

UPSC

**Contemporary
Issues
&
Current Affairs
October 2018**

By Jawwad Kazi

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UPSC

Contemporary Issues & Current Affairs October - 2018

(Study Material)

By Jawwad Kazi

<https://t.me/jawwadkazicurrentaffairs>

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1

India's Ombudsman : Lokpal

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Search Committee for recommending names for Lokpal has finally been constituted by Government. ● It is under the chairmanship of former Supreme Court judge Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai.
Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The office of ombudsman has been existing in many European countries to look after public grievances against public officials. ● Similar demand has been floating in India for decades to look into corruption allegation against administrators, including legislature. ● It finally got shape with the passing of Lokpal and Lokayuktas Bill, 2013, but only after a nationwide protest led by India Against Corruption, a civil society movement of activist Anna Hazare. ● It would receive and inquire into complaints related to offences punishable under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 (PCA).
About Search Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is to recommend the chairperson and members of the anti-corruption ombudsman, Lokpal. ● Former State Bank of India Chief Arundhati Bhattacharya, Prasar Bharati Chairperson A. Surya Prakash and A.S. Kiran Kumar are among the members of the Search Committee. ● This development took place after the Supreme Court's order to appoint Lokpal at the earliest. ● Search committee will give the names which will be considered for appointment for Lokpal by selection committee.
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Quest for a national Lokpal started in 1960s. From 1968 to 2011, the bill had come before parliament under seven prime ministers beginning with Indira Gandhi. ● 2010 - National Campaign for Peoples' Right to Information (NCPRI) led by Aruna Roy formed a committee comprising of Shekhar Singh, Arvind Kejriwal and Prashant Bhushan to draw the Jan Lokpal Bill. ● 2011 - Anna Hazare launched a fast at Jantar Mantar in April 2011, consequently a joint drafting committee of ten people with five senior cabinet ministers and five people nominated by Anna Hazare was constituted. ● 2014 - The Bill was notified on 1st Jan 2014 was a watered down version of the Jan Lokpal Bill. ● CBI was not under direct control.
Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayukta at the level of the states. ● Composition: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Lokpal will consist of a chairperson and a maximum of eight members, of which 50 per cent shall be judicial members. (2) 50 per cent of members of Lokpal shall be from SC/ST/OBCs, minorities and women.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Selection Committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The chairperson and members of Lokpal shall be done by selection committee. ● Members of selection committee: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Prime Minister. ➤ Speaker of Lok Sabha. ➤ Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha. ➤ Chief Justice of India or a sitting Supreme Court judge nominated by CJI. ➤ Eminent jurist to be nominated by the President of India on the basis of recommendations of the first four members of the selection committee. ● Jurisdiction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lokpal's jurisdiction will cover all categories of public servants. ➤ Prime Minister has been brought under the purview of the Lokpal. ➤ All entities receiving donations from foreign source in the context of the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) in excess of Rs 10 lakh per year are brought under the jurisdiction of Lokpal. ➤ Lokpal will have power of superintendence and direction over any investigation agency including CBI for cases referred to them by Lokpal. ➤ Transfer of officers of CBI investigating cases referred by Lokpal. ● Power of Lokpal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Lokpal can summon or question any public servant if there exists a prima facie case against the person, even before an investigation agency (such as vigilance or CBI) has begun the probe. ➤ Any officer of the CBI investigating a case referred to it by the Lokpal, shall not be transferred without the approval of the Lokpal. ➤ Special courts will be instituted to conduct trials on cases referred by Lokpal. ➤ The Lokpal can award fine up to Rs. 2 lakh for "false, frivolous or vexatious" complaints ● Provides adequate protection for honest and upright public servants. ● A mandate for setting up of the institution of Lokayukta through enactment of a law by the State Legislature within a period of 365 days from the date of commencement of the Act. ● A high powered committee chaired by the Prime Minister will recommend selection of the Director, CBI. ● The Act also ensures that public servants who act as whistle-blowers are protected. ● The bill lays down clear time lines for preliminary enquiry and investigation and trial and towards this end, the bill provides for setting up of special courts. ● A separate Whistle Blowers Protection Act was passed for this purpose.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The bill also incorporates provisions for attachment and confiscation of property acquired by corrupt means, even while prosecution is pending. ● The bill lays down clear time lines for preliminary enquiry and investigation and trial and towards this end, the bill provides for setting up of special courts.
<p>the Lokpal and Lokayuktas</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It amended the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act, 2013 in relation to declaration of assets and liabilities by public servants. The provisions of the Bill would

<p>Amendment Bill, 2016</p>	<p>apply retrospectively, from the date of the coming into force of the 2013 Act.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It has been criticized as it does away with the earlier provision in the Act <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ that mandated a public disclosure of the Assets and Liabilities. ➤ the statutory requirement of public servants to disclose the assets of their spouses and dependent children. ● Since ill gotten wealth can be handed over to family members and further since it is a criminal misconduct to amass wealth disproportionate to known sources of income, the disclosures are significant. ● Further such disclosures are made by candidates seeking election to public offices as well as judges. ● It is a well established practice in developed countries for the public officials and their spouses to declare their assets and liabilities.
<p>Why Lokpal appointment was delayed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The current Lok Sabha does not have a Leader of Opposition to sit on the selection panel. ● For an opposition party to get the Leader of the Opposition post, it should have a strength of at least 10% of the total members in the House and none of the parties managed to cross this mark. ● This unique situation called for an amendment to the existing Lokpal Act to change the Leader of Opposition to Leader of the largest Opposition party. ● Section 4 of the Act- one of the members of the selection committee has to be the leader of opposition (LOP). ● However, Supreme Court has asked to make leader of largest opposition party member of search committee. ● The SC in a judgment in 2017 had stated that even if the LoP was not available the Selection Committee could still appoint a Search Committee for recommending names and send the same to the President.
<p>Criticism on Govt</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Lokpal Act does not define the Leader of Opposition and the government could have appointed the leader of the single largest party in the opposition. ● Salary and Allowances of Leaders of Opposition in Parliament Act, 1977, Section 2 - defines LOP as the leader of the party in opposition to the government having the greatest numerical strength. ● Many other Acts – such as the Right to Information Act, 2005, Central Vigilance Commission Act, 2003, etc – expressly provide that if there is no LOP, then the leader of the opposition party with the highest number of seats will be considered so. ● Section 4(2) of the Lokpal Act - even if the Lokpal is appointed without the LOP (or any other such vacancy in the selection committee), the appointment would still be valid. ● The provision regarding the LOP being from a party having at least 10% seats is based on convention and not on a written rule. ● The government could have amended the provision of the Lokpal Act and recognized Leader of the single largest party.
<p>Sources</p>	<p>The Hindu, PIB</p>



2

Decriminalization of politics

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Supreme Court (SC) refused to bar candidates facing criminal charges from contesting elections leaving the matter in the hands of Parliament, political parties and politicians. ● The court however added that Parliament must legislate to ensure that people facing serious criminal cases do not enter the political mainstream.
What are some guidelines by SC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While filing their nominations, the candidates must declare pending criminal cases against them in courts. ● Political parties are also responsible for putting up details of criminal cases filed against their candidates on their websites. ● Parliament must legislate on the matter to ensure that candidates with criminal antecedents do not enter public life or become lawmakers. ● While filing the nomination forms, candidates must declare their criminal past and the cases pending against them in bold letters. ● Political parties should publicise the background of their candidates via the electronic media and issue declarations.
What are some recent judgements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At present, a chargesheet does not debar a person from contesting elections and cases usually take years to be decided. ● Former CEC S. Y. Qureshi has argued that a person chargesheeted for a criminal conduct must be debarred from contesting elections. ● In November 2017, SC directed the centre to set up special fast-track courts to try the more than 1,581 cases pending against legislators across the country.
Criminalization of Politics:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It means that the criminals entering the politics and contesting elections and even getting elected to the Parliament and state legislature. ● Why it takes place? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (1) Primarily because of the nexus between the criminals and some of the politicians. (2) The criminals need the patronage of politicians occupying public offices to continue with their criminal activities and the politicians need the money and muscle power that the criminals can offer to the politicians to win elections. (3) The elections to Parliament and State Legislatures are very expensive and it is a widely accepted fact that huge election expenditure is the root cause for corruption in India. (4) Only criminal activity can generate such large sums of untaxed funds. (5) In course of time, the nexus led the criminals themselves to contest elections. (6) Our delay and pendency riddled judicial system further abets criminalization as it takes several years for conviction.

<p>Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) Data</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to the ADR's analysis, 187 MPs in the current Lok Sabha face criminal charges (that is, 34.4%). ● Of them, 113 face serious criminal charges. ● The number has gone up from 162 (76 serious) charges in 2009 and 128 (58 serious) in 2004.
<p>2nd ARC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The "opportunity to influence crime investigations and to convert the policemen from being potential adversaries to allies is the irresistible magnet drawing criminals to politics."
<p>Sec 8 (3), Representation of People Act, 1951</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A person convicted of any offence and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years shall be disqualified from the date of such conviction and shall continue to be disqualified for a further period of six years since his release. ● Thus once someone has been convicted disqualification follows, in which case the only recourse available is to get the conviction stayed, for removal of the disqualification.
<p>Judicial Activism</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction of NOTA in 2013. ● SC in 2002 held that the voters enjoy right to make informed choices during elections and hence directed Election Commission of India to make it mandatory for contesting candidates to declare - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ their assets and liabilities, that of their spouses and dependent children ➤ any criminal conviction in the court of law ➤ any criminal case pending ● Ramesh Dalal vs. Union of India 2005, the Supreme Court held that a sitting Member of Parliament (MP) or Member of State Legislature (MLA) shall also be subject to disqualification from contesting elections if he is convicted and sentenced to not less than 2 years of imprisonment by a court of law. ● 1997, the Supreme Court directed the High Courts to not suspend the conviction of a person if he is convicted under The Prevention of Corruption Act 1988
<p>Lily Thomas vs. Union of India case, 2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Section 8(4) Representation of People Act, 1951 - if a sitting member of Parliament or state legislature is convicted and sentenced to not less than 2 years of imprisonment shall be disqualified from being member of house. ● However, if the member goes on appeal against his conviction within 3 months, then he shall not be subject to disqualification. ● The Supreme Court in Lily Thomas vs. Union of India 2013 held Section 8(4) as unconstitutional and void. ● Hence, now if a sitting member of Parliament or state legislature is convicted and sentenced to not less than 2 years of imprisonment, he will get immediately disqualified from being member of house.
<p>Election Commission Recommendation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If a person is accused of a serious crime (that is, where the law prescribes a punishment of not less than 5 years for the alleged crime) and if a court of law has framed criminal charges against the accused, then it shall be regarded as a reasonable ground for the disqualification of accused from contesting elections. ● If a person is found guilty by a Commission of Inquiry then he shall be disqualified from contesting elections. ● The FPTP electoral system shall be replaced by the 2-ballot system. ● Introduction of Right to Recall and State Funding of Elections.

National Commission to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC)'s recommendation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The NCRWC offers suggestions to stem the menace of criminalization in politics:<ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) permanently debaring candidates convicted of heinous crimes,(2) speedy disposal of pending criminal cases against politicians through special courts of the status of High Courts,(3) disqualification not to take effect for a period of three months from the date of conviction in case of a sitting MP/MLA as well as during the pendency of an appeal against the order of conviction.
Some other suggestions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">(1) Bringing greater transparency in campaign financing is going to make it less attractive for political parties to involve gangsters.(2) The Election Commission of India (ECI) should have the power to audit the financial accounts of political parties, or political parties' finances should be brought under the right to information (RTI) law.(3) Fast-track courts are necessary because politicians are able to delay the judicial process and serve for decades before prosecution.(4) The Election Commission must take adequate measures to break the nexus between the criminals and the politicians.(5) The information submitted by candidates at the time of filing of papers must be given wide publicity.
Source	Common cause website, The Hindu, ADR



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3

Internal Migration

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recently after the horrific rape incidence, allegedly by a migrant worker, in Sabarkantha district, there has been an exodus out of northern Gujarat of Hindi-speaking migrant workers. ● The Economic Survey 2017 has brought in new evidence to indicate that Indians are much more mobile than it was generally believed.
Who are migrants?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● International Organisation for Migration (IOM) defines a migrant as any person who is moving or has moved across an international border or within a State away from his/her habitual place of residence, regardless of- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The person's legal status; 2. Whether the movement is voluntary or involuntary; 3. What the causes for the movement are; 4. What the length of the stay is.
Present status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to 2011 Census the total number of internal migrants in the country is 139 million. ● NSSO report says- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 29% population is internally migrated. 2. Rate of migration to urban centres higher than to rural 3. % migration higher in females- main reason marriage ● Lead source states: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Uttarakhand and Tamil Nadu. ● Key destination states: Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Karnataka. ● Migrants are mostly employed in the following subsectors: construction, domestic work, textile, brick-kilns, transportation, mines, quarries and agriculture. ● Between 2011 and 2017, close to nine million people migrated between states annually, up from about 3.3 million according to successive censuses.
Causes of Migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Unequal social and economic opportunities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. India's rural area have failed to create opportunities for employment. 2. Agriculture has been main source of employment in rural areas. However, agricultural income has become erratic due to climate change as well as policy and infrastructural bottlenecks. ● Aspiration for Social Mobilization: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Traditionally rural society has highly hierarchical, inegalitarian and still follows the caste system. 2. Migration to urban areas breaks this shackles. 3. This is especially true for women who bear the burden of institutions like Khap Panchayat, Moral Policing. ● Lack of Public Infrastructure:

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rural area India has failed to provide good education, hospitals, and other civic facilities. 2. Better infrastructure, mode of transport, standard of living in urban areas has been attracting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Marriage : The social obligations of marriage, women migrate to their husband's household.
<p>Positive impacts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Availability of labour: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. there is regional asymmetry in availability of labour in India. 2. Internal migration bridges this gap. ● Remittances : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. migrants send back surplus income to native place. 2. This lead to improvement of living conditions in rural area, healthcare, nutrition, education. 3. Increase in per-capita land holdings. ● Social Remittances: Migrants bring back to the source areas a variety of skills, innovations and knowledge, known as 'social remittances', including change in tastes, perceptions and attitudes. ● Capacity building of women: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As men are out of home, women have been given the responsibility of household. 2. This helps in active participation of women in economic activities. 3. Improvement in social status of women, self-reliance. ● Social cohesion: ● Cultural bonding and tolerance. ● Opportunity to escape caste division and restrictive social norms, work with dignity.
<p>Challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low priority by government: As migrant don't contribute to vote bank, they get low priority of government. ● Migrants are heterogeneous class: Migrants constitute heterogeneous which makes it difficult to form coherent policies related migrants. ● Urban Slums: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Migrants find it difficult to get affordable homes which force them to settle in slums. 2. These areas often lack sanitation, drinking water, etc. ● Exploitation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Migrants lack capacity to bargain which leads to their exploitation by employers. 2. Women often become victim of sexual harassment. ● Lack of workers in rural areas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As rural workers are migrating to urban areas, it has created vacuum in rural market. 2. This has increased the cost of agriculture labour. ● Lack of Skill: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New jobs created in Urban areas require new skills. 2. This makes it difficult for migrants to get meaningful jobs in urban areas. ● Insufficient data at disposal: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internal migration is highly unregulated activity in India. 2. This makes it difficult to collect the data on migration 3. Seasonal nature of migration further complicates the problem.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nativism/Sons of the soil: people from host states feel hostile towards which leads to violence against migrants. ● Societal Tensions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. life in urban area is fast which migrants find difficult cope up with. 2. This often leads to depression, anxiety and other mental problems.
Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act (1979)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It applies to only migrants crossing state borders. ● It does not monitor migration under unregistered contractors. ● It does not address access to social protection of migrants, their right to the city and the special vulnerabilities of children and women migrants. ● Important provisions of the Act such as minimum wages, displacement allowance, medical facilities and protective clothing remain unenforced.
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Urban planners and policymakers need to devise policies and programmes for economically deprived section. ● Proper implementation of PURA and Public Distribution System. ● Adopting Sustainable farming. ● More research is also needed to understand migration from gender perspective. ● Proper inclusion of DPSP (Article-38, 43) in policies. ● Develop a coherent legal and policy framework on migration ● Fill knowledge and research gaps to enable evidence-based policy making ● Improve institutional preparedness and build capacity for facilitating and promoting migration.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Though 'Freedom of Residence' is guaranteed by under article 19(1) (e) of Part III of Indian constitution. ● However, government should ensure better daily life opportunity to address the issues of internal migration, otherwise the growth of the nation will be hampered .
Sources	The Hindu, Indian express, LiveMint



