

MPSC

INTEGRATED BATCHES 2018-19

CURRENT AFFAIRS

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India Withdraws MFN Status of Pakistan

- One day after the Pulwama terror attack on 14th February, 2019, India has taken a stern step of withdrawing the Most Favoured Nation or MFN Status of Pakistan. This move would enable India to increase customs duty on goods coming from Pakistan. The decision was taken in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) that took place on 15th February 2019.

What is the MFN Status?

- The MFN status is given under WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). It is given to an international trade partner to ensure non-discriminatory trade amongst all the members of WTO.
- As per the first clause in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), a country providing MFN status to another country has to provide concessions, privileges, and immunity in trade agreements.
- WTO states that if a special status is granted to one trade partner, the country is required to extend it to all members of the WTO without discrimination or any special treatment.
- An MFN status helps reduce trade barriers and results in a reduction in tariffs especially in customs duty.
- This in turn strengthens trade-ties between the two countries. As India and Pakistan both are members of the WTO, both are required to grant MFN status to each other and other partner countries.

What is the State of MFN Status Between India and Pakistan?

- India had granted MFN status to Pakistan in 1996, a year after the formation of WTO. But Pakistan hasn't accorded MFN status to India till now.
- The reason for this is decades of conflict, mistrust and war. Now the total India-Pakistan trade has increased marginally to \$2.41 billion in 2017-18 as compared to \$ 2.27 billion in 2016-17.
- India had imported goods worth \$488.5 million in 2017-18 and exported goods worth \$ 1.92 billion in that fiscal. India's exports mostly include cotton, dyes, chemicals, vegetables and iron and steel; while its imports include fruits, cement, leather, chemicals and spices.
- Given that Indo-Pakistan trade-ties is not very strong, this step of revoking the MFN status is only symbolic.

About the Pulwama Terror Attack:

- 37 CRPF personnel were martyred in Jammu and Kashmir's Pulwama district on 14th February 2019 when a terrorist attacked with an explosive-laden vehicle into one of the buses of the convoy of the security forces. Jaish-e-Mohammed has taken responsibility for the attack. There were more than 78 vehicles in the convoy in which 2500 personnels were present. This is the worst terror attack since the Uri attack in 2016.

Following are some of the key benefits of MFN status:

- Free trade:The status increases trade creation and decreases trade diversion. A country that grants MFN on imports will have its imports provided by the most efficient supplier if the most efficient supplier is within the group of MFN.
- Equal Opportunities: The status allows smaller countries, in particular, to participate in the advantages that larger countries often grant to each other. The smaller countries would often not be powerful enough to negotiate such advantages by themselves.
- More Transparency :Having one set of tariffs for all countries simplifies the rules and makes them more transparent.

- **No Discrimination:** Each WTO member is required to treat all the other members equally as "most-favoured" trading partners. If a country improves the benefits that it gives to one trading partner, it has to give the same "best" treatment to all the other WTO members so that they all remain "most-favoured". The nation also has to ensure that there is no discrimination between its own and foreign products, services or nationals.
- **Fair Competition :** It also discourages unfair practices such as export subsidies and dumping products at below cost to gain market share.

Impact of withdrawal

- Pakistan exported just \$500 million of goods in 2017-18 to India, representing 1.5 per cent of its exports. However, it is believed to have exported goods worth about 3-4 times as much through third countries.
- While the official trade between the two neighbours in 2017-18 stood at \$2.4 billion, the third-country trade between the two is estimated to have been \$5-10 billion.
- The main items imported by India from Pakistan include fresh fruits, cement, petroleum products, bulk minerals and ores and finished leather.
- The major items that India exports to Pakistan include raw cotton, cotton yarn, chemicals, plastics, manmade yarn and dyes.
- According to analysts, the 200 per cent hike in the excise duty could hit cement and bituminous oil export by Pakistan as these are bulk commodities which are difficult to ship through third countries without impacting the costing hugely.

ILO Centenary Celebrations Launched

- The ILO Centenary Celebrations in India were inaugurated by Union Minister of State (I/C) for Labour and Employment Shri Santosh Kumar Gangwar at V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, Noida.
- India being a founding member has played an active role in every field of the organization. India has ratified 47 out of 189 ILO conventions during the century which includes all eight core conventions.

International Labour Organisation

- International Labour Organisation (ILO) is a tripartite organisation where representatives from the government, employers and employees openly debate and create labour standards.
- ILO is celebrating its 100th anniversary in 2019. As part of the 100th Anniversary, ILO is implementing seven centenary initiatives, which are:
- The future of work initiative, The end to poverty initiative, The women at work initiative, The green initiative , The standards initiative, The end to poverty initiative, The women at work initiative .

Great Indian Bustard is the Mascot for COP-13 on Migratory Species

- The Union Government has announced the Great Indian Bustard (GIB) as the mascot for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the UN Convention on the conservation of migratory species (CMS) to be held in Gujarat next year.
- The logo, mascot and the website for the 13th Conference of Parties (COP) was launched by the Union Minister for Environment, Forests and Climate Change Harsh Vardhan. The mascot for the event, Great Indian Bustard has been fondly named as 'Gibi'.

Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (CMS)

- CMS is an international treaty under the aegis of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). It is also known as the Bonn Convention.
- CMS aims to conserve terrestrial, marine and avian migratory species throughout their range.
- CMS is only global and UN-based intergovernmental organization established exclusively for conservation and management of terrestrial, aquatic and avian migratory species throughout their range.
- The convention provides a global platform for deliberations on the conservation and sustainable use of migratory wild animals and their habitat .
- The convention was signed in 1979 at Bonn (hence the name Bonn Convention), Germany and entered into force in 1983. Its headquarters are in Bonn, Germany.
- Since its entry into force, the membership has grown steadily to include over 120 Parties from Africa, Central and South America, Asia, Europe and Oceania.

Bharat Ratna and Padma Awards cannot be used as Titles

- On 12th Feb. 19, replying to a written question in Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Home Shri Hansrah Gangaram Ahir said that National Awards, such as Bharat Ratna, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri do not amount to titles within the meaning of Article 18(1) of the Constitution and hence, cannot be used as prefixes or suffixes to the name of the recipient.
- In case of any misuse, the defaulter shall forfeit the award conferred on him/her as per the Regulation 10 related to creation of awards, which says that the president may cancel or annul the awards, after which the name of the awardee would be erased from the records and he would have to surrender it.

Afghanistan begins export to India through Chabahar port

- Afghanistan on February 24, 2019 began exports to India through the Chabahar port in Iran. This is the first time Afghanistan has exported goods to India bypassing the Pakistan route.
- The first consignment of exports to India was flagged off by Afghan President Ashraf Ghani.
- While inaugurating the new route, the President said that the Chabahar port is the result of healthy cooperation between India, Iran and Afghanistan and it will ensure economic growth.

Salient features :

- According to reports, twenty-three trucks carrying 570 tonnes of dried fruits, textiles, carpets and mineral products were dispatched from the western Afghan city of Zaranj to Chabahar in Iran.
- The consignment will then be shipped from Chabahar to the Indian port city of Mumbai.
- Afghanistan's exports are expected to increase from \$1 billion to \$2 billion after the opening of the new trade route.

- The Chabahar port is expected to help Afghanistan transform from an importer country into an exporter country.

Significance:

- The move marks the first time that Afghanistan has shipped goods to India through a newly developed Iranian seaport in a bid to improve exports and reduce reliance on routes through its uneasy neighbor, Pakistan.
- For decades, the landlocked nation was forced to rely on Pakistan's land and seaports for international trade.
- However, mutual tensions in recent years significantly reduced Afghan trade and transit activities through Pakistan.

Abu Dhabi adds Hindi as third official court language

- The Abu Dhabi Judicial Department (ADJD) has added Hindi as the third official language to be used in the city's courts, alongside Arabic and English.
- The move is aimed at helping foreigners to learn about litigation procedures, their rights and duties without a language barrier, in addition to facilitating registration procedures through unified forms available through the judicial department's website.

Salient features :

- The Abu Dhabi Judicial Department has extended the adoption of interactive forms of statement of claims filed before courts by including the Hindi language alongside Arabic and English in labour cases.
- The adoption of multilingual interactive forms for claim sheets, grievances and requests, aims to promote judicial services and increase the transparency of litigation procedures. The move is designed to improve access to justice.
- It is in addition to facilitating registration procedures to the public through simplified and easy forms and raising litigants' legal awareness through interactive forms of the statements of claims, to ensure access to the legal materials related to the subject of the dispute.
- The adoption of new languages comes as part of the bilingual litigation system, the first phase of which was launched in November 2018, through the adoption of procedures requiring the plaintiffs to translate case documents in civil and commercial lawsuits into English, if the defendant is a foreigner.
- The foreign investor receives the case files translated, thus contributing to the provision of a global judicial service that meets the requirements of residents in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi.

Vande Bharat Express: PM Modi launches India's first semi-high speed train

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 15, 2019 flagged off India's first Semi High Speed Train, 'Vande Bharat Express' on New Delhi-Kanpur-Allahabad-Varanasi route from the New Delhi Railway Station.
- With maximum speed of 160 kmph, Vande Bharat Express or Train-18 offers travel classes like Shatabdi Train but with better facilities with a totally new travel experience to passengers.
- Vande Bharat Express is regarded as a successor to the 30-year-old Shatabdi Express. Shatabdi was introduced in 1988 and is presently running on over 20 routes connecting metros with other important cities.

New Delhi-Varanasi train journey to be covered in 8 hours

- The Vande Bharat Express will cover the distance between New Delhi and Varanasi in 8 hours at speed of 160 kmph and will run on all days except Mondays and Thursdays.

