of states importation into India, Japan ranks twelfth.</li> <li>● <b><u>Various Barriers-</u></b> India facing barriers like language barriers, high quality and service standards.</li> </ul>
<b><u>Way Ahead</u></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Deepened relations-</u></b> India-Japan relations are in good swing and cooperation and understanding between both leaders further deepened relations.</li> <li>● <b><u>Political willingness-</u></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Both countries need to work on getting consensus on issues which are creating hurdles.</li> <li>(2) Thus, Political willingness is the key to put relations to new heights.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b><u>Looking beyond geopolitical aims-</u></b> Both need to go beyond their geopolitical aims and need to focus on basic aspects of bilateral engagement.</li> <li>● <b><u>Bilateral trading-</u></b> Bilateral trade has continued to decline since 2013 which need refocus on it.</li> <li>● <b><u>India-Japan Vision 2025-</u></b> Bilateral and regional ambitions in the Indo-Pacific have been clearly laid out in 'India-Japan Vision 2025'.</li> </ul>
Sources	The Hindu, Indian Express, The Diplomat, LiveMint



## 12

## India-Africa Relations

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accorded <b>Africa</b> high priority in recent years.</li> <li>● India entered into a structured engagement with African countries with the launch of the primary Indian Africa Forum Summit in 2008 in Indian capital.</li> </ul>
<b>Historical Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In 1960,70s, Nehruvian policy based on NAM.</li> <li>● From 1970 to 1990s, India continued to support Africa against Apartheid.</li> <li>● 1990s onwards, reengagement phase started which led by the private sector, rather than the government.</li> <li>● Since 2008, India and Africa relations have been institutionalized.</li> <li>● India has started engagement with the African Union (Pan African Platform).</li> <li>● Summits have been organized under the aegis of India Africa Forum Summit.</li> </ul>
<b>Recent Developments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Recent visits-</b></li> <li>● <b>2018-</b> Prime Minister Narendra Modi's tour of Rwanda, Uganda and South Africa from 23 to 27 July 2018 (Modi's third visit to the continent).</li> <li>● <b>2016-</b> Tour of Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania and Kenya in 2016.</li> <li>● <b>2015-</b> Seychelles and Mauritius in 2015.</li> <li>● <b>Initiatives-</b></li> <li>● Third India-Africa Forum Summit in 2015.</li> <li>● <b>Launch of the Asia Africa Growth Corridor-</b> An initiative to enhance connectivity and people to people partnership between Asia and Africa in collaboration with Japan in 2017.</li> </ul>
<b>Importance of Africa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Economic-</b></li> <li>● <b>Investment opportunities-</b> Africa also being developing country like India provides huge potential for Indian investment in various sectors like infrastructure, manufacturing and services.</li> <li>● <b>Diversifying energy resources-</b> Africa has diverse energy resources which will help India to diversify its energy import.</li> <li>● <b>Reservoir of natural resources-</b> Africa contains rich reservoir of valuable minerals, metals including gold and diamond.</li> <li>● <b>Geostrategic-</b> Africa strategic location in the Horn of Africa region and proximity to India also creates security concerns.</li> <li>● <b>Geopolitical-</b></li> <li>● <b>Bid to UNSC-</b> African countries support to India's bid for UNSC permanent seat is essential considering its voting power and count in UNGA.</li> <li>● <b>Peace, stability and capacity building-</b> India is involved in capacity building, peace and stability of African countries.</li> </ul>
<b>Factors giving edge to India in Africa</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Indian Diaspora-</b> India has huge Diaspora in Africa which may help in building social infrastructure.</li> <li>● <b>Similarity-</b> Being 3<sup>rd</sup> world country, both India and Africa has same set of challenges like poverty, unemployment, literacy rate, etc.</li> <li>● <b>Creation of opportunities through projects-</b></li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Projects undertaken by India in African countries have local people involvement unlike china which exports Chinese labour.</li> <li>● Thus, India creates employment and job opportunities to the local people.</li> <li>● <b><u>Private sector involvement in Africa-</u></b></li> <li>● Indian private sector now actively participating in African projects of different fields.</li> <li>● Government export policies also become more favourable to these private investments unlike earlier policies.</li> </ul>
<b>Threats/ challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Political instability-</u></b> Number of African Nations facing it which may impact India's long term investment opportunities.</li> <li>● <b><u>Security threats, Conflicts and Extremism-</u></b></li> <li>● Increase in terrorist attacks by extremists connected to al-Qaida and ISIS across Africa, Growing influence of Islamic state and other terrorist organisations creating threat to Indian investments.</li> <li>● Piracy concerns and kidnapping of the vessels in the littoral areas are also areas of concern for India.</li> <li>● <b><u>Assault Incidences-</u></b> Racist attacks against African students and nationals in India and counterattacks in African states involving Indians have the potential to deteriorate people-to-people ties.</li> <li>● <b><u>China factor-</u></b></li> <li>● China strong presence in the continent.</li> <li>● China following check book diplomacy which creating further challenges to Indian investments in the region.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Government reorientation-</u></b></li> <li>● In the backdrop of India's negligence towards the continent, in last four years, 26 high level Indian visits have been made.</li> <li>● These demonstrate India's desire to have a high level dialogue with the African leadership.</li> <li>● <b><u>Strengthening bilateral collaboration-</u></b></li> <li>● Improved relations between both countries will help in strengthening bilateral collaboration in different areas and upgrade India-Africa engagement to a new level.</li> <li>● Through economic and political diplomacy, India can get leverage in deals to its advantage.</li> <li>● <b><u>Maintaining historic past and current similarities-</u></b> India and Africa similarities and historical ties has potential to work in India's favour.</li> <li>● <b><u>Continuing capacity building and developmental diplomacy-</u></b> India should maintain its ongoing diplomacy approach in future also to avoid any hurdles in it.</li> </ul>
<b>Sources</b>	The Hindu, the Diplomat, IDSA



## 13

## Role of MSME in India

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Prime Minister launched the <b>Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Support and Outreach program.</b></li> <li>● During the occasion, he made 12 key decision for the growth and development of MSMEs.</li> </ul>
	<b>12 Decisions</b>
1. 59-minutes loans	● The GST-registered micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) will be sanctioned a loan of Rs 1 crore in just 59 minutes through a new portal.
2. Rebate in interest rate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The GST-registered MSMEs will get 2% subvention or rebate on incremental new loans of up to Rs 1 crore.</li> <li>● Interest subvention on pre- and post-shipment credit for exports by MSMEs has also been increased from 3% to 5%.</li> </ul>
3. Cash flow certainty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is now mandatory for companies with a turnover of more than Rs 500 crore to join <b>Trade Receivables e- Discounting System (TReDS)</b></li> <li>● It is so that MSMEs do not face trouble in cash flow.</li> </ul>
4. Procurement by PSUs	● Public sector companies will now source at least a quarter of their requirement (25%) from the sector.
5. Women entrepreneurs	● Out of the 25% procurement mandated from MSMEs 3% must now be reserved for women entrepreneurs.
6 Government e-Marketplace	● All central public sector enterprises will have to take membership of the Government e-Marketplace (GeM).
7. Technological upgradation	● The government announced Rs 6,000 crore package to facilitate better technological support and tools to small industries.
8. Pharma companies	● The government will form MSME pharma clusters. 70% cost of establishing these clusters will be borne by the government.
9. One annual return	● MSMEs will have to file just one annual return on eight labour laws and 10 central rules.
10. No more inspector raj	● Inspections of factories in the MSME sector will be sanctioned only through a computerised random allotment.
11. Relaxation in environmental clearances	● MSMEs will now need single air and water clearance and just one consent to establish a factory.
12. Ordinance in Companies Act	● An ordinance has been promulgated to simplify the levy of penalties <b>for minor offences under the Companies Act.</b>
<b>What is TReDS?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● TReDS is an online electronic institutional mechanism for facilitating the financing of trade receivables of MSMEs through multiple financiers.</li> <li>● The TReDS Platform will enable discounting of invoices/bills of exchange of MSME Sellers against large Corporates including Govt.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Departments and PSUs, through an auction mechanism, to ensure prompt realization of trade receivables at competitive market rates.</li> <li>• <b>Following are the Salient Features of TReDS :</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Unified platform for Sellers, Buyers and Financiers.</li> <li>(2) Eliminates Paper.</li> <li>(3) Easy Access to Funds.</li> <li>(4) Transact Online.</li> <li>(5) Competitive Discount Rates.</li> <li>(6) Seamless Data Flow.</li> <li>(7) Standardised Practices.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>												
<p><b>What is MSME in India?</b></p>	 <p><b>Change in classification criteria of MSMEs</b></p> <p>Cabinet Decision February 7, 2018</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cabinet approves change in the basis of classifying Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) from 'investment in plant &amp; machinery/equipment' to 'annual turnover'</li> <li>• Section 7 of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (MSMED) Act, 2006 will accordingly be amended to define units producing goods and rendering services in terms of annual turnover as follows:</li> </ul> <table border="1" data-bbox="453 817 1230 1087"> <thead> <tr> <th>Classification</th> <th>Annual Turnover</th> <th>Impact</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Micro Enterprise</td> <td>Less than or equal to Rs. 5 crore</td> <td>Will encourage ease of doing business</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Small Enterprise</td> <td>More than Rs. 5 crore but does not exceed Rs. 75 crore</td> <td>Will make norms of classification growth-oriented</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Medium Enterprise</td> <td>More than Rs. 75 crore but does not exceed Rs. 250 crore</td> <td>Will align classification norms to the new tax regime revolving around GST</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>[At present, the MSMED Act (Section 7) classifies MSMEs on the basis of investment in plant and machinery for manufacturing units, and investment in equipment for service enterprises]</p>	Classification	Annual Turnover	Impact	Micro Enterprise	Less than or equal to Rs. 5 crore	Will encourage ease of doing business	Small Enterprise	More than Rs. 5 crore but does not exceed Rs. 75 crore	Will make norms of classification growth-oriented	Medium Enterprise	More than Rs. 75 crore but does not exceed Rs. 250 crore	Will align classification norms to the new tax regime revolving around GST
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<p><b>What is the Importance and role of MSMEs in the Indian Economy?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Creates large-scale employment:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) MSMEs require low human capital to start the business.</li> <li>(2) Most of the activities involved in MSMEs are labour intensive.</li> <li>(3) It creates huge employment opportunities.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Contribution to Exports:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) MSMEs contribute of 8% to GDP in Indian economy.</li> <li>(2) MSME contributes 40% of exports in India.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Encourages Inclusive Growth:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) India has witnessed jobless growth in the post-liberalization period.</li> <li>(2) As MSMEs creates large low skilled employment opportunities, it promotes inclusive growth.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Simple Management Structure for Enterprises:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) MSMEs require comparatively less resources to start.</li> <li>(2) MSMEs are easy to manage as there are less upstream and downstream linkages.</li> </ol> </li> <li>• <b>Promotion of Make in India:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Handmade products by MSMEs are unique and have a huge demand in the domestic and foreign market.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>												

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Immunity from Global Shocks:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Though MSMEs contribution to export is significant, yet they don't form the part global supply chains.</li> <li>(2) Hence MSMEs are comparatively more immune to global shocks.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>An Alternative to Disguise employment in Rural areas:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Due to the lack of employment opportunity in rural areas, there is disguise employment agriculture sector.</li> <li>(2) Census 2011: more than 50 % of the Indian workforce is engaged in Agriculture activities.</li> <li>(3) Agriculture economy is also in distress due to climate change and all.</li> <li>(4) MSMEs give employment opportunities to this disguise workers.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Regionally Distributed Growth :</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) As MSMEs are established in diverse locations depending on availability of raw material, it is promoting regionally balanced growth.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Cheap Labour and minimum overhead:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) In large-scale organizations, one of the key challenges is to retain the human resource through an effective human resource management professional manager.</li> <li>(2) But in the case of an MSME, the requirement of labour is less, and it does not need a highly skilled labourer.</li> <li>(3) Hence, the indirect expenses incurred by the owner is also low.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenges before MSME in India</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Technology:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) MSME firms are small.</li> <li>(2) often, they are not in a position to adapt new technology.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Informal Structure:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) More than 90% MSME operate in Informal sectors.</li> <li>(2) Hence, they find it difficult to get formal credit.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Absence of clear policies and long-term planning:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Ministry of MSME does have a strategic goal for the long term growth of MSESs</li> <li>(2) Policies such as Demonetization and GST caused more harm than good to MSMEs</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Credit Defaults:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Former RBI governor has cautioned about MUDRA loans.</li> <li>(2) Banks already have high NPA and push for credit to MSME can push banks more in trouble.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>External Barrier:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Developed countries are levying nontariff barriers such as violation of labor laws, child labor for MSMEs products.</li> <li>(2) Inability to contact potential overseas customers.</li> <li>(3) Identifying foreign business opportunities.</li> <li>(4) Meeting export product quality/standards/specifications.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>What needs to be done to further strengthen the</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Capacity building-</b> Skill Development, Business management, Technology Upgradation.</li> <li>● <b>Credit Access</b> -Financial literacy training and inclusion, Affordable Finance, Formal institution.</li> </ul>

<b>MSME sector in India?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Easy market linkages-</b> Showcase competencies, Policy support, Formalization.</li><li>● <b>Employment generation-</b> Support for Youth Start-ups, Women Empowerment, Promoting rural industries.</li><li>● <b>Improved R&amp;D-</b> Creation of databases, Strengthening of Research and Development.</li></ul>
<b>Source</b>	PIB, MSME ministry, RBI



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## 14

## Amendment to Protection of Children from Sexual offences (POCSO) Act

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The new proposed amendments in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) plan to crack down on child pornography.</li> <li>● As per the amendments, <b>Commercialisation of child pornography</b>, watching videos of the same or possessing videos can attract a jail term of 5 years.</li> </ul>
<b>NCRB Data on Sexual offences:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NCRB data shows that almost three-fourths of rape cases go unpunished every year.</li> <li>● Study conducted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development in 2007-<b>Fifty three percent of children in India face some form of child sexual abuse.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Salient features of the POCSO Act</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Child Definition:</b> "Children" according to the Act are individuals aged below 18 years. <b>The Act is gender neutral.</b></li> <li>● <b>Universality of application:</b> This act is applicable to the whole of India and provides protection to children under the age of 18 years against sexual offences.</li> <li>● <b>Definition of sexual abuse:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Penetrative and non-penetrative assault, as well as sexual harassment and pornography</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Age of consensual sex:</b> It has raised the age of consensual sex from 16 years as per Indian Penal Code, 1860 to 18 years.</li> <li>● <b>The burden of proof lies on the accused :</b> Punishment has been provided for false complaints or false information with malicious intent.</li> <li>● <b>Provision for Abetment:</b> People who traffic children for sexual purposes are also punishable under the provisions relating to abetment in the Act.</li> <li>● <b>Following best international child protection standards-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ In keeping with the best international child protection standards, the Act also casts a legal duty upon a person who has knowledge that a child has been sexually abused to report the offence;</li> <li>➤ Failure - punished with six months' imprisonment and/ or a fine.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Role to Police and CWC-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Act also casts the police in the role of child protectors.</li> <li>➤ Police are given the responsibility of making urgent arrangements for the care and protection of the child.</li> <li>➤ The police are also required to bring the matter to the attention of the Child Welfare Committee (CWC) within 24 hours of receiving the report.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Proposed amendments</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Targeting child pornography:</b> The new proposed amendments in the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) plan to crack down on child pornography.</li> <li>● <b>Punishment changes:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Those found guilty of possessing these objectionable items will soon invite a jail term, extending to 5 years, and a hefty fine.</li> <li>(2) On the second conviction, the offender is likely to get 7 years in prison.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Punishment for not reporting-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Those who don't report child porn will be punished too.</li> <li>➤ Other than viewing, possessing and circulating child pornography, the proposal includes penalties for not reporting it.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Targeting Social media:</b> Those having such images and videos on WhatsApp will also come under the radar.</li> <li>● <b>Amending Section 15:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The amendments were proposed in Section 15 of POCSO Act.</li> <li>(2) The accused will have to pay Rs. 1,000 fee and repeat offenders will have to pay Rs. 5,000.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Strictest punishment to circulating child-porn for commercial purposes-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Currently, Section 15 of the Act underlines maximum three years of punishment and a fine, or both, for convicted.</li> <li>(2) The proposed amendments would ensure offenders get imprisonment, no less than three years, and it could extend to five years too.</li> <li>(3) On the second conviction, they may get seven years in prison.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Way ahead</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The protection of children from all forms of violence is a fundamental right enshrined in the <b>UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.</b></li> <li>● <b>Indias POSCO act gives impetus to achieve Specific target (SDG 16.2)</b> in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to end all forms of violence against children gives renewed impetus towards the realization of the right of every child to live free from fear, neglect, abuse and exploitation.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu, Indian Express.



15

## Fintech Revolution

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recently the International Monetary Fund and World Bank's annual meetings marked the launch of the <b>Bali Fintech Agenda</b>.</li> <li>● The agenda is set of 12 policy recommendations aimed at better harnessing the benefits and opportunities of rapid advances in financial technology.</li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The profit of formal banking has been constrained by followings:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The cost of physically reaching people in rural and remote areas.</li> <li>(2) The economics of servicing low-income populations, informal sectors and small- and medium-sized enterprises.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● Here Fintech has the potential to broaden the reach of formal financial services, sharply lower costs and spur efficiency gains.</li> <li>● The resulting income and employment gains and poverty reduction would help bring more inclusive growth.</li> <li>● But there are concerns associated with data privacy, data security, and money laundering.</li> </ul>
<b>The Concept</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>FinTech is using technology to improve financial services.</b></li> <li>● These services are the ways in which consumers and businesses manage, move and store their money: paying, lending, saving, borrowing, investing and so on.</li> <li>● Fintech firms are aiming to fragment the finance industry by making these services more <b>efficient, convenient and accessible</b>.</li> <li>● The 'tech' in Fintech is the emergence of new technologies, such as <b>Artificial Intelligence, the blockchain, analytics, and big data</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Enabler of Fintech Services in India.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fintech enablement in India has been seen primarily across <b>payments, lending, security/biometrics, and wealth management</b>.</li> <li>● Emerging technologies such as <b>Artificial Intelligence</b> and <b>blockchain</b> are helping fuel the fintech revolution in India.</li> <li>● Other enablers are the development of <b>telecom infrastructure, smartphone penetration, and internet services</b> among others.</li> </ul>
<b>Significance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The promise of fintech is characterized in the wave of <b>innovation in payments, clearing, and settlement</b> beside powering <b>e-commerce</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Cost-effective:</b> The fintech will cut costs and improve the quality of financial services.</li> <li>● <b>Multiple services: fintech providers are now beginning to offer saving, borrowing, insurance, and other financial products and advisory services.</b></li> <li>● <b>Financial Inclusion:</b> Resultant financial inclusion can fundamentally reshape the lives of people and have a hugely positive economic and social impact.</li> <li>● <b>Transparency:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Governments benefitting from reduced leakages and better targeting of public services.</li> <li>(2) An expanding tax base through improved compliance allows greater resource-generation for public investment.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Modernization Banks:</b> The growth of fintech presents an opportunity for banks to modernize and attract those customer bases that are hitherto uncovered.</li> </ul>
<b>Concerns</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Regulations:</b> Fintech tends to be lightly regulated or unregulated in some jurisdictions and stability are concerns.</li> <li>● <b>Credit Risk:</b> Payments and e-money operators use essentially private money, which carries credit and settlement risks.</li> <li>● <b>Financial Stability:</b> Broader financial stability questions arise as fintech expands from a low base and linkages with banks grow.</li> <li>● Other fintech risks relate to:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Monetary policy transmission,</li> <li>(2) Financial safety nets,</li> <li>(3) Lender-of-last-resort and questions regarding financial crisis management and resolution.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Combat Vulnerabilities:</b> Combating cyber-security vulnerabilities Should be the first and foremost priority.</li> <li>● <b>Policy Cooperation:</b> The risks call for an appropriate supervisory and regulatory approach at the country level, backed by international cooperation to address cross-border concerns.</li> <li>● <b>Maintain Balance:</b> Policy needs to strike the right balance between not stifling innovation while guarding against financial stability risks.</li> <li>● <b>Effective Oversight:</b> Bringing fintech under strengthened, effective and unified supervisory oversight should be a priority.</li> <li>● <b>Ensuring Security:</b> Appropriate rules also need to be set for data protection, privacy, and technology, along with cybersecurity protection and reporting standards.</li> <li>● <b>Early preparedness for Banks:</b> Banks should be aware of the risks and its implications before they develop their fintech strategies.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu, Economic Times, LiveMint.