4

Feminisation of Agriculture

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 15th October is celebrated as National Women Farmer's Day or Rashtriya Mahila Kisan Diwas in India. ● It is held by Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. ● Ministry of agriculture and farmer's welfare has proposed deliberations to discuss the challenges that women farmers face. ● The aim is to work towards an action plan using better access to credit, skill development and entrepreneurial opportunities to women. ● According to the Economic Survey 2017-18, the number of women in multiple roles such as cultivators, entrepreneurs and labourers is increasing. ● The Survey also stressed the need for an inclusive transformative agricultural policy aimed at gender-specific approach.
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With increasing migration of men from rural to urban areas, we are seeing a 'feminisation' of agriculture sector. ● World over women have a crucial role in achieving food security and preserving local agro-biodiversity. ● Rural women are key to the integrated management and use of diverse natural resources to meet the daily household needs.
Causes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Migration: Migration of male member of family to urban areas has created vacuum in agriculture work force filled by women. ● Poverty: Poverty pushes women members to work in the agricultural fields to supplement the income levels of the family. ● Wage Differentials: Men are paid more than women. When they can get more by working elsewhere, a low-income pursuit is left for women. ● Tradition: Agriculture has traditionally been an acceptable avenue of work for women in rural areas, unlike other avenues of women's employability. ● Farmers suicide: The rising number of farmer suicides have also compelled women folk to take up agriculture work. ● Lack of employment opportunity: In rural areas, women don't find good employment opportunity.
Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to Oxfam India, women are responsible for about 60-80% of food and 90% of dairy production, respectively. ● As per Census 2011, out of total female main workers, 55% were agricultural labourers and 24% cultivators. ● The work by women farmers, in crop cultivation, livestock management or at home, often goes unnoticed. ● The Agriculture Census (2010-11) shows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Out of an estimated 118.7 million cultivators, 30.3% were females. 2. Similarly, out of an estimated 144.3 million agricultural labourers, 42.6% were females.

Nature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The concentration of women is in agricultural labour or other work related to agriculture. ● Since agriculture sector is declining men are migrating out of it leaving women behind to continue the unprofitable trade. ● Hence feminisation of agriculture has also been referred to as 'feminization out of compulsion' or 'feminization of agrarian distress' or 'feminization of poverty'. ● It is compounded further as this feminization is taking place within a gender and rural crisis. ● Since women do not have land titles, making available other credit and other facilities is a major challenge.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Patriarchal society: ● Patriarchal nature of society leads to transfer of land to male members of family. Women have been deprived of effective landholding. ● Credit Availability: ● lack of ownership of land does not allow women farmers to approach banks for institutional loans as banks usually consider land as collateral. ● Fragmentation of land: ● Another challenge is of declining size of land holdings. It acts as a deterrent due to lower net returns earned and technology adoption. ● Double burden of work: ● In addition to working on the farm, women have household and familial responsibilities. ● Traditional Machinery: ● Most farm machinery is difficult for women to operate and masculine in character. ● Resources: ● When compared to men, women generally have less access to resources and modern inputs (seeds, fertilizers, pesticides) to make farming more productive. ● Skills: women lack skill for modern agriculture processes. Especially in poultry, fishing, etc.
Government Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The following measures have been taken to ensure mainstreaming of women in agriculture sector: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Earmarking at least 30% of the budget allocation for women beneficiaries in all ongoing schemes/programmes and development activities. 2. Initiating women centric activities to ensure benefits of various beneficiary-oriented programs/schemes reach them. 3. Focusing on women self-help group (SHG) to connect them to micro-credit through capacity building activities. 4. To provide information and ensuring their representation in different decision-making bodies.
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Food and Agriculture Organisation says that equalising access to productive resources for female and male farmers could increase agricultural output in developing countries by as much as 2.5% to 4%. ● Access to Resources: Access to secure land, formal credit and to market, have greater propensity in making investment in improving

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● harvest, increasing productivity, and improving household food security and nutrition.● Credit: Provision of credit without collateral under the micro-finance initiative of the NABARD should be encouraged.● Collective farming can be encouraged to make women self-reliant.● Gender-friendly machinery: Manufacturers should be incentives for this.● Training and skills imparted to women as has been done by some self-help -groups and co-operative based dairy activities (Saras in Rajasthan and Amul in Gujarat).● These can be explored further through farmer producer organisations.● Krishi Vigyan Kendras in every district can be assigned an additional task to educate and train women farmers about innovative technology along with extension services.● Moreover, government flagship schemes such as the National Food Security Mission, Submission on Seed and Planting Material and the Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana must include women-centric strategies and dedicated expenditure.● In order to sustain women's interest in farming and also their uplift, there must be a vision backed by an appropriate policy and doable action plans.
Source	The Hindu, PIB, The Wire.



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5

IL & FS Crisis

<p>Why is it in news?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) Group is a major infra funding group that has recently missed its debt repayments. ● This caused concern in investors as it has been considered as a safe investment. ● There have been fears that its troubles may spread to other areas too. ● On 1st Oct, 2018, the Government of India took steps to take control of the company and arrest spread of the contagion to the financial markets. ● A new board was constituted as the earlier board was deemed to have failed to discharge its duties.
<p>What is IL&FS?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● IL&FS was formed in 1987 as an "RBI registered Core Investment Company" by three financial institutions, namely the Central Bank of India, Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC) and Unit Trust of India (UTI), to provide finance and loans for major infrastructure projects. ● Currently, its institutional shareholders include Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), ORIX and Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, with small shareholdings by a few Indian banks. ● It has helped develop and finance projects worth 1.8 trillion rupees (\$25 billion). ● Its infrastructure project include the Chenani-Nashri tunnel — India's longest road tunnel at 9 kilometers (5.6 miles). ● Shareholders include India's largest insurer, Life Insurance Corp.; its biggest lender, State Bank of India; and Japan's Orix Corp. ● It has 169 subsidiaries, associates and joint ventures which make it too complex for any watchdog or credit-rating firm.
<p>What went wrong?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It has run short of cash. ● It defaulted on a few payments and failed to service its commercial papers (CP) on due date. ● The company piled up too much debt to be paid back in the short-term while revenues from its assets are skewed towards the longer term. ● the reason for the crisis could be attributed to a business model where short-term loans were taken to pay for long-term projects. ● But the long-term projects did not earn enough or fast enough to pay off the short-term loans. ● As well as a recent drying up of new infrastructure projects in India, IL&FS has felt the pain from interest rates that have soared to multi-year highs for short-term borrowings. ● Some of IL&FS's own construction projects, including roads and ports, have faced cost overruns amid delays in land acquisition and approvals. ● Disputes over contracts have locked about 90 billion rupees of payments due from the government.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the meantime, Ravi Parthasarathy, at the helm of the IL&FS empire since its inception, stepped down for health reasons in July. ● The bottom line: IL&FS Financial Services has about \$500 million of repayment obligations over the next six months. ● Its debts total about \$12.6 billion.
Government and RBI's measures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has moved the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) against Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) and its subsidiaries seeking a change of the board and management control of the company, which NCLT accepted. ● The government came up with new board, with Uday Kotak as its chairman. ● Other members - former chairman of the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), Ghyanendra Nath Bajpai, IAS officer Malini Shankar, Tech Mahindra's executive vice-chairman Vineet Nayyar, ICICI Bank's non-executive chairman Girish Chandra Chaturvedi, former Deputy Comptroller and Auditor General Nand Kishore. ● The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which classifies IL&FS as a systemically important non-banking finance company, has ordered a special audit. ● The RBI allowed NBFC's, which do not finance infrastructure, to increase single borrower exposure limit from 10% to 15% of capital funds till December 31, 2018. ● The RBI also permitted banks to use government securities equal to their incremental outstanding credit to NBFC's to be used to meet Liquidity coverage ratio. ● Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), which has the largest shareholding in IL&FS, said that it would not allow the debt-ridden IL&FS to collapse and would explore options to revive it.
What are the effects?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The company's default spells trouble for its investors, which include banks, insurance companies, and mutual funds. ● Investors and traders have been worried over the cascading effects of IL&FS's defaults. ● IL&FS sits atop a web of 169 subsidiaries, associates, and joint-venture companies, which makes the default even more worrisome. ● This has raised concerns about the possibility of a contagion or spillover, with further defaults hitting mutual funds with exposure to IL&FS and its group companies.
Commercial Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Commercial paper (CP) is a popular instrument for financing working capital requirements of companies. ● The CP is an unsecured instrument issued in the form of promissory note. ● This instrument was introduced in 1990 to enable the corporate borrowers to raise short-term funds. ● It can be issued for period ranging from 15 days to one year. ● Commercial papers are transferable by endorsement and delivery. ● The highly reputed companies (Blue Chip companies) are the major player of commercial paper market.
What are structural weaknesses?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indian bond market lacks appetite for lower-rated borrowers. ● Single default virtually dries up funding for the entire domain. ● The risk is magnified by asset-liability mismatches aggravated by their chase for high growth.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Corporate bond market is lacking in both liquidity and depth, leading to severe miss-pricing of the risks, whenever there is a sudden bout of risk aversion. ● Mutual funds, which are becoming influential players, have also added to the fragility of this market.
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● These type of instances can recur. RBI and SEBI can come up with permanent fixes to the liquidity issue in corporate bonds. ● RBI may have to consider a special repo window in corporate bonds to provide liquidity to NBFCs. ● The NBFCs in India lack a formal mechanism for early detection and orderly resolution of the defaults. ● To tackle such issues, Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance (FRDI) Bill, is one of the right solutions.
Sources	The Hindu, Indian Express, PIB



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6

Sexual Harassment at Workplace

<p>Why is it in news?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The #MeToo movement has gained momentum in India in October resulting in several women from media and entertainment industry coming out to complaint alleged sexual harassment. ● The most prominent case of the movement has been the ex MoS for External Affairs M J Akbar who had to resign on account of multiple complaints against him.
<p>Nature of the movement in India</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The movement can be said to be an offshoot of the social movement in USA by the same name. ● Enabled by collective platform of social media, women have found the courage to reveal the harassment they faced in their careers at the hands of male colleagues or superiors. ● While legal recourse has not be pursued by those allegedly harassed in all the cases, the intentions vary from naming and shaming the alleged perpetrator, warning others who could meet the same fate or finding a sense of closure. ● Most of the cases have allegations against successful and famous men of a particular industry and have been filed by well-educated working women. ● Defamation suits have been threatened or filed against the women who have made the allegations.
<p>What are the Vishakha guidelines?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Laid down by the Supreme Court in a judgment in 1997. ● This was on a case filed by women's rights groups, one of which was Vishaka. ● They had filed a public interest litigation over the alleged gang-rape of Bhanwari Devi, a social worker from Rajasthan. ● In 1992, she had prevented the marriage of a one-year-old girl, leading to the alleged gang-rape in an act of revenge. ● Its general points include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Supreme Court directed that they establish a Complaints Committee, which would look into matters of sexual harassment of women at the workplace. 2. Gender equality includes protection from sexual harassment and right to work with dignity as per our constitution. 3. Extra hazard for a working woman compared her male colleague is clear violation of the fundamental rights of 'Gender Equality' & Right to Life and Liberty. 4. Safe working environment is fundamental right of working woman. 5. In no way working women may be discriminated at workplace against male employees. (If a woman is, then it must be documented in company policies, for example limitation of women in police and armed forces) 6. The right to work as an inalienable right of all working women 7. The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction (pregnancy, maternity & nursing etc) is fundamental right of working women.

<p>How does the 2013 Act broaden these?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It mandates that every employer constitute an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) at each office or branch with 10 or more employees. ● It lays down procedures and defines various aspects of sexual harassment, including aggrieved victim — a woman “of any age whether employed or not”, who “alleges to have been subjected to any act of sexual harassment”. ● which means the rights of all women working or visiting any workplace, in any capacity, are protected under the Act. ● For the ICC to act, must the victim write a complaint? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Act says the aggrieved victim “may” make, in writing, a complaint of sexual harassment. 2. If she cannot, any member of the ICC “shall” render “all reasonable assistance” to her for making the complaint in writing. 3. And if the woman is unable to make a complaint on account of her “physical or mental incapacity or death or otherwise”, her legal heir may do so. ● Time-frame for complaint: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Act states the complaint of sexual harassment has to be made “within three months from the date of the incident”. 2. For a series of incidents, it has to be made within three months from the date of the last incident. 3. However, this is not rigid. 4. The ICC can “extend the time limit” if “it is satisfied that the circumstances were such which prevented the woman from filing a complaint within the said period”. 5. The ICC is to record these reasons. ● How does the inquiry take place? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The ICC may forward the complaint to the police under IPC Section 509 (word, gesture or act intended to insult the modesty of a woman; maximum punishment one-year jail with fine). 2. Otherwise, the ICC can start an inquiry that has to be completed within 90 days. 3. ICC has similar powers to those of a civil court in respect of the following matters: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. summoning and examining any person on oath; b. requiring the discovery and production of documents. ● What happens if a complaint is found to be false? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Section 14 of the Act deals with punishment for false or malicious complaint and false evidence. b. In such a case the ICC may recommend to the employer that it take action against the woman, or the person who has made the complaint, in accordance with the provisions of the service rules.
<p>Sexual harassment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Acts or behaviour” committed directly or by implication: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Physical contact and advances 2. A demand or request for sexual favours 3. Sexually coloured remarks 4. Showing pornography 5. Any other unwelcome physical, verbal or non-verbal conduct of sexual nature.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Women & Child Development Ministry has published a Handbook on Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace with more detailed instances of behaviour that constitutes sexual harassment at the workplace. These include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sexually suggestive remarks or innuendos; serious or repeated offensive remarks; inappropriate questions or remarks about a person's sex life 2. Display of sexist or offensive pictures, posters, MMS, SMS, WhatsApp, or emails. 3. Intimidation, threats, blackmail around sexual favours; also, threats, intimidation or retaliation against an employee who speaks up about these. 4. Unwelcome social invitations with sexual overtones, commonly seen as flirting 5. Unwelcome sexual advances.
<p>What are flaws of the Act?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The implementation of the law remains heavily skewed in favour of the harasser. ● In many instances, the strongest penalty molesters may face is his contract being terminated. ● His next employer will probably have no clue about the recruit's record. ● There is little data on the number of cases that have eventually reached the district officer in order to have penal action initiated against the harasser. ● The Act doesn't cover the members of the Armed Forces and agricultural workers who form the majority of the workforce. ● The reporting rate is conclusive with the fact that women don't report cases of sexual harassment because there is very little faith in the way the legislative procedures work. ● A study conducted by Team Lease in 2016 on gender diversity indicated that 72 percent women feel that gender discrimination is pervasive in workplaces ● The legislation does not deal with this systemic issue, and that is its biggest flaw. ● In its past five years of implementation, there has been mechanism to monitor the kind of cases that are coming, no initiative to go beyond the pedantry of legal definitions, and no will to change the structure of workplaces to make it more accessible to women.
<p>Way forward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ministry of Women and Child Development should run a mass media campaign to a publicize the issue and the law. ● Posters about ICCs are mandated to be put up in workplaces, ICCs must also be publicized in all areas of female employment, including markets, neighborhoods, construction sites, rural farms, etc. ● Sexual harassment at informal workplaces should be included in all debates and discussions. ● Zero tolerance policy, not just legal but also social must be followed.