Features of Vande Bharat Express:

- Touted as the Next Generation Shatabdi Express, Vande Bharat Express is the first long-distance train without separate locomotive (engine) and is driven by a self-propulsion module.
- It is capable of running at a speed of up to 160 kmph. It will cut travel time by 15 percent compared to the Shatabdi Express.
- The train has been developed by the Chennai-based Integral Coach Factory (ICF) at an investment of nearly Rs 100 crore.
- It is fully air-conditioned train and is equipped with CCTV cameras.
- It has 16 coaches with Chair Car type configuration with 2 Executive Class Chair Cars and 14 Chair Cars.
- It has two executive compartments in the middle with 52 seats each and the trailer coaches would have 78 seats each.
- It has soft lighting, automatic doors, footsteps and GPS-based audio-visual Passenger Information System.
- It has intelligent braking system with power regeneration for better energy efficiency thereby making it cost, energy and environment efficient.
- The footstep in a coach's doorway slides outward when the train stops at a station enabling passengers to board or deboard safely with comfort.
- The train offers some features to enhance passenger comfort which include inter-connected fully sealed gangways, automatic doors with retractable footsteps, onboard Wi-Fi and infotainment, and modular toilets with bio-vacuum systems.
- It also has provision of Divyang-friendly facilities.
- It also features rotational seats which can be aligned in the direction of travel (executive class), roller blinds and diffused LED lighting, and disabled-friendly toilets.
- All toilets are bio-vacuum type.
- The lighting is dual mode - diffused for general illumination and personal for every seat.

- Every coach has a pantry with facility to serve hot meals, hot and cold beverages.
- The insulation is meant to keep heat and noise to very low levels for additional passenger comfort.
- Adding up the green footprints, the train has regenerative braking system in the coaches which can save up to 30 percent of electrical energy.
- Speed, Safety and Service are the hallmarks of this train.

STATES

Orrisa approved rs 466 Crore sanitary napkin scheme for adolescent girls:

- Odisha government, in the Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, approved Khusi scheme aimed at improving menstrual hygiene among adolescent girl students in the state, with an outlay of Rs 466.08 crore over a period of 5 years.
- Free sanitary napkins will be provided to 17.25 lakh adolescent girl students of Class 6 to 9 studying in government and non-government aided schools of the state. It will also cover Kendriya Vidyalayas and Jawaharlal Navodaya Vidyalayas.
- Each girl student will be provided with 18 beltless sanitary napkins per month.
- Other objectives of the scheme include reducing the expenditure of the parents towards health care of the girls, reduction in the dropout rate among girls, improved attendance in schools and increase in academic parameter.
- The scheme will be implemented in coordination with the School and Mass Education, Scheduled Tribe & Scheduled Caste Development and Minorities and Backward Classes, and Social Security & Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities departments.

New Railway Zone for Andhra Pradesh

- The Union Minister for Railways Piyush Goyal has announced the creation of new railway zone for Andhra Pradesh, Southern Coast Railway Zone to be headquartered in Visakhapatnam.

Salient features about the Southern Coast Railway Zone:

- The Southern Coast Railway zone would comprise of existing Guntakal, Guntur and Vijayawada divisions that currently fall under the South Central Railway and the South Central Railway will then consist of the Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Nanded divisions.
- Waltair division under the East Coast Railway Zone, covering the northern districts of Andhra Pradesh, parts of Chhattisgarh and Odisha will be split into two.
- One part will be incorporated in the new zone and merged with the neighbouring Vijayawada division, the remaining portion will be converted into a new division, headquartered at Rayagada, under the East Coast Railway (ECoR).

Political Move?

- Under item 8 of Schedule 13 (Infrastructure) of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014 Indian Railways was required to examine establishing a new railway zone in the successor state of Andhra Pradesh.

- Southern Coast Railway Zone is a step forward in this direction. The establishment is largely seen as a political move since the Railway Minister has given assent to the creation of new zone despite the internal report of the Railway Board calling it “catastrophic”.
- The report had said that creation of a new zone in Andhra Pradesh would be “like putting many nails in the coffin of the Indian Railways.
- The South Coast Railway zone would be an 18th Railway zone in the country. Currently, India has 17 zones and a total of 73 divisions.

India’s first Aqua Mega Food Park commissioned in Andhra Pradesh

- Union Minister of Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal on February 12, 2019 commissioned Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park at Tundurru Village in Bhimavaram Mandal, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh through video conferencing.
- The park is promoted by Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park Pvt. Ltd. It will be the first Mega Aqua Food Park operationalised exclusively for fish and marine products processing in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Salient features :

- The Godavari Mega Aqua Food Park Pvt. Ltd has been set up in 57.81 acre of land at a cost of Rs. 122.60 crores.
- The park also has a common administrative building for office and other uses by the entrepreneurs and 2 PPCs at Amalapuram EG-District and Karlapalem, Guntur District having facilities for primary processing and storage near the farms in the catchment area to benefit farmers.
- This mega food park will benefit the people of West Godavari-District as well as nearby Districts of East Godavari, Krishna of Andhra Pradesh and nearby districts of Telangana.

Significance:

- The modern infrastructure for food processing created at park will benefit the farmers, growers, processors and consumers of Andhra Pradesh and adjoining areas immensely and prove to be a big boost to the growth of the food processing sector in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Background

- The Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries is implementing Mega Food Park Scheme in the country to give a major boost to the food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of the supply chain with particular focus on perishables.
- The mega food parks create modern infrastructure facilities for food processing along the value chain from farm to market with strong forward and backward linkages through a cluster based approach.
- Further, common facilities and enabling infrastructure is created at central processing centre and facilities for primary processing and storage is created near the farm in the form of Primary Processing Centers (PPCs) and Collection Centers (CCs).

ECONOMICS

World Sustainable Development Summit 2019

- The World Sustainable Development Summit 2019 was inaugurated by the Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu in New Delhi. The World Sustainable Development Summit 2019, organized by The Energy and Resources Institute – TERI.

World Sustainable Development Summit:

- The World Sustainable Development Summit is the annual flagship event of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). World Sustainable Development Summit is the sole Summit on global issues taking place in the developing world.
- The World Sustainable Development Summit provides a platform for global leaders and practitioners to discuss and deliberate over climatic issues of universal importance.
- The World Sustainable Development Summit strives to provide long-term solutions for the benefit of the global community by assembling the world's most enlightened leaders and thinkers on a single platform.
- World Sustainable Development Summit is continuing the legacy of Delhi Sustainable Development Summit (DSDS) which was initiated in 2001 with the aim of making 'sustainable development' a globally shared goal.

The Energy and Resources Institute – TERI:

- TERI – the Tata Energy Research Institute was established by the Mr Darbari S Seth in 1974. Mr Darbari S Seth was the builder of Tata Chemicals Limited.
- He provided a decent sum for establishing TERI's corpus and provided encouragement, inspiration, and moral support to the Director and staff of the Institute without ever interfering with the operational decision-making.
- Over time from its inception, TERI has emerged as one of the world's pre-eminent think tanks and research institutions in the field of energy, climate change and sustainability.
- TERI aims to usher transitions to a cleaner and sustainable future through the conservation and efficient use of Earth's resources and innovative ways of minimizing and reusing waste.

Foreign Direct Investment to India

- The Ministry of Commerce and Industry has released the data related to the Foreign Direct Investment (fdi) inflows during April-September 2018-19. The important aspects from this data:
 - The Foreign direct investment (FDI) into India was declined by 11 per cent to USD 22.66 billion during April-September period of 2018-19.
 - The FDI inflows during April-September 2017-18 stood at USD 25.35 billion.
 - The FDI which attracted large FDI are services (USD 4.91 billion), computer software and hardware (USD 2.54 billion), telecommunications (USD 2.17 billion), trading (USD 2.14 billion), chemicals (USD 1.6 billion), and automobile industry (USD 1.59 billion).
 - **Singapore** with the FDI of USD 8.62 billion inflow was the largest source of FDI during April-September 2018-19.
 - Singapore was followed by Mauritius (USD 3.88 billion), the Netherlands (USD 2.31 billion), Japan (USD 1.88 billion), the US (USD 970 million), and UK (USD 845 million).

- The Foreign Direct Investment growth witnessed a five-year low growth of 3 per cent at \$ 44.85 billion in 2017-18. The decline in the growth rate of FDI could adversely affect the country's balance of payments and may also impact the value of the rupee.

Fiscal Deficit for April-December

- The data shows that the fiscal deficit touched 112.4 per cent of the full-year budget target of Rs 6.24 lakh crore at the end of December. The important data highlights related to the fiscal deficit are:
- The gap between Government's expenditure and revenue stood at Rs 7.01 lakh crore during April- December of the current financial year which ends in March.
- The deficit was 113.6 per cent of the Budget Estimate by the end of December.
- The government had earlier budgeted to cut the fiscal deficit to 3.3 per cent of GDP or Rs 6.24 lakh crore in 2018-19, from 3.53 per cent in the previous financial year.

APPOINTMENTS

Rishi Kumar Shukla appointed CBI Director

- IPS officer Rishi Kumar Shukla has been appointed as the chief of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for a fixed tenure of two years.
- Rishi Kumar Shukla is currently serving as the chairman of Madhya Pradesh Police Housing Corporation in Bhopal.
- The appointment of the Rishi Kumar Shukla was approved by the Appointments Committee of the cabinet based on the recommendation of the selection committee headed by the Prime Minister.
- The CBI Director search committee headed by Prime Minister has the Chief Justice of India and the Leader of Opposition as members.

Supreme Court Observations:

- The appointment of the CBI director gains significance in the backdrop of comments made by the Supreme Court which had said that it was "averse" to the arrangement of an interim CBI Director and the Centre should "immediately" appoint a regular chief of the probe agency.
- The Supreme Court stated that the post of CBI Director is sensitive and important, and it is not good to keep an interim director of the agency for a longer period. The Supreme Court sought to know why the government has not made the appointment yet.