## 16

## Socio-Economic condition of Muslims in India

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A new research paper by <b>Sam Asher of the World Bank</b> observed that mobility among the Indian Muslims severely declining.</li> <li>● The <b>National Sample Survey Office (NSSO)</b> labor force survey reports that the economic condition of Muslims does not show any signs of improvement.</li> <li>● This is despite India being the fastest-growing large economy.</li> </ul>
<b>Introduction</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Muslims constitutes around <b>14% of total population</b> of India.</li> <li>● The community is lagging behind all other religious communities in the country on many of <b>social indicator, political activism, financial condition, and educational qualification</b>.</li> <li>● low levels of general education ensure that they are <b>trapped in a vicious circle of poverty</b> which is adversely affecting their <b>job prospects</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>The problem of low representation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Muslims lag behind in certain major areas. They are as follows:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Political Representation:</b> Muslims in India are divided on political lines and have little or no national leadership.</li> <li>(2) <b>Administration:</b> Muslims are hardly found in country's civil services and public administration.</li> <li>(3) <b>Journalism:</b> The community is also grossly under-represented in the field of journalism.</li> <li>(4) <b>Entrepreneurship:</b> Muslims in India have dismal entrepreneurial ambitions.</li> <li>(5) <b>Higher Education:</b> Participation of Muslims in higher education is particularly poor.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Mobility</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● While mobility among the SCs and STs has improved in recent years, it has been offset by severely <b>declining mobility for Muslims</b>.</li> <li>● By comparison, mobility levels for <b>African-Americans in the US are better</b> than those for Muslims in India</li> <li>● The mobility among SCs and STs is comparable to that of African-Americans.</li> <li>● A study finds that <b>urban areas are significantly more mobile</b> than rural areas.</li> <li>● At the same time, <b>southern India is much more inclusive</b> compared to the rest of the country.</li> </ul>
<b>Sachar Committee</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The high-level committee chaired by <b>Justice Rajindar Sachar</b> was set up to prepare report on Social, Economic and Educational status of Muslims which submitted its report in 2006.</li> <li>● <b>Findings of the report:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Literacy:</b> The literacy rate among Muslims was 59%, which was below the national average of 64.8%.(Then)</li> <li>(2) <b>Work:</b> Muslims are more vulnerable in terms of condition of works as their concentration in informal sector is above national average.</li> <li>(3) <b>Formal credit Issue:</b> Despite the community being highly self-employed, their access to credit facilities was very limited.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<p>(4) <b>Government jobs:</b> Overall participations of Muslims in central government departments is abysmally low (At that time, less than 5% of Muslims held government jobs).</p> <p>(5) Their <b>living conditions</b> were comparable, and on some parameters, worse than other backward categories such as Scheduled Castes.</p>
<b>Later Data</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government employment is up from 5% a decade ago to 8.50% in 2014-15, but that's way below their share in the population.</li> <li>● Higher education indices for 2014-15 put the gross enrolment rate at 13.8% for Muslims, compared to an all-India figure of 23.6%.</li> <li>● Muslim population inside jails is going up too.</li> </ul>
<b>Other Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Communal problems:</b> Whenever the communal problem and riots take place for whatever reason, minority interest get threatened.</li> <li>● <b>Representation:</b> Not well represented in Political, Economic and Social realms.</li> <li>● <b>Employment:</b> The lower socio-economic strata haven't been able to keep pace with developments in technology and skills of the market. Muslims are predominantly engaged in self-employment.</li> </ul>
<b>Government Initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>USTAAD:</b> The Scheme aims at upgrading Skills and Training in preservation of traditional Ancestral Arts/Crafts of minorities.</li> <li>● <b>HamariDarohar:</b> The Scheme aims to preserve rich heritage of minority communities in context of Indian culture.</li> <li>● <b>Khwaza Garib Nawaz Senior Secondary School</b> will be established at Ajmer by Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF) to give a fillip to minority education.</li> <li>● <b>Nai Manzil:</b> A bridge course to bridge the academic and skill development gaps of the deeni Madrasa passouts with their mainstream counterparts.</li> <li>● <b>Nai Roshni:</b> Leadership Development of Minority Women with an aim to empower and instill confidence in women.</li> <li>● <b>Strengthening of State Wakf Boards:</b> The scheme envisages to provide assistance for meeting the training and administrative cost of State Wakf Boards, removal of encroachment from Waqf Properties and also strengthening of Zonal/Regional offices of Waqf Boards.</li> </ul>
<b>Way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Government Intervention:</b> The Central and State governments could take concerted steps to help Indian Muslims escape this vicious circle of poverty.</li> <li>● <b>Incentives:</b> One way to improve their situation is to provide a special incentive and subsidy system for higher education.</li> <li>● That will ensure that school-going students continue to higher levels of schooling and higher education.</li> <li>● <b>Vocational Education:</b> Similarly, students who don't wish to continue in general academic education must have access to vocational education from Class 9 onwards.</li> <li>● the great responsibilities lie with the <b>institutions</b> associated with the community, <b>religious leaders</b> and its <b>well-off members</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Liberal Values:</b> Besides craving for excellence in education and learning, the institutions must also promote democratic, liberal and secular values.</li> <li>● <b>Collective change:</b> The reforms can only come from within the community and outside intervention together.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu, The Wire, Hindustan Times, LiveMint.



## 17

## RTI ACT : Amendment & "Key Issues and Constraints"

<b>Why itid in News?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2018 seeks to change the rules regarding the tenure and salaries of the <b>Information Commissioners and Chief Information Commissioners, both at the Union and state level.</b></li> </ul>
<b>About amendment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Right to Information (Amendment) Bill, 2018, <b>proposes to give the Centre the power to set the tenure and salaries of State and Central Information Commissioners.</b></li> <li>● The current law gives Information Commissioners a <b>tenure of five years and salaries which match those of Election Commissioners.</b></li> <li>● The Centre will also fix the terms for <b>State Information Commissioners.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Concerns:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Can Compromise independence:</b> The Bill is being opposed by several Opposition political parties and RTI activists. They warn that the amendments will dilute the RTI law and compromise the independence of the Information Commissions.</li> <li>● <b>Can compromise federal structure:</b> The Centre usurping the power to decide the tenure and salaries of State Information Commissioners raises key issues of federalism.</li> <li>● <b>No debate on the bill:</b> The secrecy around the amendments has prevented any meaningful debate or public engagement with the proposed changes. There has been no debate around the Bill</li> <li>● <b>It weakens transparency and accountability</b></li> </ul>
<b>RTI Act</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>"The Right to Information Act"</b> became operational on <b>12th October 2005.</b></li> <li>● This law empowered Indian citizens to seek information from Public Authorities, making the Government and its functionaries more accountable and responsible.</li> <li>● This has led to implementation issues which need to be identified and addressed.</li> </ul>
<b>An issue in the implementation of RTI</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Issues faced on the demand side</li> <li>(2) Issues faced on the supply side</li> <li>(3) Issues faced on the information commission side</li> </ol>
<b>Issues faced on the demand side</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Low public awareness             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Section 26 of the RTI Act:</b> it states that the appropriate Government may develop and organize educational programmes to advance the understanding of the public, especially disadvantaged communities, regarding how to exercise the rights contemplated under the Act.</li> <li>(2) However, as per the survey, only 15% of the respondents are aware of the RTI Act.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Constraints faced in filing applications</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Under Section 26 of the RTI Act</b> Government is expected to publish and distribute user guides (within eighteen months of enactment of the Act) for information seekers.</li> <li>(2) However, no such guidelines are available.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

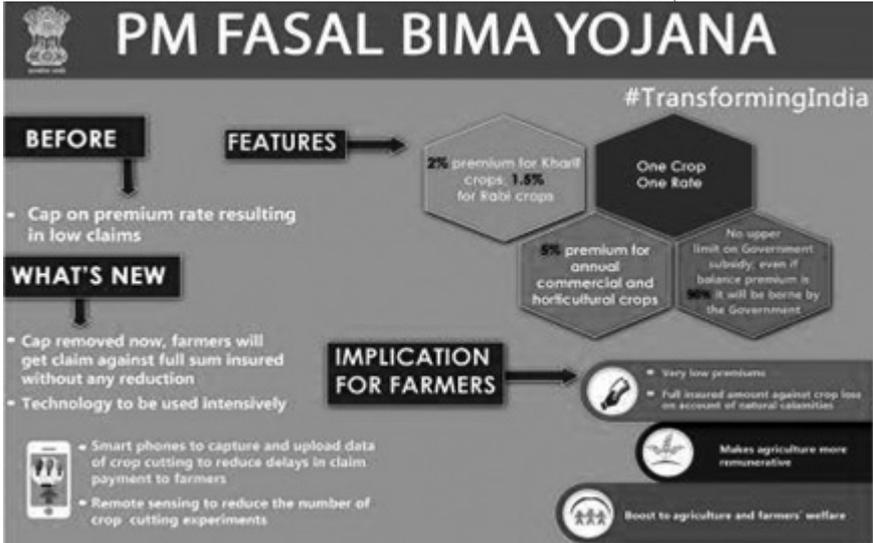
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Standard forms for RTI application:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The standard form helps in getting basic information such as address/contact numbers, form in which information is requested etc.</li> <li>(2) This helps the PIOs in providing the requisite information and contacting the applicant for communication required under section 7(3) etc.</li> <li>(3) However, States do not provide a standard form.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Inconvenient submission channels for RTI application:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Act says a citizen can make a request in writing or through electronic means in English or Hindi or in the official language of the area.</li> <li>(2) However, inadequate efforts have been made to receive RTI applications through electronic means i.e., on email/ website etc,</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Inconvenient payment channels for submission of application fees:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The payment mechanisms prescribed in some of the State rules are inconvenient to the citizens applying from locations outside the concerned State.</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p><b>Lack of assistance in filing the application:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) It is expected of the Public Information Officer to assist citizens in drafting RTI applications.</li> <li>(2) However, it is observed that such assistance is not provided.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Issues faced on the “Supply Side”</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Failure to provide information within 30 days</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) As per the Act, the information has to be provided within the stipulated time (30 days).</li> <li>(2) Due to inadequate record management procedures with the Public Authorities. The record keeping process within the Government is a big challenge.</li> <li>(3) This situation is further aggravated due to the non-availability of trained PIOs and the enabling infrastructure (computers, scanners, internet connectivity, photocopiers etc.).</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Inadequate trained PIOs and First Appellate Authorities</b></li> <li>● RTI refresher training or central knowledge repository needs to be available to the PIOs.             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Lack of Behavioural training:</b> During the information provider survey, it was observed that the training provided to the PIOs is restricted to RTI Act.</li> <li>(2) <b>PIO training problems:</b> the training of PIOs is a big challenge primarily due to:                 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) training institutions also possess a huge constraint with respect to the availability of training resources.</li> <li>(b) in the huge number of PIOs to be trained</li> <li>(c) frequent transfers of PIOs to other posts.</li> <li>(d) The current manner of providing training, there is a low involvement of the Public Authority and an inadequate sense of urgency in getting their PIOs trained.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Issues faced at Information Commissions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Record keeping:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There are no centralized database of RTI (at the State/Centre level) applicants available.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>High level of the pendency</b><ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) The number of RTI Appeals with the Information Commissions is growing</li><li>(2) High pendency of appeals is due to non-optimal processes for disposing of appeals and complaints.</li></ol></li></ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu and A report:</b> "Key Issues and Constraints" in implementing the RTI Act



# 18

## Crop Insurance scheme (PMFBY)

<p><b>Why is it in news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Implementation of farm loan waiver by various state governments has led to sharp decline in both the number of insurance policies and the farmers insured under PMFBY.</li> <li>● During Kharif 2018, the number of insured farmers under PMFBY was just 2 Crore.</li> <li>● Also, <b>mandatory seeding of Aadhar with crop insurance and issue like delays in notification of the crop</b> covered under PMFBY also led to lower enrolments.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pradhan Mantri FasalBima yojana</b></p>	 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is line with "One nation - one scheme" theme.</li> <li>● It incorporates the best fame of all previous scheme, and at the same time, all Previous shortcomings/weaknesses have been removed.</li> <li>● <b>Highlights:</b></li> <li>● Uniform premium of only 2% to be paid by all khariff crops &amp; 1.5% for all Rabi crops. For Horticulture it is 5%.</li> <li>● There is no upper limit on govt. subsidy. Even if balance premium is 90%, it will be borne by the government.</li> <li>● The use of technology has been encouraged to a real extent.</li> <li>● PMEBY is a replacement scheme of NAIS/MNAIS there will be exemption from service Tax liability of all the services involved in implementation of scheme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Is crop insurance scheme is losing steam?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>In a RTI reply:</b> More than 84 lakh farmers, which is around 15% of total farmers insured in this year in PBFBY, withdrew themselves in 2017-18.</li> <li>● The crop insurance companies including Reliance, ICICI, HDFC and IFFCO, among others have registered a total profit of around Rs. 15,795 crore since the launch of the scheme.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PMFBY - Farmers and challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Issues created by insurance companies for maximum profit:</b></li> <li>● ghost farmers.</li> <li>● manipulation of crop cutting experiment data at village/district level to show minimum crop losses.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● collecting more insurance premium in low-risk areas through informal middle men from banks.</li> <li>● not entertaining or wrongly rejecting claim applications of eligible farmers under individual cases like localised calamities.</li> <li>● a non-effective grievance redressal mechanism for farmers.</li> <li>● <b>Lack of Awareness:</b> Nearly 80-85% farmers in country are marginalised and they are not aware of the premium rates and the way it works.</li> <li>● <b>Insurance leakages:</b> The insurance companies aren't providing money to the farmers on time</li> <li>● <b>Threat from Animals:</b> This scheme doesn't cover threat from wild animals where crop failures over due to wildlife animals.</li> <li>● The insurance claims procedure is very slow &amp; tiresome.</li> <li>● The compensation amount when transferred into account of beneficiaries, it is deducted by Banks against loan taken by farmers. These worsened conditions as farmers has to take fresh loan to sow new crops.</li> </ul>
<p><b>A recent study by Down to earth magazine</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A recent assessment of Pradhan Mantri FasalBima Yojana (PMFBY) shows that the flagship agriculture scheme favours insurance companies and needs to be corrected to serve its true beneficiaries - farmers.</li> <li>● <b>Findings of the study:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Poor performance:</b> The enrolment of farmers has reduced significantly in the past two years the report added that even the area covered is reducing. Three-fourth of total claims and three-fourth of total premium is concentrated only in 25 per cent of the districts.</li> <li>(2) <b>Marginal increase in sum insured area:</b> the total sum insured under the scheme in 2017-18 was <b>Rs. 1.91 lakh crore</b>, a marginal increase of 0.12 per cent from 2016-17.</li> <li>(3) <b>Premium increased but claims lowered:</b> the report said that the total premium collected by insuring agencies increased by 11.6 per cent from 2016-17 to 2017-18.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Way forward</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Reduce the scope of moral hazards at different levels:</b> As it is under pressure to focus more on increasing profit unlike the public sector companies.</li> <li>● <b>Making claims payment fast and transparent:</b> There should be strict compliance of timelines with regard to the process of claim settlement to provide adequate and timely compensation to farmers.</li> <li>● <b>Danger of discouraging mixed cropping and crop diversification:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) A limited number of crops are notified by states under PMFBY. Only these crops can avail of insurance. This acts as an impediment to crop diversification.</li> <li>(2) PMFBY will have to make insurance relevant to farmers by including more and more crops under notification and by allowing insurance for mixed cropping.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Improve scheme monitoring and grievance redressal mechanism:</b> Dedicated common toll-free numbers should be channelized to address all queries, concerns and grievances of farmers with respect to crop insurance.</li> </ul>
<p>Source</p>	<p>The Hindu, Down to earth</p>



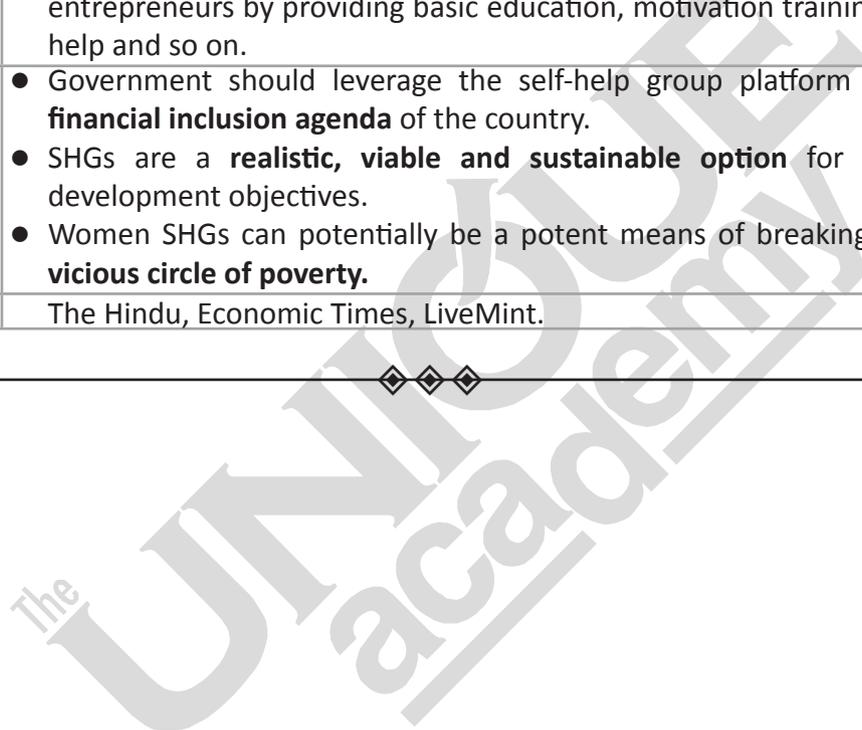
# 19

## Self Help Groups (SHGs)

<p><b>Why is it in the news ?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As we approach <b>Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary</b>, it is perhaps fitting to revisit the Gandhian approach to rural development.</li> <li>● In this context, an analysis of the idea of women self-help groups (SHGs) as a vehicle to transform the rural structure would be timely.</li> <li>● These SHGs can act as powerful institutions of participation and can contribute to India's growth trajectory.</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Concept</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Self-Help Groups are <b>informal associations of people</b> who choose to come together to find ways to improve their living conditions.</li> <li>● They act as safety nets to achieve twin goals—<b>economic security</b> and <b>social well-being</b>.</li> <li>● They help to build Social Capital among the poor, <b>especially women</b>.</li> <li>● The most important functions of a SHGs are :             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) 1. To encourage and motivate its members <b>to save</b>.</li> <li>(2) To persuade them to make a collective plan for <b>generation of additional income</b>.</li> <li>(3) To act as a conduit for <b>formal banking services</b> to reach them.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● Such groups work as a collective guarantee system for members who propose to borrow from organised sources.</li> <li>● Consequently, SHGs have emerged as the most effective mechanism for delivery of <b>micro-finance services to the poor</b>.</li> <li>● The range of financial services may include products such as deposits, loans, money transfer and insurance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Guiding Principles of SHGs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Mutualism:</b> Effort is built on mutual trust and mutual support</li> <li>● <b>Equality:</b> Every individual is equal and responsible</li> <li>● <b>Commitment:</b> Every individual is committed to the cause of the group</li> <li>● <b>Consensus:</b> Decision is based on the principles of consensus</li> <li>● <b>Collectivism:</b> The belief and commitment by an individual that through the group their standard of living will improve</li> <li>● <b>Savings:</b> Savings is the foundation on which to build the group for collective action.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Significance of SHGs</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Social Capital:</b> United leadership coupled with an informal horizontal network helps to create social capital among the poor, especially among the women.</li> <li>● <b>Financial Inclusion:</b> It promotes financial inclusion by availing formal credit through banking Priority Sector Lending norms.</li> <li>● Also the assurance of returns incentivize banks to lend to SHGs.</li> <li>● <b>Gender Equity:</b> It establishes gender equity by empowering women and inculcating leadership skills among them.</li> <li>● <b>Women's Status:</b> Women's participation in entrepreneurial activities not only leads to improvement in their socio-economic condition but also enhances their self-esteem.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Social Issues:</b> Collective participation of women in governance process enables them to highlight issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Dowry/Domestic violence,</li> <li>➤ Alcoholism,</li> <li>➤ Problem of open defecation,</li> <li>➤ Primary healthcare etc.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Pressure Group:</b> SHGs can act as a pressure groups and impact policy decisions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Concerns and Challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Low Literacy:</b> Low levels of literacy among the rural women is part of the challenge.</li> <li>● <b>Awareness Issue:</b> Lack of knowledge and proper orientation among the SHGs members to take up suitable and profitable livelihood options.</li> <li>● <b>Ignorance:</b> Majority of the group are unaware of the schemes of assistance offered to them.</li> <li>● <b>Inadequate Training Facilities:</b> The training given to the members of SHGs are not adequate to compete with that of strong units.</li> <li>● Ex. Training in the specific areas of product selection, quality of products, production techniques, managerial ability, packing etc.</li> <li>● <b>Coordination Issue:</b> Over the time groups were disintegrating on account of coordination issues.</li> <li>● <b>Dependency on few:</b> Few members knew how to maintain the group's required financial documentation, so if those members left, the groups would also dissolve.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Government Initiatives</b></p>	<p><b>Self-Help Group Bank Linkage Program (SBLP):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development linking a small number of groups with banks.</li> <li>● The initiative connected group members – many of whom had never had a bank account before.</li> </ul> <p><b>Priority Sector Lending:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government has included SHG as a priority sector to mandate and enhance banks focus on them.</li> </ul> <p><b>Priyadarshini scheme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● This scheme has aimed at <b>women empowerment and livelihood enhancement</b> through SHGs.</li> <li>● NABARD is the nodal agency for its implementation.</li> </ul> <p><b>DeenDayalAntodaya Yojana (earlier Ajeevika):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● National Rural livelihood mission was launched with focus on SHGs.</li> <li>● The mission has sought to build Capacity through grass-root level institutions by putting in place a dedicated and sensitive support structure.</li> </ul> <p><b>Ajeevika Grameen Express Yojana (AGEY):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The scheme provides an alternative source of livelihoods to members of SHGs under DeendayalAntyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM).</li> <li>● It facilitates members of SHGs to operate public transport services in backward rural areas, to connect remote villages with key services and amenities including access to markets, education and health for the overall economic development of the area.</li> <li>● This will provide safe, affordable and community monitored rural transport services like e-rickshaws, 3 and 4 wheelermotorised transport vehicles.</li> </ul>

<b>Way forward</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Timely Monitoring:</b> Self-help groups should be regularly monitored.</li><li>● <b>Responsibility of Promoters:</b> The promoters of SHGs must reinforce structures that ensure the members have the requisite help for at least the first five years.</li><li>● The promoters need to help groups in discussing issues in the social and development purview, enabling groups to have constructive, critical discussions that help them become better community members.</li><li>● <b>Capacity Building:</b> Resources should go toward periodic capacity-building of all members.</li><li>● <b>Training:</b> Investing in training of group members could go a long way in ensuring a smooth transition from <b>manual to technological platforms.</b></li><li>● <b>Collective efforts:</b> To make the group the collective and democratic effort of all members instead of a few who are better informed.</li><li>● <b>Digitization:</b> With the Indian Government's recent focus on digital financial inclusion, several efforts are underway to digitize the self-help group platform.</li><li>● <b>Role of NGOs:</b> NGOs can play a significant role in empowering women entrepreneurs by providing basic education, motivation training, and financial help and so on.</li></ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Government should leverage the self-help group platform to expand the <b>financial inclusion agenda</b> of the country.</li><li>● SHGs are a <b>realistic, viable and sustainable option</b> for achieving rural development objectives.</li><li>● Women SHGs can potentially be a potent means of breaking <b>free from the vicious circle of poverty.</b></li></ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu, Economic Times, LiveMint.