7

Swachh Bharat Mission

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India's Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) completed 4 years. ● The mission was started with two components, urban and rural, is to ensure an open defecation-free country by October 2, 2019
Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Large Number Open Defecation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. According to a report by the World Health Organization, India is ranked the highest when it comes to the number of people practicing open defecation. ● Disease Burden: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inadequate sanitation is a major cause of disease world-wide and improving sanitation is known to have a significant beneficial impact on health. 2. Open defecation is rampant in India, which has been leading cause of diarrhoea, etc. 3. In India, 117,000 children under five years of age die every year due to diarrhoea (this is about 22 percent of the global burden). ● Nutrition: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Problems such as stunting, neo-natal mortality are a result of Open Defecation, inadequate access to safe drinking water, sanitation and hygiene as they reduce nutrient absorption capacity ● Thus to combat such problems, government has initiated Swachh Bharat Mission.
Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SBM was launched in October 2014 to achieve universal sanitation coverage and to put focus on sanitation. ● Its predecessors were the “Nirmal Bharat Abhiyan” and before that the “Total Sanitation Campaign”. ● The mission aims to make India clean by 2019, as a fitting tribute to 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. ● The SBM consists of two sub-missions Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), implemented in rural areas, and Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), implemented in urban areas. ● The rural mission comes under the of Ministry of Drinking Water Sanitation; and the urban mission comes under Ministry of Urban Development. ● SBM (Urban) : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Swachh Bharat (Urban) aims to ensure that no households engage in the practice of open defecation. 2. It is to provide sanitation coverage through public toilet facilities across cities in India for achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status. 3. With around 3400 cities across the country already have achieved ODF status and other cities gearing up towards same. 4. This campaign will address need for ensuring ODF status is sustained through continuous usage and proper maintenance of public toilets. ● SBM (Gramin):

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SBM-G seeks to eliminate open defecation in rural areas by improving access to sanitation by ensuring use of toilets, besides their construction. 2. It also endeavours to accelerate rural sanitation coverage and improve management of solid and liquid wastes. 3. There is also a strong emphasis on behaviour change, including a focus on interpersonal communication. 4. It motivates communities and Panchayati Raj institutions to adopt sustainable sanitation practices.
<p>Other Initiatives under SBM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Swachh Bharat Kosh (fund): It has been created in the finance ministry that allows public sector, corporates, individuals to contribute funds, which are be utilised for various Swachh Bharat initiatives in the country. ● Swachh Iconic Places: It is to ensure adequate sanitation near iconic structures, such as the Golden Temple, Taj Mahal, temple at Tirupati, because of the large population visiting these sites. ● Swachh SwasthSarvatralaunched in collaboration with the health ministry and with the help of UNICEF (which have developed the training curriculum), primary health centres are being sanitised by providing better facilities for cleaning, washing, etc. ● Swachhata hi seva :All NGOs, schools, colleges, social, cultural and political leaders, corporates, government officials are requested to participate and offer Shramdaan. ● Swachh Sarvekshan :As a prelude to encouraging cities to improve urban sanitation, Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) conducts ‘Swachh Sarvekshan’ survey for the rating the Indian cities. ● The aim is to encourage cities to actively implement mission initiatives in a timely and innovative manner.
<p>Issues and Challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poverty: Due to poverty and lack of finance people are unable to build toilets. ● Poor quality of public facilities: The poor quality, inadequate numbers, poor maintenance of toilets and lack of water supply in public toilets has made the condition of most of our public toilets such that users prefer to defecate in the open. ● Mind-set of people: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Another important cause is the attitude of the people towards latrine usage. 2. People who have government latrines in their houses do not use them on the regular basis. ● Economic growth increases demand: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waste volumes continue to grow as economic growth spurs consumption. 2. Further there is a growing volume of hazardous waste generated in the country. ● Dumping Facilities: There are still no proper dumping facilities on roads and highways due to which people throw their waste on roads carelessly. ● Poor waste management: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no professional expertise in the Municipal Corporation to keep the city clean. 2. Most of the solid waste generated in cities is dumped in landfill sites, which is non-scientific.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lack of staff: Inadequate dedicated staff at the Field Level for implementation of rural sanitation. ● Implementation issue: The laws on municipal solid waste, protection of water sources and pollution control are just not being enforced.
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Change in mindset: The Mindset of a major portion of the population habituated to open defecation needs to be changed. ● Open Defecation Free villages and cities cannot be achieved without all the households and individuals conforming to the desired behaviour of toilet use. ● Outcome based approach: The policy makers need to shift their approach from collecting data on building of toilets to collection of data of usage of toilets. ● Proper Implementation: The official machinery required to enforce legal provisions vigorously. ● Monitoring: Community based monitoring and vigilance committees are essential to create peer pressure.
Source	The Hindu, LiveMint, ORF, NDTV.



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8

Manual Scavenging in India

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The study on deaths due to sewer and septic tank cleaning since 1992 has been released on 4th October. ● It is released by the Rashtriya Garima Abhiyan (RGA) — an NGO partnering with the Union Ministry of Social Justice for an ongoing manual scavenging census.
Findings of the study:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The first Information Reports (FIR) were filed in only 35% of the cases; none led to a trial or prosecution of any sort. ● Only 31% of affected families received cash compensation, while none received the rehabilitation or alternative jobs to which they are entitled by law. ● The Ministry reported 323 deaths nationwide in 2017 alone. ● In some cases, an official cover-up meant there was no acknowledgement of a death.
Manual Scavenging in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scavenging has been an occupation imposed upon certain citizens of the country by the society. ● This later on continued as a traditional occupation where a section of people among Scheduled Castes was ordained to clean the night soil and carry it manually on their heads. ● It often involves using the most basic of tools such as buckets, brooms and baskets. ● Manual scavengers are amongst the poorest and most disadvantaged communities in India. ● In 1993, India banned the employment of people as manual scavengers. ● In 2013, landmark new legislation in the form of the Manual Scavengers Act was passed which seeks to reinforce this ban by prohibiting manual scavenging in all forms and ensures the rehabilitation of manual scavengers to be identified through a mandatory survey.
Government Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 1993, the Government of India enacted the Employment of Manual Scavengers and Construction of Dry Latrines (Prohibition) Act. ● The Act prohibited the employment of manual scavengers for manually cleaning dry latrines and also the construction of dry toilets. ● It provided for imprisonment of upto a year and a fine. ● In 2013, this was followed by the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, 2013. ● The new Act was wider in scope and importantly, acknowledged the urgency of rehabilitating manual scavengers.
Key features of the 2013 Act:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prohibits the construction or maintenance of insanitary toilets. ● Prohibits the engagement or employment of anyone as a manual scavenger. ● Violations could result in a years' imprisonment or a fine of INR 50,000 or both.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prohibits a person from being engaged or employed for hazardous cleaning of a sewer or a septic tank. ● Offences under the Act are cognizable and non-bailable. ● Calls for a survey of manual scavengers in urban and rural areas within a time bound framework.
Issues and Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Despite various policies and Acts, manual scavenging is still practiced in India. ● Rather, Ministry of Railway is largest recruiter of manual scavengers. ● Manual scavenging reflects the caste pattern of the society. Lower cast people are hired for manual scavenging. ● According to the India Census 2011, there are more than 2.6 million dry latrines in the country. ● The Prohibition of Manual Scavenging Act, 2013 does not outline administrative measures beyond conduct rules that can be imposed if officials do not implement the Act. ● Though, Swatch Bharat Abhiyan targets for open defecation free India, millions of septic tanks are being built in rural India under it, in turn promoting manual scavenging.
Problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Septic tanks are designed badly. They have engineering defects which means that after a point, a machine cannot clean it. ● If the Central, state and local sanitation programmes do not take up faecal sludge management as a priority, the onus will shift to the lowest rung of the society to clean millions of dry toilets built. ● Adding to the problem is the fact that many cities do not have sewerage that covers the whole city. ● Sometimes, sewage lines are connected to storm water drains which get clogged and demand human intervention. ● Also, the civic bodies in India are required to conduct health check-up of the workers at regular intervals but never do so.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While manual scavenging for many may have ended as a form of employment, the stigma and discrimination associated with it lingers on. ● It makes it difficult for former or liberated manual scavengers to secure alternate livelihoods. ● Correctly identifying manual scavengers remains another key challenge. ● Correct and timely identification of insanitary latrines and manual scavengers. ● Implementation of provision regarding prohibiting 'hazardous cleaning' of sewers and septic tanks.
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The rehabilitation challenge requires a comprehensive approach that moves beyond expanding income generation or providing loans to focus on various crucial aspects. ● Use of technology is considered essential to end this scourge, Mechanised cleaning of septic tanks is the prescribed norm. ● Ensure discrimination-free, secure and alternate livelihoods by providing skill development and livelihoods training. ● Employment: Linking them to government employment schemes and entitlements as well as ensuring their land rights is progressive. ● Vocational training linked to employment could go a long way in ensuring steady, stable livelihoods for the future.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create a favourable environment through community awareness and sensitization of local administration.● Build the capacity of the community to promote rehabilitation efforts and self-reliance and also build leadership in the community with a particular focus on Dalit women.● A strong mission for total eradication of manual scavenging and rehabilitation of manual scavengers needs to be set up.● The Centre must spell out a detailed, time-bound and transparent action plan with a monitoring and accountability framework.
Source	The Hindu, Down to Earth, UN India, EPW.



9

India - Russia Relations

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recently, India-Russia joint 19th summit was held in New Delhi. ● It was held just weeks after India hosted 2+2 dialogue with USA. ● In recent times Russia has been increasing relations with Pakistan and China. Similarly, India is increasing its strategic partnership with USA, Japan, Australia.
Background of India-Russia relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditionally, relation between India and Russia have been cordial. ● 5 major components of Indo-Russian strategic partnership: politics, defence, civil nuclear energy, anti-terrorism co-operation and space. ● Initial visits - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to the Soviet Union in June 1955 ➢ Khrushchev's return trip to India in the fall of 1955. ● Khrushchev had supported Indian sovereignty over Kashmir region and Portuguese coastal enclaves such as Goa. ● The Soviet Union gave India substantial economic and military assistance during the Khrushchev period. ● 1965 war: Soviet Union served successfully as peace broker between India and Pakistan. ● 1971 war: Russia's help in India's Bangladesh liberation war 1971 unprecedented. ● Friendship Treaty: India signed with the Soviet Union the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation in August 1971. ● Rajiv Gandhi visited the Soviet Union on his first state visit abroad in May 1985 and signed two long-term economic agreements with the Soviet Union.
Important Outcomes of 19th India-Russia joint Summit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Inter-governmental agreements (IGAs) for the procurement of S-400 Air Defence System and construction of 1135.6 series of frigates. ● Agreement on cooperation in International Information Security. ● MoU for expansion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation. ● Shareholder agreement for establishing a Joint Venture to manufacture Ka-226T helicopter in India. ● MoU for developing smart cities in Andhra Pradesh and Haryana and for developing transport logistics systems for such cities. ● MoU between Gazprom and Engineers India Limited (EIL) for the joint study of a gas pipeline to India from Russia and other areas of cooperation. ● Cooperation Agreement between Rosneft Oil Company and ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL) in the area of Education and Training. ● MoU for setting up an investment fund of \$1 billion by the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF). ● MoU for Cooperation between Russian and Indian Railways in increasing the speed of trains between Nagpur- Hyderabad/ Secundrabad.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● MoU between ROSCOSMOS and ISRO on Mutual Allocation of Ground Measurement Gathering Stations for NAVIC and GLONASS with support for India's manned mission project Gaganyaan ● MoU between India's Department of Science and Technology and Russia's Federal Agency for Scientific Organisations.
Bilateral relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Defence relationship: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. India import more than 70 percent of its defence equipment from the Russia and Russia retaliate by providing transfer of latest technology. 2. For instance, Brahmos, INS chakra Submarine, (replacement as INS Arihant), Kamov Ka-226T, S-400 missile system and also joint defence exercises like IndRa, SCO Peace Mission Exercise, Vostok-2018 (East-2018) and recent Avaiindra-18. ● Civil Nuclear Agreement : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. India and Russia are planning to strengthen and streamline civil nuclear cooperation between the two countries in the recent summit. 2. Russia is helping India building 12 nuclear power plants in India. Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant is one of them. ● Space technology: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Russia is helping India in its space exploration by joint projects over various technologies e.g. cryogenic technology. 2. India's first satellite, Aryabhata, was launched by Russia. 3. Russia has shown interest in training Indian astronauts for India's manned space mission, Gaganyaan. ● UNSC Council: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Russia still supports the India membership in the Security Council and also on the Kashmir issue. 2. The India and Russia both envision multipolar world which is evident by common membership of organization like BRICS, SCO to increase cooperation. ● India and Russia both are part of connectivity projects like INSTC (International North-South Transport Corridor).
Decline in Indo-Russia cooperation in present context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Russia downgrading its military-technical relationship with India from that of an exclusive partner to a preferred partner. ● It comes in the backdrop of India diversifying its own military import portfolio and no longer considers Russia as its exclusive trading partner. ● Russian military export overtures towards Pakistan. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Russia recently decided to supply Mi-35 Hind attack helicopters to Pakistan. Prior to this, Moscow had refrained from supplying lethal military equipment to Pakistan on account of New Delhi's strained relationship with Islamabad. ● Russia-Pakistan recently conducted first RERA exercise. ● Though, Russia constitute nearly 70% of India's armament, this has been declining with India's strategic partnership with countries like USA, Israel, Japan, etc. ● There is a rise in collaboration between Russia and China. Recently, Russia-China conducted largest military exercise; Vostok 2018.
Importance of India for Russia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Russia economy is little more than half of India's economy (\$1.6 trillion.) ● India act as a good market for Russia for diversification of Its economy.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India is a natural partner for Russia & has been tried & tested in tough situation like Ukraine Crisis. ● India remains the biggest importer of defence equipment from Russia. ● India is a vast market for Russian energy resources & hydrocarbons. ● Despite its renewed friendship with China, Russia will soon find itself in competition with it as Beijing regards itself as the new G2 along with the US. ● India can help provide the multi-polarity that Russia fiercely seeks.
Importance of Russia for India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Russia has been supplying India technology which no other country is will to provide. Eg. Nuclear Submarine. ● It can meet its abundant energy requirements at a cost-effective price. ● India still needs to collaborate with Russia to master future technology in defence & space. ● India needs support of Russia to pursue nanotechnology on grand scale; an expertise of Russia worldwide. ● It improves India's bargaining power when it negotiates arms sales with the West. ● Geopolitically, Russia continues to be a balancing force against China & Pakistan in our region. ● Russia can be a major market for Indian industry such as pharmaceuticals, manufactured goods, dairy products, bovine meat and frozen seafood. ● Joint projects on exploration and exploitation of hydrocarbons in the Arctic shelf of Russia. ● Support for India's bid for permanent membership in UNSC and NSG.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India and USA defence relationship: There is growing discomfort in the Moscow by India signing various defence pacts with USA like COMCASA, LEMOA and GISMOA. ● China Tilt: Russia is increasing engagement with China evident by perform military exercise, transfer defence technology, and become part of the OBOR project ignoring India reservation on the same . ● Russia is trying to sell Su-35 and su-30 fighter jet to Pakistan and china despite the fact they are they can be used against India. ● Russia is also getting soft on Pakistan on Kashmir issue and want solution on basis of UN resolution which is against the India position on Kashmir to settle the dispute bilaterally.
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India has to rebuild on its strengths and common concerns with the Russians. ● Both have to revitalize their earlier agreement on sharing intelligence for a joint strategy on terrorism. Indian and Russian anxieties on terrorism need to converge and bring about some positive outcome. ● India needs to deepen its scientific and technological relations with Russia since a base for this already exists. ● India can use some creative means to build a Russia-India-China (RIC) alliance. ● Needs focus is increasing trade and investment ties between India and Russia. ● Need to ensure of Ease of Doing business for businessmen from the 2 countries.
Sources	The Hindu, Indian express, MEA, The Diplomat