Sushil Chandra appointed new Election Commissioner

- The President has appointed Sushil Chandra as the new Election Commissioner. Sushil Chandra's appointment fills the vacancy caused after the retirement of O.P. Rawat, as Chief Election Commissioner (CEC).
- Sushil Chandra will join other two members of the Commission, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora and Election Commissioner (EC) Ashok Lavasa.
- The appointment was made under the clause (2) of Article 324 of the constitution.

Sushil Chandra:

- Sushil Chandra is currently serving as the chairman of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).

- He is the second Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer to be appointed to the Commission after T.S. Krishnamurthy, who went on to become the CEC in 2004.
- Sushil Chandra is a B. Tech from IIT Roorkee and who also holds a law degree. He joined the Revenue Service in 1980.
- He has served as Commissioner of Income Tax (Appeals) International Taxation in Delhi, Director of Investigation, Mumbai and Director General Investigation, Gujarat.

Kareena Kapoor Khan appointed ambassador of Swasth Immunised India campaign

- Actress Kareena Kapoor Khan has been appointed as an ambassador of Swasth Immunised India campaign. The Swasth Immunised India campaign has been launched by Serum Institute of India (SII) and Network 18.

Swasth Immunised India campaign:

- The Swasth Immunised India campaign aims to build a robust campaign aimed at spreading awareness on the importance and benefits of immunisation among the masses.
- The campaign is aimed at dispelling myths and misconceptions pertaining to the administration of vaccination among Indians.
- The campaign aims to raise awareness about the importance and benefits of vaccine administration, advocating its acceptance and building a strong immunization outreach in the country.
- The Swasth Immunised India campaign aims to complement the efforts of the government to reach full immunisation coverage through continuous education and awareness.

Significance of the Immunisation

- India's commitment towards vaccination has aided in successfully eradicated deadly diseases like Polio and Smallpox.
- **WHO** states that immunisation prevents 2-3 million deaths every year. But still, 5 lakh kids die every year in India because of diseases preventable by vaccines.
- India is still home to the highest number of unvaccinated (56%) and incompletely vaccinated children (32%).
- Prevalence of myths and misconceptions, lack of information and misinformation has hindered the government efforts to achieve full immunisation.
- This is resulting in outbreaks of various kinds of illnesses, leading to a growing fatality rate among infants, children and expectant mothers in India.
- The Swasth Immunised India campaign aims to address these gaps.

POLITY

Cinematograph Amendment Bill 2019

- The Union Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the Cinematograph Amendment Bill 2019. The amendment bill aims to amend the Cinematograph Amendment act 1952. The features of the amendment bill are:
- The amendment bill makes film piracy offences punishable with imprisonment up to three years and fines that may extend to 10 lakh or both.

- The amendment states that any person, who without the written authorisation of the copyright owner, uses any recording device to make or transmit a copy of a film, or attempts to do so, or abet the making or transmission of such a copy, will be liable for such a punishment.
- Section 7 of the Cinematograph Act, 1952 deals with who can watch and exhibit which films and penalties for violating terms and conditions related to the exhibition of board-certified films.
- The amendment bill adds a new subsection (4) to section 7 of the Cinematograph Act, 1952 with the definition of piracy and the penal provisions for the same.
- The Cinematograph Amendment Bill, 2019 aims to tackle film piracy by including the penal provisions for unauthorised camcording and duplication of films.
- The bill when passed will build a credible deterrence which would increase industry revenues, boost job creation, fulfil important objectives of India's National Intellectual Property policy and will give relief against piracy and infringing content online.

Voter Verification and Information Programme Launched

- The Voter Verification and Information Programme (VVIP) was launched by the Election Commission during the two-day intensive training-cum-workshop on the use of information & communication technology for the conduct of general elections.
- During the workshop, training was imparted on the **c- VIGIL** mobile application.
- This app provides time-stamped, evidence-based proof of complaints relating to violation of model code of conduct or expenditure limit, complete with live photo/video with auto location data.

Voter Verification and Information Programme (VVIP)

- The Voter Verification and Information Programme (VVIP) has been launched by the Election Commission to help citizens verify their names in the electoral rolls, register as new voters, update voter details and make corrections in their voter identity cards ahead of the general election due in April-May.
- The VVIP service can be availed by the voters through various channels including voter helpline application, voter helpline number 1950 and contact centres in all districts across India.

PwD App

- During the workshop, the PwD App was also launched. The App is aimed at enabling Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) to request for new registration, change in address, change in particulars and mark themselves as PwD through the use of the mobile application was also launched.
- By simply entering their contact details, the booth level officer is assigned to provide them doorstep facility. PwDs can also request for a wheelchair during polling.

Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill 2018

- The Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2018 was passed in Lok Sabha. The features of the bill are:
- Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial Act, 1951 provided for the erection of a National Memorial in memory of those killed or wounded on April 13, 1919, in Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar.
- The 1951 Act also provided for a Trust to manage the National Memorial. The Trust as per the 1951 Act included the Prime Minister, as Chairperson, (ii) the President of the Indian National Congress, (iii) the Minister in-charge of Culture, (iv) the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, (v) the Governor of Punjab, (vi) the Chief Minister of Punjab, and (vii) three eminent persons nominated by the central government.

- The 2018 amendment bill removes the President of the Indian National Congress as a Trustee.
- Further, the bill clarifies that when there is no Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, the leader of the single largest opposition party in the Lok Sabha will be the Trustee.
- The 1951 act provided that the three eminent persons nominated by the central government will have a term of five years and will be eligible for re-nomination.
- The 2018 bill added a clause to allow the central government to terminate the term of a nominated trustee before the expiry of his term without assigning any reason.
- The government claimed that the bill was brought in to address various deficiencies in the management of the National Memorial and to ensure that the Trust is an apolitical entity.

Union Cabinet approves Introduction of Registration of Marriage of NRI Bill, 2019

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 13, 2019 approved the introduction of Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indian (NRI) Bill, 2019 to create more accountability to Indian citizens living abroad.
- The bill mainly seeks to offer more protection against the exploitation of Indian citizens, mostly Indian women by their NRI partners.

Salient features :

- The Bill provides for amendment of the legal framework to act as a deterrent to the erring NRI spouses and creating more accountability and offer protection against exploitation of Indian Citizens, specially women married to NRIs.
- Under the new bill, a marriage between an NRI and an Indian citizen will have to be registered in India or Indian missions and posts abroad within 30 days from the date of marriage.
- After the bill's passing, the necessary changes would be carried out in the Passports Act, 1967 and Code of Criminal Procedure 1973 by insertion of Section 86A.
- According to the proposed amendments, if the marriage isn't registered within 30 days, the passport of the NRI will be revoked, summons and warrant be issued.
- Despite all this, if the NRI fails to appear in court, his properties will be attached and he will be declared 'Proclaimed Offender'.
- IMPACT- The Bill would offer great protection to Indian citizens married to NRIs and serve as a deterrent to NRIs against harassment of their spouses. It is expected to benefit Indian women married to NRIs across the world.
- The bill would amend the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, solving a major problem of serving judicial summons for court proceedings in India.

Background

- The bill has been introduced with the hope of restricting NRI husbands from using marriage as a tool of exploitation and making money and providing better enforcement of rights for the deserted woman under the family laws.
- The introduction of the Bill was necessitated due to numerous complaints received from Indian nationals mostly women, who were deserted or harassed by their Non-Resident Indian Spouses.

- Since marriage takes place outside India, there are no records or legal documents for further procedures to be initiated against the offender.
- Hence, once the Bill is passed, such practices will be curbed and it will provide much needed relief to all Indian women married to NRIs worldwide.

Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2017

- The Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari has stated that the Central Government expects a 20 per cent decline in road accidents from the current five lakh a year and Parliament's nod to pending legislation Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill will also help curb the accidents.

Features of the Bill

- The features of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2017 are:
- The bill seeks to redress the difficulties faced in obtaining driving licenses without the help of touts by taking the process online. Tests for driving licences will be automated, and learner's licences will be issued online.
- The bill provides for an increase of fines for breaking road rules. The new law states that driving licence issued to a person under the age of 30 is valid till the person turns 40.
- For those who receive licences between the ages of 30 and 50, the licence will remain valid for 10 years. If the licence is issued between 50 and 55 years, it will be valid until the person turns 60, and above 55 years, licences will carry a five-year validity.
- The bill defines aggregators as a digital intermediary or market place for a passenger to connect with a driver for the purpose of transportation and makes it optional for the states to follow central guidelines related to the aggregators.
- The bill leaves the regulation of aggregators should be left to states. The bill also removes the cap on payments to be made under third-party insurance proposed in the 2016 bill.
- The bill provides for the recall of vehicles if the defective vehicle is a danger to the environment, the driver or other road users.
- The manufacturer would be required to reimburse all buyers with the full cost of the vehicle, replace the defective vehicle, and if necessary pay a fine as specified by the government.
- The Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill, 2017 has been passed by the Lok Sabha and is pending in the Rajya Sabha.

125th Constitutional Amendment Bill

- The government has introduced the 125th Constitutional Amendment Bill in the Parliament to increase the financial and executive powers of the 10 Autonomous Councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of the northeastern region.

Features of the Amendment Bill

- The salient features of the 125th Constitutional Amendment Bill which will impact one crore tribal people in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram are:
- The amendments proposed provide for elected village municipal councils, ensuring democracy at the grass-root level.
- The amendment empowers the village councils to prepare plans for economic development and social justice including those related to agriculture, land improvement, implementation of land reforms, minor irrigation, water management, animal husbandry, rural electrification, small scale industries and social forestry.

- The amendment bill mandates the finance commission to recommend devolution of financial resources to these autonomous councils. The Autonomous Councils are dependent on grants from Central ministries and the State government for specific projects.
- The amendment bill also reserve one-third of the seats for women in the village and municipal councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of Assam, Mizoram and The bill to empower the Autonomous Councils was announced by the government last month in the backdrop of the protests in the North-East .