## 20

## Renewable Energy and India

<b>What is Renewable Energy?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Definition:</b> It is energy that is collected from renewable resources which are naturally replenished within the human timescale.</li> <li>● <b>Example:</b> solar energy, Wind energy, Hydropower energy, Tidal energy.</li> </ul>
<b>Statistics</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In the <b>electricity Sector</b>, renewable energy (excluding large hydro) accounted for 20% of the total installed capacity as of June. 30, 2018.</li> <li>● The contribution of different sectors of renewable energy. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Wind - 57%</li> <li>(2) Solar - 19%</li> <li>(3) Biomass- 15%</li> <li>(4) Small Hydro- 8%</li> <li>(5) Waste to Energy- 0.2%</li> </ul> </li> <li>● large hydropower projects are not considered while accounting renewable energy in India.</li> <li>● Because large hydropower comes under the <b>ministry of Power</b> while other energy sources come under the ministry of MNRE.</li> </ul>
<b>Some achievements of India in the renewable sector?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Installed capacity of Renewable energy has reached over <b>70GW out of total installed capacity 346 GW</b>. Over 40 GW renewable power capacity is under construction.</li> <li>● India's global ranking <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) 5<sup>th</sup> in overall renewable power.</li> <li>(2) 4<sup>th</sup> in wind power.</li> <li>(3) 6<sup>th</sup> in solar power (installed capacity)</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Solar energy increased from 3 GW in 2014 to 22 GW in 2018 (about 8 times).</li> <li>● Wind energy increased from 21 GW in 2014 to 34 GW in 2018 (about 1.8 times).</li> <li>● India is on track of achieving 175 GW target of installed capacity of renewable energy and according to some estimates even more.</li> </ul>
<b>India's renewable energy Breakup.</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● India recently increased its renewable energy target by 28%.</li> <li>● Earlier it was to achieve 175 GW of renewable energy by 2022. Now it is achieving 227 GW of renewable energy by 2022.</li> </ul>

	Earlier (175GW)	Now (227 GW)`	Achieved in 2018
Solar	100	113.49	21 GW
Wind	60	66.65`	34 GW
Biomass	10	10.5	9 GW
Small Hydro	5	5.98	4 gw
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>175</b>	<b>227</b>	<b>68 gw</b>

- This addition of 52 GW will require \$ 50 Billion investment in the sector.
- But there are concerns:
  - (1) Excess capacity
  - (2) Energy demand
  - (3) Implementation of the plan.

**Benefits of using renewable energy**

- **Reduction of greenhouse gases emissions:** renewable energy sources run without fossil fuel. So, they are able to reduce carbon footprint.
- **Employment generation:**
  - (1) It can be a potential game-changer in employment generation.
  - (2) Renewable sector has a huge demand for skilled and low skilled workers.
- **Diversity of energy sources:** Oil and coal dominate India's energy requirement. Use of renewable energy will diversify this.
- **Regional Development:** renewable energy projects are located away from urban and suburban areas often in the remote area. This could give impetus to the regional development of these areas.
- **Less maintenance:** Renewable energy facilities require less maintenance than traditional generators.
- **Low Cost of Operation:** their fuel being derived from natural and available resources reduces the cost of operation.
- **Boost Public health:** greenhouse gasses, carbon and Sulphur compounds emitted by fossil fuels are risky to our health if inhaled over time.

**Challenges of renewable energy**

- **The generation capacity is still not enough:** This is the reason we can't solely rely on the renewable energy sector.
- **Renewable energy is unreliable.** Renewable energy technologies totally depend upon weather (for sun & wind). In case atmospheric conditions are not good enough, renewable energy sources lack the ability to generate electricity
- **Low-efficiency levels.** Renewable energy is new to the market. This pose forecast problems and investor are not interested in investing.
- **Initial investment cost is extremely high.**
- Storability of renewable energy is a big issue.
- Cost of renewable energy is decreasing nowadays otherwise it was also a great challenge.
- Social acceptance of renewable-based energy system is still not very encouraging in urban India.
- **Manpower training:** The Indian power sector is facing severe trained manpower shortage.

**Advantages for India**

1. **Robust Demand:** As the Indian economy grows, the electricity consumption may scale up.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. <b>Increasing investments:</b> Due to govts efforts for green energy, the Renewable energy sector is becoming more attractive to investors.</li> <li>3. <b>Policy Support:</b> Govt is ensuring various support to the renewable energy sector in terms of subsidy, incentives.</li> <li>4. <b>Competitive advantage:</b> Sunlight, wind and hydropower potential is richly available in India</li> </ol>
<b>Governments Initiatives</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>INDCs:</b> Indian INDC pledges are in line with the renewable sector in India.</li> <li>2. <b>Renewable purchase obligation:</b> This is a mechanism by which state electricity regulatory commissions are obliged to purchase a certain percentage of power from the renewable energy source.</li> <li>3. <b>International Solar alliance:</b> India has taken lead in forming an alliance of 121 countries to development of solar energy. The ISA aims to develop cost-efficient solar technologies and applications. It is also expected to mobilize \$1 trillion for funding solar energy projects by 2030.</li> <li>4. <b>KUSUM scheme:</b> KUSUM (KisanUrja Suraksha Evam UtthaanMahaabhiyan) aims to incentivize farmers to run solar farm water pumps and use barren land for generating solar power to have extra income.</li> <li>5. <b>National Solar Mission.</b></li> <li>6. <b>Introducing Carbon Tax:</b> It is now 400 rs/tonnes on coal. This discourages coal and incentives renewable energy.</li> <li>7. <b>Mapping potential of India's wind and Solar energy:</b> By Indian Institute of wind energy</li> </ol>
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Research and development:</b> the High cost associated with RE projects necessitates further research and technological developments in this area.</li> <li>● <b>Policy framework:</b> A comprehensive policy framework is necessary for accelerated growth of renewable energy in India.</li> <li>● <b>To remove weather dependency:</b> Planning infrastructure accordingly will be the solution</li> <li>● <b>Skill up-gradation:</b> Skill up-gradation of the existing manpower and training of new professionals are essential to achieving the goal of “power to all” by 2012.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Goal 7</b> of the <b>SDGs</b> aims to correct this enormous imbalance by ensuring everyone has access to affordable, reliable, and modern energy services by the year 2030.</li> <li>● To expand energy access, it is crucial to enhance energy efficiency and to invest in renewable energy.</li> </ul>



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## India's Neutrino Observatory

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The National Green Tribunal upheld environmental clearance for the long-planned Neutrino project.</li> </ul>
<b>What are neutrinos?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The neutrino is a tiny elementary particle like proton, neutron and electron but it is not part of the atom.</li> <li>● Such particles are found to exist in nature.</li> <li>● Neutrino has a <b>very tiny mass, no charge and spin half</b>.</li> <li>● It <b>interacts very weakly</b> with other matter particles.</li> <li>● So weakly that every second trillion of neutrinos fall on us and pass through our bodies unnoticed.</li> <li>● Neutrinos come from the sun (solar neutrinos) and other stars, cosmic rays that come from beyond the solar system, and from the Big Bang from which our Universe originated.</li> <li>● They can also be produced in the lab.</li> <li>● Neutrinos come in three types or “flavours” – <b>electron neutrino, tau neutrino and muon neutrino</b>.</li> <li>● They can change from one flavour to another as they travel.</li> <li>● This process is called neutrino oscillation and is an unusual quantum phenomenon.</li> <li>● The India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) will study atmospheric neutrinos only. Solar neutrinos have much lower energy than the detector can detect.</li> <li>● In 2015, <b>the Nobel prize in physics was awarded to Takaaki Kajita and Arthur B. McDonald</b> for discovering <b>neutrino oscillations demonstrating that neutrinos have mass</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>INO PROJECT</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It will place a specially built iron calorimeter (ICAL) detector about 15 km under the ground.</li> <li>● Here the chances of detecting neutrinos are higher.</li> <li>● The project will aim to determine the mass of neutrinos, and to establish a mass order among the three known types of neutrinos — <b>electron, muon and tau</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>KEY FACTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● NEUTRINOS ARE thought to have been produced just after the Big Bang that created the universe. The neutrino density of the universe is 330 per cubic centimetre.</li> <li>● RS 1500 CR is the estimated cost of the project Building the lab is likely to cost Rs 470 cr.</li> <li>● 22 INSTITUTIONS are part of the project.</li> </ul>
<b>Applications of Neutrino</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Neutrinos have the potential to <b>speed up global communication, detect the presence of nuclear weapons, and even confirm the presence of elusive dark matter</b>. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ A way to monitor nuclear proliferation. <u>HOW?</u></li> </ul> </li> <li>● As Neutrinos are produced from <b>radiation</b>. So, there is possibility to use neutrino detectors to monitor which countries have Nuclear Weapons.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Understanding neutrinos could help in detection of oil and mineral deposit <b>HOW?</b></li> <li>● Neutrino spin depending on how far they have traveled and how much matter they have passed through.</li> <li>● By analysing the way a beam of neutrinos are spinning after passing through pockets of the Earth could reveal where mineral deposits are</li> <li>● <b>Faster global communication. HOW?</b></li> <li>● Today's communication uses Electromagnetic radiation(EM). The problem with EM is they are opaque to seas. That is submarine communication is not possible.</li> <li>● As Neutrinos have capacity to pass through anything. Also they are not deflected by any force. so it is possible to communicate with neutrino.</li> <li>● <b>A way for scientists to detect dark matter.</b></li> <li>● Scientists have theorized that a certain type of neutrino might come from decaying dark matter.</li> </ul>
<p><b>India's Neutrino observatory</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Location:</b> At Pottipuram village, in Theni district, near the Tamil Nadu-Kerala border.</li> <li>● The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research is the nodal institution. The observatory is to be built jointly with the Department of Atomic Energy and the Department of Science and Technology.</li> <li>● <b>What does it entail?</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) It is an underground project and will comprise a complex of caverns.</li> <li>(2) The main cavern, which will house the huge neutrino detector [50-kilo tonne magnetised iron calorimeter], will be 130 m long, 26 m wide, and 30 m high.</li> <li>(3) Two smaller caverns will be used for setting up experiments for neutrino double detector and dark matter.</li> <li>(4) Approach to this complex will be by a 2-km-long tunnel.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Reasons for underground project:</b></li> <li>● <b>What's special about locating the INO in the South?</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The proximity near equator will permit neutrino astronomy searches covering the whole celestial sky and study of solar.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Why are the locals opposing it?</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Locals fear that the excavation and blasts needed to bore the tunnel in the mountains will endanger the biodiversity of the Western Ghats.</li> <li>(2) Some of the concerns range from <b>radiation, structural damage to the mountain to emission of hazardous chemicals.</b></li> <li>(3) There is apprehension that this facility could be used as nuclear storage facility</li> <li>(4) <b>Mudumalai Tiger reserve is near to project. This could hamper the project tiger of country.</b></li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Why none of the opposition is true?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Opposition regarding blasts:</b> The proposed excavation is planned to be carried out by a controlled blast, limiting the impact of vibrations with the help of computer simulations.</li> <li>● <b>Opposition regarding constructing road tunnel:</b> Such tunnels have been built extensively in India and the relevant studies show that the environmental impact (mainly dust and noise in the initial phase) have been managed.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Regarding Nuclear waste:</b>The operation of INO will have no release of radioactive or toxic substances. It is not a weapons laboratory and will have no strategic or defence applications.</li></ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Neutrinos are the information bearers of the universe — which are almost never lost in their path.</li><li>● Efforts in studying neutrinos at INO may help unravel the deepest mystery of the universe.</li></ul>
<b>Sources</b>	The Hindu, Business Line



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## 3D Printing

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● According to a team from <b>IIT Madras</b>, who has successfully printed a miniature single storey structure within two days, India could build its first 3D printed house within a year</li> </ul>
<b>What is 3D Printing?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>3D printing</b> or <b>additive manufacturing</b> is a process of making <b>three dimensional solid objects from a digital file</b>.</li> <li>● The creation of a 3D printed object is achieved using additive processes.</li> <li>● In an additive process, an object is created <b>by laying down successive layers of material</b> until the object is created.</li> <li>● it is the <b>opposite of subtractive manufacturing</b> which is cutting out / hollowing out a piece of metal or plastic with for instance a milling machine.</li> <li>● 3D printing enables you to produce complex (functional) shapes using less material than traditional manufacturing methods.</li> <li>● 3D printing, which has been around for over 30 years, is now used not only to make jewelry and toothbrushes but also football boots, racing-car parts, food products, guns, human org.</li> </ul>
<b>Application of 3D printing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Education:</b> 3D printing enables students to materialize their ideas in a fast and affordable way.</li> <li>● <b>Rapid Prototyping:</b> Making prototype before actual manufacturing is simple is 3D printing</li> <li>● <b>Rapid Manufacturing:</b> Rapid manufacturing is a new method of manufacturing where companies are using 3D printers for short run / small batch custom manufacturing.</li> <li>● <b>Automotive:</b> Companies are using it to produce parts, tools, and fixtures. It has also enabled on-demand manufacturing leading to lower stock levels for spare parts.</li> <li>● <b>Construction:</b> Contour crafting essentially uses a robotic device to automate the construction of large structures such as homes. This device prints walls layer-by-layer by extruding concrete.</li> <li>● <b>Health Care:</b> With the advancement of technology, customizable human body parts and organs can now be manufactured this technology is termed as <i>Bioprinting</i>.</li> <li>● <b>Affordability:</b> The initial cost for setting up a 3d printing facility is definitely high; however, it is much cheaper compared to labor costs and manufacturing costs while using the conventional way.</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Decrease in Manufacturing Jobs:</b> The decrease in manufacturing jobs will greatly affect the economy of countries that rely on a large number of low skill jobs.</li> <li>● <b>Limited Size:</b> The size of objects created with 3d printers is currently limited.</li> <li>● <b>Limited Raw Materials:</b> Traditional manufacturing of products has an enormous range of raw materials that can be used. Presently 3d printers can work up to approximately 100 different raw materials and creating products</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Violation of Copyrights:</b> The biggest disadvantage of 3d printing is Counterfeiting. Anyone who gets a hold of a blueprint will be able to counterfeit products easily.</li> <li>● <b>Production of Dangerous Items:</b> With 3d printers, plastic knives, guns, and any other hazardous objects can be created. It makes easier for terrorists and criminals bring a weapon without being detected.</li> </ul>
<b>India's prospect</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>According to 6Wresearch, India 3D printer market is expected to cross \$79 million by 2021</b>, with automotive applications accounting for the biggest chunk of business.</li> <li>● 3D printers are emerging as a key growing printing technology in the global landscape.</li> <li>● In India, the market for 3D printers is at its nascent stage. However, It offers huge growth opportunities in the coming years.</li> </ul>
<b>Advantages for India :</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>low cost of manufacturing</b></li> <li>● <b>Boost to make in India:</b> increasing penetration across various applications coupled with Make-in-India campaign would spur the 3D printer market in India.</li> <li>● <b>Health:</b> 3D printing offers body organs at a cheap price. This could be a potential game-changer for the health sector in India. It also helps to reduce out of pocket expenditure of Indians.</li> <li>● <b>Boost to start-ups and job creation:</b> 3D printing requires less space than traditional manufacturing. It is an advantage to startups with less capital and space. Also, various skilled workers could try their innovation in 3 D printing.</li> <li>● <b>Low carbon footprints:</b> As 3 D printing technology is less carbon emissive it offers environmental benefits.</li> <li>● <b>Increase efficiency:</b> so less material go in waste.</li> </ul>
<b>Key hurdles in India</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>key hurdles for the adoption in the country:</b> Low market awareness, cost constraint, and lower domestic production.</li> <li>● <b>Policy hurdles:</b> India has still not defined 3D printers as a product category. Due to this, 3D printers in India attract close to 40 percent excise duty, making it less accessible to Indian customers.</li> </ul>
<b>Conclusion</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 3D printing is a technology of future. It has huge potential for mankind. But without adequate precautions, this technology can lead to severe unemployment in the country.</li> <li>● So there is need of policy measures which could boost 3 D printing at the same time skilling of manpower is also needed.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu



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## Electric Vehicles in India

<b>Why it is in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In an effort to combat air pollution, the Delhi government released its draft “Electric Vehicle Policy 2018”.</li> <li>● Which aims to have at least 25 per cent e-vehicles among new registrations by 2023.</li> </ul>
<b>National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government of India launched the <b>National Electric Mobility Mission Plan (NEMMP) 2020 in 2013.</b></li> <li>● It aims <b>to achieve national fuel security</b> by promoting hybrid and electric vehicles in the country.</li> <li>● There is an ambitious target <b>to achieve 6-7 million sales of hybrid and electric vehicles year on year from 2020 onwards.</b></li> <li>● Government aims to provide fiscal and monetary incentives to kick start this nascent technology.</li> <li>● With the support from the Government, the cumulative sale is expected to reach 15-16 Million by 2020.</li> <li>● It is expected to save 9500 Million Liters of crude oil equivalent to Rs. 62000 Cr. savings.</li> </ul>
<b>FAME-India</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>FAME-India (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of hybrid &amp; Electric vehicles in India)</b> scheme objective is to support hybrid/electric vehicles market development and Manufacturing eco-system.</li> <li>● <b>Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &amp;) Electric Vehicles (FAME India) is under NEMMP 2020 with an initial outlay of Rs. 75 Cr.</b></li> <li>● The FAME India Scheme is aimed at incentivising all vehicle segments i.e. 2 Wheeler, 3 Wheeler Auto, Passenger 4 Wheeler Vehicle, Light Commercial Vehicles and Buses.</li> <li>● <b>Four focus areas of FAME scheme are ...</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Technology development</li> <li>(2) Demand creation</li> <li>(3) Pilot projects and</li> <li>(4) Charging infrastructure.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Advantages of using electric cars</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>No Gas Required:</b> Electric cars are entirely charged by the electricity meaning we don't need to buy any gas hence far cheaper to run.</li> <li>● <b>Savings:</b> They can save money in the form of lesser cost of using and government subsidies.</li> <li>● <b>No Emissions:</b> Electric cars are 100 percent eco-friendly as they run on electrically powered engines.</li> <li>● <b>Popularity:</b> EV's are growing in popularity. With popularity comes all new types of cars being put on the market that are each unique.</li> <li>● <b>Safe to Drive:</b> Electric cars undergo same fitness and testing procedures test as other fuel powered cars and are as safe as conventional cars.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Low Maintenance:</b> Since there is no need to lubricate the engines the maintenance cost of these cars has come down.</li> <li>● <b>Reduced Noise Pollution:</b> Electric cars put curb on noise pollution as they are much quieter. Electric motors are capable of providing smooth drive with higher acceleration over longer distances.</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages of using e vehicles</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Recharge Points:</b> Electric fuelling stations are still in the development stages.</li> <li>2. <b>Availability of Electricity:</b> Sometimes electric cars require a huge charge in order to function properly.</li> <li>3. <b>Short Driving Range and Speed:</b> Electric cars are limited by range and speed. Most of these cars have range about 50-100 miles and need to be recharged again.</li> <li>4. <b>Longer Recharge Time:</b> While it takes couple of minutes to fuel your gasoline powered car, an electric car take about 4-6 hours to get fully charged.</li> <li>5. <b>Silence as Disadvantage:</b> Silence can be a bit disadvantage as it can lead to accidents in some cases.</li> <li>6. <b>Normally 2 Seaters:</b> Most of the electric cars available today are small and 2 seated only.</li> <li>7. <b>Battery Replacement:</b> Depending on the type and usage of battery, batteries of almost all electric cars are required to be changed every 3-10 years.</li> <li>8. <b>Not Suitable for Cities Facing Shortage of Power:</b> As electric cars need power to charge up, cities already facing acute power shortage are not suitable for electric cars.</li> </ol>
<b>Why there is need for electric vehicles in India?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Cost Saving :</b> NITI Aayog has estimated that the nation can save up to Rs. 4 lakh crore by rapidly adopting EVs.</li> <li>● <b>Renewable energy plan:</b> It will help in achieving India's ambitious renewable energy plan.</li> <li>● <b>India's INDC:</b> It will promote clean and green energy. Hence environment friendly. Thus, will help in achieving the target of "Paris climate agreements".</li> <li>● <b>Addressing pollution:</b> It will help in addressing vehicular pollution in India.</li> <li>● <b>Global warming:</b> It will help in curbing green houses. Hence will reduce global warming.</li> </ul>
<b>What are policy challenges in India's case?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Only 35% inputs for EV's are manufactured in India therefore there is high import dependency.</li> <li>● Capital costs are high and the payoff is uncertain.</li> <li>● Batteries make up 50% of EV costs. India does not have any known reserves of lithium and cobalt, which makes it entirely dependent on imports of lithium-ion batteries from Japan and China.</li> <li>● while electric vehicles are taxed at 12% under the goods and services tax (GST), batteries were taxed at 28% until recently. This has now been lowered to 18%.</li> <li>● Indian EVs is incapable of traversing even city distances without running out of charge, a wide network of charging stations is imminent for attracting investment: charging infrastructure.</li> <li>● An EV, after all, is only as clean as the electricity source it uses. In India, thermal sources account for about 65% of capacity.</li> </ul>
<b>Measures needed to promote e</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>NITI Aayog recommendations in its report-</u></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Subsidization and Penalisation-</b> The government must <b>subsidize the EV industry</b> while penalizing conventional cars.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

vehicles in india	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Loans-</b> Reduction in Taxes and interest rates for loans on EVs.</li> <li>(2) <b>Sale and registration-</b> Reduction in the sale and registration of <b>conventional cars</b>.</li> <li>(3) <b>Creating Infrastructure-</b> Using taxes from diesel and petrol car sales to <b>create electric charging stations</b>.</li> <li>(4) <b>It also suggests setting up:</b></li> <li>(5) <b>Manufacturer consortium-</b> for batteries, common components,</li> <li>(6) <b>Platforms-</b> to <b>develop battery cell technologies</b> and packs and to procure common components for Indian original equipment manufacturers.</li> <li>(7) <b>Stabilizing the policy environment-</b> when it comes to taxes, non-fiscal incentives and the infrastructure needed to tackle.</li> </ol>
Source	Conserve enery future website, the hindu, PIB