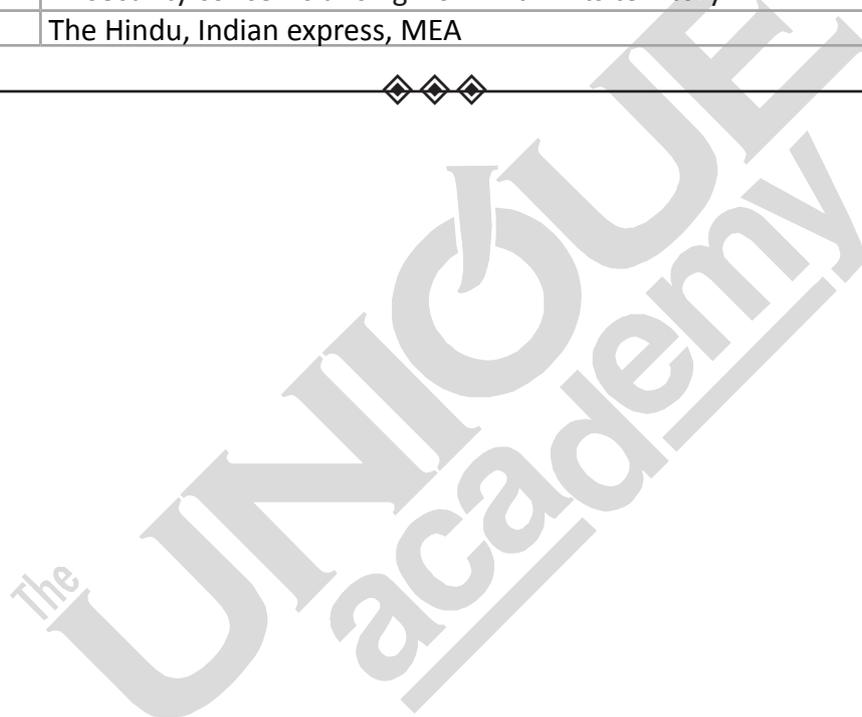
10

India - Nepal Relations

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Traditionally, Nepal has been under the sphere of influence of India. ● In recent times, China has been making inroads in Nepal as seen from the recent agreements signed. ● Fourth BIMSTEC summit was held in Kathmandu, Nepal.
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The relationship between the two countries is bound by history, geography, economic cooperation, socio-cultural ties and people-to-people relations. ● India and Nepal share a unique relationship of friendship and cooperation characterized by open borders (no other country has open border with India) and deep-rooted people-to-people contacts of kinship and culture.
The basis of India-Nepal Friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship of 1950 forms the bedrock of the special relations that exist between India and Nepal. ● Under the treaty, the Nepalese citizens have enjoyed unparalleled advantages in India, availing facilities and opportunities at par with Indian citizens. ● 6 million Nepali citizens live and work in India. ● India and Nepal have several bilateral institutional dialogue mechanisms, including the India-Nepal Joint Commission. ● The Joint Commission is chaired by the foreign ministers of both the countries.
Why Nepal is important for India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategic importance: Nepal is a buffer state between India and China. ● Internal security: There is an alleged link between Naxalites and Maoist in Nepal. Open border between India and Nepal made this easy. ● Socio-economic development: Socio-economic state of bordering States especially Bihar and Uttar Pradesh is highly dependent stable relation between India and Nepal. ● To counter terrorist activities: terrorist organisations are active on Nepal's side of border. ● Environment conservation: area around India-Nepal border is environmentally fragile and prone to natural disasters. ● Disaster Management: rivers causing floods in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal have their origin in Nepal. ● Indian Investment in Nepal: Indian firms are the biggest investors in Nepal, accounting for about 40% of the total approved foreign direct investments. ● Power: Nepal has been supplying electricity to bordering States of India. ● South Asian connectivity: Asian connectivity is important part of India's foreign policy. However, without Nepal's active participation it will not fructify
Areas Of Cooperation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The following areas of cooperation between the two countries - <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. India accounts for 2/3 of Nepal's foreign trade and its currency is pegged to Indian currency 2. India is providing Economic aid and helps build its infrastructure 3. Indian Army has a lot of Nepalese citizens working and there is a regiment which serves in India but comes from Nepal i.e. Gurkha Rifles.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. India has also offered \$1 billion concessional line of credit for various development purposes 5. Visakhapatnam port has been opened for Nepal 6. India had pledged \$1 billion of reconstruction aid, of which 40 per cent was a grant and the balance in the form of soft loans. 7. This was in addition to the \$1 billion assistance announced during Mr Modi's visit, bringing India's total commitment to \$2 billion over the next five years. 8. Regardless of political situation, cultural contacts between India and Nepal are always robust. 9. Pokhra-New Delhi direct bus service launched. 10. Raxaul-Kathmandu rail line- India and Nepal have signed MoU to build a strategic railway line connecting Raxaul city in Bihar, India to Kathmandu, capital of Nepal. 11. Inauguration of 400-bed Nepal-Bharat Maitri Pashupati Dharamshala in Kathmandu, capital of Nepal. 12. USD 750 million dollars for post-earthquake reconstruction projects in Nepal. 13. MoU for Upgradation and Improvement of Road Infrastructure in Terai Area of Nepal.
<p>Areas of Contentions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Criticism of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship 1950:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The treaty has been complained about by citizens of Nepal to be unequal. 2. Some sections of Nepalese feel that the treaty is an infringement upon its sovereignty. ● <u>Constitutional Crisis:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A new constitution in Nepal has been framed in 2015 after many years of drafting procedure. 2. India thinks that, some sections Nepal are not equally represented legislature. ● <u>India's Blockade of Nepal 2015:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Nepal has accused India of an undeclared blockade. 2. It is alleged that India was not happy with the Nepal constitution which not able to appease the Madhesis and hence the blockade was enforced. 3. Indian Government has consistently denied any such sort of measure officially. ● <u>Anti-India Sentiments in Nepal:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no consensus Nepal's political spectrum about cooperation with India. 2. Nepal's Maoist party, the Communist Party Nepal-Union Marxist Leninist (CPN-UML), courted Beijing seeking to temper the influence of Delhi. 3. Citizens of Nepal think India is playing Big Brother role in the subcontinent. ● <u>China:</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. China has proposed 2+1 dialog between India, Nepal, and China. 2. China has proposed Friendship Highway (Nepal-China) as an alternative Nepal's access to Bay of Bengal through India. 3. China is going to hold 2nd Nepal-China Military exercise this year.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Reluctance of Nepal:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Nepal, which had initially confirmed its participation with a full contingent at MILEX-18, proposed by India at 4th BIMSTEC summit.
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● India must dispel the notion that it in anyway interferes with Nepal's internal affairs or impinges on its sovereignty.● India must also steer clear of the political trap that pits India against the Chinese influence in the region.● India needs a comprehensive and long-term Nepal policy the shaping of perceptions would be an integral part of this strategy.● India should engage with all the political parties and other stakeholders in Nepal.● A stable and inclusive Nepal is in India's interest and India must do all it can to help Nepal reach that goal. The problem of the Madhesis must be addressed in this context.● While cooperation is significant Nepal must be made to understand India's security concerns arising from within its territory.
Sources	The Hindu, Indian express, MEA



11

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recently Pakistan has announced that its close ally Saudi Arabia would not join the USD 50 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. ● It was days after Islamabad said Riyadh will be the third "strategic partner" of China's flagship project, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. ● Pakistan has requested for a bail out at International Monetary Fund from debt, of which significant part is related to CPEC.
Background of CPEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor) is a part of China's ambitious project, Belt and Road initiative. ● CPEC is a clutch of projects valued at \$51 billion project which aims at rapidly expanding and upgrading Pakistan's infrastructure and strengthening the economic ties between the People's Republic of China (China) and Pakistan. ● It includes building roads, laying railway lines and pipelines to carry oil and gas. ● CPEC eventually aims at linking the city of Gwadar in South Western Pakistan to China's North Western region Xinjiang through a vast network of highways and railways. ● The proposed project will be financed by loans, that will be disbursed to the Government of Pakistan by Chinese banking giants such as Exim Bank of China, China Development Bank, and the Industrial and Commercial Bank of China. ● The 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor' violates India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. India's principal objection was that CPEC passed through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
Present Stand by India on CPEC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Ministry of External Affairs statement : "The so-called 'China-Pakistan Economic Corridor' violates India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. No country can accept a project that ignores its core concerns on sovereignty and territorial integrity." ● New Delhi sent a clear message to Beijing that it doesn't support CPEC. ● India registered its protest by boycotting the high-profile Belt and Road Forum organized by China. ● Its principal objection was that CPEC passed through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).
What is Pakistan's interest in CPEC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Under the '1+4' cooperation framework of CPEC, '1' represents 'CPEC' and the 4 includes Energy, Gwadar Port, Transport Infrastructure and Industrial Cooperation. The Chinese investments are supposed to boost Pakistan's 274 billion dollar GDP by over 15 percent. ● Energy needs of Pakistan: The large-scale energy production has been termed as the biggest breakthrough of the project. Energy projects such as Karot Hydropower project, Karachi Nuclear power plant and World's largest solar power plant in Pakistan's Punjab Province etc are part of this initiative that can double Pakistan's energy capacity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Infrastructure development: Pakistan expects infrastructural enhancement which includes construction of a 2,000 km of road and rail network worth 10.63 billion dollars. ● Employment Opportunities: This corridor promises huge employment opportunities to all sections of society. ● Away from Western Influence: CPEC provides Pakistan with an opportunity to work closely with a more reliable friend China independent of Western influence especially the US. ● However, according to various political analysts, Pakistan is becoming a victim of China's "DEBT TRAP." ● Pakistan has requested a bailout package at IMF, after its close ally, China and Saudi Arabia had shown reluctance.
<p>China's Debt Trap</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For Chinese finance, particularly BRI, financing terms are opaque and the concession in strategic autonomy is demanded as a price for Chinese funds. ● Several small countries looking to develop internal infrastructure and becoming part of global supply chains find Chinese funds the easiest source of investments. ● Negotiating capacities of most of these countries are limited and, as a result, they are unable to secure financing deals without agreeing to tough conditions.
<p>What is China's interest in CPEC?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Gwadar Port: A fully operational Gwadar port in Pakistan provides the following benefits: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It provides a link between Maritime Silk Road and the Arabian Sea. 2. The port at the mouth of the Persian Gulf provides China with the shortest route to the oil-rich Middle East, Africa, and most of the Western hemisphere. 3. Gwadar will have the estimated capacity to handle 19 million tonnes of crude oil per year, which will be sent to China after being refined at the port. 4. At present, China transports 80% of its oil through the Strait of Malacca. 5. Apart from these lucrative commercial benefits, China also has huge strategic and geopolitical advantages in the Indian Ocean region. <div data-bbox="507 1395 1219 1949" style="text-align: center;">  </div>

CPEC and its Significance to India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● From the time when it was initiated India opposed CPEC route and development of Gwadar port. ● Apart from sovereignty issues the high economic stakes in the project will push China to ally with Pakistan on the Kashmir dispute. ● China will get a free corridor to move its armor and mechanized weapons which are a threat to India in the plains of Punjab and Rajasthan. ● In the guise of securing CPEC, China can permanently position troops on Pakistan soil not too far from the Indian ● China may establish a naval base at Gwadar to ensure Chinese maritime hegemony in the Indian Ocean. ● Some experts see Gwadar Port as part of China's String of Pearls" bases, that extends from its eastern coast to the Arabian Sea.
What can India do?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In order to counter Chinese dominance in Gwadar Port, India has invested in Iran's Chabahar port which is very near to Gwadar. ● Also, India, Iran, and Afghanistan signed a trade corridor deal giving India the land access to Central Asia from Chabahar, bypassing Pakistan. ● India can work on improving the relationship with Pakistan as it can provide the shortest land route for us to access Central Asia.
Way forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CPEC is ultimately a thorn in India-Pakistan relations. The best way forward would be for India to come up with a concrete plan on PoK. Otherwise, its protests on CPEC may well be ignored by stakeholders in the project, with little consequence. ● Japan and India can build rail and road connectivity across the Eurasian landmass running parallel to OBOR. ● India should focus more on its projects such as Sagarmala and North-South Transport Corridor. ● The Asia Africa Growth Corridor, premised on consultation and inclusiveness, must be developed at the earliest. ● Project Mausam, Chabahar ports projects need to be implemented effectively. ● India now needs to match ambition with commensurate augmentation of its capacities that allows it to be a net security provider in the Indian Ocean region.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India should highlight its concerns via diplomatic initiatives to address its fears. ● India should be cautious while explicitly opposing the project as it would strain the relationship with China. ● Last but not the least a prosperous South Asia is possible only if India and Pakistan leave their political clout and work closely with each other to find an amicable solution to the bilateral issues.
Sources	The Hindu, Indianexpress, The Diplomat.



12

Mental Health Issue in India

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Centre gave its nod to establishment of National Institute of Mental Health Rehabilitation (NIMHR) in Sehore district in Madhya Pradesh. ● NIMHR will be the first of its kind in the country in the area of mental health rehabilitation.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Main Aims of the NIMHR: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The NIMHR will serve as an institution of excellence for capacity building in human resource and research in the area of mental health rehabilitation. 2. The institute will ensure effective rehabilitation of persons with mental illness. ● Head Department: Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities.
Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is good Mental Health? <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mental health is defined as state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential. 2. Individual has capacity to cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community. ● Effects of Mental illness: Mental illness impairs - <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Pperson's behaviour, judgment. 2. Capacity to recognise reality or ability to meet ordinary demands of life.
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is growing evidence of the global impact of mental illness. ● Mental health problems are among the most important contributors to the burden of disease and disability worldwide. ● Five of the 10 leading causes of disability worldwide are mental health problems. ● Over 300 million people are estimated to suffer from depression, equivalent to 4.4% of the world's total population. ● They are as relevant in low-income countries as they are in rich ones, cutting across age, gender and social strata.
Mental health issue in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Growing Number of Cases: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The survey, which was carried out across 12 states, found that the overall prevalence for current mental health morbidity was 10.6 percent. 2. As per the WHO's Report released in 2017, the estimated prevalence of depressive disorders in India is 4.5% of the total population. ● Common mental disorders: depression, anxiety disorders and drug abuse affect nearly 10% of the Indian population. ● Poor treatment: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. nearly 80% of people suffering from mental disorders had not received any treatment despite the presence of illness for more than 12 months. 2. the amount spent on mental healthcare is just 0.06% of health budget.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Poor awareness: lack awareness about the symptoms of mental illness, stigma and the lack of availability of mental health services available has resulted in a massive treatment gap, with inadequate numbers of trained mental health care professionals.
Depression	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Depression is the single largest contributor to global disability. ● WHO says depression can be long lasting and recurrent with characteristics like sadness, interest loss, feelings of guilt and low self-worth. ● Depression among younger generation is because of competition in education, career prospects, parental pressures, and interpersonal relationships.
Government Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government is implementing DMHP for detection, management and treatment of mental disorders/illness in 517 districts of the country. 2. It comes under the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP), which is being implemented since 1982. 3. The major components of DMHP are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Counselling in schools and colleges, b. Work place stress management, c. Life skills training, d. Suicide prevention services and e. Activities for generation of awareness and removal of stigma associated with Mental Illness. ● The Mental Health Care Act, 1987: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It was brought in to consolidate and amend the law relating to the treatment and care of mentally ill persons, to make better provision with respect to their property and affairs and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. ● National Mental Health Policy 2014 : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Universal access to mental healthcare institutions 2. Strengthen leadership in the mental health care 3. Gives out role for central and state governments, local bodies and civil societies.
Areas of Concerns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates India has only 0.3 psychiatrists, 0.07 psychologists and 0.12 nurses available per 1,00,000 people. ● To compare, the ratio of psychiatrists in developed countries is 6.6 per 100,000. ● The average number of mental hospitals globally is 0.04 per 100,000 while it's only 0.004 in India. ● There is also a wide variability in availability of mental health services-while urban areas have some services, the situation is dire in rural areas. ● Also the families try to hide the condition out of a sense of shame. This attitude leaves the victims vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, neglect, and marginalization. ● In 2007, India ratified the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which requires signatory countries to change their laws to give effect to the rights of persons with mental illness.