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

Part Two of the Darwaza Band Campaign Launched

- The part two of Darwaza Band campaign which aims to promote the use of toilets and to sustain the open defecation free status of villages across India has been launched.
- The campaign has been launched under the aegis of Swachh Bharat Mission Grameen initiative of Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- Darwaza Band literally stands for shutting the door. The campaign symbolically stands for shutting the door for open defecation.
- The campaign aims to encourage behaviour change in men who have toilets but are not using them and to encourage women to stand up for this issue in their villages and assume a leadership role.
- The Darwaza Band campaign is designed to encourage behaviour change through television ads, radio jingles, outdoor publicity and digital campaigns. The campaign is launched in association with World Bank.

Making India open Defecation Free

- The data from government suggests that over 50 crore people have stopped defecating in the open since the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission and over 5.5 lakh villages have been declared Open Defecation Free. The national sanitation coverage is now in excess of 98 per cent as compared to 39 per cent in 2014.

SHREYAS: Union HRD Ministry launches Scheme to provide apprenticeship opportunities to graduates

- The Union Minister for Human Resources Development, Prakash Javadekar on February 27, 2019 launched the 'Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills' (SHREYAS) for providing industry apprenticeship or training opportunities to fresh graduates of 2019.
- Launched primarily to skill non-technical students of BA, BSc. BCom courses, the SHREYAS programme intends to introduce BA, BSc, and BCom (Professional) courses in the higher educational institutions.
- These courses will be available to the students from Academic year April-May 2019.
- The scheme aims to boost the employment skills of Indian youth by providing them with 'on the job work exposure' through the National Apprenticeship Promotional Scheme (NAPS) and the National Career Service (NCS).

Ministries involved:

- The SHREYAS Scheme is a programme basket comprising the initiatives of three central ministries, including the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, and the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

SHREYAS: Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills:

- The scheme will be operated in conjunction with National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS) which provides for placing of apprentices or trainees up to 10 percent of the total work force in every industry.
- The scheme will be implemented by the Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) initially in the Banking Finance Insurance Services (BFSI), Retail, Health care, Telecom, Logistics, Media, Management services, ITeS and Apparel. More sectors would be added over time with emerging apprenticeship demand.

Background

- Taking into account that the biggest challenge facing education sector in the country is maintaining acceptable quality standards, the Government is continuously making efforts to spread educational technology and connectivity to resolve this issue and being fairness in educational standards.
- Various initiatives such as e-Pathshala, DIKSHA, NROER, NPTEL, e-pathshala SWAYAM and SWAYAM-Prabha DTH Channels etc. have provided adequate content of high quality which can be taken to every classroom, and thereby facilitating blended learning and flip class learning.
- These educational interventions can adequately raise the standards of teaching, irrespective of the location of the Schools and Colleges/Institutes.

e-Aushadhi Portal

- Minister of State for AYUSH, Shri Shripad Yesso Naik launched the e-Aushadhi portal for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs.

Features of the e-Aushadhi Portal

- The new e-portal, e-Aushadhi is an acronym for Ayurveda, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy Automated Drug Help Initiative. The important features of the e-Aushadhi Portal are:
- The portal is intended to bring increased transparency, improved information management facility, improved data usability and increased accountability in the licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs.
- The timelines will be fixed for processing of application through this portal with SMS and e-mail status updates at each step of the process.
- The portal will aid the licensing authority, manufactures and consumers, as it will provide real-time information of the licensed manufactures and their products, cancelled and spurious drugs, contact details of the concerned authority for specific grievances.
- The launch of the e-Aushadhi portal for online licensing is part of governments commitment towards egovernance, ease of doing business and Make in India.

Government launches Shehri Samridhi Utsav to extend outreach of DAY-NULM

- The Union Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in February 2019 launched the Shehri Samridhi Utsav, an initiative that aims to extend the outreach of Deendayal Antyodaya Mission – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) to the most vulnerable.
- The event will facilitate access of Self-Help Group (SHG) members to the other government schemes.

Highlights of the Shehri Samridhi Utsav

- The Day one of Shehri Samridhi Utsav began with a series of rallies led by women's SHGs across the country. These rallies spread awareness about DAY-NULM in urban poor communities.
- Job melas and fairs were organised by many states to market the products made by women micro-entrepreneurs.
- Through Shehri Samridhi Utsav, the SHG members across cities are being linked to government schemes such as Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), Ujjwala Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Yojana and National Nutrition Mission.
- A major highlight of Shehri Samridhi Utsav is the National Exhibition cum sale of SHG products and National Street Food Festival that will be organised in New Delhi.
- Over 100 stalls are being set up in Central Delhi with various handlooms, handicrafts, snacks and other local products made by 200 Self Help Groups representing 23 states.

Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM)

- The Deen Dayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission extends coverage to all the 4041 statutory cities and towns, thereby covering almost the entire urban population.
- The mission aims to provide the shelter equipped with essential services to the urban homeless in a phased manner to reduce poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households.
- The scheme addresses the livelihood concern of the urban street vendors by facilitating with suitable space, institutional credit, and social security and skills to the urban street vendor for accessing emerging market opportunities.
- The core belief of National Urban Livelihoods Mission is that the poor are entrepreneurial and have innate desire to come out of poverty. The challenge is to unleash their capabilities to generate meaningful and sustainable livelihoods.
- NULM believes that any livelihood promotion programme can be scaled up in a time bound manner only if driven by the poor and their institutions.

SPORTS AND AWARDS

India's Mithali Raj Becomes First Woman Cricketer to Play 200 ODIs

- India's One-day International (ODI) captain Mithali Raj has become the first woman to play 200 ODI matches with her appearance in the match against New Zealand.
- The record for largest number of games played by a Woman Cricketer was already in the name of Mithali Raj.
- Mithali Raj had achieved the milestone when she played her 192 ODI of the career, going past Charlotte Edwards' record of 191 appearances.
- The 36-year-old Mithali Raj is playing the game at the international circuit for almost twenty years and she is also the fourth-highest among the cricketers as a whole, as Mithali is just behind Sachin Tendulkar (463), Sanath Jayasuriya (445) and Javed Miandad (233).

Journey of Mithali Raj:

- Mithali Raj made her ODI debut back on 25 June 1999 against Ireland in Milton Keynes.
- Mithali Raj is the leading run scorer in the ODIs among women with 6622 runs. Of the 213 matches India has played since her debut, she has played in all of them barring 13.
- Mithali Raj also holds the record for leading a country in ODIs most number of times with 123 matches.

Republic Day Parade: Gorkha Brigade wins best marching contingent award:

- On January 30, 2019, Gorkha Brigade received the best marching contingent trophy of the Republic Day parade whereas, The CRPF won the best marching contingent prize for the para-military forces.
- In the category of tableaux, Tripura's tableau depicted Gandhian way of fuelling rural economy and won the first prize whereas Jammu and Kashmir's tableau depicted the state's composite culture and ethnic diversity won the second place and Punjab's tableau which represented the theme of Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919, which evoked memories of Independence struggle received the third prize.

President Ram Nath Kovind confers Gandhi Peace Prize for 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018

- President Ram Nath Kovind on February 26, 2019 conferred the Gandhi Peace Prize for the years 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 at a function in Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi. The award ceremony saw the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The awards were announced on January 16, 2019 by the Union Ministry of Culture.
- The 2018 Gandhi Peace Prize was conferred on Yohei Sasakawa, who is at the forefront of many philanthropic initiatives. His compassionate nature can be seen in the manner in which he has worked to eliminate leprosy in India.

Awardees

Year	Awardees	Contribution
2015	Vivekananda Kendra, Kanyakumari	Contribution in rural development, education, development of natural resources.
2016	Akshaya Patra Foundation and Sulabh International	Akshaya Patra Foundation was chosen for its contribution in providing mid-day meals to millions of children across India
		Sulabh International was chosen for its contribution in improving the condition of sanitation in India and emancipation of manual scavengers.
2017	Akal Abhiyan Trust	Contribution in providing education for rural and tribal children in remote areas pan India, rural empowerment, gender and social equality
2018	Yohei Sasakawa	For his contribution in Leprosy Eradication in India and across the world

- The awardees were selected by the jury under the Chairmanship of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- The jury comprises the Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, Speaker of Lok Sabha Sumitra Mahajan, Leader of the single largest Opposition Party in Lok Sabha Mallikarjuna Kharge and Member of Parliament, L.K. Advani.
- The jury unanimously decided on the awardees after detailed discussions on January 16, 2019.

About the Gandhi Peace Prize:

- The Gandhi Peace Prize was instituted in the year 1995 on the occasion of the 125th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- This annual award is given to individuals and institutions for their contributions towards social, economic and political transformation through non-violence and other Gandhian methods.
- The award carries a cash prize of Rs 1 crore, a citation and a Plaque as well as an exquisite traditional handicraft/handloom item.
- The Award for every year is selected by a Jury under the Chairmanship of the Prime Minister. Julius K Nyerere, former Tanzanian President, was the first recipient of the award in 1995.

PM Modi awarded Seoul Peace Prize

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been honoured with the Seoul Peace Prize. The South Korean government has awarded the Seoul Peace Prize for PM Modi in recognition of his service to international cooperation, global growth and human development.
- The PM Modi dedicated the award to the people of India. He stated that the award belongs to the success India has seen in less than five years, powered by 1.5 billion people.
- PM Modi is the 14th recipient of the award. Past winners of the Seoul Peace Prize include former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and international relief organisations like Doctors Without Borders and Oxfam.

Seoul Peace Prize

- The Seoul Peace Prize is sponsored by the Seoul Peace Prize Foundation. The Seoul Peace Prize was established in 1990 to commemorate the success of the 24th Olympic Games held in Seoul.
- The Seoul Peace Prize reflects the wishes of the Korean people and to crystallize their desire for everlasting peace on earth. The awardee receives a diploma, a plaque and honorarium of US\$200,000.
- The Seoul Peace Prize is awarded to Individuals or institutions which have made great contributions to the harmony of mankind and world peace in each field of endeavour around the world regardless of nation, race, religion, or ideology.