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# CSR activities in India

<p><b>Why in News?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government has launched portal called “Main Nahi Hum” for IT professionals to promote their innovative ideas for social development.</li> <li>● This initiated the debate on CSR activities in India.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CSR in India</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is defined as operating a business in a manner <b>that meets or exceeds the ethical, legal, commercial and public expectations that society has of business.</b></li> <li>● The <b>Corporate Social Responsibility</b> concept in India is governed by <b>Section 135 of the Companies Act, 2013.</b></li> <li>● India has the most elaborated CSR mechanism and implementation strategy</li> <li>● The CSR ambit is getting bigger as among various large economies India is a country which has assured by mandating CSR through its legislative action.</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="411 846 1248 1217" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>WHAT'S YOUR CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY?</b></p> <p>Every company having net worth of ₹500 cr or more, turnover of ₹1,000 cr or more, or a net profit of ₹5 cr or more during a financial year required to form a corporate social responsibility committee of the board</p> <p>Board to ensure the company spends, in every financial year, at least 2% of its average net profit during the three immediately preceding financial years on CSR</p> <p><b>Companies Act, 2013, lists following as CSR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Eradicating extreme hunger and poverty;</li> <li>▪ Promotion of education;</li> <li>▪ Promoting gender equality and empowering women;</li> <li>▪ Reducing child mortality and improving maternal health;</li> <li>▪ Combating human immunodeficiency virus, acquired immune deficiency syndrome, malaria and other diseases;</li> <li>▪ Ensuring environmental sustainability;</li> <li>▪ Employment enhancing vocational skills;</li> <li>▪ Social business projects;</li> <li>▪ Contribution to the Prime Minister's National Relief Fund or any other fund set up by the Centre or states for socio-economic development &amp; relief and funds for the welfare of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes, minorities and women;</li> <li>▪ Such other matters as may be prescribed</li> </ul> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A High-Level Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility – 2018 (HLC-2018) has been constituted under the Chairmanship of Shri. Injeti Srinivas.</li> <li>● <b>The mandate of committee:</b> to review the existing framework and guide and formulate the roadmap for a coherent policy on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR).</li> </ul>
<p><b>Main Nahin Hum Portal and App</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● PM Modi has launched the “<b>Main Nahi Hum</b>” Portal and App for <b>IT Professionals</b>. It works on the theme “<b>Self4Society</b>”.</li> </ul> <p><b>Aim:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) to help catalyze greater collaboration <b>towards the service of the weaker sections of society especially by leveraging the benefits of technology.</b></li> <li>(2) <b>to generate wider participation of interested people</b> who are motivated to work for the benefit of society.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Why CSR is needed today?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● CSR as a strategy is becoming increasingly important for India today because of three identifiable trends:</li> <li>● <b>Changing social expectations:</b></li> <li>● As corporates and business houses degrading the environment through their various activities, they expected to compensate this way.</li> <li>● Consumers and society, in general, expect more from the companies whose products they buy.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Redistribution of wealth: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Due to limited capacity of government CSR can act as catalyst of redistribution of wealth from private sector.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Globalization:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Rising number of MNCs in developing countries which often have negative impact on development process.</li> <li>➤ In this globalized era CSR can act as moderator for negative impact of globalization.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Importance of CSR</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Productivity of Employees:</b> Companies that maximize their social responsibility potential encourage innovative and creative employees.</li> <li>● <b>Attracting FDI:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Companies with higher social responsibility attract more foreign investment.</li> <li>➤ It helps the country to get a valuable foreign exchange.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Development of Employees:</b> Employees are able to professionally and personally develop as a result of corporate social responsibility.</li> <li>● <b>Brand building:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ CSR activities create a good perception about the companies.</li> <li>➤ It goes a long way in creating a positive word of mouth and brand building for the organization on the whole.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Concern and challenges</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Reluctance of companies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has observed that among the 5,097 companies have filed annual reports till December 2016.</li> <li>➤ Only 3,118 companies had made some contribution towards CSR expenditure.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Lack of Innovation and creativity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ There has been very little strategic thinking and innovation in the CSR where corporations can play a leadership role in contributing to society.</li> <li>➤ This also shows that companies in India have generally not understood the larger goals of CSR, viewing it more as a charitable act.</li> <li>➤ Only Health and Education sector get about 50% of total CSR funding. Other important sectors such as poverty alleviation, employment generation did not get enough funding.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Regional Disparity:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ More industrialized states are more CSR activities over poorer. Maharashtra receives about 40 % of total spending.</li> <li>➤ more remote regions where development aid is acutely needed are not getting significant CSR activities.</li> <li>➤ Northeast and Kashmir are getting very low from CSR. They are most vulnerable</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Way ahead</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● All corporate should look at sustainable development and National Development Agenda.</li> <li>● Regional and structural inequalities should fade out.</li> <li>● Structuring CSR funds to support government welfare schemes will make a huge difference.</li> <li>● Need to learn how CSR funds are used effectively in different countries.</li> <li>● Ministry of corporate affairs must incentivize companies to encourage employees to provide technical assistance for those non-profit organizations</li> </ul>

	receiving grant support. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● A combination of both financial and technical resources will enhance the impact of a company's donations.</li></ul>
<b>Sources</b>	India CSR portal, PIB, Rajyasabha



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## Slums in India

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● According to census 2011, more than 30% population lives in urban areas, which is growing 3% per year since then.</li> <li>● This increase in urban population with a lack of affordable houses is generating slums in urban areas.</li> </ul>
<b>Slums</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The slum is the residential area where <b>dwellings are unfit for human habitation</b> because of overcrowding, lack of ventilation or sanitation facility.</li> <li>● There is <b>no regular supply of water, electricity or proper sanitation facilities</b>. The existing drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions.</li> <li>● Slums are generally built on government land that is lying unclaimed or vacant.</li> <li>● They are mostly occupied by migrant workers, unskilled labor, domestic workers and other such persons who cannot afford proper housing in the cities.</li> </ul>
<b>Slums in India</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The number of people living in slums in India has more than doubled in the past two decades.</li> <li>● As per the last census, 13.8 million households, about 64 million people, live in city slums nationwide.</li> <li>● That's 17.4 % of all urban households.</li> <li>● Dharavi, Mumbai, is Asia's largest slum.</li> <li>● About <b>one in six Indian city resident</b> lives in an <b>urban slum</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Reasons behind the existence of Slums</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>No Alternative Option:</b> Most people in slums live there because they have no other viable housing options.</li> <li>● <b>Lack of Affordability:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Most people migrate to urban areas in search of employment. Once in the city, they find only underpaid unskilled jobs.</li> <li>(2) Thus, with such jobs these persons are forced to find accommodation in a settlement in slums that contribute to the perpetuation of slums.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● The <b>rehabilitation of the slums takes place at a location which is far away from the core areas</b> and employability is zero. Hence instead of shifting to such places, people find it convenient to stay back in slums.</li> </ul>
<b>Problems of Slums</b>	<p><b>Congested Settlement:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The settlements are built in small, congested areas, near airports, railway lines and industries, rivers and other water bodies, and markets.</li> </ul> <p><b>Sanitation Woes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Slums lack proper sanitation facilities. Most of the people tend to defecate in open.</li> <li>● Even the common toilets that are used by the dwellers are not connected with proper sewage systems.</li> </ul> <p><b>Fragile Housing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The settlements are built with whatever material people there can find be if corrugated sheets or gunny bags or polythene bags.</li> <li>● This also creates complications during monsoon when there is flooding during heavy rains.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Poverty:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● With lack of education, slum dwellers have to opt for jobs such as rag picking, labourers and house servants.</li> <li>● They earn a meagre income, just enough to buy a day's meal.</li> </ul> <p><b>Water Supply:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Water is supplied only for a few hours per day.</li> <li>● There is no regulated supply of electricity in slums, making living conditions very poor.</li> </ul> <p><b>Garbage &amp; Filth:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Due to reckless disposal and lack of proper garbage management, one sees dumps of garbage everywhere.</li> <li>● The dumped waste spread foul odour and at the same time becomes breeding ground for flies and mosquitoes which carry several diseases with them.</li> </ul> <p><b>Water borne disease:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In rainy season there is standing water everywhere, spreading all kinds of water borne diseases.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Government Initiatives</b></p>	<p><b>Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It provides substantial central financial assistance to cities for infrastructure and capacity development for improved governance and <b>slum development</b> through Basic Services to the Urban Poor.</li> <li>● These include security of tenure at affordable prices, improved housing, water supply, sanitation, education, health and social security.</li> <li>● This scheme is now succeeded by <b>Atal AMRUT Mission</b>.</li> <li>● The purpose of <b>Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation (AMRUT)</b> is to ensure that every household has access to a tap with assured supply of water and a sewerage connection.</li> </ul> <p><b>Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) scheme ran between 2009 and 2014 as a central sector scheme focusing on slum free India using JNNURM support.</li> <li>● RAY sees slum settlements as spatial entities that can be identified, targeted and reached through the following development options:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) <b>Slum improvement.</b></li> <li>(ii) <b>Slum upgrading.</b></li> <li>(iii) <b>Slum redevelopment.</b></li> <li>(iv) <b>Slum resettlement.</b></li> </ol> </li> <li>● This scheme is now succeeded by <b>Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY)</b></li> <li>● PMAY Scheme is an initiative provided by the Government of India which aims at providing affordable housing to the urban poor.</li> <li>● The mission of this initiative is to provide <b>housing for all by the year 2022.</b></li> </ul>
<p><b>Way forward</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To make and keep India beautiful, first of all, we need to improve the living conditions in Slums.</li> <li>● <b>Participation:</b> It's a huge task and would require combine efforts from Government and active and equal participation from communities.</li> <li>● <b>NGOs and community-based organisations</b> active in the area of slum housing and development, to identify possible development options.</li> <li>● <b>Financing:</b> Easy financing and loaning options at affordable interest rates for upgrading, building and extension of the existing shelter should be made available.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● <b>Use of Technology:</b> Use of drones improves the efficiency of the process. Technology promotes inclusivity for all and not exclusivity for a few.</li><li>● <b>Odisha Model:</b> As Odisha leads the way, the entire country must take note of the lessons learnt and work towards a technology-enabled, citizen-centric delivery of economic growth through critical assets such as land and property.</li><li>● <b>To rehabilitate the downtrodden,</b> the government should offer them areas where they can stay within the community and not in isolated projects and societies.</li><li>● <b>In-situ Approach:</b> Instead of forced evictions, authorities should plan an in-situ upgrading approach, to the extent possible.</li></ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu, Indian Express, PIB, LiveMint.



**UPSC**

# **Current Affairs November 2018**

**By Jawwad Kazi**

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## 1

## Polity

**SC: live-in partner can seek maintenance**

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A live-in partner can seek maintenance under the <b>Domestic Violence Act</b>, the <b>Supreme Court</b> has said.</li> <li>● The 2005 Act provides an <b>“efficacious remedy” for maintenance even if the victim is not a legally wedded wife.</b></li> </ul>
Entitled to relief	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Under the provisions of the DVC Act, 2005 the victim i.e. estranged wife or live-in-partner would be entitled to more relief than what is contemplated under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973</li> <li>● The economic abuse also constitutes domestic violence under the 2005 Act, the Bench noted in the order.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

**Long cohabitation is presumed marriage: SC**

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Supreme Court has upheld the “presumption” that a couple who live together as husband and wife are legally married and the woman can claim maintenance under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.</li> <li>● A Bench of SC observed that it is “fairly well settled that the law presumes in favour of marriage and against concubinage when a man and woman have cohabited continuously for a number of years”.</li> </ul>
Legal loopholes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The man should not be allowed to benefit from the legal loopholes by enjoying the advantages of a de facto marriage without undertaking the duties and obligations.</li> <li>● Any other interpretation would lead the woman to vagrancy and destitution, which the provision of maintenance in Section 125 is meant to prevent</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

**No double jeopardy bar if there was no trial: Supreme Court**

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The SC has held that the bar of <b>double jeopardy</b> does not arise:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) if an accused was discharged of a criminal offence, even before the commencement of trial,</li> <li>(2) on the basis of an invalid sanction for prosecution.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Article 20 of the constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Article 20 (2) of the Constitution mandates that a person cannot be prosecuted or punished twice for the same offence.</li> <li>● A Bench of SC held in an October 30 judgment that if an <b>“accused has not been tried at all and convicted or acquitted, the principles of double jeopardy cannot be invoked at all.”</b></li> <li>● If an earlier order of sanction was found to be invalid, there is no bar for the competent authority to issue a proper order of sanction for prosecution.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There was no bar for filing fresh/supplementary charge sheet after obtaining a valid sanction for prosecution.</li> <li>● Once it found that there was no valid sanction, the special court should have directed the prosecution to do the needful.</li> <li>● The special court has not given sufficient opportunities to produce valid prosecution sanction from the competent authority.</li> <li>● It erred in refusing to take cognizance of the case even after production of valid prosecution sanction obtained from the competent authority and the High Court was not right in affirming the order of the special court.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

### Delay in recruitment of judges

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Supreme Court pulled up various State governments and the administrative side of the High Courts for delay in filling vacancies in subordinate judicial services.</li> <li>● A Bench had taken <i>suomotu</i> cognizance of more than 5,000 vacancies for subordinate judicial posts even as pendency touched crores.</li> <li>● The Supreme Court cautioned the States and the High Courts that it would resort to a “<b>centralized selection mechanism</b>” if they did not act promptly to fill the over 5,000 judicial posts lying vacant in the lower judiciary.</li> </ul>
Poor infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It found that the source of the problem lay in poor infrastructure from courtrooms to residences for judges a sheer lackadaisical approach to conducting the appointment process on time.</li> <li>● The court found there were more than 1,000 vacancies in Uttar Pradesh alone.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

### Safe Food project in Kerala

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Health Department of Kerala to launch an initiative to enforce dietary guidelines.</li> <li>● It involves the reduction of <b>trans fatty acids (TFAs), salt and sugar in commercially available foods in the State.</b></li> <li>● The initiative is with technical support from: The World Bank, WHO and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).</li> <li>● It is being launched as unhealthy diet is pushing up metabolic syndrome and premature deaths due to non-communicable diseases (NCDs) among Keralites.</li> <li>● Latest estimates put the prevalence of metabolic syndrome (MS) in <b>Kerala</b> between 24-33%, indicating that one in three or four persons predominantly women have this condition.</li> <li>● Metabolic syndrome (MS) is a cluster of metabolic abnormalities such as high blood pressure, high blood sugar, abdominal obesity abnormal cholesterol or triglyceride levels — that occur together, raising risk of heart disease, stroke and diabetes.</li> </ul>
TFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● WHO recommends that trans-fat intake be limited to less than 1% of total energy intake and has called for the total elimination of TFAs in global food supply by 2023.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FSSAI has proposed to limit TFA limit in foods to 2% and eliminate trans fats from foods by 2022.</li> <li>● Enforcing the current FSSAI legislation limiting TFAs at 5% is the need of the hour.</li> <li>● Denmark pioneered trans-fat ban in 2003 and in three years, their CVD mortality rates plummeted.</li> <li>● Food industry players and the unorganized food sector should be persuaded to switch to commercially viable alternatives to TFAs.</li> </ul>
<b>What is strategy?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The State Food Safety wing will embark on a sample study across the State, collecting at least 300 samples of popular food items from the market and testing the TFA content.</li> <li>● The Health Department hopes that once it has the baseline information, it can convince the food industry players and the unorganized food sector about the need to keep TFA levels within legal limits.</li> <li>● Awareness campaigns targeting the public and advocacy will follow.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu</b>

### CIC asks Registrar General of India to change its data collection procedure

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The CIC has directed the Registrar General of India (RGI) to change its practices of data collection, especially with regard to births and deaths.</li> </ul>
<b>RGI as data aggregator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● During the hearing, the official representing the RGI said the office was a data aggregator.</li> <li>● The states were tasked with the <b>overall implementation under section 3 of the Registration of Births and Deaths (RBD) Act</b>, whereas the ground-level record was maintained by the registrars appointed by the respective states.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu

### Parents cannot interfere in lives of married couple: HC

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Allahabad High Court has noted that nobody, including the parents of a man and woman, can interfere in the couple's married life and their living together if the two individuals are of legal age.</li> <li>● The court passed the order while considering a writ petition filed by a couple seeking direction to their parents and others to not interfere in their married life and also for protection of their lives and liberty.</li> </ul>
<b>Validity of marriage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The court noted that both the petitioners are “major” and have “solemnized” their marriage out of their own sweet and free will”.</li> <li>● The court, however, said it had not adjudicated upon the alleged marriage of the petitioners.</li> <li>● The two submitted themselves as husband and wife.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu

### NGT to inspect Panipat refinery

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has constituted a committee to carry out inspections, following a plea alleging air pollution by the Indian Oil .</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The inspection team comprises of representatives from the Central Pollution Control Board, Haryana State Pollution Control Board and Deputy Commissioner, Panipat.</li> </ul>
<b>Report within a month</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The National Green Tribunal has been established in 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010.</li> <li>● It draws inspiration from India's constitutional provision of Article 21, which assures the citizens of India the right to a healthy environment.</li> <li>● It aims for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources including enforcement of any legal right relating to the environment and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.</li> <li>● It has Original Jurisdiction on matters of "substantial question relating to environment" and &amp; "damage to the environment due to specific activity" (such as pollution).</li> <li>● It follows principles of Natural Justice</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu

## State of forensic labs

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A Ministry of Home Affairs document in the <b>Supreme Court</b> shows that vacancies in the country's forensic labs are alarmingly high even as cases pile up in trial courts and undertrial prisoners languish in jails.</li> <li>● The forensic laboratories, at both the Central and State levels, are used to examine crucial evidence which could decide between life and death in many criminal cases.</li> <li>● The role of the laboratories has expanded lately with the emergence of cybercrime and drug-related offences.</li> <li>● They also play a major role in using medical evidence to crack sex crimes.</li> </ul>
<b>Upgrades proposed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Ministry document also highlights policies to upgrade State FSLs, including under the Central government scheme called '<b>Modernization of Police Forces</b>'.</li> <li>● The scheme aims to integrate police stations to set up a national data base of crime and criminal records which would be linked with other pillars of criminal justice system such as prisons, FSL and prosecution offices.</li> <li>● Directorate of Forensic Science Service (Ministry Home Affairs) as per its charter of duties continuously provides technical support to the State FSLs for establishment of new divisions like DNA, CYBER, audio-video, etc, training and any other technical support.</li> </ul>

## PIL urges Minimum Wages Act for domestic workers

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking its intervention to bring dignity to "<b>India's invisible workforce in the informal sector</b>" — <b>the domestic workers</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>The Need of Minimum wage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The lack of education makes domestic workers prone to violence and abuse at the hands of their employers and placement agencies.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The petition asked the Supreme Court to lay down guidelines to protect the workers' rights.</li> <li>● As employment is largely through word of mouth or personal referrals, employment contracts are rarely negotiated, leaving the terms of employment to the whims of the employer.</li> <li>● The petition said Indian homes have witnessed a 120% increase in domestic workers in the decade post liberalization. While the figure was 7,40,000 in 1991, it has increased to 16.6 lakh in 2001.</li> <li>● The petition sought the recognition of domestic work under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948. Their work hours should be reduced to eight a day and they should be given a mandatory weekly off as a basic right under Article 21.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu

## Mekedatu project

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Central Water Commission approved the pre-feasibility report submitted by the state government</li> <li>● The Commission has asked the Karnataka government to formulate a detailed project report for the Mekedatu Project.</li> <li>● The CWC has also stated that the Karnataka government must provide Tamil Nadu with the required water from River Cauvery as prescribed by the Supreme Court.</li> </ul>
<b>What is the Mekedatu project?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Mekedatu is a deep gorge situated about 100 km away from Bengaluru city in Ramanagara district.</li> <li>● The Rs 5,912-crore project aims to alleviate the drinking water problems of Bengaluru and Ramanagara district.</li> <li>● It is also expected to generate hydro-electricity to meet the power needs of the state.</li> <li>● The government at the time said that the reservoir would have a capacity of 66 tmcft, after the release of water to Tamil Nadu.</li> </ul>
<b>Why the controversy?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Tamil Nadu's stand was that the project would not only impede the water available to farmers in the state but it would also go against the mandate that the total quantity of water must be for consumptive use, as prescribed by the Tribunal.</li> <li>● On February 16, 2018, the Supreme Court ordered the setting up of a scheme that would oversee the implementation of its orders as well as arbitrate on any future water disputes between the two states.</li> <li>● With one of Tamil Nadu's major contentions being settled, the Chief Minister Palaniswami has contended that Karnataka approaching the CWC without the concurrence of Tamil Nadu was in violation of the apex court verdict.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu

## #MeToo: GoM may review law

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Group of Ministers (GoM) constituted to examine sexual harassment at the workplaces may consider amending the law against sexual harassment at workplaces.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The GoM headed by Home Minister Rajnath Singh.</li> <li>● The GoM includes Minister for Road Transport and Shipping Nitin Gadkari, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and WCD Minister Maneka Gandhi.</li> </ul>
<b>Vishaka guidelines</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Vishaka Guidelines laid down by the Supreme Court in 1997 lays the onus on the employer to prevent or deter acts of sexual harassment, apart from “providing resolution, settlement or prosecution of acts of sexual harassment.”</li> <li>● The Act lays down the duties of an employer:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Ensuring a safe working place.</li> <li>(2) Displaying penal consequences of sexual harassment.</li> <li>(3) Creating awareness, as well as facilitating an internal probe.</li> <li>(4) The employer is liable to pay a fine of Rs. 50,000 if he fails to comply with the inquiry report submitted by an internal complaints committee or doesn't report the number of cases in the annual report.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● The Justice J. S. Verma panel had recommended an employment tribunal instead of an internal committee to probe complaints.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu</b>

## Maharashtra Assembly approves 16% quota for Marathas

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>Maharashtra</b> Assembly unanimously passed a Bill proposing 16% reservation for Marathas in government jobs and education.</li> <li>● With this, 85% of the State's population will be entitled to constitutional benefits under Article 15(4), 16 (4) of the Constitution.</li> <li>● The approval of the Bill will also see the reservation limit go up from the current 52% to 68%, thus crossing the 50% ceiling set by Supreme Court.</li> </ul>
<b>SEBC report</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Government of Maharashtra has considered the report of the commission.</li> <li>● On the basis of exhaustive study of the Commission, including employment, education, social status, economic status, living conditions, the government is of the opinion declaring Marathas SEBC.</li> <li>● While retaining the principle of creamy layer for the purpose of reservation to the Socially Economically Backward Class under the Act, the Bill urged that reservation be made available to only those persons found “below” the layer.</li> <li>● The draft Bill while giving a backdrop for the community, which constitutes 30% of state's population, said the presence of Marathas in position of academic excellence is “very marginal”.</li> <li>● Around 70% are residing in kuccha homes, only 35.39% of them have personal tap water, 31.79% rely on traditional sources of firewood.</li> <li>● While 2,152 Maratha farmers have committed suicide as against total suicides numbered 13,368 between 2013-18.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu</b>



## 2

# Environment

## MoEF study to Evaluate Health Effects of Environment Exposure in 20 Cities

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A National Environmental Health Profile Project, aimed at evaluating the health effects arising from environmental exposure, is underway at the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF).</li> </ul>
<b>About the study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The study will be carried out across 20 cities divided into four zones.</li> <li>● There are five cities in each zone and one city has been taken as a referral city.</li> <li>● The city where the pollution levels are not very high is taken as the referral city, and the cities with the higher pollution loads are taken as test cities where the study will be conducted.</li> <li>● All of them will follow the same protocol and there will be a harmonization of data which will look at met data, health data and particulate matter.</li> <li>● In the north zone, Delhi, Ludhiana, Kanpur and Raipur will serve as test cities while Guwahati will be the referral city.</li> <li>● Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam and Chennai will be test cities and Thiruvananthapuram will be the referral point for the south.</li> <li>● In the west zone, Ahmedabad, Mumbai, Jaipur, Bhopal will serve as test areas while Panjim will be the reference point.</li> <li>● In the east, Patna, Kolkata, and two other cities will be test cities, and Shillong will be the referral point.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu

## Oceans Heating Faster: Study

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The world's oceans have absorbed 60% more heat than previously thought over the last quarter of a century.</li> </ul>
<b>About study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● According to their most recent assessment this month, scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said that the world's oceans have absorbed 90% of the temperature rise caused by man-made carbon emissions.</li> <li>● <b>But new research published in the journal <i>Nature</i> found that for each of the last 25 years, oceans had absorbed heat energy equivalent to 150 times the amount of electricity mankind produces annually.</b></li> <li>● That is 60% higher than what previous studies showed.</li> <li>● While those studies relied on tallying the excess heat produced by known man</li> <li>● made greenhouse gas emissions, a team of U.S.-based scientists focussed on two gases found naturally in the atmosphere — Oxygen and carbon dioxide.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Both gases are soluble in water, but the rate at which water absorbs them decreases as it warms.</li> <li>● The IPCC warns that drastic measures need taking in order to limit global warming to 1.5 Celsius by the end of the century but the world produced a record amount of carbon emissions in 2017.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

## Greater flamingoes

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● After a long a gap, a <b>flock of five greater flamingoes</b> has been spotted on the Coast of Hope Island, a part of the <b>Coringa Wildlife</b> Sanctuary.</li> </ul>
Greater Flamingoes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The long-legged and long-necked birds were last seen in a group about two and a half decades ago.</li> <li>● While a lone flamingo was recorded in the 2016 Asian Water Bird Census at Sirra Yanam village in East Godavari district.</li> <li>● A group of greater flamingoes, however, was last seen here in 1993.</li> <li>● The sighting is an important development. Generally, the birds are always on the lookout for mudflats for nesting.</li> <li>● The greater flamingoes are the filter feeders and get their characteristic pink color from their diet of brine shrimps and algae available in the coastal wetlands</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

## Avni killing: NTCA seeks report

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has commissioned a report from the Maharashtra Forest Department on how tigress Avni (T1) was killed.</li> <li>● If it is not satisfied [with the description of events] on whether the animal was executed following established procedure NTCA will conduct their own investigation.</li> </ul>
NTCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, through amendment in 2006, for strengthening tiger conservation.</li> <li>● <b>Chairman:</b> Minister for Environment and Forests.</li> <li>● <b>Members:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The eight experts or professionals having qualifications and experience in wildlife conservation and welfare of people including tribal, apart from three Members of Parliament of whom two will be elected by the House of the People and one by the Council of States.</li> <li>(2) The Inspector General of Forests, in charge of project Tiger, will be ex-officio Member Secretary.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

## Earth's ozone layer is finally healing, says UN

<p><b>Why is it in news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A new United Nations report has revealed that the ozone layer is beginning to heal from all the damage caused by aerosol sprays and other man-made chemicals.</li> <li>● The protective shield in Earth’s atmosphere had been thinning out before scientists raised the alarm about the impact of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) in the 1980s.</li> <li>● As a result of bans introduced by global governments, the upper ozone layer above the Northern Hemisphere should be completely restored in the 2030s.</li> <li>● A gaping hole in the ozone over the Antarctic won’t disappear until later – sometime in the 2060s, according to a scientific assessment released at a conference in Quito, Ecuador.</li> <li>● The ozone layer in the Southern Hemisphere should be repaired by mid-century.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Ozone depletion</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The ozone layer starts around six miles above the Earth and protects the planet from the Sun’s cancer-causing ultraviolet rays.</li> <li>● Use of CFCs in aerosol sprays and refrigerator coolants began eating away at the ozone in the 1970s.</li> <li>● But in 1987, countries around the world agreed in the Montreal Protocol to phase out CFCs and businesses came up with replacements for spray cans and other forms of the harmful chemicals.</li> <li>● At its worst in the late 1990s, about 10 per cent of the upper ozone layer was depleted.</li> <li>● If nothing had been done to stop the thinning, the world would have destroyed two-thirds of its ozone layer by 2065</li> <li>● One potential problem is that new technology has found an increase in emissions of a particular kind of banned CFC in east Asia, the report noted.</li> <li>● And replacements now being used to cool cars and refrigerators need to be replaced themselves with chemicals that don’t make global warming worse.</li> <li>● An amendment to the Montreal Protocol that goes into effect next year would cut the use of some of those gases.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source</b></p>	<p>The Hindu</p>

### Shifting of Tigress, Sundari

<p><b>Why is it in news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sundari, the tigress captured following a few incidents of mauling in Odisha’s Satkosia Tiger Reserve, may not be shifted to the Nandankanan Zoological Park as per the Central Zoo Authority.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Why Zoo has opposed?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The ambitious tiger reintroduction programme at STR had run into controversy after <b>Sundari, which was translocated from the Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, attacked a man in Satkosia leading to his death.</b></li> <li>● Angry villagers had then vandalised public property demanding shifting of the tigress.</li> <li>● Bowing to public pressure, the State Forest and Environment Department decided to tranquilise the big cat.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● After successful tranquilisation of the tigress on November 6, the animal was shifted to a makeshift enclosure set up at Raiguda, deep inside the Satkosia forest.</li> <li>● As per the strategy to achieve objectives of zoos specified in the National Zoo Policy, 1998, para 3.2.1 says <b>except for obtaining founder animals for approved breeding programme and infusion of new blood into inbred groups, no zoo shall collect animals from the wild.</b></li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

## Indian star tortoise

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Customs officials seized 490 Indian star tortoises when they were about to be smuggled out of Chennai harbour.</li> <li>● As it is prohibited to do so under Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, the star tortoises were seized under the Customs Act, 1962, read with Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, and Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, the release said.</li> </ul>
Indian star tortoise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>Indian star tortoise</b> (<i>Geochelone elegans</i>) is a threatened species of tortoise found in dry areas and scrub forest in India and Sri Lanka.</li> <li>● In countries like Malaysia, Thailand and Singapore, there is a huge demand for star tortoises.</li> <li>● They are traded usually for use in traditional medicines, for food and also to be kept as exotic pets.</li> <li>● This species is quite popular in the exotic pet trade, which is the main reason it is endangered</li> <li>● <b>IUCN:</b> Vulnerable.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

## Ice age crater discovered beneath Greenland glacier

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Buried beneath a kilometer of snow and ice in northern Greenland, scientists have uncovered an asteroid impact crater, bigger than the area of Paris.</li> <li>● This is the first time that a crater of any size has been found under one of Earth's continental ice sheets.</li> </ul>
About Crater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The researchers worked for the past three years to verify their discovery, initially made in the 2015.</li> <li>● The crater measures more than 31 km in diameter, placing it among the 25 largest impact craters on Earth.</li> <li>● It was formed when a kilometer-wide iron meteorite smashed into northern Greenland.</li> <li>● The crater is exceptionally well-preserved, and that is surprising, because glacier ice is an incredibly efficient erosive agent that would have quickly removed traces of the impact</li> <li>● So far, it has not been possible to date the crater directly, but its condition strongly suggests that it formed after ice began to cover Greenland, so younger than 3 million years old and possibly as recently as 12,000 years ago — toward the end of the last ice age.</li> </ul>

Source	The Hindu
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### The Sri Lankan Frogmouth

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The sighting of a rare bird species in the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary. Its presence was noticed on the eastern side of the Western Ghats for the first time.</li> <li>● The Sri Lankan Frogmouth, belonging to the <i>Batrachostomus moniliger</i> species, which was sighted at the sanctuary is usually confined to its habitation in the western side of the Western Ghats forests.</li> <li>● It is a relative of Nightjar, a crepuscular and nocturnal bird breeding in Europe and temperate Asia.</li> <li>● Its preferred habitat is a dry and open area with some small trees or bushes.</li> </ul>
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Only one egg a year	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The main feature is that it lays only one egg a year after the mating season in April-May.</li> </ul>
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Location of Chinnar WLS	<p>The map displays the state of Kerala with its district boundaries and major cities. Key sanctuaries marked include Ranipuzha, Aralam, Wayanad, Parambikulam, Peechi-Vazhani, Chimmony, Thattakad, Mangalavanam Bird, Chinnar Wildlife, Korinjimala, Shendurney, Neyyass, and Peppara. The Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary is specifically highlighted in the eastern part of the state, near the border with Tamil Nadu. A legend in the bottom right corner defines symbols for State Boundary, District Boundary, State Capital, District Headquarters, and Wildlife Sanctuaries. The map is titled 'KERALA WILDLIFE SANCTUARIES MAP' and includes a copyright notice for 2014 from indiamapsonline.com.</p>
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Source	The Hindu
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## Crop drying technology

<p><b>Why is it in news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Farmers in Odisha will soon have a handy tool <b>to bring down quantitative and qualitative losses caused by high moisture content during post-harvest operation.</b></li> <li>● An innovative drying technology, <b>Solar Bubble Dryer</b>, developed jointly by International Rice Research Institute, Philippines; Grainpro, a leading post-harvest solution providing company; and University of Hohenheim, Germany.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Solar Bubble Dryer</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The SBD is a low-cost drying technology that aims <b>to provide a simple and flexible alternative to sun-drying, while protecting from spillage, animals, weather and vehicles running over the grains.</b></li> <li>● The quantitative loss in traditional sun-drying method is estimated to be in the range of 15 to 30% between harvesting and milling.</li> <li>● Due to quality loss, farmer do not get proper price of their produce.</li> <li>● After harvesting, moisture content in paddy is found between 20 to 24% and it needs to be brought down to below 14% in order to protect the stock from insect attack and fungus formation.</li> <li>● The new technology has been developed in such a way that farmers can dismantle the machinery and reassemble it on their own.</li> <li>● Power can be drawn both from solar energy and traditional electricity.</li> <li>● The SBD is in use in almost all southeast Asian countries since 2016. Now, this is being introduced in India.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source</b></p>	<p>The Hindu</p>

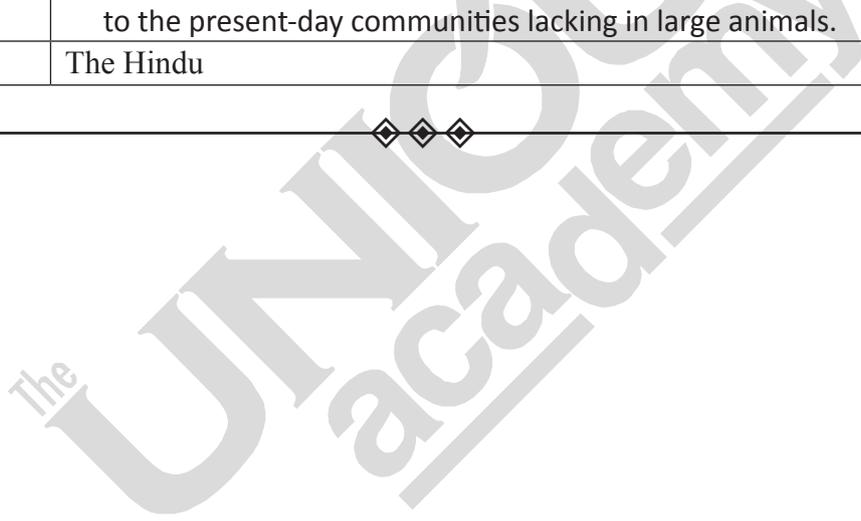
## India to study marijuana-derived drugs

<p><b>Why is it in news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Three major science administrators in India —              (1) The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research              (2) The Indian Council for Medical Research              (3) The Department of Biotechnology — are getting together to promote research in herbal drugs, some of which involve deriving new drugs from marijuana.</li> <li>● Here researchers will test whether strains of marijuana grown at the CSIR-IIIM campus in Jammu could be effective in the treatment of breast cancer, sickle-cell anaemia as well as be “bio-equivalent” (similar in make-up and effect) to marijuana-derived drugs already approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Restricted cultivation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Marijuana (or hemp), more formally parts of the cannabis super-family, is illegal for commercial cultivation though it grows as weed in several parts of the country.</li> <li>● Uttarakhand, Jammu and — as of this month Uttar Pradesh — have allowed restricted cultivation of the plant for medical research.</li> <li>● The studies into the therapeutic potential of marijuana is part of a larger governmental thrust to making new drugs derived from herbs and plants that find mention in Ayurvedic and other traditional-medicine knowledge systems.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The U.S. FDA this year approved Epidiolex (cannabidiol) [CBD] oral solution for the treatment of seizures associated with two rare and severe forms of epilepsy, Lennox-Gastaut syndrome and Dravet syndrome.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu

### Humans not to blame for ancient mammal extinctions in Africa: study

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● According to a study Human ancestor are not to blame for wiping out many of the large mammals in Africa over the last several million years.</li> <li>● Published in the journal <i>Science</i>, the study suggests that long-term environmental change drove the extinctions, mainly in the form of grassland expansion likely caused by falling atmospheric carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) levels.</li> <li>● Despite decades of literature asserting that early hominins impacted ancient African faunas, there have been few attempts to actually test this scenario or to explore alternatives.</li> <li>● To test for ancient hominin impacts, the researchers compiled a seven-million-year record of herbivore extinctions in eastern Africa, focusing on the very largest species, the so-called 'megaherbivores'.</li> </ul>
<b>Fossil study</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Their analysis reveals that over the last seven million years substantial megaherbivore extinctions occurred: 28 lineages became extinct, leading to the present-day communities lacking in large animals.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu



## 3

## International Relation

## India get Iran oil waiver

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● India is one of eight countries to receive temporary exemptions from U.S. sanctions on Iran that came into effect.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b><u>Countries granted exemptions-</u></b> China, India, Italy, Greece, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Turkey.</li> <li>● <b><u>Conditions on other countries-</u></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Each country on the list had demonstrated “significant reductions” of the purchase of Iranian crude over the past six months.</li> <li>(2) China and India, in that order, are the top two importers of Iranian oil. All payments for Iranian oil will be held in Foreign Accounts.</li> <li>(3) The waivers are only temporary, and the U.S. will expect countries that get them to keep cutting Iranian imports in the months ahead.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b><u>Conditions on Tehran-</u></b> Tehran can use the money to purchase non-sanctioned goods and for humanitarian purposes, including food, medicines and medical devices.</li> <li>● <b><u>Effects of sanctions-</u></b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) In the last fiscal year, India, which imports over 80% of its oil, sourced some 10% of its oil imports, or just over 22 million tons from Iran.</li> <li>(2) The Indian Oil Corporation is the biggest Indian customer for Iranian oil.</li> <li>(3) More than 20 countries have decreased their imports of Iranian crude.</li> <li>(4) It, thus, cutting Iran’s oil revenues by more than \$2.5 billion since May this year, when Donald Trump pulled the U.S. out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or “Iran Deal” .</li> </ol> </li> <li>● European Union-which consists of 28 countries including the UK-will not be one of the jurisdictions granted a temporary exemption.</li> <li>● The waivers are being granted in exchange for continued import cuts so as not to drive up oil prices.</li> </ul>
<b>Background</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● India is the second biggest buyer of Iranian oil after China.</li> <li>● India is being pushed by the US to restrict its monthly purchase to 15 million tonnes a year, down from 22.6 million tonnes bought in 2017-18 financial year.</li> <li>● New Delhi, however, had pushed back on zero oil imports citing the adverse impact on its economy and the inflationary impact it would have.</li> <li>● In September, during the Indo-US 2+2 dialogue, the US told the Indian side that it is not in Washington’s interest to damage the Indian economy.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu.

## China-Pakistan relations

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In recent visit of Pakistan PM to China, two countries signed 16 agreements to boost their "all-weather" strategic ties.</li> <li>● It will provide the "necessary support" to Pakistan to tide over the present financial crisis and expanding CPEC projects.</li> </ul>
<b>Visit outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Visit also aimed at-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) To iron out differences over the multi-billion-dollar, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).</li> <li>(2) Islamabad approaching 'friendly nations' to avoid a tough IMF bailout package. e Plan of Action (JCPOA) or “ Iran Deal” .</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>16 agreements mainly relating-</b> to poverty alleviation in Pakistan, strengthening cooperation in agriculture and industrial sectors and technical training.</li> <li>● <b>IMF bailout package-</b> Pakistan has already approached the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a bailout package and wants to minimise IMF loans fearing stringent conditions and scrutiny of the CPEC projects.</li> <li>● <b>Aid-</b> Beijing will provide \$6 billion in aid to Islamabad which included a loan of \$1.5 billion along with an additional package of \$3 billion for the CPEC.</li> <li>● <b>Foreign-ministerial dialogue mechanism-</b> Both sides have agreed to establish a foreign-ministerial dialogue mechanism to make overall planning and coordinate in various fields.</li> <li>● <b>Cooperation on Terrorism-</b> China has been pressing Pakistan to crack down on Uygur militants of the East Turkistan Islamic Movement (ETIM) in Xinjiang region from crossing in and out of the province.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu, Firstpost

## U.S. exemption from sanctions to Chabahar port work

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Activities related to the development of the Chabahar port in Iran will be exempt from U.S. sanctions that kicked in recently.</li> <li>● Sanctions kicked off following the 180-day cool-off period after the U.S. withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA or the ‘Iran Deal’) in May 2018.</li> <li>● This waiver will bring some measure of relief to India which had been discussing a sanctions exemption for Chabahar.</li> </ul>
<b>More in news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>India has committed \$500 million to the project and \$2 billion to build a railway line from Chabahar to Hajigaj in Afghanistan.</b></li> <li>● <b>Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act of 2012 (IFCA)</b> - It is the law under which sanctions on Iran were imposed by former U.S. President Barack Obama.</li> <li>● Sanctions have <b>implications</b> for non-U.S. companies working with Iran in various sectors, including shipping, shipbuilding, energy and insurance.</li> <li>● U.S. President Donald Trump’s South Asia strategy was focussed on economic growth for Afghanistan and a “close partnership” with India.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu</b>



# International events

## Sri Lanka crisis

<p><b>Why is it in news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sri Lanka's Supreme Court stayed President Maithripala Sirisena's dissolution of Parliament and restrained the Election Commission from preparing for snap elections.</li> <li>● The ruling comes amid a fortnight-long political upheaval.</li> <li>● It remains unclear if the House will take up a floor test.</li> <li>● President Sirisena's November 9 decision to dissolve Parliament came shortly after his party publicly admitted to lacking a majority in the House, heightening a political crisis.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Events of crisis</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In a snap move, Mr. Sirisena fired his PM Wickremesinghe, installed former President Mahinda Rajapaksa in his place, and swiftly swore in a "new cabinet", in the face of strong local and international criticism.</li> <li>● In exactly two weeks, Mr. Sirisena dissolved Parliament, preventing a vote on the House to test the rival camps' claims to majority.</li> <li>● Almost all political parties, except those aligned to the Sirisena-Rajapaksa front, petitioned the Supreme Court on Monday, challenging the "illegal" action.</li> <li>● One independent election commissioner joined them.</li> <li>● A formidable line-up of senior lawyers represented the 11 petitioners who made submissions to the three-member Bench led by the country's Chief Justice Nalin Perera.</li> <li>● The Attorney General responded invoking the President's plenary powers in the Constitution to argue that his actions were constitutional.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source</b></p>	<p>The Hindu</p>