<p>Mental Healthcare Act 2017 features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Every person would have the right to specify how he would like to be treated for mental illness in the event of a mental health situation. ● An individual will also specify who will be the person responsible for taking decisions with regard to the treatment, his admission into a hospital, etc. ● Rights of the person for affordable, good quality, easy access to services such as minimum mental health services in every district. ● Persons with mental illness also have the right to equality of treatment and protection from inhuman and degrading treatment. ● The government has to set up the Central Mental Health Authority at national level and State Mental Health Authority in every state. ● The new act also decriminalised suicide. ● It states that whoever attempts suicide will be presumed to be under severe stress, and shall not be punished for it. ● Every insurance company shall provide medical insurance for mentally ill persons on the same basis as is available for physical illnesses.
<p>Way ahead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Involving the community through scaled-up grassroots-led approach is vital. ● The need of the hour is to sensitize and educate individuals about the signs and symptoms of mental illness while normalizing the idea of seeking support for themselves and their loved ones. ● Supporting the human rights of people with mental illness. ● Periodic reviews can help plug gaps between practice and theory. ● There is a dearth of funds and functionaries in the country. Budgetary allocations and private funding to fill this gap need to be done. ● Giving proper vocational training to patients so they can be gainfully employed.
<p>Source</p>	<p>The Hindu, PRS, WHO, NCBI.</p>



13

Drug Resistance

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scientists in Australia warned that a superbug resistant to all known antibiotics that can cause “severe” infections or even death is spreading undetected through hospital wards across the world.
Antibiotic resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What is an antibiotic? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ An antibiotic is a substance used to kill bacteria. ➤ Antibiotics kill bacteria, not viruses, which means an antibiotic prescription for a cold or the flu isn’t going to do any good. ● Antibiotic resistance : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The WHO defines antimicrobial resistance or antibiotic resistance as a microorganism’s resistance to an antimicrobial (antibiotic) drug that was once able to treat an infection by that microorganism. ➤ The resistance to antimicrobials is a natural biological phenomenon. ➤ Antibiotic resistance occurs when bacteria change in a way that reduces the effectiveness of drugs, chemicals, or other agents designed to cure or prevent infections. ➤ The bacteria survive and continue to multiply, causing more harm.
Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Antibiotic resistance leads to higher medical costs, prolonged hospital stays, and increased mortality. ● Antibiotic resistance is one of the biggest threats to global health, food security, and development today. ● Antibiotic resistance occurs naturally, but misuse of antibiotics in humans and animals is accelerating the process. ● A growing number of infections – such as pneumonia, tuberculosis, and gonorrhoea – are becoming harder to treat as the antibiotics used to treat them become less effective. ● Antibiotic resistance leads to longer hospital stays, higher medical costs and increased mortality.
Reasons for Anti-Microbial Resistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The main reasons for the antimicrobial resistance are as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The natural resistance in certain types of bacteria. 2. The genetic mutation. 3. By one species acquiring resistance from another. 4. Misuse of antibiotics. ● The resistance is generally slow to reverse or is irreversible.
The Facts and Figures related to Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nearly 2 lakh people die every year from multi-drug and extremely drug-resistant TB. ● In India, 60,000 newborns die each year of Antibiotic-Resistant Neonatal Infections. ● Around 70 percentage of diarrhoeal illness are caused by viral infections, against which antibiotics are ineffective. But for diarrhea treatment antibiotics are used frequently.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Nearly 500 million antibiotics courses are used each year to treat diarrhoea in India, Indonesia, Nigeria and Brazil. ● The Universal access to improved water and sanitation could reduce this by 60 percentages.
<p>Myths and Reality regarding Anti-Microbial Resistance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Myth #1: Antibiotic resistance happens when the human body becomes resistant to antibiotics. ● Reality: In fact bacteria—not humans or animals—become resistant to antibiotics and their spread causes hard-to-treat infections. ● Myth #2: Individuals are not at risk of a drug-resistant infection if they personally take their antibiotics as prescribed or not take antibiotics at all. ● Reality: Anyone, of any age, in any country, can get an antibiotic-resistant infection – irrespective of their intake of antibiotics. This is because not humans but bacteria is becoming resistant.
<p>What are the reasons for the recent increase in the use of antibiotics in India?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The reasons for the sharp increase in antibiotic use are as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The high disease burden. b. The rising income. c. The easy and the cheap availability of these medicines to the public. d. The uncontrolled sales of antibiotics. e. Poor public health infrastructure. f. Lack of awareness regarding the misuse of antibiotics.
<p>Prevention and control of the problem</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Only use antibiotics when prescribed by a certified health professional. ● Ensure a robust national action plan to tackle antibiotic resistance is in place. ● Improve surveillance of antibiotic-resistant infections. ● Strengthen policies, programmes, and implementation of infection prevention and control measures. ● Prevent infections by ensuring your hands, instruments, and environment is clean. ● Only prescribe and dispense antibiotics when they are needed, according to current guidelines. ● Report antibiotic-resistant infections to surveillance teams. ● Invest in research and development of new antibiotics, vaccines, diagnostics and other tools. ● Only give antibiotics to animals under veterinary supervision. ● Not use antibiotics for growth promotion or to prevent diseases. ● Vaccinate animals to reduce the need for antibiotics and use alternatives to antibiotics when available.
<p>What is a Red Line campaign?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Union Health Ministry’s Anti-Microbial Resistance awareness campaign urges people not to use medicines marked with a red vertical line, including antibiotics, without a doctor’s prescription. ● These medicines are called as the ‘Medicines with the Red Line’. ● To check the irrational use of antibiotics, the ‘red line’ will helps the users to differentiate them from other drugs. ● This campaign is aimed at discouraging unnecessary prescription and over-the-counter sale of antibiotics causing drug resistance for several critical diseases.

<p>What are the other government Initiatives that helps to curb Anti-Microbial Resistance (AMR) in India?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The first step in addressing the problem of AMR is to avoid the need for antibiotics at all in the first place. ● An improved water, vaccination, and sanitation may control the inappropriate antibiotic use indirectly. ● The main government policies that help in this process are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Through the Swacch Bharat program, the Government has taken active steps to improve hygiene and sanitation and reduce the environmental spread of pathogens. 2. The Vaccination is an equally important public health measure, and through Mission Indradhanush, India has set itself an ambitious goal of increasing routine immunization coverage to 90% within just a few years. ● Note: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ India faces a twin challenge of overconsumption of antibiotics breeding drug-resistant bacteria while ensuring that the poor and vulnerable have easy access. ➤ The lack of access or delayed access to effective antibiotics is causing more deaths in India than from drug-resistant bacteria.
<p>What are the strategies of WHO's Global Action Plan on Anti-Microbial Resistance?</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To improve awareness and understanding of antimicrobial resistance through effective communication, education, and training. 2. To strengthen the knowledge and evidence base through surveillance and research. 3. To reduce the incidence of infection through effective sanitation, hygiene and infection prevention measures. 4. To optimize the use of antimicrobial medicines in human and animal health. 5. To develop the economic case for sustainable investment that takes account of the needs of all countries and to increase investment in new medicines, diagnostic tools, vaccines and other interventions.
<p>What are the other solutions available to combat the Antimicrobial Resistance?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Educate patients, prescribers and dispensers on the importance of appropriate antimicrobial use and containment of antimicrobial resistance. ● The Prescription Audit may minimize the overuse and misuse of drugs, helps to plan essential drug selection and to estimate the drug need of the community and help all stakeholders in decision making. ● The regular review of health care procedures and documentation of auditing is also important in combating AMR. ● Control and monitor pharmaceutical company promotional activities within the hospital environment and ensure that such activities have an educational benefit. ● Improving the sanitation, proper vaccination and maintaining a good and healthy lifestyle can prevent the use of antibiotics to an extent.
<p>Source</p>	<p>The Hindu, Indian express, WHO, MoHFW</p>



14

Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5 degrees Celsius

<p>Why is it in news?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5°C was approved by the IPCC in Incheon, Republic of Korea. ● With more than 6,000 scientific references cited and the dedicated contribution of thousands of expert and government reviewers worldwide, this important report testifies to the breadth and policy relevance of the IPCC. ● The report's full name is <i>Global Warming of 1.5°C, an IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emission pathways, in the context of strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.</i>
<p>What is IPCC?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establishment: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ IPCC is the international body for assessing the science related to climate change. ➢ The IPCC was set up in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and UNEP. ● Members: ● Participation in the IPCC is open to all member countries of the WMO and United Nations. ● It currently has 195 members. ● The Panel, made up of representatives of the member states, meets in Plenary Sessions to take major decisions. ● The IPCC Bureau, elected by member governments, provides guidance to the Panel. ● IPCC assessments are written by hundreds of leading scientists, who volunteer their time and expertise as Coordinating Lead Authors.
<p>Why 1.5 degree was chosen?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1.5°C/ 2°C was chosen based on periodic assessment reports produced by IPCC. ● As per those reports, if the temperature goes beyond 2°C, then, the impacts of climate change could be irreversible and catastrophic. ● Mainly, small island nations and least developed nations are likely to suffer the most and hence, they asked for the goal to restrict the temperature rise to even within 1.5°C. ● The 1.5°C target demanded much deeper emission cuts from the big emitters. ● This requires massive deployment of financial and technological resources.

<p>Features of report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It gives a clear warning --impacts of global warming at 1.5°C far greater than anticipated and estimated earlier. The impacts at 2°C are catastrophic for the poor and for developing nations like India. ● Human-induced global warming has already reached 1°C; the current climate efforts of countries will take the world to 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052. ● It is very difficult but not impossible to remain within 1.5°C by the end of the century. ● The US is the biggest obstacle to forming a global coalition to fight climate change. The world needs to unite against the obstructive approach of the US. ● Paris Agreement and UNFCCC cannot be the only way ahead to address climate change. The world needs a 'Plan B' to address climate change. ● India must take the lead in forming a global coalition for a 1.5°C world to save its poor and vulnerable population.
<p>Steps recommended by IPCC</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Keeping global warming within 1.5°C is very difficult -- still the world must set its goal to limit warming to 1.5°C and not 2.0°C: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ There will be an inclination among countries to reject the 1.5°C target as impractical and instead, keep the focus on 2.0°C. But this would be disastrous for the poor and for developing countries. ➤ If the world insists on sticking to the 2.0°C target, in all probability it will overshoot it. ➤ However, if the world agrees to keep warming within 1.5°C, it can contain it well within 2.0°C. ● Require a UNFCCC-plus approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Climate efforts cannot be restrictive to the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement. ➤ The world needs to think and devise more forums and venues to address climate change. ● Equity is essential and must be re-visited: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Summary for Policy Makers points out that “social justice and equity are core aspects of climate-resilient development pathways that aim to limit global warming to 1.5°C”. ➤ The world, however, requires a new formulation of equity in which every country must act now and actively raise its level of ambition. ➤ The developed countries must take the lead by rapidly de-carbonising their economies as well as reducing consumption. ➤ Developing countries will have to pursue low-carbon pathways more vigorously and should limit addition of fossil fuel assets going ahead. ● Enhancing sinks in natural ecosystems is key to limiting warming to 1.5°C: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ All pathways to reduce emissions, to keep the warming within 1.5°C require Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) in the Agriculture, Forestry and Other Land Use (AFOLU) sector in varying degree. ➤ Sequestering CO₂ in AFOLU sector will require incentivising billions of farmers and forest-dwellers to pursue sustainable practices that enhance carbon sinks. The world must come together to devise a mechanism to do this.

Contribution by India in IPCC report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Officials from Union Environment Ministry, the Union Ministry of Earth Sciences and Indian Institute of Human Settlements and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences were part of the Indian delegation at Incheon.● India hasn't made any scientific contribution in terms of modelling possible climate change impact to its agriculture, monsoon, urban dwellings. But gave critical inputs to the scientific basis underlying these assessments.
Sources	The Hindu, PIB, Centre for science and Environment.



15

Industrial Revolution 4.0

Why is it in the news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The World Economic Forum announced its new Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0) in India. ● The centre, which was launched by Prime Minister, aims to bring together the government and business leaders to pilot emerging technology policies.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Centre will work in collaboration with the government, leaders from business, academia, start-ups, and international organizations. ● The National Institute for Transforming India (NITI) Aayog will coordinate the partnership on behalf of the government and the work of the center among multiple ministries. ● The Fourth Industrial Revolution will change how we produce, how we consume, how we communicate and even how we live.
Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The First Industrial Revolution used water and steam power to mechanize production. ● The Second Industrial Revolution used electric power to create the mass production. ● The Third Industrial Revolution used electronics and information technology to automate production. ● Now a Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0) is building on the Third, the digital revolution that has been occurring since the middle of the last century. ● It is characterized by a fusion of technologies that is blurring the lines between the physical, digital, and biological spheres. ● Industry 4.0 is a blend of following across the business value chain: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Advanced analytics, b. Big Data, c. Robotics & Automation, d. Artificial Intelligence, e. Internet of Things (IoT) and f. IProcess Digitisation. ● The Fourth Industrial Revolution is evolving at an exponential rather than a linear pace and is disrupting almost every industry in every country.
Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Improve Production: Advanced analytics would help to enhance production capacity and its quality. ● Prevention of Defects: The model would shift towards prediction and prevention of defects through data analytics. ● Efficiency: The adoption of Robotics & automation would shorten the production cycle, reduce time-to-market and bring an inefficient utilization of resources. ● Cost Saving: The digitization of various business processes would lead to cost-saving and a better experience for customer and employees.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Time-Saving: IoT and connectivity of machine to people and machine to a machine would tighten supply chain and reduce lead times. ● Pushing Research: The adoption of Industry 4.0 technologies will push research in various fields such as IT security and will have its effect on education in particular. ● People and Government <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The transition will enable citizens to engage with governments, voice their opinions, coordinate their efforts, and even circumvent the supervision of public authorities. b. Simultaneously, governments will gain new technological powers to increase their control over populations, based on pervasive surveillance systems and the ability to control digital infrastructure. c. The breadth and depth of these changes herald the transformation of entire systems of production, management, and governance.
<p>Industry 4.0: An Opportunity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fourth Industrial Revolution has the potential to raise global income levels and improve the quality of life for populations around the world. ● Technology has made possible new products and services that increase the efficiency and pleasure of our personal lives. ● Transportation and communication costs will drop, logistics and global supply chains will become more effective, cost of trade will diminish. ● All of which will open new markets and drive economic growth.
<p>Challenges</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capital: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The transformation to industry 4.0 will require a huge investment in a new technology that doesn't sound cheap. b. Also, the huge capital requirement will alienate smaller businesses and might cost them their market share in the future. ● Employment: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Automation substitutes for labour across the entire economy. b. The 4th Industrial Revolution could yield greater inequality, particularly in its potential to disrupt labour markets. c. In India, every year 10-12 million worker enter the workforce. Labor intensive industry has promise for employment of this workforce. ● Skill demand: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Industry 4.0 is based on knowledge economy and requires a highly skilled workforce. b. This will give rise to a job market increasingly segregated into "low-skill/low-pay" and "high-skill/high-pay" segments. ● Security and Privacy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Perhaps the most challenging aspect of implementing Industry 4.0 techniques is the IT security risk. b. This online integration will give room to security breaches and data leaks. Cyber theft must also be put into consideration. ● Ethical Issue: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Industry 4.0 involves amalgamation of Bio technology (gene editing, emotion sensing, Bio printing) and Information technology (Internet of Things, Artificial Intelligence) which can predict human behavior and eugenics.

	b. Such technologies have created questions like till what level technology can interfere in biological and natural processes.
Final words	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Industry 4.0 has a lot to promise when it comes to revenues, investment, and technological advancements, but employment still remains one of the most challenging aspects of the new industrial revolution.● While speculations regarding privacy, security, and employment need more study, the overall picture is promising.
Source	The Hindu, PIB, WEF, LiveMint.