PM Narendra Modi receives Seoul Peace Prize for 2018

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on February 22, 2019 received the prestigious Seoul Peace Prize 2018 for his contribution to international cooperation and fostering global economic growth.
- The committee credited him for his efforts in promoting global peace and harmony through inclusive economic growth and improving quality of life.
- The award was presented to him by Kwon E-hyock, the Chairman of the Seoul Peace Prize Cultural Foundation at a grand ceremony in Seoul, South Korea. A short film on the life and achievements of Prime Minister Modi was also screened at the event.
- With this, PM Modi became the 14th recipient of the Seoul Peace Prize.

Recognition of 'Modinomics', 'Modi Doctrine' and 'Act East Policy

- The Seoul Peace Prize Committee recognised Modi's contributions to the growth of the Indian and global economies, crediting 'Modinomics' for reducing social and economic disparity between the rich and the poor.
- The Committee lauded PM Modi's initiatives to make the government cleaner through anti-corruption measures and demonetisation.
- He has also been credited for his contribution towards regional and global peace through a proactive foreign policy with countries around the world under the 'Modi Doctrine' and the 'Act East Policy.'
- The committee assessed over a hundred candidates proposed by over 1300 nominators from around the world and decided to bestow the Prize on PM Modi, calling him 'the perfect candidate for the 2018 Seoul Peace Prize'.
- The nominating group consists of 300 Korean nationals and 800 internationals.

About Seoul Peace Prize

- The Seoul Peace Prize was established in 1990 to commemorate the success of the 24th Olympic Games held in Seoul, Korea which saw participation of 160 nations, creating harmony and friendship.
- The award was established to crystallise the Korean people's yearning for peace on the Korean Peninsula and in the rest of the world.
- The award has been conferred biennially to individuals who have made their mark through contributions to the harmony of mankind, reconciliation between nations and to world peace.
- The awardee receives a diploma, a plaque and honorarium of USD 200,000.
- Past laureates include distinguished global personalities like former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and international relief organizations like Doctors Without Borders and Oxfam.
- **NOTE** : The Seoul Peace Prize was established to mark the success and spirit of the 24th Summer Olympics held in Seoul in 1988.
- The 1988 Olympics were held at a time when the world was undergoing a massive transformation. The Iran-Iraq War had just ended; the Geneva Accords relating to the situation in Afghanistan were signed; the Cold War was about to end.

Azim Premji awarded EY Lifetime Achievement Award

- Azim Premji Chairman of Wipro Ltd will be felicitated with the Ernst & Young Lifetime Achievement Award. Ernst & Young, famously known as EY is a multinational professional services firm and is one of the "Big Four" accounting firms.

Motivational Journey of Azim Premji

- Azim Premji was born on July 24, 1945, to an affluent Gujarati entrepreneur. He inherited Wipro, a vegetable oil company at the age of 21 after the sudden demise of his father.
- Azim Premji was pursuing Electrical Engineering from Stanford University, USA when he took over the reins of his family business in 1966.
- He was written off to carry the herculean task and was publicly advised to sell his shareholding and give it into more mature hands.
- This further strengthened his resolve to make Wipro a success story. Under his able leadership, Wipro diversified from hydrogenated cooking fats to bakery fats, ethnic ingredient based toiletries, hair care soaps, baby toiletries, lighting products and hydraulic cylinders.
- The expulsion of IBM from the Indian market led to a vacuum and Wipro ventured into software services taking advantage. The rest is history.
- He led Wipro from a hydrogenated cooking fats company to a pioneer in providing integrated business, technology and process solutions on a global delivery platform.
- Wipro Technologies is the largest independent R&D service provider in the world and is ranked among the top 100 technology companies globally.
- In 2005 Premji was conferred the Padma Bhushan and Padma Vibhushan in 2011. Premji has also pledged to donate USD 2 billion for improving school education in India, the first of its kind by any Indian billionaire.

Vidarbha claim 2nd successive Ranji Trophy

- The defending champions Vidarbha won the 85th Ranji Trophy title. The defending champions defeated Saurashtra by 78 runs in the final.

Score Card of the Ranji Final Clash

- Vidarbha: 312 and 200
- Saurashtra: 307 and 127
- Aditya Sarwate of was Vidarbha was declared man of the match for his 11 wickets in the match and 49 runs in Vidarbha's second innings which helped Vidarbha clinching the title for the second time.

Ranji Trophy

- Ranji Trophy is the Indian domestic first-class cricket championship between teams representing regional and state cricket associations.
- The championship is named after Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji Jadeja, who was famously referred to as 'Ranji'. The cricket championship was conceived in July 1934 and the first fixture was held between Madras and Mysore at the Chepauk ground in Madras.
- The Ranji Trophy was also donated by Ranjitsinhji Vibhaji Jadeja. Mumbai(Bombay) have won the tournament the most number of times with 41 wins.
- Vidarbha became the sixth team to successfully defend their title. The other sides to win the consecutive titles are Bombay/Mumbai, Maharashtra, Delhi, Rajasthan and Karnataka.

Swachhata Excellence Awards 2019

- The Raigarh Municipal Corporation of Chhattisgarh has won the "Swachhata Excellence awards 2019".
- The municipal corporations of Ambikapur of Chhattisgarh and Kumbakonam of Tamil Nadu have bagged the second and third prizes respectively. All of these are AMRUT cities.
- A total of 40 awards were distributed to the Area Level Federations (ALFs), City Livelihoods Federations (CLFs) and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs). These Awards were given by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) as part of the Shehri Samriddhi Utsav.

Other Winners:

- Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation has been awarded the first prize for the Million Plus Cities.
- Nagar Palika Parishad of Jashpur Nagar (Chhattisgarh), Malappuram Municipality (Kerala), and Nagar Palika Parishad Surajpur (Chhattisgarh) claimed the prizes in the "Statutory Towns" category.
- From Aspirational Districts, Chas Municipal Corporation (Bokaro district of Jharkhand) has been awarded a consolation prize.

What is Shehri Samriddhi Utsav?

- The Shehri Samriddhi Utsav was organised by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) from 1st – 15th February 2019.
- A number of activities and events were organized at the City, State and National level as part of the initiative which aimed at extending the outreach of National Urban Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NULM) to the poorest of the poor and the most vulnerable by showcasing its initiatives and facilitating access of SHG members to the other government schemes.

What is DAY-NULM?

- National Urban Livelihoods Mission (NULM) was launched by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Poverty Alleviation (MHUPA), Government of India on 23rd September 2013 by replacing Swarna Jayanti Rozgar Yojana. DAY-NULM focuses on organizing urban poor in their strong grassroots level institutions, creating opportunities for skill development leading

to market-based employment and helping them to set up selfemployment venture by ensuring easy access to credit. The Mission is aimed at providing shelter equipped with essential services to the urban homeless in a phased manner. It encourages the formation of SHGs of those from vulnerable occupations, such as rag pickers and waste pickers.

What are the Swachhata Excellence Awards?

- Swachhata Excellence Awards were instituted by Ministry of Housing & Urban Affairs (MoHUA) in 2017, to encourage Area Level Federations (ALFs) of SHGs formed under DAY-NULM, for their initiatives to make their communities Swachh and help their cities achieve the outcomes of Swachha Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM-U).
- The City Swachhata Livelihoods Awards for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) was introduced this year for the ULBs for creating an enabling environment for dignified livelihoods in the sanitation sector.

Dr Divya Karnad Wins the Prestigious Future for Nature 2019 Award

- Dr Divya Karnad, Assistant Professor of Environmental Studies at Ashoka University has been awarded the prestigious Global Future For Nature Award 2019 for her work on marine conservation.

Other Recipients

- The other recipients of the Global Future For Nature Award is awarded for the year 2019 are: Fernanda Abra (Brazil) and Olivier Nsengimana (Rwanda).
- Dr Divya Karnad's project InSeason Fish had successfully reduced the unwanted bycatch of endangered sharks along the Coromandel coast of India.
- Divya Karnad did her PhD in Geography from Rutgers University, USA and has completed her Masters in Wildlife Biology and Conservation from the Post Graduate Programme run by the National Centre for Biological Sciences, Centre for Wildlife Studies and Wildlife Conservation Society, India.

Future for Nature Award

- Future for Nature 2019 Award awarded by Future for Nature foundation celebrates tangible achievements in protecting wild animal and plant species. The award aims to :
- Reward and fund individuals for their outstanding efforts in the protection of species of wild animals and plants. Stimulate Award winners to sustain their dedicated work.
- Help winners to raise their profile, extend their professional network and strengthen their funding basis.
- The Award provides the winners international recognition, financial support and reinforced linkages to an international conservation network.

Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam wins Israel's Dan David Prize 2019

- Indian historian Sanjay Subrahmanyam on February 10, 2019 won the prestigious Dan David Prize 2019 for his work on inter-cultural encounters between Asians, Europeans and people of North and South America during the early modern era.
- He won the Israel's prestigious USD 1 million dollar award in the category of "Past Time Dimension" for his work in macro history. He shared the award in the Past category with Professor Kenneth Pomeranz of University of Chicago.

- Once presented with the award money, Subrahmanyam will donate 10 percent of the prize money towards scholarships for graduate or post-graduate researchers.
- **Note:** The Dan David Prize laureates are required to donate 10 percent of their prize money towards scholarships for graduates or post graduates researches in their perspective fields to encourage and foster new generations of scholars.