## BASIC nations meeting on 'Climate finance'

<p><b>Why is it in news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ahead of the United Nations Conference of Parties (COP) in December, Environment Ministers and top climate change negotiators <b>from Brazil, South Africa, China and India (BASIC)</b> convened in Delhi.</li> <li>● BASIC countries — as a group — would continue to push for developed countries on their earlier commitment to providing \$100 billion annually from 2020.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Climate finance</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● So far only a fraction of these monies have actually been provided.</li> <li>● This year's edition of the COP — the 24th such meeting — will see representatives from at least 190 countries, think-tanks, and activists converge.</li> <li>● This edition will try to agree on a Rule Book that will specify how countries will agree to take forward commitments taken at the 21st COP in Paris in 2015.</li> <li>● Countries had agreed to take steps to limit global warming to 2C below pre-industrial levels and "as far as possible" limit it to 1.5C before the end of the century.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The NDCs are the commitments made by countries to adapt to <b>climate change</b> and reduce emissions.</li> <li>● The fact is that, on the ground, there is not much development on providing finance.</li> <li>● In the run-up to the climate conference, <b>India</b> has had meetings with several countries to firm up a key plank of the forthcoming negotiations on transparency.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

## E-registration must for jobs in 18 countries

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Passport holders with “<b>non-Emigration Check Required (non-ECR)</b>” status will soon have to get themselves registered with the Ministry of External Affairs before taking up jobs abroad.</li> <li>● The rule which takes effect on January 1 is said to be aimed at the welfare of Indians going abroad.</li> <li>● It applies to jobs in 18 countries, including the six Gulf Cooperation Council nations, which have the largest number of expats.</li> </ul>
Category of passengers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The non-ECR category of passengers includes Indians paying income tax and those with educational qualification above matriculation.</li> <li>● As of now only ECR category passport holders were required to get emigration clearance from the office of the Protector of Emigrants to seek employment abroad.</li> <li>● All those seeking employment will have to register online via the website <a href="http://www.emigrate.gov.in">www.emigrate.gov.in</a>.</li> <li>● Those failing to register at least 24 hours prior to actual departure will be off-loaded at the airports.</li> <li>● For all other visa categories, there is no change in existing procedures.</li> <li>● <b>Top Destination: UAE</b></li> <li>● This is followed by Saudi Arabia; Kuwait; Oman and Qatar.</li> <li>● The job roles were that of mason, labour, carpenter, helper and electrician.</li> <li>● top labour-sending State Uttar Pradesh.</li> <li>● This was followed by Bihar; Tamil Nadu; West Bengal and Rajasthan.</li> <li>● The other countries where registration is required are Afghanistan, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Sudan, South Sudan, Syria, Thailand and Yemen.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

## Ukraine crisis

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ukraine’s President signed an act imposing martial law in border regions for 30 days in 10 regions bordering <b>Russia</b>, the Black Sea and the Azov Sea.</li> <li>● It is in retaliation over Russia’s seizure of Ukrainian ships.</li> </ul>
Ukraine crisis	<p><b><u>Euromaidan-</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>Euromaidan</b> was a wave of ongoing demonstrations, civil unrest and revolution in Ukraine, which began on the night of 21 November 2013 with public protests demanding closer European integration.</li> </ul>

- President **Viktor Yanukovich's government** announced Ukraine is abandoning an agreement to strengthen ties with the European Union and is instead seeking closer cooperation with Moscow.
- This was the immediate cause of the Euromaidan protests.
- There were other reasons too.

**Result-**

- **2014 Ukrainian Revolution.**
- Impeachment of **Viktor Yanukovich.**
- Return of 2004 constitution.
- Worsening of the economic situation, including credit downgrading by American credit agencies like Moody's.
- **Beginning of Crimean crisis and invasion by Russia.**



Source

The Hindu, NBC News, Reuters



# Miscellaneous

## Birthright Citizenship in US

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recently, U.S President talked about preparing an executive order that would abolish the constitutional guarantee of birthright citizenship in the United States.</li> <li>● It is given under <b>14th Amendment to the Constitution.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Birthright Citizenship in US</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Birthright citizenship-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Birthright citizenship, or jus soli, a legal term that means “right of the soil,” is the right guaranteed by the 14th Amendment</li> <li>(2) U.S. citizenship is automatically granted to any person born within and subject to the jurisdiction of the United States.</li> <li>(3) Supreme Court also said that anyone born on U.S soil is automatically a citizen.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>14th Amendment-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The 14th Amendment is known as a Reconstruction amendment, because it was added to the Constitution after the Civil War in 1868.</li> <li>(2) The 14th Amendment- Grants citizenship to anyone born on U.S. soil.</li> <li>(3) Document reads it as, “All person born or naturalized in the United States, and subject to the jurisdiction thereof, are citizens of the United States and of the State wherein they reside.”</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Current main contentions-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Conservatives view-           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) 14th Amendment was to apply only to citizens and legal permanent residents,</li> <li>(b) Not to immigrants who are present in the country without permission.</li> <li>(c) Misreading of the amendment- Supreme Court ruling in 1898 be valid only to the children of legal residents.</li> </ol> </li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu, US.gov



## 4

## Science and Technology

## Kepler space telescope

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Kepler space telescope has run out of fuel and will be retired after a 9-1/2-year mission in which it detected thousands of planets beyond our solar system and boosted the search for worlds that might harbour alien life.</li> <li>● Currently orbiting the sun 156 million km from the earth, the spacecraft will drift further from our planet when mission engineers turn off its radio transmitters.</li> </ul>
<b>Kepler space telescope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is an unmanned space observatory.</li> <li>● Launched in 2009 by NASA.</li> <li>● It aims to detect Earth-like planets in the Milky Way galaxy.</li> <li>● It does not probe the environmental conditions of planets.</li> <li>● It works by observing a dimming in the light of a star, known as a transit, each time an orbiting planet passes in front of it.</li> <li>● <b>Achievements-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The telescope laid bare the diversity of planets that reside in our Milky Way galaxy.</li> <li>(2) It has findings indicating that distant star systems are populated with billions of planets, and even helped pinpoint the first moon known outside our solar system.</li> <li>(3) The <b>Kepler telescope discovered more than 2,600 of the roughly 3,800 exoplanets</b> (the term for planets outside our solar system) that have been documented in the past two decades.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu

## GSAT-11

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GSAT-11, the <b>heaviest Indian communication satellite built to date</b>, for faster Internet connectivity, is back once again at the Guiana Space Centre for an early December launch.</li> <li>● It returns to the South American port for the second time in six months after it was taken back to Bengaluru in April for inspections.</li> </ul>
<b>GSAT-11</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GSAT-11 is an advanced communication satellite.</li> <li>● Weight- 5,700 kg.</li> <li>● <b>Purpose-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) To provide the Indian region superior communication and 12 GBPS connectivity with its multiple spot beams in Ka and Ku bands.</li> <li>(2) High bandwidth connectivity - GSAT-11 carries 40 transponders in the Ku-band and the Ka-band frequencies,</li> <li>(3) It is capable of providing high bandwidth connectivity with up to 14 GB per second data transfer speed.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Arianespace, ISRO's long-time European launch services contractor, has paired GSAT-11 with South Korea's weather satellite GEO-Kompsat 2A.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

## Earth Biogenome Project

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A mission to sequence the genome of every known animal, plant, fungus and protozoan - a group of single-celled organisms - is underway.</li> <li>● The Earth BioGenome Project (EBP) has been described as a "moonshot for biology".</li> </ul>
Earth Biogenome Project	<p><b>Aim-</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) To sequence, catalog and characterize the genomes of all of Earth's eukaryotic biodiversity over a period of ten years.</li> <li>(2) A key aim is to use the information in efforts to conserve threatened species.</li> <li>(3) Collecting clues about how species adapt to environmental change could be hidden in their DNA code.</li> <li>(4) To create an entirely new inventory of life on Planet Earth by reading the genetic code of every organism belonging to a vast group known as eukaryotes - essentially, species made up of multiple cells with their DNA bound inside a nucleus.</li> </ol> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Vision-</b> Create a new foundation for biology to drive solutions for preserving biodiversity and sustaining human societies.</li> <li>● <b>Why Sequence Life?</b></li> </ul> <div style="text-align: center;">  <p> <b>REVOLUTIONIZE OUR UNDERSTANDING OF BIOLOGY AND EVOLUTION</b> </p> <p> <b>CONSERVE, PROTECT, AND RESTORE BIODIVERSITY</b> </p> <p> <b>CREATE NEW BENEFITS FOR SOCIETY AND HUMAN WELFARE</b> </p> </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Powerful advances in genome sequencing technology, informatics, automation, and artificial intelligence will help to achieve it.</li> <li>● It propelled humankind to the threshold of a new beginning in understanding, utilizing, and conserving biodiversity.</li> <li>● For the first time in history, it is possible to-             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Efficiently sequence the genomes of all known species, and</li> <li>(2) To use genomics to help discover the remaining 80 to 90 percent of species those are currently hidden from science.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Main ambitions of the project are threefold:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) <b>Fundamental science:</b> The genomes will be an inventory of knowledge about the biology of life on the planet.</li> <li>(2) <b>Conservation:</b> To protect endangered species from threats like climate change, scientists want to understand the genetic code that underlies their adaptations to their environment.</li> <li>(3) <b>Human welfare:</b> Pinpointing the code for "useful traits" could reveal, for example, medicinal properties embedded in an organism's DNA or ways to protect vital crop species from drought and disease.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

Source	BBC News, earthbiogenome.org
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## China unveils its space station

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● China unveiled a replica of its first permanently crewed space station.</li> <li>● It would replace the international community's orbiting laboratory and symbolises the country's major ambitions beyond the earth.</li> </ul>
Space Station	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Three astronauts will be permanently stationed in the 60-tonne orbiting lab.</li> <li>● It will enable the crew to conduct biological and microgravity research.</li> <li>● Assembly is expected to be completed around 2022.</li> <li>● The station lifespan- around 10 years.</li> <li>● <b>The International Space Station</b> — a collaboration between the U.S., Russia, Canada, Europe and Japan — has been in operation since 1998, but is due to be retired in 2024.</li> <li>● China will then have the only space station in orbit, though it will be much smaller than the ISS which weighs 400 tonnes.</li> <li>● The country had announced that the lab would be open to "all countries" to conduct science experiments.</li> </ul>
Source	<b>The Hindu</b>

## GSAT-29

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● ISRO is readying itself to put communication satellite GSAT-29 on its heavy-lift vehicle, the GSLV-MkIII.</li> </ul>
GSAT-29 and GSLV Mk III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>GSAT-29</b> is configured around ISRO's Enhanced I-3K Bus.</li> <li>● It will be the payload for second developmental flight of GSLV-MkIII.</li> <li>● It carries Ka x Ku multi-beam and optical communication payloads for the first time.</li> <li>● The mission targets for Village Resource Centres (VRC) in rural areas to bridge the digital divide.</li> </ul> <p><b>GSLV Mk III</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GSLV Mk III is a <b>three-stage heavy lift launch vehicle</b> developed by ISRO.</li> <li>● It is a three-stage vehicle with two solid motor strap-ons (S200), a liquid propellant core stage (L110) and a cryogenic stage (C25).</li> <li>● <b>GSLV-Mk III is capable launching 4 ton class of satellites to Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).</b></li> <li>● GSLV Mk III is designed to carry <b>4 ton class of satellites into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO)</b> or about <b>10 tons to Low Earth Orbit (LEO)</b>, which is about twice the capability of GSLV Mk II.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

## Advanced Motor Fuels Technology Collaboration Programme

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Union Cabinet has been apprised of India joining as Member of Advanced Motor Fuels Technology Collaboration Programme (AMF TCP) under International Energy Agency (IEA).</li> </ul>
Advanced Motor Fuels Technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Advanced Motor Fuels (AMF) is one of the International Energy Agency's (IEA) transportation related Technology Collaboration Programmes.</li> </ul>

<b>(AMF)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Technology Collaboration Programmes (TCPs) are multilateral technology initiatives that encourage technology-related activities that support-             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Energy security,</li> <li>(2) Economic growth and</li> <li>(3) Environmental protection.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● AMF provides an international platform for co-operation to promote cleaner and more energy efficient fuels and vehicle technologies.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Vision-</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The vision of AMF is a sustainable transportation system that-             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Uses advanced, alternative, and renewable fuels;</li> <li>(2) Has reduced emissions of GHGs and air contaminants; and</li> <li>(3) Meets needs for personal mobility and the movement of goods on a local and global scale.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● AMF contributes to the achievement of this vision by providing :             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) A solid basis for decision making (information and recommendations) and</li> <li>(2) A forum for sharing best practices and pooling resources, internationally</li> </ol> </li> </ul> <p><b><u>Mission-</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● To provide sound scientific information and technology assessments that allow citizens and policy makers to make informed and science-based decisions about options involving the use of advanced fuels for transportation systems.</li> <li>● To provide such data to decision makers, AMF acts as a clearinghouse, by-             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Pooling resources and information on an international level;</li> <li>(2) Identifying and addressing technology gaps and barriers to deployment;</li> <li>(3) Performing cooperative research on advanced motor fuels;</li> <li>(4) Demonstrating advanced motor fuels and related vehicle and after-treatment technologies; and</li> <li>(5) Aggregating data and deriving key recommendations for decision makers within governments, municipalities, and industry</li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu, <a href="http://iea-amf.org">iea-amf.org</a>

### 'Super-Earth' found

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Astronomers have discovered a frozen planet with a mass over three times that of the Earth orbiting the closest solitary star to the Sun.</li> </ul>
<b>More in news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The potentially rocky planet known as <b>Barnard's star b</b>, is a 'super-Earth' and orbits around its host star once every 233 days.</li> <li>● The findings show that the planet lies at a distant region from the star known as the 'snow line'.</li> <li>● This is well beyond the habitable zone in which liquid water, and possibly life, could exist.</li> <li>● The planet's surface temperature is estimated to be around -170°C.</li> <li>● However, if the planet has a substantial atmosphere the temperature could be higher and conditions potentially more hospitable.</li> <li>● <b>'Infamous object'-</b></li> <li>● Barnard's star is an infamous object among astronomers and exoplanet scientists.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As it was one of the first stars where planets were initially claimed but later proven to be incorrect.</li> <li>● At nearly six light-years away Barnard's star is the next closest star to the Sun after the Alpha Centauri triple system.</li> <li>● It is a type of faint, low-mass star called a red dwarf.</li> <li>● Red dwarfs are considered to be the best places to look for exoplanet candidates, which are planets outside our solar system.</li> <li>● Barnard's star b is the second closest known exoplanet to our Sun.</li> <li>● The closest lies just over four light-years from Earth.</li> <li>● That exoplanet, Proxima b, orbits around the red dwarf Proxima Centauri.</li> <li>● The researchers used the radial velocity method during the observations that led to the discovery of Barnard's star b.</li> <li>● This technique detects wobbles in a star which are likely to be caused by the gravitational pull of an orbiting planet.</li> <li>● These wobbles affect the light coming from the star.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

### Genome study on teas at advanced stage

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A genome study project initiated by the Tea Board of India, to establish the origins and speciality of Indian teas, has now reached an advanced stage.</li> <li>● The study is being conducted on Assam teas to establish it as a product of India.</li> </ul>
Partner institutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● There are six partner institutes in this project.</li> <li>● The list includes:               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The New Delhi-based National Tea Research Foundation and</li> <li>(2) ICAR-National Research Centre for Plant Bio Technology,</li> <li>(3) CSIR-Institute of Himalayan Bio Resource Technology Palampur Himachal Pradesh,</li> <li>(4) Tea Research Institute, Jorhat (under TRA),</li> <li>(5) UPASI, Coimbatore, and</li> <li>(6) Darjeeling Tea Development Centre in Kurseong, Darjeeling.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● The study, which will establish <i>Camelia assamica</i> as an indigenous Indian variety, comes amid reports of a neighbouring country's efforts to establish Darjeeling tea as a variety that is their own.</li> <li>● The Commerce Ministry official said that the multi-institutional project on genome sequencing is extremely important for establishing the whole genetic make-up of India tea germplasm, in addition to molecular methods like DNA fingerprinting and DNA barcoding.</li> </ul>
Source	The Hindu

### Lunar lander

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Chandrayaan-2 lunar lander's sensors are set to undergo a crucial test in the next few days as the mission races towards a planned take-off in around two months.</li> <li>● The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) plans to fly the sensors on an aircraft over its artificial lunar site at Challakere to see how they</li> </ul>
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	<p>will function and guide the Chandrayaan-2 landing craft when it starts descending on the lunar terrain.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The orbiter carrying the lander and a rover is scheduled to be sent to the Moon from Sriharikota on January 31 and expected to reach there sometime in February 2019.</li> <li>● The test on ground, called the Lander Sensor Performance Test or LSPT, will be conducted at ISRO's new R&amp;D campus in Chitradurga district.</li> </ul>
<b>Lunar lander</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The highly autonomous or pre-programmed mission uses a large number of sensors.</li> <li>● Among them are those that help the lander to precisely assess its height from the landing spot; decide its speed and help it to steer clear of any boulders or uneven surface.</li> <li>● The lander is being developed and tested by the U.R. Rao Satellite Centre in Bengaluru.</li> <li>● For the test, a prototype module carrying the sensors will be flown on one of ISRO's two small aircraft.</li> <li>● As the plane descends from around 7 km to about 1 km over the artificial terrain, the sensors must show how they will guide the soft landing of the lunar craft at the right spot, speed and position.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu

### HIV infected children likely to suffer cognitive impairment: study

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Recent study unveiled that Children infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) have to endure a significant adverse impact on their neurodevelopment and cognitive functioning.</li> <li>● Study reveals that HIV-infected children have lower neuropsychological test scores thus reflecting reduced memory span, attention deficit and decreased visual-motor coordination among other conditions.</li> </ul>
<b>Study outcomes</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Killer virus-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) HIV attacks the immune system.</li> <li>(2) The virus is found in semen, blood, vaginal and anal fluids, and breast.</li> <li>(3) The virus can be trans-mitted from mother to child during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding.</li> <li>(4) According to the National Aids Control Organization (NACO), as of 2017, India had 2,14 million people living with HIV.</li> <li>(5) <b>The most affected population are people who inject drugs, transgender, gay men and commercial sex workers</b></li> </ol> </li> <li>● <b>Cognitive changes-</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The study concluded that all HIV infected children had lower neuropsychological test scores as compared to the control group.</li> <li>(2) Study highlighted significant fluctuations in regions of the brain that are associated with auditory, language, sensory and motor functional networks of HIV infected children.</li> <li>(3) Decline of mental processes has been commonly observed in HIV infected adults.</li> </ol> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Altered brain regions-</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ These findings will facilitate early detection of structural and functional brain changes, allowing appropriate treatment and therapies to improve functional activities in children with immunity disorders.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p><b>Solution-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Key to achieving overall growth in HIV infected children is a good diet, 100% medicine compliance and regular physical activity.</li> <li>● Doctors said that such studies highlight the need for a holistic approach to HIV programmes.</li> <li>● The emphasis should not only be on medication, but also nutritional, psychological and neurodevelopment support.</li> </ul>
Source	<b>The Hindu</b>

### NASA's InSight Rover

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Nasa's InSight spacecraft endured "seven minutes of terror" and might end them dead on the Martian surface.</li> <li>● The lander is the first spacecraft built to explore deep in the interior of Mars, digging down and trying to understand its core.</li> </ul>
InSight Rover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>InSight</b>, short for Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport, is a Mars lander.</li> <li>● It is designed to give the Red Planet its first thorough checkup since it formed 4.5 billion years ago.</li> <li>● It is the first outer space robotic explorer to study in-depth the "inner space" of Mars: its crust, mantle, and core.</li> <li>● Studying Mars' interior structure answers key questions about the early formation of rocky planets in our inner solar system - Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars - more than 4 billion years ago, as well as rocky exoplanets.</li> <li>● InSight also measures tectonic activity and meteorite impacts on Mars today.</li> <li>● The lander uses cutting edge instruments, to delve deep beneath the surface and seek the fingerprints of the processes that formed the terrestrial planets.</li> <li>● It does so by measuring the planet's "vital signs": its "pulse" (seismology), "temperature" (heat flow), and "reflexes" (precision tracking).</li> <li>● This mission is <b>part of NASA's Discovery Program</b> for highly focused science missions that ask critical questions in solar system science.</li> </ul> <p><b>First CubeSat to Deep Space-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The rocket that launched InSight also launched a separate NASA technology experiment: two mini-spacecraft called Mars Cube One, or MarCO.</li> <li>● These briefcase-sized CubeSats fly on their own path to Mars behind InSight.</li> </ul> <p><b>MarCO Mission Overview-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Their goal is to test new miniaturized deep space communication equipment and, if the MarCOs make it to Mars, may relay back InSight data as it enters the Martian atmosphere and lands.</li> <li>● This is the first test of miniaturized CubeSat technology at another planet, which researchers hope can offer new capabilities to future missions.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● If successful, the MarCOs could represent a new kind of communication capability to Earth.</li> <li>● InSight's success is independent of its CubeSat tag-alongs.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>In Sight Science Goals-</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The InSight mission seeks to uncover how a rocky body forms and evolves to become a planet by investigating the interior structure and composition of Mars.</li> <li>● The mission will also determine the rate of Martian tectonic activity and meteorite impacts.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Science Goals-</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Goal 1-<b>Understand formation and evolution on Mars</b></li> <li>● Goal 2-<b>Determine the level of tectonic activity on Mars</b></li> </ul> <p><b><u>Why Mars?</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Previous missions to Mars have investigated the surface history of the Red Planet by examining features like canyons, volcanoes, rocks and soil.</li> <li>● However, signatures of the planet's formation can only be found by sensing and studying its "vital signs" far below the surface.</li> <li>● In comparison to the other terrestrial planets, Mars is neither too big nor too small.</li> <li>● This means that it preserves the record of its formation and can give us insight into how the terrestrial planets formed.</li> <li>● It is the perfect laboratory from which to study the formation and evolution of rocky planets.</li> <li>● Scientists know that Mars has low levels of geological activity. But a lander like InSight can also reveal just how active Mars really is.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source</b></p>	<p>The Hindu, NASA</p>