16

Creation of Time Zones For India

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scientists at the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research's National Physical Laboratory (CSIR-NPL), have published a research article describing the necessity of two time zones. ● The new time zone would be ahead an hour of the existing time zone.
Suggestion of Research Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Two Time Zones: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the research paper proposes to call the two time zones IST-I (UTC + 5.30 h) and IST-II (UTC + 6.30 h). 2. States west of the line would continue to follow IST (to be called IST-I). 3. States east of the line — Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Andaman & Nicobar Islands — would follow IST-II. ● Second Time Zone: the proposed line of demarcation is at 89°52'E, the narrow border between Assam and West Bengal, chicken neck. ● Energy saving: the study puts a figure to the country's potential savings in energy consumption — 20 million kWh a year — if it does follow two time zones.
How Time is Maintained ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If lines of longitude are drawn exactly a degree apart, they will divide the Earth into 360 zones. ● Because the Earth spins 360° in 24 hours, a longitudinal distance of 15° represents a time separation of 1 hour, and 1° represents 4 minutes. ● Theoretically, the time zone followed by any place should relate to its longitudinal distance from any other place. ● Political boundaries, however, mean that time zones are often demarcated by bent lines rather than straight lines of longitude. ● The geographic "zero line" runs through Greenwich, London. ● It identifies GMT, now known as Universal Coordinated Time (UCT), which is maintained by the Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) in France. ● Indian Standard Time (IST), maintained by CSIR-NPL, is based on a line of longitude that runs through Mirzapur in UP. ● At 82°33'E, the line is 82.5° east of Greenwich, or 5.5 hours (5 hours 30 minutes) ahead of UCT.
What is the Issue ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Large Longitudinal Extend of India: India extends from 68°7'E to 97°25'E, with the spread of 29° representing almost two hours from the geographic perspective. ● Loss of Day Time: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In the Northeast, the sun rises as early as four in the morning and in winter it sets by four early in the evening. 2. The loss of many daylight hours by the time offices or educational institutions open. ● Energy Consumption: Early sunset, for its part, leads to higher consumption of electricity.

<p>Case of Assam</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In order to combat the issue, Assam's tea gardens follow a separate time zone known as Tea Garden Time or <i>Bagantime</i>, which is one hour ahead of IST. ● Labourers generally work in the tea gardens from 9 a.m. (IST 8 a.m.) to 5 p.m. (IST 4 p.m.). ● This system was introduced during British rule, keeping in mind the early sunrise in this part of India. ● The Assam government wants to introduce the separate time zone across the whole state and the other northeast Indian states. ● A campaign was started in 2014 but it's yet to be approved by the Central Government of India.
<p>Problems with two time zones</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Synchronisation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. India has a huge population; if the country were divided into two time zones, there would be chaos at the border between the two zones. 2. It would mean resetting clocks with each crossing of the time zone. ● Railways: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Railway signals are not fully automated and many routes have single tracks. 2. Trains may meet with major accidents owing to human errors. ● Regionalism: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is already a sense of alienation between the relatively prosperous and industrialised western zone and the less developed eastern zone. 2. The people in the Northeast sense a distance from the mainland and a separateness in clock time may accentuate it.
<p>Daylight Saving Time(DST)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Many countries around the world practise a Daylight Saving Time(DST) wherein the time in the summers is advanced (or the clocks put forward) by one hour and retracted during the winters. ● Therefore, people have longer summers and also avoid the inconvenience of late sunrises and early sunsets during the winters. ● If we were to introduce DST in India, the inconvenience of time adjustment during summer and winter months would involve the whole country, happening twice a year, with, of course, some benefits.
<p>Way Ahead</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● One alternative is to introduce neither time zones nor DST, but to advance IST by half an hour to being six hours ahead of GMT. ● This proposal of advancing IST by half-an-hour avoids the problems apprehended in the other two proposals (of time zones and DST). ● While there seem to be arguments both for and against the use of more than one-time zone, given the widespread adoption of mobile phones-which can automatically adjust for a time change -the barriers to introduction of any change have lessened over the years. ● However, the magnitude and temporal and spatial dimensions of the proposed change in IST will need to be deliberated on.
<p>Source</p>	<p>The Hindu, Indian Express, The Better India.</p>



17

RBI data localisation

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Central bank (RBI) had asked payment system players to adhere to the October 15 deadline for storing data locally. ● This, after some of them sought an extension during a recent meeting with top central bank officials.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In April, RBI had asked all stakeholders to ensure that the entire data relating to payment systems operated are stored in a system only in India. ● The data should include the full end-to-end transaction details.
Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data localisation is a concept that the personal data of a country's residents should be processed and stored in that country. ● Some directives may restrict flow entirely, while others more leniently allow for conditional data sharing or data mirroring – in which only a copy has to be stored in the country. ● As of now, much of cross-border data transfer is governed by individual bilateral “mutual legal assistance treaties” (MLATs).
Background and Developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With digital payments growing, the need for storing the data being generated within the country has gained importance. ● Earlier in July the Finance Ministry had recommended the central bank issue a clarificatory circular on data storage norms. ● B N Srikrishna Committee: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. All personal data of Indians: have at least one copy in India. 2. Critical personal data must be stored and processed only in India.
Significance of Data Localisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● National Security: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Data localisation will help Indian law enforcement access data stored in India. 2. Security against foreign attacks and surveillance. (Concerns were raised when Facebook declared that its Cambridge Analytica controversy had affected Indian users as well). ● Boost to Domestic Economy: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Data as a new oil” also provides a backbone to much of the localisation drive. 2. Localisation would lead to establishment of local offices in India, and increase tax mobilization. 3. It will help for domestic innovation, and harness India’s digital economy. 4. Help create new jobs as it will require many analysts and data specialists to process the stored data.
Problems with Data Localisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Data localisations may lead to “state misuse and surveillance” of personal data. ● It is argued that data localization is insufficient for security and government access. ● Even if the data is stored in the country, the encryption keys may still remain out of the reach of national agencies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Excluding all Indian payment data from transfers is onerous, expensive, and can potentially limit the functionality which is currently available. ● Having a mirror of data in India may actually increase the cost of operation and compliance, which in turn hamper the profit of companies.
Global Scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The think tank European Centre for International Political Economy has found a surge in data localisation measures worldwide over the last decade. ● Russia has the most restrictive regulation for data flow with strict localisation and high penalties. ● The European Union's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) does not mandate all data to be localised, but rather restricts flow to countries with a strong data protection framework. ● The China government mandates localisation for all "important data" held by "critical information infrastructure". ● The United States leaves regulation up to the state and sector. ● US has passed the CLOUD Act that amends the Stored Communications Act (SCA) of 1986 to allow federal law enforcement to compel U.S.-based technology companies to provide requested data stored on servers regardless of whether the data are stored in the U.S. or on foreign soil.
Source	Indian Express, Economic Times, LiveMint.



The UNIO Academy

18

Defence procurement policy

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recent political storm over Rafael deal where current government alleged to have “completely bypassed” defence procurement procedure. ● The opposition parties had demanded to place before the Cabinet Committee on Security for the approval of Rafael deal which government has refuted.
DPP 2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● DPP 2016 is aimed at- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Boosting India’s target of ‘Make in India’ policy. 2. Creation of major domestic defence industry to cater to its own needs as well as exports. 3. DPP lays the road map on how India, the world’s largest arms importer, will acquire equipment in the future. ● Splits the existing ‘Make’ category of projects into two: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Make I: to be mostly funded by government 2. Make II: to be developed by industry. ● Strengthens the Role of Defence Acquisition Council (DAC): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New policy also allows the DAC to take a “fast-track” route to acquire weapons. 2. This was limited to only the armed forces till now. ● IDDM (Indigenously Designed, Developed and Manufactured): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The DPP 2016 has included a new category, IDDM, to acquire weapons. 2. The IDDM will be the first preferred category of procurement. ● Offsets guidelines: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Offsets are a portion of a contracted price with a foreign supplier that must be re-invested in the Indian defence sector, or against which the government can purchase technology. 2. Intentions behind it to encourage start-ups and direct investment, and flexibility for foreign suppliers. 3. The foreign supplier has complete discretion on choice of the Indian offset partner (IOP). ● Acceptance of Necessity (AON): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In a bid to cut down on the time taken for acquisition process, it mandates that all AONs of a particular platform will be valid for only six months. 2. Earlier it had 12-month deadline.
Problems in DPP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contradiction in aim and implementation: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. As per The Defence Procurement Procedure, 2016, (DPP) procurement is undertaken in a manner that takes India closer to the goal of developing a world-class domestic defence and aerospace industry. 2. However, the offset requirements under the DPP, which mandates production by foreign company, are not helping it achieve this goal. ● Favouritism and nepotism: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. According to Indian laws, government procurement should not have favouritism or nepotism in the award of public contracts.

	<p>2. But when it comes to the details, things look different.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Misleading arguments: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government has argued that it cannot have a say in the choice of offset partner or its investments. 2. However, DPP 2016 provide for the government with extensive control over selection of the offset partner. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> b. For instance, it has the power to bar any entity from becoming an offset partner. b. The government also retains the power to evaluate offset proposals received in response to procurement tenders and conclude offset contracts. c. The DPP also provides that all offset proposals will be approved by the Union minister of defence, regardless of their value.
<p>What can be done?/ Way forward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As offset guidelines are not satisfactory, there is need for- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Transparent Defence procurement: Defence procurement should be subject to transparent processes that ensure that Indian companies, big and small, compete on a level playing field. 2. Fair and diverse procurement process for offsets- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. While the procurement policy recognizes the need for domestic private partnership, it does not mandate a fair and diverse procurement process for offsets. 2. Given the large contract values involved, this makes it likely that foreign suppliers will partner with just one or two large industrial groups to discharge their offset obligations. 3. Change in flawed definition of IOP- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> c. IOPs are defined as Indian enterprises engaged in making eligible products and/or services. b. If the objective is to build a domestic defence sector, the focus should instead be on direct investments. c. In other sectors where India has succeeded, foreign technology and know-how has followed investments, irrespective of ownership. d. “Indian” ownership does not necessarily contribute to the growth of a sector, as much as investments within Indian shores. e. Focussing on investments will ensure that companies of all sizes, including foreign companies who wish to manufacture in India, are permitted to grow and flourish. 4. Transparency in procurement contracts- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> d. Foreign suppliers should be free to invest in India. e. But at the same time, offset investments/procurement must be subject to safeguards along the lines of those that govern public procurement.
<p>Conclusion</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is need to provide the private sector with incentives and subsidies for research and development, and access to low cost capital that is available to overseas defence companies. ● Government should focus on creating white-collar jobs through a ‘Create in India’ policy; in which Indian entities do systems engineering, rather than mere systems integration.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● DPP needs to be revised to ensure that it genuinely gives a level playing field to all Indian players, else allegations of crony capitalism will keep resurfacing.
Sources	PIB, Livemint, Economic times

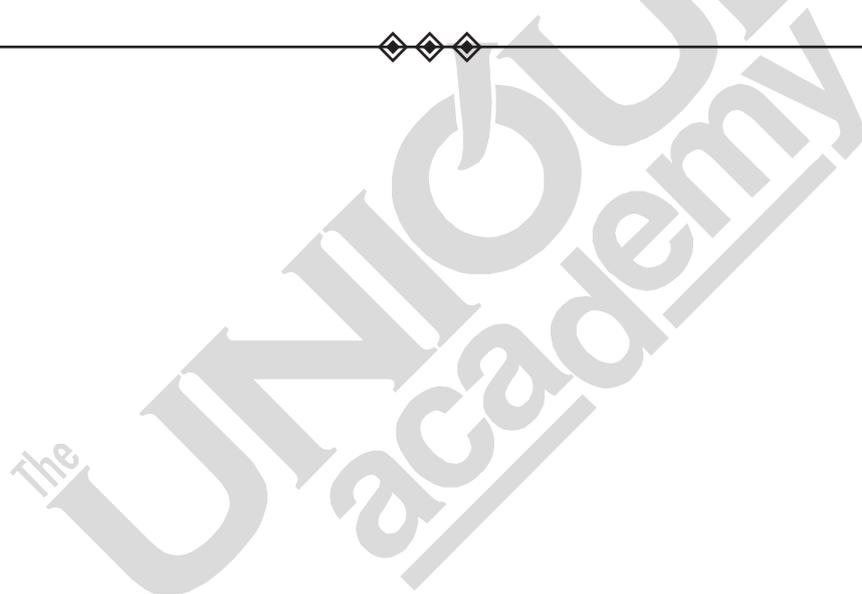


19

Defence Production Policy

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ministry of Defence had released a new Draft Defence Production Policy (DProP), 2018.
What are the aims of DProP, 2018?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To mark India's position among the top defence production countries in the world. ● The DProP 2018 is focused on self-reliance. ● It seeks to change India's position from being the largest importer of arms in the world.
What is the plan under DProP?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indigenous Defense production: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The policy targets 2025 for becoming self-reliant in 13 weapons platforms. b. It includes fighter aircraft, warships, tanks, missiles, and artillery, which constitute the bulk of India's imports. ● PPP Model: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The policy attempts for increased productivity and innovation. b. It thus calls for increased participation of MSMEs, start-ups and other players from the private sector in the defence industry. ● Liberal Policies: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The policy would liberalise licences that will be provided to defence industries. b. Also, the requirements for renewal of licences will be pruned. c. The companies with a good track record will be given favourable consideration. d. The policy also liberalises the FDI regime in the defence sector. ● Skill Development: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. It aims at advancing and boosting the existing public sector defence production units. b. This is particularly aimed to be achieved through skill development and overall program management. ● Overseas Production: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. The recent policy aims at fusing together technologies from Ordnance Factory Board, Defence Public Sector Undertaking and private players. b. For this, the policy plans on setting up Defence Export Organisation in partnership with the industry. c. This will facilitate for overseas marketing of domestically produced goods.
What are the expected outcomes of the policy?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● If properly implemented the policy will reduce the import bill. ● It could increase the export earnings up to Rs 1,70,000 crore by creating employment for more than 3 million people. ● This will make India a top destination for Research & Development (R&D) in the world.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It can promote India as a hub for defence related Intellectual Property (IP). ● The broad policy will accelerate domestic defence production and thereby makes it feasible to have a market of our own. ● Indigenous defence production will attract more investors which eventually will lead to massive market creation.
What are the challenges ahead?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Realising the aims demands difficult changes. ● E.g. the military will have to abandon its insistence on imported, state-of-the-art weaponry. ● There is a need for an overarching infrastructural, fiscal and legal environment, and essential testing and validating facilities that individual firms cannot cost-effectively create. ● The policy involves multiple ministries which could delay the establishment of defence production ecosystem within an optimistic time frame.
Way ahead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The defence ministry, therefore, must focus on creating white-collar jobs through a 'Create in India' policy. ● The private sector with incentives and subsidies for research and development, and access to low-cost capital that is available to overseas defense companies.
Source	The Hindu, Indian Express, MEA, Economic times, PIB.