About Sanjay Subrahmanyam

- Sanjay is the son of strategic analyst K Subrahmanyam and brother of former foreign secretary S Jaishankar.
- Subrahmanyam is an alumnus of University of Delhi and did his doctorate from Delhi School of Economics.
- He began as an economic historian but later, worked on the political, intellectual and cultural history.
- He holds the Irving and Jean Stone Endowed Chair in Social Sciences at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA), which he joined in 2004.
- He is the recipient of the Infosys Prize for humanities for his path-breaking contribution to history.

Other winners of Dan David Prize 2019

- This year's winners were chosen from the three categories for their work in macro history (Past), defending democracy (Present) and combating climate change (Future), respectively.
- The award in the "Present" category was won jointly by Reporters without Borders and Professor Michael Ignatieff for "Defending Democracy".
- The Reporters without Borders is an organisation that works for the freedom of the Press. Michael Ignatieff is a Canadian author, academic and former politician who headed Liberal Party of Canada and was also the leader of the official opposition for almost three years.
- Christina Figueres, a Costa Rican diplomat was awarded the prize in the "future" dimension for her role in combating climate change.

About Dan David Prize:

- The Dan David Prize is awarded annually to those who have made outstanding scientific, technological and humanistic accomplishments in fields representing the past, present and future of human achievement.
- This USD 1 million prize is endowed by the Dan David Foundation, headquartered at Tel Aviv University, Israel.
- The prize was established by late Dan David, an international businessman and philanthropist who envisioned a project that would extend beyond traditional academic categorisations.
- Three Dan David prizes are given every year in the categories of Past, Present and Future to people around the world who have made outstanding contributions to humanity in the sciences.
- The recipients in the 'Past' category are generally drawn from the field of history, archaeology, paleontology, biography, etc.

- The recipients in the 'Present' category are drawn from arts, media, policy, economics, etc.
- The recipients in the 'Future' category are drawn from one of the exact or natural sciences.
- Some of the previous recipients of the award include former US Vice President Al Gore, former British Premier Tony Blair, cellist Yo-Yo Ma, novelist Margaret Atwood, Wikipedia co-founder Jimmy Wales and filmmakers Joel and Ethan Coen.
- Other prominent Indian laureates of the Dan David Prize were author Amitav Ghosh, music conductor Zubin Mehta, renowned chemist CNR Rao and astronomy professor Shrinivas Kulkarni.

Abdul aziz Muhamat, a Manus island refugee, wins international human rights prize

- Sudanese refugee, Abdul Aziz Muhamat, who spent 5 years in Australian detention centre on Manus Island in Papua New Guinea, was given the Martin Ennals Award 2019 in Geneva, Switzerland, for exposing “the very cruel asylum seeker policy of the Australian Government”.
- He said that his name was stripped off and he was referred to as **number- QNK002** and prisoners were fed through a chain-link fence and treated worse than animals.
ii. It was the **first time** that the prize focused on the plight of refugees and awarded to someone who has suffered violations due to the policies of a Western nation.

BOOKS

“Law, Justice and Judicial Power – Justice P N Bhagwati’s Approach” Book Launched

- The book “Law, Justice and Judicial Power – Justice P N Bhagwati’s Approach” written by Mool Chand Sharma was launched by the Chief Justice of India, Shri Justice Ranjan Gogoi. The first copy of the book was received by the President Ram Nath Kovind.
- The book is a collection of 24 essays celebrating Justice P N Bhagwati’s judicial work and landmark judgments as well as his work towards introducing public interest litigation in India.

Justice P N Bhagwati’s contribution to the Indian Judicial System:

- Justice Bhagwati has been referred to as the father of public interest litigation in India. He imparted idealism and simplicity to the highest court in the country wherein even a petition filed on a postcard was taken into consideration.
- The PIL tradition initiated by him is an Indian contribution to the practice of law and the process of justice delivery.
- It is admired by other democracies and other legal systems as well. The Chief Justice of India, Shri Justice Ranjan Gogoi referred to Justice Bhagwati as the “harbinger of environmental jurisprudence” and a “judicial statesman”.
- Justice Bhagwati evolved constitutional ideas that are still getting shaped. It was Justice Bhagwati who envisaged the necessity for specialized Environmental Courts, which later manifested itself in the form of the National Green Tribunal.

- For the first time, the prison reforms were embarked upon in India due to the efforts of Justice Bhagwati.

P Chidambaram's book "undaunted: Saving the idea of India" launched by Hamid Ansari:

- Former Vice President Hamid Ansari on 8th Feb. 2019, launched the new book of former Finance Minister P Chidambaram named "Undaunted: Saving the Idea of India" at Nehru Memorial Museum, New Delhi.

Shri Justice Ranjan Gogoi released a book" Law, Justice and Judicial power:

- The book "Law, Justice and Judicial Power – Justice P N Bhagwati's Approach" written by Mool Chand Sharma was launched by the Chief Justice of India, Shri Justice Ranjan Gogoi.
- The first edition of the book was received by President Ramnath Govind.
- Justice Bhagwati aka "father of public interest litigation in India" also referred to as "harbinger of environmental jurisprudence" and a "judicial statesman".

SCI-TECH

ISRO sets up Human Space Flight Centre for Gaganyaan mission

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) on January 31, 2019 unveiled its Human Space Flight Centre (HSFC) at ISRO Headquarter campus in Bengaluru, Karnataka for its maiden manned space mission 'Gaganyaan'.
- The space flight centre was inaugurated by K Kasturirangan, former ISRO Chairman, in the presence of K Sivan, current ISRO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space.

Significance :

- ISRO is gearing up for its maiden manned mission Gaganyaan, which is planned for 2021-end. The plan is to have the first unmanned mission in December 2020 and the second one in July 2021.
- Once the two unmanned missions are completed, the manned mission will happen in December 2021.
- India's first human spaceflight programme is likely to include a woman astronaut.

Gaganyaan

- Gaganyaan which is India's first manned space mission has been accorded highest priority by ISRO and the plan is to have the first unmanned mission in December 2020 and second for July 2021.

- The manned mission will happen in December 2021. The Gaganyaan project is headed by R. Hutton, who was the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) Director.
- The Gaganyaan project takes the Indian astronauts into space to a height of 350-400 km above the Earth and orbits around the planet for at least a week.
- The Indian astronauts would be conducting experiments in the space

Salient features :

- The Human Space Flight Centre shall be responsible for implementation of Gaganyaan project which involves end-to-end mission planning.
- The centre shall be responsible for the development of engineering systems for crew survival in space, crew selection and training and also pursue activities for sustained human space flight missions.
- It will take the support of existing ISRO centres to implement the first development flight of Gaganyaan under the human spaceflight programme.
- S Unnikrishnan Nair is the founder director of HSFC, while R Hutton is the project director of Gaganyaan.
- Directors of other ISRO Centres, former Chairman and other dignitaries were present during the centre's unveiling.
- Besides the centre, a full-scale model of Gaganyaan's crew module was unveiled during the event.
- The Union Cabinet had recently given its nod for the Rs 9,023 crore programme.

Anti- Tank missile "HELINA" successfully test fired in Balasore:

- India test-fired Helina, a helicopter-launched version of the Nag anti-tank guided missile, with a hit range of 7-8 km, from the Odisha Coast on Friday.
- Helina was launched from an Army chopper and the weapon system was tested for its full range at 12:55 PM near the Integrated Test Range in Chandipur in the Balasore District of Odisha.
- Developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Helina is said to be one of the most advanced anti-tank weapons in the world. It is guided by an Infrared Imaging Seeker (IIR) operating in the lock-on-before-launch mode.

GSAT-31 launched from French Guiana

- India's communication satellite GSAT-31 was successfully launched from the Spaceport in French Guiana.
- GSAT-31 was launched from the launch vehicle Ariane 5 VA-247.

Features of the GSAT-31

The important features of the GSAT-31 are:

- GSAT-31 would be placed at Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit.
- GSAT-31 will augment the Ku-band transponder capacity in Geostationary Orbit.
- GSAT-31 derives its heritage from ISRO's earlier INSAT/GSAT satellite series and will provide continuity to operational services on some of the in-orbit satellites.

- GSAT-31 will provide DTH Television Services, connectivity to VSATs for ATM, Stock-exchange, Digital Satellite News Gathering (DSNG) and e-governance applications.
- GSAT-31 will also be used for bulk data transfer for a host of emerging telecommunication applications.
- After separation from the upper stage of Ariane-5, the two solar arrays of GSAT-31 were automatically deployed in quick succession and ISRO's Master Control Facility at Hassan in Karnataka took over the command and control of GSAT-31.
- ISRO scientists will now undertake phase-wise orbit-raising manoeuvres to place the satellite in Geostationary Orbit (36,000 km above the equator) using its onboard propulsion system. The satellite would be then placed in its final orbital configuration.

Chinook Helicopters to be formally inducted into Indian Air Force

- The first batch of four Chinook military helicopters manufactured by the American aerospace major Boeing has arrived at the Mundra port in Gujarat.
- This first batch consignment will be ferried to Chandigarh, where they will be formally inducted into the Indian Air Force in 2019.

Chinook Helicopters

- Chinook is a multi-role, vertical-lift platform, which is used for transporting troops, artillery, equipment and fuel.
- Chinook would be deployed for humanitarian and disaster relief operations and in missions such as transportation of relief supplies and mass evacuation of refugees.
- The advanced multi-mission helicopter Chinook will provide the Indian armed forces with unmatched strategic airlift capability across the full spectrum of combat and humanitarian missions.
- India had placed a mega contract to Boeing for the procurement of 22 Apache helicopters and 15 Chinooks for the Indian Air Force in September 2015.
- To deliver on the order, Boeing has strengthened its supply chain with over 160 partners in India. Boeing has also planned a joint venture to manufacture fuselages for Apache helicopters and the annual sourcing from India stands at \$1 billion.

NASA's Mars Rover Opportunity Concludes a 15-Year Mission

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced that its Mars Mission, Opportunity has come to an end.
- This marked the conclusion of the 15-year saga. The decision to end the mission was made after all the efforts to restore contact with the Opportunity Mars rover didn't yield desired results.