**HysIS- Imaging satellite**

<p><b>Why is it in news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● HysIS, the country's <b>first hyperspectral imaging satellite for advanced Earth observation.</b></li> <li>● About 30 small satellites of foreign customers are its co-passengers on the PSLV launcher, numbered C-43.</li> </ul>
<p><b>More in news</b></p>	<p><b><u>Launch specification-</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● PSLV-C43 mission will launch 31 satellites on November 29 in two orbits.</li> <li>● Slated to last just under 2 hours (or about 113 minutes), it will be ISRO's third longest mission.</li> <li>● Main payload HysIS, all of 380 kg, is built to work for five years.</li> <li>● It will aid detailed, high-definition study of Earth surface.</li> <li>● It will be placed in a polar orbit 636 km away at an inclination of 97.957 degrees.</li> <li>● 30 co-passengers include a micro satellite (100-kg class) and 29 nano satellites (under 10 kg) .</li> <li>● They are from eight countries &amp; together weigh 261 kg.</li> <li>● Their launches were booked with ISRO's arm Antrix Corporation.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>HysIS-</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The primary goal of HysIS-To study the Earth's surface in visible, near-infrared and shortwave infrared regions of the electromagnetic spectrum.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● A hyperspectral imaging camera in space can provide well-defined images.</li><li>● Thus, it can help to identify objects on Earth far more clearly than regular optical or remote sensing cameras.</li><li>● The technology will be an added advantage of watching over India from space for a variety of purposes such as defence, agriculture, land use, minerals and so on.</li></ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu</b>



## 5

## Internal Security

## India, Russia to build stealth frigates

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● India signed a \$500 mn deal with Russia to locally manufacture two stealth frigates with technology transfer.</li> <li>● The agreement was signed between Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL) and Rosoboronexport of Russia.</li> <li>● The \$500 mn deal is for material, design and specialists assistance from Russia for the two ships.</li> </ul>
<b>More on news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The cost of the engines for the ships which would come directly from Ukraine and the cost of constructing them at GSL are in addition.</li> <li>● While the ships are built by Russia, the engines are supplied by ZoryaNashproekt of Ukraine.</li> <li>● The Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) has already cleared the deal.</li> <li>● India had earlier procured six frigates weighing 4000 tonnes of the same class in two different batches, the Talwar class and the upgraded Teg class.</li> <li>● The four ships to be built will weigh 300 tonnes more than the earlier ones and will be armed with BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu

## Indian Army artillery gun inductions

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Indian Army inducted its first artillery gun systems in three decades.</li> <li>● The M777 Ultra Light Howitzers from the U.S. and K9 Vajra-T self-propelled artillery gun from South Korea were inducted.</li> <li>● The third equipment inducted is a common gun tower.</li> </ul>
<b>Info graphics</b>	<p><b>K9 Vajra-T self-propelled artillery gun-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 155-mm, 52-calibre self-propelled gun.</li> <li>● Maximum range-40 km</li> <li>● Customised from the original K9 Thunder.</li> <li>● Its fire control system - customised for desert conditions.</li> <li>● Under the agreement, the first 10 guns will be imported from South Korea and the rest will be made by L&amp;T in India.</li> <li>● The first regiment will be in place by July 2019 and all 100 guns will be delivered by November 2020.</li> </ul> <p><b>M777 Ultra Light Howitzers-</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 155-mm, 39-calibre towed artillery gun.</li> <li>● Weight-4 tonnes,</li> <li>● Range- 24 to 30 km</li> <li>● Transportable under slung from helicopters.</li> <li>● In November 2016, India signed \$737 million deal with U.S. for 145 howitzers under the foreign military sales programme.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu

## Navy makes formal request for multi-role U.S. copters

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● India made a formal request to the U.S. for the purchase of 24 MH-60R Multi-Role Helicopters (MRH) for the Navy in a deal estimated at \$2bn.</li><li>● This is among a series of defence procurements and inductions from the U.S. and Russia in the last two months.</li></ul>
<b>More in news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The Navy is presently facing a critical shortage of helicopters and several frontline warships are plying with empty helicopter decks.</li><li>● These helicopters are being procured as replacement for 15 Sea King ASW helicopters de-inducted from service in 1991 and one Sea King 42B MRH lost in accident.</li><li>● The current MRHs in service, Sea King 42Bs, were inducted in the 1980s.</li><li>● In August, ahead of the inaugural India-US 2+2 dialogue, the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) accorded the Acceptance of Necessity (AoN) for the procurement.</li><li>● Given the urgency for helicopters, the U.S. is likely to take some MH-60R helicopters off the flight deck of their newest aircraft carrier USS Gerald Ford.</li><li>● In July, the USS Gerald Ford went for year-long upgrades and fixes.</li><li>● All the helicopters would be delivered in a phased manner from 2020-24.</li></ul>
<b>Source</b>	The Hindu



The Unique Academy

## 6

## Economics

## RBI to ease liquidity

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Central bank announced to inject Rs 12,000 crore into the system through the purchase of government securities on November 15.</li> <li>● It has decided to conduct the purchase of the government securities under <b>Open Market Operations(OMO)</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The OMO operation will help ease tight liquidity situation triggered by a series of default by group companies of IL&amp;FS.</li> <li>● The RBI had earlier stated that the system liquidity will move into deficit in the second half of 2018-19.</li> <li>● Subsequently the evolving liquidity conditions would determine its choice of instruments for both transient and durable liquidity management.</li> <li>● As part of the OMOs, the RBI will purchase government securities maturing in 2021.</li> <li>● OMOs are the tools which can be used to either inject or drain liquidity from the system.</li> <li>● If there is excess liquidity, the RBI resorts to sale of securities and sucks out the rupee liquidity.</li> <li>● Similarly, when the liquidity conditions are tight, it buys securities from the market, thereby releasing money into the market.</li> </ul>
<b>Open Market Operations (OMO)</b>	<p><b>Open Market Operations (OMO's):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Major monetary policy instrument of the RBI.</li> <li>● It refers to the buying and selling of eligible securities or first-class bills (govt. securities) by the RBI.</li> <li>● Buying of securities in the open market increases the supply of credit.</li> <li>● On the other hand, selling of securities reduces the volume of money with the public.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>Indian Express.</b>

## RBI board meeting

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The very crucial RBI board meeting concluded with detailed and deliberate talks.</li> <li>● The government and the RBI found a middle ground, giving both sides crucial space to revisit their positions.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Issues debated:</li> <li>● The most contentious issue that the central bank and finance ministry locked horn was the issue of <b>RBI's capital</b>.</li> <li>● Issues of transfer of surplus reserves and relaxing norms for weak banks were referred to committees.</li> <li>● The membership and terms of reference of the committee will be decided by the finance minister and RBI governor.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Another significant decision was <b>relief to the micro, small and medium enterprises.</b></li> <li>● The board has advised RBI to let banks recast loans up to Rs.25 crore given to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).</li> </ul> <div data-bbox="475 314 1334 832" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Finding a way forward</b></p> <table border="0" style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>What the Centre wanted from the RBI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Aligning capital norms of banks to Basel levels</li> <li>■ Relaxation of Prompt Corrective Action framework on 11 PSBs</li> <li>■ Easier credit for MSMEs</li> <li>■ Transfer of part of the RBI's reserves</li> <li>■ Special liquidity window for NBFCs</li> <li>■ Fixing issues of governance in RBI</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>What the RBI Board meet has decided</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ No change in Basel norms; deadline pushed back by a year for the last tranche</li> <li>■ Prompt Corrective Action on banks issue to be examined by RBI department</li> <li>■ Debt recast for MSME borrowers with loans of up to ₹25 cr. to be considered</li> <li>■ Committee to be set up to examine the Economic Capital Framework of RBI</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 10px;">  <p><b>Left undecided</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Special liquidity window for NBFCs</li> <li>■ Fixing issues of governance in RBI</li> </ul> </div> </div>	<p><b>What the Centre wanted from the RBI</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Aligning capital norms of banks to Basel levels</li> <li>■ Relaxation of Prompt Corrective Action framework on 11 PSBs</li> <li>■ Easier credit for MSMEs</li> <li>■ Transfer of part of the RBI's reserves</li> <li>■ Special liquidity window for NBFCs</li> <li>■ Fixing issues of governance in RBI</li> </ul>	<p><b>What the RBI Board meet has decided</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ No change in Basel norms; deadline pushed back by a year for the last tranche</li> <li>■ Prompt Corrective Action on banks issue to be examined by RBI department</li> <li>■ Debt recast for MSME borrowers with loans of up to ₹25 cr. to be considered</li> <li>■ Committee to be set up to examine the Economic Capital Framework of RBI</li> </ul>
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<p><b>RBI Board</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Central Board of Directors is at the top of the Reserve Bank's organizational structure.</li> <li>● Important decisions of the RBI are taken by the Central Board as it is the apex authority of the RBI.</li> <li>● The board is appointed by the Government of India in keeping with the Reserve Bank of India Act.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Constitution:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Official Directors</b></li> <li>● Full-time : Governor and not more than four Deputy Governors</li> <li>● <b>Non-Official Directors</b></li> <li>● Nominated by Government: ten Directors from various fields and two government Official</li> <li>● Others: four Directors - one each from four local boards.</li> </ul>		
<p><b>Source</b></p>	<p><b>The Hindu, LiveMint.</b></p>		

### Need to protect autonomy of Central Bank: RBI

<p><b>Why is it in the news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The RBI governor Urjit Patel strongly stressed on the need to protect the autonomy of the central bank before a parliamentary panel.</li> <li>● Mr. Patel made a presentation on the impact of demonetization and the status of non-performing assets in the banking sector.</li> </ul>
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<p>More in the news</p>	<h3 style="text-align: center;">What Urjit Patel said</h3> <div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="width: 70%; padding-left: 10px;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Autonomy over depositors' interest is non-negotiable</li> <li>▪ Monetary policy should be exclusive domain of RBI</li> <li>▪ Maintaining RBI's reserves is critical to keeping the country's AAA rating</li> <li>▪ Obligated to follow Basel III norms as govt. has committed to G20 on them</li> <li>▪ Will give written answers to all the questions within 10-15 days</li> </ul> </div> </div>
<p><b>NPAs on downhill path</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● According to RBI, both gross and net non-performing assets (NPAs) of scheduled commercial banks have reduced in the two quarters ending September 30, 2018.</li> <li>● NPAs of all scheduled commercial banks were at Rs.10.36 lakh crore at the end of the March 2018 quarter, and subsequently declined to Rs.10.14 lakh crore by the end of the September quarter.</li> <li>● NPAs of scheduled commercial banks had reduced due to the concerted efforts taken by the government and RBI to address the problem.</li> <li>● However, the profitability of banks was still impacted due to a decline in earnings from loan assets.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source</b></p>	<p><b>The Hindu.</b></p>



# Government Policies and Taxation

## YuvaSahakar-Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)</b> has come up with a youth-friendly scheme '<b>YuvaSahakar-Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme</b>'.</li> <li>● In order to cater to the needs and aspirations of the youth, the scheme aims for attracting them to cooperative business ventures.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Government has been encouraging 'Start-Ups' for ease of doing business.</li> <li>● The conducive environment is being leveraged by private and corporate sectors and 'Hub Start-ups' are being promoted.</li> <li>● The newly launched scheme would encourage cooperatives to venture into new and innovative areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>More about the Scheme:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The scheme will be linked to Rs 1000 crore 'Cooperative Start-up and Innovation Fund (CSIF)' created by the NCDC.</li> <li>● It would have more incentives for cooperatives of North Eastern region, Aspirational Districts and cooperatives with women or SC or ST or PwD members.</li> <li>● The funding for the project will be up to 80% of the project cost for these special categories as against 70% for others.</li> <li>● The scheme envisages 2% less than the applicable rate of interest on term loan for the project cost up to Rs 3 crore including 2 years moratorium on payment of principal.</li> <li>● All types of cooperatives in operation for at least one year are eligible.</li> </ul>
<b>National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The NCDC has the unique distinction of being the sole statutory organisation functioning as an apex financial and developmental institution.</li> <li>● It is exclusively devoted to cooperative sector.</li> <li>● It supports cooperatives in diverse fields apart from agriculture and allied sectors.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>PIB.</b>

## 'NSE goBID' App

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has launched an app and web-based platform, '<b>NSE goBID</b>', for retail investors to buy government securities.</li> </ul>
<b>More about the App</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Sebi chairman Ajay Tyagi launched the new app which would be available to all the registered investors with NSE's trading members.</li> <li>● The app would allow investors to invest in <b>treasury bills (T-Bills)</b> of 91 days, 182 days and 364 days and various government bonds from one year to almost 40 years.</li> <li>● The retail investors would be able to make payment directly from their bank accounts using Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and Internet banking.</li> </ul>

<b>About Treasury Bills</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● These are government bonds or debt securities with maturity of less than a year.</li> <li>● Treasury bills are issued when the government need money for a shorter period while bonds are issued when it need debt for more than say five years.</li> <li>● T- bills are issued to meet short-term mismatches in receipts and expenditure. Bonds of longer maturity are called dated securities.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu.</b>

## Look-out Circulars against willful defaulters

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The government has now allowed CEOs of public sector banks to directly seek issuance of look-out circulars (LOCs) against willful defaulters.</li> <li>● The step has taken to prevent the willful defaulters from fleeing the country.</li> <li>● A Home ministry notification said CEOs of PSBs have been added to the list of officials who can now make a request for issuance of LOCs to the ministry.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The inclusion by MHA was done following the recommendation of an inter-ministerial panel under Financial Services Secretary Rajiv Kumar.</li> <li>● The move comes against the backdrop of defaults by Vijay Mallya, Nirav Modi and Mehul Choksi and thereafter, their fleeing the country.</li> <li>● The Department of Financial Services has issued an advisory to CEOs of all PSBs to act as and when required in a specified manner.</li> <li>● An official statement said, the move was a continuation of the government's clean-up drive of the banking sector.</li> </ul>
<b>How LOC will work?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The issuance of LOC by the concerned authority will thwart any move by defaulters to flee the country.</li> <li>● Previously only the likes of the CBI, Directorate of Revenue Intelligence, RAW, designated officers of Interpol and the ED were empowered to place a request for the issuance of LOC as per the MHA's guidelines.</li> <li>● Once the MHA receives such a request, it issues the LOC to all immigration check points of airports across the country.</li> <li>● The guidelines, issued last December, allowed immigration authorities to deny departure to a person seen as "detrimental" to the "economic interests of India".</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu.</b>



# Infrastructure

## Centre eyes seaplanes in UDAN 3

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Opening the third round of <b>UDAN</b>, the Ministry of Civil Aviation has invited proposals for air routes that include tourist destinations.</li> <li>● Centre is inviting <b>bids for Seaplanes for connecting selected destinations</b> under the <b>regional connectivity scheme (UDAN)</b>.</li> <li>● The first deadline for submitting applications was November 20.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Government proposes 10 destinations which to be connected through seaplanes.</li> <li>● Some of the 10 proposed destinations includes:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) The recently unveiled Statue of Unity at Sardar Sarovar Dam.</li> <li>(2) Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad.</li> <li>(3) Tehri Dam in Uttarakhand.</li> <li>(4) Nagarjuna Sagar in Telangana.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● In the latest phase, the Centre is reoffering 34 airports that weren't successfully connected.</li> <li>● Few airports which are deprived of regular connectivity due to default of few airlines have been added.</li> </ul>
<b>UDAN</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>UDAN (UdeDesh ka AamNaagrik)</b> is a regional airport development and "<b>Regional Connectivity Scheme</b>" (<b>RCS</b>) of Government of India.</li> <li>● The scheme envisages providing connectivity to <b>un-served and under-served airports</b> of the country through <b>revival of existing air-strips and airports</b>.</li> <li>● UDAN is a scheme to develop the regional aviation market.</li> <li>● <b>UDAN 2.0 to focus on overseas flights.</b></li> <li>● UDAN 2 will allow the state governments to provide subsidy for international flights to be launched from their states.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu, PIB.</b>

## GST and the logistics sector

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As per a recent survey, the Indian logistics sector provides livelihood to 22 million-plus people, which is expected to be over 40 million by 2020.</li> <li>● The high rate of growth in the next couple of years is expected largely due to implementation of <b>GST</b>.</li> <li>● India has moved from the <b>54th position in 2014 to 44th in 2018</b> in the <b>World Bank's Logistics Performance Index</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● GST has replaced at least 7 indirect tax heads and has eliminated the need for warehouse hubs across States.</li> <li>● Further, GST has eliminated check posts across the nation and thereby waiting time, leading to at least 12-15% reduction in the turnaround time of trucks.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Considering the double-digit growth, the logistics market would exceed \$250 billion in the next two years.</li> <li>● Better utilisation of assets like vehicles and warehouses will lead to efficiency and increased productivity thus lowering overall cost.</li> <li>● This would considerably benefit the supply chain directly and India's growth indirectly.</li> <li>● Post GST, there is a marked improvement in the use of technology and digitization by logistics players.</li> </ul>
<b>Logistics costs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Logistics costs</b> have been one of the biggest stumbling blocks for Indian manufacturers eyeing exports.</li> <li>● At about 13-14% of GDP, India's logistics cost is high, and compares with about 8% in advanced nations.</li> <li>● This despite the percentage of outsourcing being higher in developed markets.</li> <li>● The Centre has made clear its intention to bring down this cost to less than 10%, which would make Indian manufacturers globally relevant.</li> </ul>
<b>Infrastructure Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The infrastructure status to the sector was conferred in November 2017.</li> <li>● Infra status is helping the sector avail cheaper finance (2% lower) for its warehousing and cold storage needs.</li> <li>● This will bring in a lot more players with an integrated service approach that would again help Indian manufacturers.</li> <li>● New investments in this sector is good news as it could create a lot more jobs in the near future.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu.</b>



# Miscellaneous

## Seychelles launches World's First Sovereign Blue Bond

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Republic of Seychelles has launched the world's first sovereign blue bond.</li> <li>● It is a pioneering financial instrument <b>designed to support sustainable marine and fisheries projects.</b></li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The bond raised US\$15 million from international investors, demonstrates the potential for countries to harness capital markets for <b>financing the sustainable use of marine resources.</b></li> <li>● The <b>World Bank</b> assisted in developing the blue bond.</li> <li>● Proceeds from the bond will include:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Support for the expansion of marine protected areas.</li> <li>(2) Improved governance of priority fisheries.</li> <li>(3) The development of the Seychelles' blue economy.</li> </ol> </li> <li>● Grants and loans will be provided through the <b>Blue Grants Fund</b> and <b>Blue Investment Fund.</b></li> <li>● The Funds will be managed by the Seychelles' <b>Conservation and Climate Adaptation Trust (SeyCCAT)</b> and the <b>Development Bank of Seychelles (DBS).</b></li> </ul>
<b>About Seychelles's Ecosystem</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Seychelles is an archipelagic nation consisting of <b>115 granite and coral islands.</b></li> <li>● It has a land area of 455 km<sup>2</sup> spread across an Exclusive Economic Zone of approximately 1.4 million km<sup>2</sup>.</li> <li>● Seychelles is <b>one of the world's biodiversity hotspots.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>World Bank.</b>

## RBI survey on Remittances

<b>Why is it in the news ?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As per the RBI survey for 2017, the Southern states of Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra accounted for a share of 46% or \$31.74 billion (Rs 2,30,900 crore) of total remittances of \$69 billion.</li> <li>● Kerala, which received \$13.11 billion (over Rs 95,000 crore), topping the list during the year 2017.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu together received 58.7 per cent of the total inward remittances.</li> <li>● Kerala top the list with 19% share followed by Maharashtra(16.7%) and Karnataka(15%).</li> <li>● India continues to be the top recipient country with <b>\$69 billion</b> of remittances in 2017 sent by a large pool of skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled Indian migrants across the globe.</li> </ul> <p><b>Top source Countries:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● United Arab Emirates, the United States, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, the United Kingdom and Malaysia.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● These 8 countries accounted for 82 per cent of the total remittances received by India.</li> </ul> <p><b>Use of Remittances:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● More than half of the remittances received by Indian residents were used for family maintenance (59.2 per cent).</li> <li>● Deposits in banks (20 per cent).</li> <li>● Investments in landed property, and shares (8.3 per cent).</li> </ul>
<b>Remittances and India</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Remittances essentially represent household income from foreign economies arising mainly from the temporary or permanent movement of workers to source economies.</li> <li>● Remittances may have a significant impact on poverty reduction and can finance economic growth in receiving economies.</li> <li>● Remittances are mainly derived from two items in the balance of payments framework:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Income earned by workers in economies where they are not resident (or from non-resident employers) and</li> <li>(2) <b>Transfers from residents of one economy to residents of another.</b></li> </ol> </li> <li>● India is the largest remittances receiving country in the world (\$ 69 billion in 2017) followed by China (\$ 64 billion) and the Philippines (\$ 33 billion).</li> <li>● This remittance is the second largest item in the country's invisible account.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>Indian Express.</b>

### Fitch rates India 'BBB-'

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Global rating firm <b>Fitch</b> retained its sovereign rating for the country at '<b>BBB-</b>', the lowest investment grade with a <b>stable outlook</b>.</li> <li>● As per Fitch report, a weak fiscal position continues to constrain the ratings and there were significant risks to macroeconomic outlook.</li> <li>● Fitch had last upgraded India's sovereign rating from 'BB+' to 'BBB-' with a stable outlook over 12 years ago on August 1, 2006.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<p><b>Report Findings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Fitch listed the IL&amp;FS defaults and the rising bad loans as risks.</li> <li>● A weak fiscal position continues to constrain India's sovereign ratings.</li> <li>● Government debt at close to 70% of GDP.</li> <li>● A difficulty to meet deficit target of 3.3% of GDP in the current financial year (2018-19) due to lower revenues including from GST in first half.</li> </ul>