20

Indus Water Treaty

<p>Why is it in news?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India and Pakistan have agreed to undertake Indus Waters Treaty 1960 mandated tours by their water commissioners in Indus basin on both sides to resolve issues on various hydroelectric projects in Jammu and Kashmir. ● This was decided in recently concluded high-level bilateral talks on Indus Waters Treaty in Lahore, Pakistan.
<p>Historical background</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 1954: World Bank gave a water-sharing formula for two countries. ● 1960: Indus Waters Treaty signed. ● 1970's: India starts building hydropower projects in Kashmir. Pakistan raises concern. ● 1984: Pakistan objects over India building Tulbul barrage on Jhelum. India stops it unilaterally. ● 2007: Pakistan raises concern over Kishanganga hydroelectric plant. ● 2008: Lashkar-e-Taiba starts campaign against India. Its chief Hafiz Saeed accuses India of water terrorism. ● 2010: Pakistan accuses India of choking water supply consistently. ● 2016: India reviews working of Indus Waters Treaty linking it with cross-border terrorism (Uri attack).
<p>About the Treaty</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Indus river basin spans parts of 4 countries (Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and China) in an area that is more than 30% arid.

The Indus Water Treaty

The 56-year-old Indus Water Treaty between India and Pakistan has been instrumental in the peaceful sharing of the water of Indus and its tributaries

With the recent spurt of tensions between the two countries and PM Narendra Modi's statement that "blood and water cannot flow together" followed by India's decision to suspend meetings of Indus Water Commission, here is a look at the treaty and its ingredients:

Signed on: **September 19, 1960**
 Signatories: Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan's President Ayub Khan
 Brokered by: The World Bank

Features

- Rivers Beas, Ravi and Sutlej to be governed by India while Indus, Chenab and Jhelum by Pakistan
- India is allowed to use 20 per cent of Indus water for irrigation, power generation and transport purposes
- A permanent body called Indus Water Commission solves disputes arising over water sharing
- River Indus originates from China, but it is not a part of the treaty

<p>Recent Developments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India and Pakistan have agreed to undertake Indus Waters Treaty 1960 mandated tours by their water commissioners in Indus basin on both sides. ● Deliberations were held on further strengthening the role of Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) for matters under 1960 Treaty. ● Technical discussions were also held on implementation of various hydroelectric projects under provisions of Indus Waters Treaty including PakalDul(1000 MW) and Lower Kalnai(48 MW) in Jammu and Kashmir. ● India has invited Pakistani experts to visit sites of PakalDul and Lower Kalnai hydropower projects on Chenab River in September 2018 to address its concerns over construction of the projects. ● During the talks India rejected Pakistan’s objections to the construction work and has hinted at continuation of the work on both the hydropower projects.
<p>Can India walk out of the pact unilaterally?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The treaty has no provision for either country unilaterally walking out of the pact. ● Article XII of the treatysays “The provisions of this Treaty, or, the provisions of this Treaty as modified under the provisions of Paragraph (3), shall continue in force until terminated by a duly ratified treaty concluded for that purpose between the two governments.” ● If India wants to go about abrogating it, the country should abide by the 1969 Vienna convention on the law of treaties.
<p>Should India violate a bilateral treaty with Pakistan because of cross-border attacks?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) was meant to reduce hostilities between India and Pakistan. It should be kept in the same spirit. ● India has always dealt with security and water issues separately with Pakistan. ● 80% of Pakistan’s 21.5 million hectares of farmland is irrigated by river Indus and its tributaries. ● India at present does not have enough infrastructures to use the additional water available. It may create flood in the Kashmir valley as well. ● It may further increase the appeal of anti-India non-state actors in Pakistan and increase security risks. ● Not respecting the Indus Water Treaty, may invite global condemnation to India as the treaty is an international agreement. ● Neighbours like Nepal and Bangladesh with whom we have water treaties may turn skeptical. ● China may also block the water of Brahmaputra to Assam. ● The Kashmir issue will get a whole new dimension if India withdraws from the treaty. ● It could trigger the formal beginning of water wars. ● India, aspiring for a seat in the UNSC, should safeguard rather than violate bilateral treaties. ● The approach of government should be to utilize provisions available in Indus Water Treaty itself. But building infrastructure across Indus will take time.
<p>Way Forward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Need to make treaty more transparent by using state-of-art information communication technology tools. ● To remove mistrust on data exchange, install satellite based real-time telemetry system for monitoring water quality and quantity.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Need to setup an independent office of Indus Water Commission (IWC) comprising neutral experts outside of South Asian region, having unblemished record and integrity.● This may also include experts from various international agencies such as the World Bank, the UNEP and the EU, etc.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The IWT has survived wars and phases of frosty ties between India and Pakistan.● India cannot abrogate the treaty on a short notice as it takes years to divert the flow of a river.● The government of India will have to prepare a long-term strategy if it intends to threaten Pakistan by diverting or stopping the water.
Sources	The Hindu, Indian Express, MEA, Firstpost



21

Delhi Smog

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Union Environment Ministry notified a 'Graded Response Action Plan' against air pollution for Delhi and the National Capital Region.
Graded Response Action Plan on Pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Prepared by the Supreme Court-mandated Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA). ● Lays down stratified actions that are required to be taken as and when the concentration of pollutants, in this case particulate matter, reaches a certain level. ● The graded action plan will be implemented if - <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ PM2.5 levels stay over 300 micrograms per cubic metre and ➤ PM10 levels stay above 500 micrograms per cubic metre. ● The Delhi specific comprehensive action plan was prepared by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).
Reasons behind Delhi's air pollution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Burning of paddy stubble: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. in Punjab and Haryana ahead of new planting season is among the main causes of spike in pollution in Delhi at this time of the year. 2. Wind in Delhi blows from North–West to South–West. ● Pollution caused by the traffic: Vehicular emission is increasing the hazardous effects of air pollution and smog. ● Geographical factors: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. During winter season, air is dense. Dust particles and pollutants in the air unable to move. 2. They get locked in the air and forms smog. 3. In Delhi, there are two winds: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. one carrying pollutants from stubble burning in Punjab and 2. the other bringing in moisture from Uttar Pradesh that are colliding above the national capital. 3. This, combined with the near-still wind conditions near the ground level, have effectively trapped the pollutants, leading to the smog. ● Industrial pollution and garbage dumps are also increasing air pollution and building-up smog in the air. ● Particulate matters due to Construction: Large scale construction in Delhi-NCR is another culprit that is increasing dust and pollution in the air.
How is smog different from fog?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fog is just condensed water vapour close to the ground. ● When water vapour saturates the air, the vapour starts to condense back into a liquid, as water droplets. ● These droplets suspended in the air appear as the thick haze that is known as fog. ● This results in low visibility. ● On the other hand, when pollution is high, nitrogen oxides and dust particles interact with sunlight to form ground-level ozone leading to the building up of haze.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This is smog, a result of a photochemical reaction of sunlight with pollutants that have been released into the atmosphere. 							
<p>What are these pollutants?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WHO classifies particulate matter (the major components being “sulphate, nitrates, ammonia, sodium chloride, black carbon, mineral dust and water”) into two broad types, PM10 and PM2.5 ● The numbers indicates the diameter of the particles in microns. ● In Delhi, the ground-level ozone and PM 2.5 play the most significant role in formation of smog. 							
<p>How harmful is it?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chronic exposure to both PM10 and PM2.5 can lead to the risk of developing cardiovascular and respiratory diseases as well as of lung cancer. ● Both can penetrate and lodge deep inside the lungs; PM2.5 can cross into the blood, causing damage in many organ systems. ● The direct impact of smog is on the lungs and the heart. ● Higher levels of nitrogen dioxide precipitate asthma, higher levels of sulphur dioxide precipitate chronic bronchitis. ● Particulate matter can damage the lungs and worsen asthma due to inflammation of the air tract. ● PM2.5, which can enter the lungs and also the lung lining, carries long-term risks including lung cancer, reduced lung function, skin diseases and reduction in life expectancy. ● There has been evidence that PM2.5 can also enter the bloodstream and prolonged exposure can cause inflammation of heart arteries. ● It can lead to thrombosis when clotting inside a blood vessel obstructs the flow of blood and can atherosclerosis, a condition in which the diameter of blood vessels is reduced and can result in hypertension. ● Recent studies have also linked high levels of particulate matter to strokes and neuro-degenerative illness. <div data-bbox="469 1178 1374 1902" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">AIR POLLUTION KILLS NEARLY 8M PEOPLE EVERY YEAR GLOBALLY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DANGER IN THE AIR</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 2px;"> <p>GREENHOUSE GASES: Carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, black carbon, nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydro-fluorocarbons (HFC)</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 2px;"> <p>PARTICLES (PM10/PM2.5): Nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, volatile organic compounds (VOC), ammonia, carbon monoxide (CO), ozone</p> </td> <td style="width: 33%; padding: 2px;"> <p>TOXICS: Vehicular exhaust, road dust, construction waste, burning of dry leaves, benzene, heavy metals</p> </td> </tr> </table> <p style="text-align: center;">COMMON ILLNESSES CAUSED DUE TO POLLUTANTS</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"> <p>Children: Poorly developed lungs, pneumonia, bronchitis, asthma</p> <p>Adults: Asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary</p> </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"> <p>disease (COPD), lung cancer</p> <p>Elderly: Asthma, COPD, recurrent respiratory tract infection, heart disease, increased risk of stroke</p> </td> </tr> </table> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"> <p>PREVENTIVE MEASURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Avoid crowded vehicular areas > Drink plenty of water > Contact doctor for unusual cough or breathing difficulty > Get vaccinated if you have respiratory problems </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 2px;"> <p>LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Making people aware of harmful effects of various pollutants such as diesel > Improving public transport and encouraging people to use it to curb vehicular emissions > Penalizing heavy vehicles that release high amounts of toxics > Preserving and promoting greenery </td> </tr> </table>  </div>	<p>GREENHOUSE GASES: Carbon dioxide (CO₂), methane, black carbon, nitrous oxide (N₂O), hydro-fluorocarbons (HFC)</p>	<p>PARTICLES (PM10/PM2.5): Nitrogen oxides, sulphur oxides, volatile organic compounds (VOC), ammonia, carbon monoxide (CO), ozone</p>	<p>TOXICS: Vehicular exhaust, road dust, construction waste, burning of dry leaves, benzene, heavy metals</p>	<p>Children: Poorly developed lungs, pneumonia, bronchitis, asthma</p> <p>Adults: Asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary</p>	<p>disease (COPD), lung cancer</p> <p>Elderly: Asthma, COPD, recurrent respiratory tract infection, heart disease, increased risk of stroke</p>	<p>PREVENTIVE MEASURES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Avoid crowded vehicular areas > Drink plenty of water > Contact doctor for unusual cough or breathing difficulty > Get vaccinated if you have respiratory problems 	<p>LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Making people aware of harmful effects of various pollutants such as diesel > Improving public transport and encouraging people to use it to curb vehicular emissions > Penalizing heavy vehicles that release high amounts of toxics > Preserving and promoting greenery
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<p>What precautions can people take?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Children and elderly can wear air masks when outdoors. ● The efficacy of these, however, has not yet been proven, and it is safer for all, across age groups, to avoid walking when the smog is heavy. ● Doctors recommend that the vulnerable population take an influenza vaccination before the onset of the season, and that those suffering from chronic illnesses visit a physical.
<p>Stubble burning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Stubble burning is the deliberate setting fire of the straw stubble that remains after wheat and other grains have been harvested. ● The burning of stubble, contrasted with alternatives such as ploughing the stubble back into the ground has a number of consequences and effects on the environment. ● Reasons for Stubble burning: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quickly clears the field and is cheap. 2. Kills weeds, including those resistant to herbicide. 3. Kills slugs and other pests. 4. Can reduce nitrogen tie-up ● harmful effects on the environment: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loss of nutrients. 2. Pollution from smoke. 3. Damage to electrical and electronic equipment from floating threads of conducting waste. 4. Risk of fires spreading out of control.
<p>Some solutions to stubble burning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the long run, Governments should commercialize the stubble for animal feed. ● Waste to energy concept can be implemented with power generation. ● The stubble can be used for packaging and paper industries, etc. ● In the short term, the Government can think of, in lieu of burning stubble, some subsidies for agricultural equipment, what is being done now. ● The Government can also look at giving equipment that can sow seeds without the need to remove the remains of stubble, the promotion of Happy Seeder is in this direction. ● The cumbersome formalities must be removed while granting subsidies. ● Alternatives crops to paddy must be cultivated in Punjab and Haryana so that stubble burning issue is reduced.
<p>Source</p>	<p>PIB, the Hindu, Indian express</p>



22

National Digital Communication policy

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Union Cabinet has approved the National Digital Communications Policy-2018 (NDCP-2018). ● Objective: India's transition to digitally empowered economy and society by fulfilling the information and communications needs of citizens and enterprises ● Responsibility of implementing this policy has been given to the Telecom Commission with designating it as "Digital Communications Commission".
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The key objectives of the policy are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Broadband for all; 2. Creating four million additional jobs in the Digital Communications sector; 3. Enhancing the contribution of the Digital Communications sector to 8% of India's GDP from 6% in 2017; 4. Propelling India to the Top 50 Nations in the ICT Development Index of ITU from 134 in 2017; 5. Enhancing India's contribution to Global Value Chains; and 6. Ensuring Digital Sovereignty ● These objectives are to be achieved by 2022.
Background	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India is the world's second-largest telecommunications market, with over 1.17 billion subscribers as of June 2018. ● The present world has entered the era of modern technological advancements in the Telecom Sector such as 5G, IoT (Internet of Things), M2M (Machine to Machine Communication) etc. ● India's telecommunications market is expected to experience further growth, fuelled by increased non-voice revenues and higher penetration in rural market. ● A need was being felt to introduce a 'customer focused' and 'application driven' policy for the Indian Telecom Sector. ● Accordingly, the new National Digital Communications Policy - 2018 has been formulated to cater to the modern needs. ● It will replace the existing National Telecom Policy-2012.
Features	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Policy aims to : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provide universal broadband connectivity at 50 Mbps to every citizen; 2. Provide 1 Gbps connectivity to all Gram Panchayats by 2020 and 10 Gbps by 2022; 3. Ensure connectivity to all uncovered areas; 4. Attract investments of USD 100 billion in the Digital Communications Sector; 5. Train one million manpower for building New Age Skill; 6. Expand IoT ecosystem to 5 billion connected devices;

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 7. Establish a comprehensive data protection regime for digital communications that safeguards the privacy, autonomy and choice of individuals. 8. Facilitate India's effective participation in the global digital economy. 9. Enforce accountability through appropriate institutional mechanisms to assure citizens of safe. 10. Secure digital communications infrastructure and services. 10. Also, scope of USOF will be reviewed by redesigning USOF and broadening its objectives to enable universal broadband access and strengthening institutional capacity to ensure effective rollout of services in uncovered, remote and rural areas.
IoT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The IoT is the network of physical devices, vehicles, home appliances, and other items embedded with electronics, software, sensors, actuators, and connectivity.
USOF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aim: To provide universal access to telecom services, i.e., focus on providing telecom services to rural and remote areas at affordable and reasonable prices. ● A fund exclusively for meeting the above objectives, created under department of telecommunications, Ministry of Communication and information technology. ● It is a non-lapsable fund i.e., unspent amount under target financial year does not lapse, accrues for next years' spending. ● All credits to the fund require parliamentary approval and it has a statutory support under Indian Telegraph (amendment) act 2003. ● It Provides an effective and powerful linkage to the hinterland thereby mainstreaming the population of rural and remote parts of the country. ● It ensures that universal services are provided in an economically efficient manner.
Significance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It emphasizes supporting India's transition to a digitally empowered economy and society by means of satisfying information and communications needs of citizens and enterprises. ● It endeavours to achieve this by means of creating ubiquitous, resilient and affordable digital communications infrastructure and services. ● The Policy also speaks about strengthening Satellite Communication Technologies in India. ● It is customer focussed and application-driven policy. ● It will help garner new ideas and innovations after the launch of advanced technology like 5G, IoT, M2M etc. which shall govern India's telecom sector. ● It will also help to promote Make in India project.
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Low Investment: since the Indian telecom industry is deeply in trouble, targeted investment seems difficult to take place. India's top telecom company, Bharti Airtel, appears in Credit Suisse's list of stressed companies. ● Political will: the government has ambitious plans with respect to 5G, IoT, M2M, and other techs, however the policy has still not cut the very high levels of government levies in this regard. ● Declining Revenue of Telecom Sector: in the last two years, revenues from the sector to the government have fallen by around 37%.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Illiteracy: illiteracy is measure hindrance to the penetration of digital communication in India. ● Digital Divide: with affluent people taking benefit of digital communication, poor people unable to use it, will widen already existing Digital divide.
Way ahead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adequate fund must be disbursed fairly to ensure that affordable communication services are available to most citizens. ● Government should strive to strengthen institutional capacity to ensure effective rollout of services in uncovered, remote and rural areas. ● Government should make available the right way and spectrum at affordable price points to provide much-needed relief to the Telecom operators who are operating at a loss. ● Also, subsidies or tax incentives towards the roll-out of communication infrastructure can help Telecom operators to become profitable. ● This will facilitate them in enhancing their R&D and investments towards future expansion.
Source	The Hindu, PIB, IBEF, USOF.