Why the NASA lost the contact with Opportunity?

- A historic global dust storm reached the location of the Opportunity rover on Mars. The storm darkened the skies and cut off of the rover's solar power.
- All the efforts of NASA to restore the rover did not yield positive results. Things worsened with the onset of the winter at the location of the Opportunity rover.
- The reduced sunlight and colder temperatures during winter made it unlikely for the recovery of the Opportunity rover.

About the Mission

- Opportunity was the second of the twin Mars Exploration Rovers to land on Mars in January 2004. Opportunity landed 90 days after its twin rover Spirit landed. Spirit landed at Gusev Crater and Opportunity landed on the opposite side of Mars at Meridiani Planum.
- NASA expected 90-day lifetimes for the rovers. Both Opportunity and Spirit far exceeded their expected lifetime.
- Spirit's mission ended in May 2011 after travelling eight kilometres and Opportunity had logged 45 kilometres before losing contact in June 2018.

Hina Jaiswal becomes the First Woman Flight Engineer of IAF

- Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal broke the glass ceiling and became the first woman flight engineer of IAF which was till now an exclusive man's club. The flight engineer branch was opened to women officers in 2018.
- Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal Commissioned into the IAF's engineering branch in January 2015. She had created history by becoming the first woman candidate to pursue the elite course.
- Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal will serve at IAF's operational helicopter units and serve in demanding and stressful conditions from the icy heights of the Siachen glacier to the seas of the Andamans.

Flight Engineer

- A flight engineer is a member of an aircraft's flight crew and requires special skills for constantly monitoring and operating its complex systems.

Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal

- Flight Lieutenant Hina Jaiswal hails from Chandigarh and has completed her Bachelors of Engineering degree from University Institute of Engineering and Technology (UIET) Panjab University.

LCA Tejas gets Final Operational Clearance

- The Indian Air Force (IAF) has received the Final Operational Clearance (FOC) standard certification for Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas from Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The DRDO's FOC certification testifies the combat-readiness of Tejas. The Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification (CEMILAC) is a DRDO laboratory authorised to certify military aircraft and airborne systems.
- To get the final operational clearance, the aircraft must have battle-time capabilities of mid-air refuelling, AESA radar, electronic warfare suites, a variety of bombs and weapons, among others.

LCA Tejas

- LCA Tejas is lightweight single-seat multi-role jet fighter powered by a single engine. It has tailless and compound delta wing design made entirely of composite structures. It is pegged as the world's smallest and lightest supersonic fighter aircraft in its class.
- LCA Tejas is first advanced fly-by-wire Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) designed, developed and manufactured indigenously by state-owned Hindustan Aeronautical Limited (HAL) and Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) as part of LCA programme, started in the 1980s to replace India's ageing MiG-21 fighters.
- It was named 'Tejas', which means 'radiance', by former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Advance Features

- LCA Tejas is equipped with the quadruplex digital fly-by-wire flight control system to ease handling by the pilot. It also has a digital computer-based attack system and autopilot mode. It is also equipped with the satellite-aided Inertial Navigation System.

Stealth Features

- It has many features of stealth fighter aircraft. Its radar cross section is very less compared to other aircrafts like MiG-29, F-16 due to its small size and extensive usage of carbon composites.
- It incorporates a glass cockpit in which the pilot is fed with real-time information. It also has open architecture software for avionics which can be easily updated as and when required.

Range

- It has a limited reach of little over 400-km and will be mainly used for close air-to-ground operations (unlike Russian-origin Sukhoi-30MKIs or Rafale which have deep strike capability into enemy territory due to their long range).

Weaponry

- It can fire air-to-air missiles, carry bombs and precision guided ammunition. DRDO has successfully tested fired Tejas with different kinds of weaponry and missiles including R-73 air-to-air missile, bomb dropping (including laser-guided bombs). DRDO also plans test firing of indigenous Astra missile from the Tejas.

Operations

- LCA Tejas had commenced operations from Sullur Air Force Station in Tamil Nadu in July 2018, two years after it was formally inducted into IAF. The fighter jet is part of 'Flying Daggers' of 45 Squadron of IAF.
- Southern Air Command based in Kerala capital Thiruvananthapuram has been entrusted with the responsibility of integrating fighter aircraft in IAF's concept of operations.

IMPORTANT DAYS AND DATES

2 February: World Wetlands Day

- World Wetlands Day was celebrated on February 2nd with the theme of "Wetlands and Climate Change".
- The theme signifies the importance of healthy and intact wetlands to one of the most pressing challenges of our times, climate change.
- The theme has been chosen to initiate action against the drainage of wetlands. The theme Wetlands and Climate Change is aimed at increasing awareness of the importance of wetlands, such as swamps, marshes, mangroves or peatlands, to help us cope with and mitigate global warming.

Significance of Wetlands:

- The importance of Wetlands is listed below:
- Almost 90% of disasters are water-related and affects 60% of humanity that lives along coastlines by flooding and tsunamis. Wetlands are key to climate change mitigation.
- Wetlands function as a natural and extremely efficient carbon sink.
- For Example, peatlands which cover only 3% of land mass, absorb and store twice the amount of carbon as all the world's forests combined.
- Wetlands act as a buffer for climate catastrophes that help communities be resilient against the immediate impacts of climate change.

Why February 2nd is celebrated as World Wetland Day?

- The World Wetlands Day aims to bring attention towards the protection of the fragile wetlands which are threatened by human activity.
- The rate of disappearance of Wetlands is 1% which is at a higher rate than deforestation. Wetlands are also exposed to draining and burning for agricultural enterprise and rural development, as well as rising sea levels.
- World Wetlands Day is celebrated on 2 February 1971 to commemorate the signing of the Convention on Wetlands, called the Ramsar Convention at the Iranian city of Ramsar on the shores of the Caspian Sea.
- The two-fold objectives of the Ramsar Convention are Conservation and sustainable utilization of wetlands and stop the encroachment and loss of wetlands.

World Radio Day 2019

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) every year celebrate February 13 as the World Radio Day.
- World Radio Day 2019 is celebrated to highlight the importance of the radio in its search for a more peaceful and tolerant world.
- The World Radio Day 2019 is celebrated with the theme Dialogue, Tolerance and Peace.
- The theme is selected to provide a platform for dialogue and democratic debate over issues like migration or violence against women which can help to raise awareness among listeners and inspire understanding for new perspectives in paving the way for positive action.

Genesis of the World Radio Day:

- Spain's Radio Academy in the year 2010 proposed the idea of World Radio Day. In the following year, UNESCO declared February 13 as the World Radio day and the first World Radio Day was celebrated in 2012.
- February 13 was chosen because the United Nations Radio, the United Nation's international broadcasting service was established on February 13, 1946.
- The World Radio Day commemorates the anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations Radio.

National Science Day 2019 observed; Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize conferred

- The National Science Day 2019 was observed across India on February 28, 2019 to mark the discovery of the Raman Effect by Indian physicist Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman (CV Raman).
- This year celebrations of the Day were organised by the Department of Science & Technology (DST) Theme : The theme of National Science Day 2019 was "Science for the people and the people for Science".
- On the occasion of National Science Day 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi conferred the Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize for Science and Technology for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018 to the awardees.

- The Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar Prize is named after the founder Director of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR), Dr. Shanti Swarup Bhatnagar.
- The Prize is given each year to recognise outstanding Indian work in various disciplines of Science and Technology.

Why science day is observed on February 28 in India?

- The National Science Day is observed on February 28 to mark the discovery of the Raman Effect (a phenomenon of scattering of photons) by Indian physicist, Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata (CV) Raman on February 28, 1928.
- For his path-breaking discovery, CV Raman was knighted in 1929 and awarded the Nobel Prize in 1930. This was the first Nobel Prize won by an Indian or any Asian in the field of Science.
- The motive behind the celebration of the Day is to spread a message about science and its importance in the daily life of the people.

Raman Effect

- Raman Effect is a process in which the wavelength of light changes when it passes through a transparent sample of a chemical compound. The light beam changes its wavelength when its molecules are deflected.
- The molecules deflect when the light passes through a dust-free, transparent sample of a chemical compound or something else. In this case, a fraction of the light emerges in directions other than that of the actual beam. Maximum of the scattered light is of unchanged wavelength.
- The small part of deflected light or the light with a different wavelength is the result of the Raman Effect.

How the day came into existence?

- The day came into existence after the National Council for Science and Technology Communications (NCSTC) asked the Union Government to designate 28 February as National Science Day in 1986.
- In 1986 itself, the government designated 28 February as National Science Day. The first National Science Day was observed in the year 1987.

International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements 2019:

- On January 29, 2019, UNESCO launched 2019 as The International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements in Paris
- The launch of International Year of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements 2019 also recognized 150th anniversary of the establishment of the Periodic Table of Chemical Elements by the Russian scientist, Dmitri Mendeleev, one of the father of Modern Chemistry.

Budget 2019: List of all Schemes

- New Schemes announced in Union Budget 2019-20: The Union Minister Piyush Goyal announced various schemes in the Interim Union Budget 2019-20 on February 1, 2019. These schemes have been announced with the objective to uplift the poor, women and farmers.
- The union Budget 2019 is the Modi government's first interim Budget in which Piyush Goyal began his speech by highlighting the government's reforms undertaken in the last four and half years and its achievements.

1. Pradhanmantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojna:

- Government announced fixed yearly income for small and marginal farmers.
- This scheme will benefit about 12 crore farmers who have 2 Hectare land.
- Rupee 6000 per year direct cash transfer in their account.
- Cash transfer will be given in three equal installments of Rs 2000 each.
- The benefit under this yojna will be given retrospectively from December 2018.
- Rs. 75000 crore allotted for this scheme.
- It is expected to double the farmers income.