	<p><b>Report card</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ India has the highest medium-term growth potential among the largest emerging markets</li> <li>■ Country's five-year average real GDP growth of 7.1% highest in the APAC region and among 'BBB' range peers</li> <li>■ Growth has potential to remain high for a substantial period of time, as convergence with more developed economies can be expected</li> <li>■ GST is an important reform, and is likely to support growth in the medium term once teething issues dissipate</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Fitch Ratings</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Fitch Ratings Inc.</b> is one of the "Big Three credit rating agencies", the other two being <b>Moody's</b> and <b>Standard &amp; Poor's</b>.</li> <li>● <b>Fitch Group</b> is a global leader in financial information services with operations in more than 30 countries.</li> <li>● Fitch Ratings is a leading provider of credit ratings, commentary and research.</li> <li>● Fitch Ratings offers global perspectives shaped by strong local market experience and credit market expertise.</li> <li>● The Fitch ratings system is as follows: <b>Investment grade</b></li> <li>● <b>AAA:</b> companies of exceptionally high quality (established, with consistent cash flows)</li> <li>● <b>AA:</b> still high quality; slightly more risk than AAA</li> <li>● <b>A:</b> low default risk; slightly more vulnerable to business or economic factors</li> <li>● <b>BBB:</b> low expectation of default; business or economic factors could adversely affect the company</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source</b></p>	<p><b>The Hindu, Fitch.</b></p>

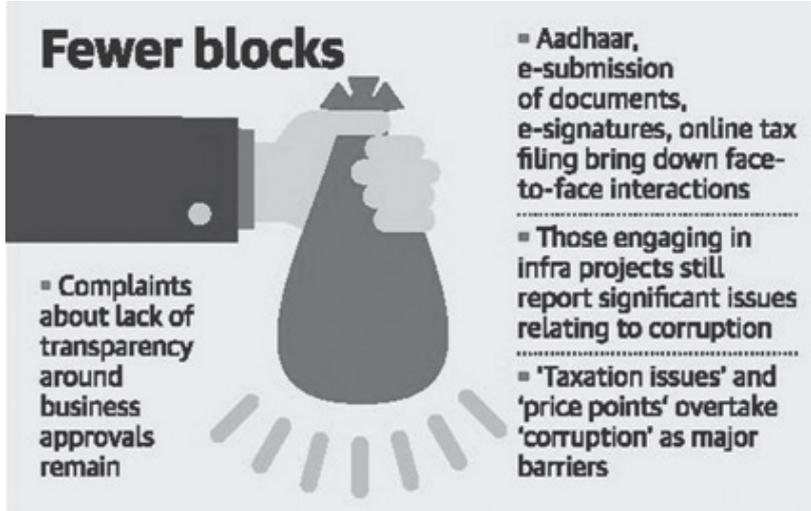
## FPIs investment in November

<p><b>Why is it in the news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Foreign investors have pumped in nearly Rs 8,285 crore into the Indian capital markets so far this month (November).</li> <li>● The recent infusion comes following a net outflow of more than Rs 38,900 crore in October, which was the steepest withdrawal in nearly two years.</li> </ul>
<p><b>More in the news</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) had pulled out over Rs 21,000 crore from the capital markets (both equity and debt) in September.</li> <li>● Before that, they had put in Rs 7,500 crore in July and August.</li> <li>● The latest inflow attributed to:</li> </ul>

	<p>(1) IFall in crude oil prices,                  (2) <b>Recovery in rupee and</b>                  (3) <b>Improvement in the liquidity situation.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● On the global front, escalating trade war tensions between US and China has caused widespread uncertainty in emerging markets.</li> <li>● This, coupled with increasing interest rates globally, prompted the investors to look for other attractive and safer alternatives.</li> </ul>
<b>Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● FPI is investment by non-residents in Indian securities including shares, government bonds, corporate bonds, convertible securities, infrastructure securities etc.</li> <li>● The class of investors who make investment in these securities are known as <b>Foreign Portfolio Investors.</b></li> <li>● Any equity investment by non-residents which is less than or equal to 10% of capital in a company is portfolio investment. While above this the investment will be counted as Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).</li> <li>● <b>NRIs doesn't comes under FPI.</b></li> <li>● Foreign Portfolio Investors includes investment groups of <b>Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs), Qualified Foreign Investors (QFIs) and subaccounts</b> etc.</li> <li>● FII is an institution who is registered under the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Foreign Institutional Investors) Regulations, 1995.</li> <li>● <b>QFI</b> is an individual, group or association which is a resident in a foreign country.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu, Economic Times.</b>

## Doing Business and Corruption

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● According to the latest edition of the <b>U.K. India Business Council's Ease of Doing Business report</b>, corruption is no longer among top 3 hurdles in doing business in India.</li> <li>● The first U.K. India Business Council's Ease of Doing Business report was launched in 2015.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In the first report launched in 2015, the number of companies that viewed 'corruption' as a major barrier were about 51%.</li> <li>● There has been a considerable year-on-year fall in the number of companies from 34% in 2016 to 25% in 2017.</li> <li>● This decline shows a major improvement, indicating that the government's efforts to mitigate corruption appear to be delivering results.</li> </ul>

	
<p><b>U.K. India Business Council</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The UK India Business Council (UKIBC) is the premier membership-led organization <b>supporting the promotion of trade, business and investment</b> between the two countries.</li> <li>● UKIBC plays an influential role in creating and sustaining an environment in which <b>free-trade and investment</b> flourishes.</li> <li>● Through its insights, networks, policy advocacy, services and facilities, the UK India Business Council supports UK businesses to achieve success.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source</b></p>	<p><b>The Hindu.</b></p>

### Capital deadline extension credit negative: Moody's

<p><b>Why is it in the news ?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● As per the Moody's investor services, RBI board's decision to extend the timeline for banks to implement <b>Basel 3 guidelines</b> is "<b>credit negative</b>" for public sector lenders.</li> </ul>
<p><b>More in the news</b></p>	<p><b>Outcomes of Board meeting:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Amid growing tension between the government and the central bank, the RBI board met on 19th of this month.</li> <li>● It discussed issues to boost funding to MSMEs and ease capital pressure on banks.</li> <li>● The board has advised RBI to let banks recast loans up to Rs.25 crore given to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).</li> <li>● Also, in the Board meeting, the central bank decided to retain the <b>CAR at 9%</b>, But extended it by one year-up to March 2020.</li> </ul> <p><b>Moody's Response:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The decision to restructure stressed micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) loans of up to Rs 25 crore also has the potential for having negative implications for the credit profiles of Indian banks.</li> <li>● The decision to extend the timeline for the full implementation of Basel 3 guidelines by a year is a credit negative for Indian public sector banks.</li> <li>● It expects that all public sector banks would have a core equity tier 1 (CET1) ratio of atleast 8 per cent by the end of March 2019.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Basel 3 guidelines</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● These are common set of global standards to be implemented by banks across countries.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● After the 2008 financial crisis, need arose to strengthen the banking system further so that they could meet further risks.</li> <li>● To meet these dangers, banks were asked to maintain a certain minimum level of capital and not lend all the money they receive from deposits.</li> <li>● This acts as a buffer during hard times. The Basel III norms also consider liquidity risks.</li> <li>● In India, lenders were expected to adhere to these regulations from 2019. But now it is extended to 2020.</li> </ul>
<b>Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capital Adequacy Ratio (CAR) is the ratio of a bank's capital in relation to its risk weighted assets and current liabilities.</li> <li>● It is decided by central banks and bank regulators to prevent commercial banks from taking excess leverage and becoming insolvent in the process.</li> <li>● Capital Adequacy Ratio = (Tier I + Tier II + Tier III (Capital funds)) / Risk weighted assets</li> <li>● The Basel III norms stipulated a capital to risk weighted assets of 8%.</li> <li>● However, as per RBI norms, Indian scheduled commercial banks are required to maintain a CAR of 9%.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu, Economic Times.</b>

### Growing protectionism may hit engineering exports

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● According to the erstwhile Engineering Export Promotion Council (now EEPC India), engineering exports may slip by about \$5 billion due to increased protectionism in the U.S. and Europe.</li> <li>● Target set for this fiscal (FY19) is \$90 billion.</li> <li>● EEPC is the apex body of engineering exporters.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<p><b>According to the EEPC officials,</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Against a target of \$90 billion for FY19, India may end the year with lower exports, say around \$85 billion.</li> <li>● Measures by the US, including an increase in import duty on steel and aluminum products, have already had an adverse impact on exports.</li> <li>● Previously, duty on steel imports from India was in the range of 0-6 per cent.</li> <li>● Other markets like Europe, which exporters were looking at for increased shipments -too imposed anti-dumping duties on different products like steel tubing and piping.</li> </ul>
<b>GSP issue</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The US had, earlier this month, revoked duty free concessions on at least 50 Indian products, mostly from the handloom and agricultural sectors.</li> <li>● As ambiguity persists, smaller exporters have been worst hit and may lose out on orders to companies in Vietnam or Cambodia.</li> <li>● GSP provides duty-free entry into the US market for over 3,400 exports from designated beneficiary developing countries.</li> </ul>
<b>What is Protectionism?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Protectionism refers to government actions and policies that restrict or restrain international trade, often with the intent of protecting local businesses and jobs from foreign competition.</li> <li>● Protectionist policies can be implemented in four main ways :</li> </ul>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>(1) Imposing tariffs to imported goods to raise the price of imports to equal or exceed local prices.</li><li>(2) Limiting the quantity of imported goods by setting quotas ( non-tariff barriers ).</li><li>(3) Product standards : Limitations based on product standards are implemented for a variety of reasons, including concerns over product safety, sub-standard materials or labeling.</li><li>(4) Government subsidies : Governments can help domestic businesses compete by providing subsidies, which lower the cost of production and enable the generation of profits at lower price levels.</li></ol>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu.</b>



## 7

## Social

## Speedy trial at Special court for POCSO

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A special court for the trial of offences under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, set up in April this year awarded convictions in 18 POCSO cases.</li> <li>● Among the 18 cases, four were awarded life sentences for their extreme act of abuse.</li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Followings are some of the instances in which the conviction was awarded by the child-friendly court:             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) An autorickshaw driver in his early 50s was sentenced to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment for sexually assaulting a six-year-old girl from Bownepally.</li> <li>(2) <b>A man who raped his 13-year-old daughter was sentenced to life imprisonment by a child-friendly court at Bharosacentre.</b></li> </ol> </li> </ul>
<b>Child Abuse in India</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A centrally-sponsored survey has found that <b>more than 53% children</b> in the country faced one or more forms of sexual abuse</li> <li>● This menace of child sexual abuse, rape, violence against children, and child trafficking is growing and has become a moral epidemic</li> <li>● Children are not safe in schools, at home and in public spaces.</li> <li>● Sadly, in most cases, they don't speak up under the garb of honour, fear, respect and dignity.</li> </ul>
<b>POCSO and Child-friendly court</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years.</li> <li>● The Act provides protection to all children under the age of 18 years from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography.</li> <li>● The Act incorporates child friendly procedures for reporting, recording of evidence, investigation and trial of offences.</li> <li>● Thus, the special courts(Child friendly) for the trial of offences under POCSO Act had been set up.</li> <li>● The state-of-art court has all the required facilities in order to make the child feel comfortable and at ease to speak to the judge and advocates.</li> <li>● Apart from the innovative and child-friendly court hall, the court comprises special room for the victims with video conference facility and a separate room for the accused.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu, Indian Express.</b>

## Migration and Literacy

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The recently released <b>UNESCO global education monitoring report 2019</b> has observed literacy levels in rural households of India dip with seasonal migration.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>More in the news</b></p>	<p><b>Findings of the report:</b>  <b>Data</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● In India, 10.7 million children aged 6 to 14 lived in rural households with a seasonal migrant in 2013.</li> <li>● About 28% of youth aged 15 to 19 in these households were illiterate or had not completed primary school, compared to 18% of the cohort overall.</li> <li>● About 80% of seasonal migrant children in seven cities lacked access to education near work sites.</li> <li>● Around 40% are likely to end up in work rather than education, experiencing abuse and exploitation.</li> </ul> <p><b>Inter-State Migration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Inter-State migration rates have doubled between 2001 and 2011.</li> <li>● An estimated 9 million migrated between States annually from 2011 to 2016.</li> <li>● The report shows there is only one urban planner for every 1,00,000 people in India, while there are 38 for every 1, 00,000 in the United Kingdom.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Steps taken to address the problem</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>Right to Education Act</b> in 2009 made it mandatory for local authorities to admit migrant children.</li> <li>● National-level guidelines were issued, allowing for flexible admission of children.</li> <li>● It also provides for transport and volunteers to support with mobile education, create seasonal hostels and aiming to improve coordination between sending and receiving districts and states.</li> </ul>
<p><b>State-wise Initiatives</b></p>	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px;"> <p><b>Some relief</b> Some States in India have begun initiatives for the welfare of children of migrant parents</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ <b>T.N.:</b> The govt. provides text-books in other languages to migrant children</li> <li>■ <b>Gujarat:</b> It has introduced seasonal boarding schools to provide education to migrant children</li> <li>■ <b>Gujarat:</b> It is also collaborating with NGOs to begin online tracking of the children on the move</li> <li>■ <b>Maharashtra:</b> Authorities have enrolled volunteers to provide after-school psycho-social support to children left behind by migrating parents</li> <li>■ <b>Odisha:</b> It has taken up the responsibility of seasonal hostels run by NGOs</li> <li>■ <b>Odisha:</b> It also works with Andhra Pradesh to improve migrant well-being</li> </ul> </div>
<p><b>Source</b></p>	<p>The Hindu.</p>

## Intangible Cultural Heritage

<p><b>Why is it in the news?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), has added <b>reggae</b> to its list of cultural institutions worthy of protection and preservation.</li> </ul>
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<p><b>More about the news</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jamaica had applied for recognition of its musical tradition at a meeting of the UN in Mauritius this year.</li> <li>● <b>Reggae is a Jamaican music</b> originating from marginalized groups, mainly in Western Kingston.</li> <li>● It was started out as voice of marginalized. But now it is embraced by wide cross-section of society, including various genders, ethnic and religious groups.</li> </ul>
<p><b>About UNESCO cultural heritage list</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● UNESCO established its <b>Lists of Intangible Cultural Heritage</b> with the aim of ensuring better protection of important intangible cultural heritage worldwide and the awareness of their significance.</li> <li>● The list was established in 2008 when Convention for Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage came into effect.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>India and cultural heritage list:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● A total of <b>13 Intangible cultural heritage (ICH)</b> elements from India have been inscribed till date on the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.</li> <li>● The Ministry of Culture has appointed the <b>Sangeet NatakAkademi</b>, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Culture.</li> <li>● It is a nodal office for matters relating to the intangible cultural heritage including for preparation of the nomination dossiers for the Representative List of UNESCO.</li> </ul> <p><b><u>List of India's intangible cultural heritage:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana</li> <li>● Tradition of Vedic chanting</li> <li>● Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas.</li> <li>● Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre</li> <li>● Mudi yettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala</li> <li>● Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan</li> <li>● Chhau dance</li> <li>● Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir.</li> <li>● Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur</li> <li>● Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab</li> <li>● Nawrouz</li> <li>● Yoga</li> <li>● Kumbh Mela</li> </ul>
<p><b>Source</b></p>	<p><b>The Hindu, PIB, The Guardian.</b></p>

## Aadi Mahotsav

<p><b>Why is it in the news ?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The 4<sup>th</sup> edition of annual "<b>Aadi Mahotsav</b>", a National Tribal Festival inaugurated recently.</li> <li>● It is organized by <b>Ministry of Tribal Affairs</b> in association with <b>TRIFED</b> and <b>Ministry of Culture</b>.</li> </ul>
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<b>About Aadi mahotsav</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The mahotsav <b>celebrates and cherishes the spirit of tribal culture, craft, cuisine and commerce.</b></li> <li>● It is underway at <b>DilliHaat, Shri Aurobindo Marg, INA till 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018.</b></li> <li>● Tribals in India constitute over <b>8% of the population.</b></li> <li>● The theme of the Delhi edition of the Ministry's signature event is "celebration of the spirit of tribal culture, craft, cuisine and commerce".</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>PIB.</b>

## World Poverty Clock

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● India recently fell from the top of the list in the ranking of countries living with extreme poverty.</li> <li>● According to <b>world poverty clock</b>, Nigeria now houses 88 million extremely poor people compared with 63 million people in India.</li> </ul>
<b>More about the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Defined as living under an income of \$1.90 a day, India had remained at the top spot for many years.</li> <li>● In 2016, India had an estimated 124 million people living in extreme poverty. It is around 63 million now.</li> <li>● India's decline in poverty is correlated with its years-long economic growth.</li> <li>● Over recent decades, the nation has implemented many economic efforts to counter economic instability.</li> <li>● By 2025, it is expected that less than 0.5% of Indians will be extremely poor.</li> </ul>
<b>About World poverty clock</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It monitors progress against poverty globally.</li> <li>● It tracks poverty rates in real time.</li> <li>● Its information is collected from domestic surveys and The International Monetary Fund's data mapper, World Economic Outlook (IMF WEO).</li> <li>● It is created by <b>Vienna based NGO, World Data Lab.</b></li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>PIB, worldpoverty.io</b>

## World Food Programme and Alibaba join hands to achieve zero hunger

<b>Why is it in the news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>UN World Food Programme</b> and Chinese e-commerce giant <b>Alibaba Group</b> have formed a strategic partnership to support efforts <b>eliminate hunger globally by 2030.</b></li> </ul>
<b>More in the news</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Under the accord, Alibaba will lend its cutting-edge technology and resources to support the digital transformation of WFP's operations.</li> <li>● In particular, Alibaba Cloud, the cloud computing arm of Alibaba, will work with WFP to develop a digital "World Hunger Map".</li> <li>● The map will monitor global hunger and operations to end the scourge by 2030 - one of the UN's key Sustainable Development goals.</li> <li>● It also aims to boost the efficiency of interventions and shorten emergency response times.</li> </ul>
<b>About World Food Programme</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The <b>World Food Programme (WFP)</b> is the food-assistance branch of the United Nations.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● It is world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.</li> <li>● According to the WFP, it provides food assistance to an average of 91.4 million people in 83 countries each year.</li> <li>● It is headquartered in <b>Rome</b>.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>Business standard, WFP.</b>

## Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The Union Cabinet has approved the Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018 for regulation and standardisation of education and services by allied and healthcare professionals.</li> <li>● The Bill provides for setting up of an Allied and Healthcare Council of India and corresponding State Allied and Healthcare Councils which will play the role of a standard-setter and facilitator for professions of Allied and Healthcare</li> </ul>
<b>Details:</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(1) Establishment of a Central and corresponding State Allied and Healthcare Councils; 15 major professional categories including 53 professions in Allied and Healthcare streams.</li> <li>(2) <b>The Bill provides for Structure, Constitution, Composition and Functions of the Central Council and State Councils, e.g. Framing policies and standards, Regulation of professional conduct, Creation and maintenance of live Registers, provisions for common entry and exit examinations, etc.</b></li> <li>(3) <b>The Central Council will comprise 47 members, of which 14 members shall be ex-officio representing diverse and related roles and functions and remaining 33 shall be non-ex-officio members who mainly represent the 15 professional categories.</b></li> <li>(4) <b>The State Councils are also envisioned to mirror the Central Council, comprising 7 ex-officio and 21 non-ex officio members and Chairperson to be elected from amongst the non-ex officio members.</b></li> <li>(5) <b>Professional Advisory Bodies under Central and State Councils will examine issues independently and provide recommendations relating to specific recognised categories.</b></li> <li>(6) <b>The Bill will also have an overriding effect on any other existing law for any of the covered professions.</b></li> <li>(7) <b>The State Council will undertake recognition of allied and healthcare institutions.</b></li> <li>(8) <b>Offences and Penalties clause have been included in the Bill to check mal-practices.</b></li> <li>(9) <b>The Bill also empowers the Central and State Governments to make rules.</b></li> <li>(10) <b>Central Govt. also has the power to issue directions to the Council, to make regulations and to add or amend the schedule.</b></li> </ol>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu</b>

## SHe-Box

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● SHe-Box, the online portal to report complaints of Sexual Harassment at Workplace, to all the Central Ministries, Departments and 653 districts across 33 States/Union Territories.</li> </ul>
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<b>She-Box</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● For prompt disposal of complaints on SHE-Box, each case goes directly to the central/ state authority concerned having jurisdiction to take action in the matter.</li> <li>● Those who have already filed a written complaint with the concerned Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) or Local Complaint Committee (LCC) constituted under the Sexual Harassment Act are also eligible to file their complaint through this portal.</li> <li>● The private organizations are encouraged to customize the Training Module as per their extant service rules and disciplinary procedures prescribed therein.</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu</b>

### Kudumbashree Mall

<b>Why is it in news?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Making history in the state, Kudumbashree under Kozhikode corporation CDS unit is all set to open the first women mall, Mahila Mal</li> </ul>
<b>Mahila Mall</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Techno World Training center of Kudumbashree, family counselling center, Kerala State Women's Development Corporation (KSWDC) help desk, She Taxi help desk and kiosks of various services administrated by women will function in the fourth floor.</li> <li>● Apart from this, Milma and Khadi board stores will be opened here.</li> <li>● An electronic play zone in 3100 square feet will be another attraction in the mall.</li> <li>● A food court will be arranged on the roof garden. ATM counters of two banks will be installed here.</li> <li>● Mahila Mall will be an exclusive mall where only women own shops. Compared to other malls, women will play various roles as security guard, administrator and so on.</li> <li>● In India, this is the only commercial venture with an all-women crew</li> </ul>
<b>Source</b>	<b>The Hindu</b>



**NOTES**



# NOTES