2. Rastriya Kamdhenu Aayog:

- This aayog will undertake the development work for Cow welfare.

3. Pradhanmantri Shramyogi Maan-dhan Yojna:

- Mega Pension Yojna. It is expected to be largest in World.
- For unorganised sector and organised workers who earns upto Rs. 15000 monthly income.
- A fixed pension amount of Rs 3000 per month will be giving after 60 years of age.
- They will have to pay minimum contribution of Rs 55 starting from age of 18.
- Minimum premium, means if 29 years old person enters into it, he will have to pay only Rs. 100 per month.
- Rs. 500 crore for this scheme.
- Government will contribute equal amount

4. Interest subvention scheme for Fishries:

- 2% interest subvention
- 3% extra interest subvention if all the installments paid on time.
- The committee would implement policies and schemes for welfare of cows.
- It aims to enhance the production and productivity cows.

5. Income Tax Slab raised to Rs. 5 lakh

- No Income tax upto 5 lakh rupess.

- It means the person who earns Rs 5 lakh per years will not have to pay any taxes.
- It will be given in the form of rebate.

The Interim Budget is also known as a vote-on-account or approval, which the government seeks from the parliament for essential spending for a limited period, the first four months of the fiscal year in which the elections are scheduled. The full-fledged budget is then presented by the new government.

Key difference between Interim and Full Budget	
Interim Budget	Full Budget
It is presented by the outgoing government during the last year of its tenure before elections.	It is presented by the new government during the first term of its tenure after it takes charge.
It is also known as vote on account or approval, which the government seeks from the parliament for essential spending for a limited period.	The annual budget is presented in two parts. It includes the detailed structure of income and future ways to raise funds.
It is generally meant for the first 2-4 months of the fiscal year in which the elections are scheduled.	It is prepared for the entire fiscal year.
It is the summary of the income and expenses made in the previous year and the proposed future expenses likely to be made in the next few months until the new government takes charge.	It includes a detailed structure of income and expenses prepared by the government in previous year.
It does not include the proposal on the income part of the budget through collection of taxes.	It also includes announcement of future ways to raise funds from taxes and how to spend them on welfare measures in different segments.
The vote-on-account is treated as a formal matter and passed by Lok Sabha without discussion.	The full budget is passed by the Lok Sabha only after proper discussions and voting on demand for grants.

Union Budget 2019: Agriculture Sector

- The Union Interim Finance Minister Piyush Goyal presented the Interim Budget 2019-20 on February 1, 2019. In Independent India, this will be the 89th budget and the sixth of the Narendra Modi-led NDA government.
- Farmer's income doubled: All 22 crops have been put under Minimum Support Price. The various pro-farmer policies have led to the production of agricultural commodities in record quantities.

- However, farming produce has reduced in recent times with that the income of farmer families have also reduced.
- Hence, there has been a need to provide structured income support to the poor farmer families to buy fertilizers and seeds etc.
- The support is aimed to help the farmers in their indebtedness and to enable them to live a respectable life.
- To provide assured income to small and marginal farmers, the Government has introduced a historic yojana- **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (KISAN)**.
- Under the yojana, the vulnerable farmers, who own around 2 hectares of land, will get direct income support of Rs 6000 per year.
- The income support will be transferred directly to the account of the beneficiary farmer in three equal installments of Rs 2000 each. It would be fully funded by the Government of India.
- The scheme is expected to benefit 12 crore farmer families. The programme will be implemented from December 2018.
- Around Rs 75,000 crore will be borne by the Centre every year. The first installment will be issued soon after preparing a list. Rs 20,000 crore will be spent this financial year.
- PM Kisan will provide assured supplementary income to vulnerable farmer families, enabling them to live a respectable life.
- Besides this, farmers affected by natural calamities will be given 3 per cent interest subvention on crop loans.

Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Sector

- India is the second largest fish producing nation in the world accounting for 6.3% of global production, registering an average annual growth of more than 7% in recent years.
- The sector provides livelihood to about 1.45 crore people at the primary level. To provide sustained and focused attention towards development of this sector, the government has decided to create a separate Department of Fisheries.
- To provide a further push to the animal husbandry and fisheries sector, the Union Government has decided to increase allocation to the Rashtriya Gokul mission to Rs 750 crore in the current year itself.
- Two percent interest subvention will be given to farmers who are engaged in animal husbandry and fisheries when loans taken through Kisan Credit Card.
- An additional 3 per cent relaxation will be given in case of timely repayment of loans.

Women development

- The government aims to make women in rural India free from the smoke of wood by providing cleaner fuel. The Government aims to deliver 8 crore free LPG connections to rural households, of which 6 crore connections have already been distributed under Ujjwala Yojana. In the next year, another 2 crore connections will be disbursed.
- More than 7,000 beneficiaries of PM Mudra Yojana are women.

Infrastructure sector

Airways

- India's aviation industry has seen a high in the past. India now has more than 100 operational airports with the inauguration of the Pakyong airport in Sikkim.
- The domestic passenger traffic has doubled during the last five years, which has led to more job creation.
- Due to 'UDAAN Scheme', ordinary citizens are also travelling by air now.

Roadways

- India has become the fastest highway developer in the whole world with almost 27 km of highway built everyday.
- Projects stuck for decades like the Eastern Peripheral Highway around Delhi or the Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh have been completed.
- The construction of rural roads has also tripled. Around 15.8 lakh out of a total 17.84 lakh habitations have been connected with pucca roads under PMGSY. PMGSY allocated Rs 19,000 crore in 2019-20

Waterways

- The flagship programme of Sagarmala along the coastal areas of the country will develop ports for faster handling of import and export cargo.
- For the first time, container freight movement has started on inland waterways from Kolkata to Varanasi.
- The government also plans to introduce container cargo movement to the North East as well, by improving the navigation capacity of the Brahmaputra River.

Railways

- The Indian Railways has experienced the safest year in its history.
- All unmanned level crossings on broad gauge network have been completely eliminated.
- The introduction of the first indigenously developed "Vande Bharat Express" will give the Indian passengers world class experience with speed, service and safety.
- This is a major leap in wholly developed technology. It will give an impetus to the Make in India programme and create jobs.
- The capital support from the budget for railways is proposed at Rs 64,587 crore in 2019-20 (BE).
- The railways' overall capital expenditure programme is of Rs 1, 58, 658 crore. The operating ratio is expected to improve from 98.4 per cent in 2017-18 to 96.2 per cent in 2018-19 and further to 95% in 2019-20 (BE).
- The operating ratio is expected to improve to 96.2 per cent in 18-19.

North-East

- The people of North East have also received significant benefits of infrastructure development. Arunachal Pradesh came on the air map recently and Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram have come on India's rail map for the first time.

- The allocation for the North Eastern Areas is being proposed to be increased by 21 per cent to Rs 58,166 crore in 2019-20 over 2018-19.

Banking Reforms

- A number of measures have been undertaken for clean banking in recent years such as through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)
- Re-capitalisation of PSU banks was done.
- Recently, the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) restriction was removed from three banks, namely - Bank of India, Maharashtra Bank, and Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC).

Swachh Bharat Mission

- As a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary in 2019, the NDA Government launched a holistic programme 'Swachh Bharat Mission' in 2014. The programme has been converted into a movement.
- Under the mission, 98 percent rural sanitation coverage has been achieved.
- 5.45 lakh villages have been declared Open Defecation Free (ODF).
- India will be celebrating the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in October 2019.

Health Sector

- India launched the world's largest healthcare programme, Ayushman Bharat – Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana to provide medical treatment for 50 crore people. As many as 10 lakh people have been benefitted so far under the scheme.
- Many poor people are able to get affordable medicines through the Jan Aushadhi Kendra.
- There are 21 All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) functioning currently in India. Of these 21, 14 AIIMS were set up under the present government.
- The 22nd AIIMS will come up in Haryana.

Defence Sector

- The government has already disbursed Rs. 35000 crore under One Rank One Pension (OROP).
- Military Service Pay has also been hiked substantially.
- The Defence Budget will cross Rs 3 lakh crore for the first time in 2019-20.

Infrastructure Sector

- India's aviation industry has seen a high in the past. India now has more than 100 operational airports with the inauguration of the Pakyong airport in Sikkim.
- Due to 'UDAAN Scheme', ordinary citizens are also travelling by air now.
- India has become the fastest highway developer in the whole world with almost 27 km of highway built everyday.
- Projects stuck for decades like the Eastern Peripheral Highway around Delhi or the **Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge** in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh have been completed.
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TAX PROPOSALS:

- Individual tax payers with taxable income of up to **Rs 5 lakh will get full tax rebate** from now on.
- Those earning Rs 6.5 lakh will not have to pay tax, if they invested in specified savings such as PF, PPF, etc.
- However, the **tax slabs will remain unchanged**.
- This move will benefit around 3 crore middle class tax payers.
- The **rent up to Rs 2.4 lakh** will be exempted from TDS.

Vision 2030 in Budget:

Ten dimensions of Vision for India of 2030:

1. **Next Generation Infrastructure** – to provide an "ease of living".
2. **Digital India** – reached every corner of the economy and every citizen.
3. **Clean and Green India** – Making India pollution free by leading transport revolution with Electric Vehicles and focus on Renewables.
4. **Rural Industrialization** – using modern digital technologies to generate massive employment
5. **Clean Rivers** – safe drinking water to all Indians using micro-irrigation techniques.
6. **Oceans and Coastlines** – scaling up of Sagarmala
7. **Space Programme** – India becoming a launchpad of the world by placing an Indian astronaut in space by 2022
8. **Self-Sufficient** – in food and improving agricultural productivity with emphasis on organic food
9. **Healthy India** – with a distress-free and comprehensive wellness system for all
10. **Minimum Government, Maximum Governance** – with proactive, responsible, friendly bureaucracy and electronic governance.