The Unique Academy

ZIKA VIRUS INFECTION

<p>Why is it in news?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has confirmed 22 positive laboratory-confirmed cases of Zika virus in Jaipur. ● It was detected through Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) surveillance system and all suspected cases in defined area and mosquito samples are being tested.
<p>Infographics: Routes of Zika Virus transmission</p>	<p>ROUTES OF ZIKA VIRUS TRANSMISSION The landscape of the Zika virus transmission and the disease are changing rapidly.</p> <p>VECTOR Zika virus primarily spreads through infected <i>Aedes</i> species mosquitoes.</p> <p>HUMAN TRANSMISSION 1 SEXUAL First sexual transmission case reported on April 15, 2016 in 2 men who had anal sex. The virus is present in semen longer than in blood. Viral load in semen is 100,000 times more than in both blood and urine. Zika virus spread through oral sex (fellatio) reported on June 2. Zika virus can spread through saliva if oral mucous membrane is disrupted. 2 NON-SEXUAL Zika virus can spread through blood and from mother to fetus. June 24 - Infectious Zika virus found in urine and saliva samples of two patients. 3 First case of female-to-male sexual transmission of Zika virus in New York City reported on July 15. Virus present in other vaginal fluids or menstrual blood might have spread to her male partner. Zika virus has been detected in the female genital tract, including vaginal fluid. Zika virus has been found in breast milk. No case of infants getting Zika virus through breastfeeding reported. 1 case of Zika virus spread through non-clinical inquiry reported.</p> <p>AFFECTED AREAS AND PATHOLOGY Frequent risk - Sporadic risk. About 1 in 5 people infected with Zika virus will get sick.</p> <p>PRECAUTIONS 1 Men & women returning from countries with Zika transmission should adopt safe sex practices for 2 months, and for at least 6 months when men exhibit symptoms. 2 Female sexual partners of pregnant women returning from countries with Zika transmission should use barrier methods while having sex.</p>
<p>What is microcephaly</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is a birth defect where a baby's head is small. ● Microcephaly can occur because a baby's brain has not developed properly during pregnancy or has stopped growing after birth, which results in a smaller head size. ● Microcephaly can be an isolated condition, meaning that it can occur with no other major birth defects, or it can occur in combination with other major birth defects.
<p>Symptoms</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The most common symptoms- Fever, rash, joint pain, or conjunctivitis (red eyes). ● Other common symptoms include- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. muscle pain and headache. 2. There are concerns that pregnant women who become infected with Zika virus can transmit the disease to their unborn babies, with potentially serious consequences. 3. Reports from several countries, most notably Brazil, demonstrate an increase in severe foetal birth defects and poor pregnancy outcomes in babies whose mothers were infected with Zika virus while pregnant. 4. This is due to abnormal brain development of the baby in the womb or during infancy.

	<p>5. Babies and children with microcephaly often have challenges with their brain development as they grow older.</p> <p>6. The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) for Zika virus disease is not known, but is likely to be a few days to a week.</p>
Transmission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mosquito route: Zika virus is transmitted to people primarily through the bite of an infected Aedes species mosquito (A. aegypti and A. albopictus). These are the same mosquitoes that spread dengue and chikungunya viruses. ● These mosquitoes typically lay eggs in and near standing water in things like buckets, bowls, animal dishes, flower pots and vases. ● Mosquitoes become infected when they feed on a person already infected with the virus. Infected mosquitoes can then spread the virus to other people through bites. ● Mother to baby route: It is possible that Zika virus could be passed from a mother to her baby during pregnancy. Studies are going on how some mothers can pass the virus to their babies. ● To date, there are no reports of infants getting Zika virus through breastfeeding. ● Sex and Blood transfusion: Spread of the virus through blood transfusion and sexual contact has also been reported.
Areas affected with Zika	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Zika virus outbreaks have occurred in areas of Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. ● An alert regarding the first confirmed Zika virus infections occurred in Brazil in May 2015. ● Countries and territories with active Zika virus transmission are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. AMERICAS: Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Haiti, Mexico, Paraguay, Venezuela. 2. OCEANIA/PACIFIC ISLANDS: American Samoa, Samoa, Tonga.
Prevention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Mosquitoes and their breeding sites pose a significant risk factor for Zika virus infection. ● Prevention and control relies on reducing mosquitoes through source reduction (removal and modification of breeding sites) and reducing contact between mosquitoes and people. ● Special attention and help should be given to those who may not be able to protect themselves adequately, such as young children, the sick or elderly. ● During outbreaks, health authorities may advise that spraying of insecticides be carried out. ● Insecticides recommended by the WHO Pesticide Evaluation Scheme may also be used as larvicides to treat relatively large water containers. ● Travellers should take the basic precautions described above to protect themselves from mosquito bites.
What is the difference between Zika, Dengue, and Chikungunya?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All these diseases present similar symptoms, but certain symptoms suggest one disease or another: ● Dengue- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Usually presents with higher fever and more severe muscle pain. 2. There can be complications when the fever breaks: attention should be paid to warning signs such as bleeding.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chikungunya- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It presents with higher fever and more intense joint pain, affecting the hands, feet, knees, and back. 2. It can disable people, bending them over so that they cannot walk or perform simple actions such as opening a water bottle. ● Zika- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It does not have clearly characteristic features, but most patients have skin rashes and some have conjunctivitis.
<p>Steps taken by WHO</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The World Health Organization has recently declared the Zika virus and its suspected link to birth defects as an international public health emergency, a rare move that signals the seriousness of the outbreak and gives countries new tools to fight it. ● WHO is working with countries to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Define and prioritize research into Zika virus disease by convening experts and partners. 2. Enhance surveillance of Zika virus and potential complications. 3. Strengthen capacity in risk communication-To help countries meet their commitments under the International Health Regulations. 4. Provide training on clinical management, diagnosis and vector control-Through a number of WHO Collaborating Centres. 5. Support health authorities- To implement vector control strategies aimed at reducing Aedes mosquito populations. 6. Follow-up of people with Zika virus- Prepare recommendations for clinical care and follow-up of people with Zika virus, in collaboration with experts and other health agencies.
<p>Response from Indian Government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India's Health Ministry issued health advisory, appointing National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC); as the nodal agency for investigation of outbreak. ● The ministry issued a detailed press release stating that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The NCDC, Delhi and National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune, would be the apex laboratories to support the outbreak investigation and for confirmation of laboratory diagnosis. 2. Ten additional laboratories would be strengthened by ICMR to expand the scope of laboratory diagnosis. 3. Rapid Response Teams (RRTs) shall be activated at Central and State surveillance units. Each team in the RRT would comprise an epidemiologist, public health specialist, microbiologist and a medical and paediatric specialist and other experts (entomologist etc) to travel at short notice to investigate suspected outbreak. 4. Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) through its community and hospital based data gathering mechanism would track clustering of acute febrile illness and seek primary case, if any, among those who travelled to areas with ongoing transmission in the 2 weeks preceding the onset of illness.
<p>Source</p>	<p>The Hindu, WHO, MoHFW</p>



24

Inter-State River Water Disputes

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Supreme Court in February 2018 delivered its verdict on Cauvery river water sharing between Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, and Puducherry, bringing an end to a decade-old case. ● The Cauvery dispute is just one among several inter-state river disputes in India. States have been fighting against each other for their 'rightful' share of water since the first reorganisation of States after Independence.
Constitutional Provisions	<p><u>Constitutional provisions related to water-</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Water is a State subject as per entry 17 of State List and thus states are empowered to enact legislation on water. ● Entry 17 of State List deals with water i.e. water supply, irrigation, canal, drainage, embankments, water storage and water power. ● Entry 56 of Union List gives power to the Union Government for the regulation and development of interstate rivers and river valleys to the extent declared by Parliament to be expedient in the public interest. ● <u>Constitutional provision related to water disputes-</u> ● In the case of disputes relating to waters, Article 262 provides: ● Parliament may by law provide for the adjudication of any dispute or complaint with respect to the use, distribution or control of the waters of, or in, any inter-State river or river valley. ● Notwithstanding anything in this Constitution, Parliament may, by law provide that neither the Supreme Court nor any other court shall exercise jurisdiction in respect of any such dispute or complaint. ● At present, the resolution of water dispute is governed by the Inter-State Water Disputes Act, 1956. According to its provisions, a state government can approach the Centre to refer the dispute to a tribunal, whose decision is considered final.
Inter State River Water Disputes Act, 1956	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Interstate River Water Disputes Act, 1956 (IRWD Act) is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted under Article 262 of Constitution of India. ● Article 262 of the Indian Constitution provides a role for the Central government in adjudicating conflicts surrounding inter-state rivers that arise among the state/regional governments. ● Whenever the riparian states are not able to reach amicable agreements on their own in sharing of an interstate river waters, section 4 of IRWD Act provides dispute resolution process in the form of Tribunal.
Drawbacks of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Setting up of tribunals-</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Although the Act provided for establishing tribunals in every state for resolution of water disputes, states have shown a general reluctance to do this. 2. This is due to a lack of mechanism for enforcing this provision to compel states to comply. ● <u>Constitution of tribunals-</u>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Even after tribunals are set up, there are no deadlines fixed on them to decide a dispute. 2. There is also no age limit fixed for the chairman and other members of the tribunal. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Procedural issues-</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The procedure for hearing and declaring awards involves a huge period of time under the Act. 2. The first stage that the central government has to be satisfied that a dispute has arisen wherein negotiation of parties is not possible itself takes years. 3. After that regular delays in the legal system are a common phenomenon in India. 4. In fact, the Sarkaria Commission had recommended certain time limits for the setting up of the tribunal as one year after the request of the state and five years for passing of the final award. 5. But none of these were accepted and incorporated in the Act. ● <u>Lack of enforcement mechanism-</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There is no method by which any award passed by the tribunal can be enforced and made binding on the parties. 2. The ISWD tribunal has been given power to pass an award but no power to enforce it. 3. The only bar was in the form of further appeal. 4. But this did not yield fruits as the Cauvery Water Dispute went to the Supreme Court on the issue of whether the interim order of the ISWD tribunal was binding on parties.
<p>Proposed Amendments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Age Limit- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. With respect to age limit it has been proposed that persons holding a post and above the age of 70 years shall cease to hold office. 2. But this Bill has not been given a retrospective effect, so old matters already solved shall not be reheard. ● Disputes Resolution Committee – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There must be a Disputes Resolution Committee at the Centre for assisting the states. 2. This Committee must consist of experts from all fields. ● Composition- The tribunal shall now consist of a chairperson, a vice chairperson and six members who are well versed with issues related to water disputes. ● Members- The members are to be nominated by the Chief Justice of India or judges of Supreme Court and High Court. ● Tenure- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The tenure for service has been laid down to five years or attaining the age of 70 whichever is earlier. 2. Additionally the tenure of vice chairperson and members has been made co-terminus with the adjudication of disputes. ● Time limit- The time limit for adjudication of disputes is to be four and a half years. The decision is to be final and binding.

Some of the major Inter-state river water disputes and states involved	Inter-State River Disputes	States Involved
	Cauvery Water Dispute	Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala
	Mahadayi (or) Mondovi River dispute	Karnataka, Goa & Maharashtra
	Mullaiperiyar River Dispute	Kerala and Tamilnadu
	The Krishna Water Dispute	Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh
	The Narmada Water Dispute	Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan
	The Ravi And Beas River Water Dispute	Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi
	The Satluj-Yamuna Link Canal Dispute	Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan
Debate on a single, permanent tribunal subsuming all the existing tribunals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Union Cabinet had proposed to have a permanent tribunal that will subsume existing tribunals and is expected to provide for speedier adjudication. ● Features of new structure- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>A single, permanent tribunal-</u> subsuming all the existing tribunals is proposed to be established to resolve grievances of states with speed and efficiency. 2. <u>Time limit-</u> The proposed tribunal is expected to deliver its verdict within a span of three years. 3. <u>Notification of verdict-</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In addition, the proposed tribunal is expected to have more teeth as its verdict will get automatically notified. 2. Until now, the verdicts of the tribunals were notified by the government. 3. This practice was causing delays in the implementation of the orders of the tribunals. 4. <u>Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC)-</u> Along with the tribunal, the amendment has also proposed to set up Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC) to handle disputes prior to the tribunal. 5. <u>Transparent data collection-</u> It calls for the transparent data collection system at the national level for each river basin and a single agency to maintain data bank and information system. ● Criticism- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <u>Unmatchable time limit-</u> Given the number of ongoing inter-State disputes and those likely to arise in future, it may be difficult for a single institution with a former Supreme Court judge as its chairperson to give its ruling within three years. 2. <u>Enforcement and finality of judgements-</u> The finality and enforcement of a tribunal's award may remain elusive as its interlocutory orders as well as final award are likely to be challenged in the Supreme Court. . 	

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. <u>No clarity on benches (permanent Vs temporary)</u>- The benches of the permanent tribunal are going to be created to look into disputes as and when they arise. It is not clear in what way these temporary benches would be different from the present tribunals. 4. <u>Lack of comprehensive data-</u> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. There is a severe lack of comprehensive data that looks at hydrology, meteorology, ecology and economy in an integrated fashion. b. Without having that data backbone, it will be difficult for a state-level tribunal or a central body to solve any issue. 0. <u>Compliance of award-</u> The new tribunal does not address the problem of non-compliance by state governments.
Conclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India has 2.4% of the World's land, 18% of world population but only 4% of the renewable water resource. ● If sufficient steps are not taken, the uneven water distribution will increase the possibility of water conflicts. ● Inter-state river water disputes hinder the cooperative federalism of our nation and provide parochial mindset making regional issues superior to national issues. ● So disputes must be resolved by dialogue and talks and the political opportunism must be avoided. ● The issue can be resolved by discussing the dispute in Inter-State Council which can be beneficial in providing a platform for the talks. ● The Centre's proposal to set up a single, permanent tribunal, subsuming all existing ad hoc tribunals, to adjudicate on inter-state river water disputes could be a major step towards streamlining the dispute redressal mechanism. ● Institutional mechanisms should be backed by the political will to make them work.
Sources	The Hindu, Indian express, Livemint



UPSC

Current Affairs October 2018

By Jawwad Kazi

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Polity

States can fix own slots for crackers

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Supreme Court modified its October 23 order restricting the time for bursting crackers on Deepavali and other religious festivals to two hours, between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. ● Instead, it allowed Tamil Nadu and adjacent southern States to decide when people can burst crackers on festival days, provided the total time does not cross the two-hour mark. ● This means the authorities can stagger the time-slots and even make it an hour in the morning and another in the night.
Green rule for NCR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Further, the court said its direction that only green crackers can be manufactured and sold is only applicable to Delhi and the National Capital Region areas. ● The court had fixed a uniform slot for bursting crackers across the country.
Source	The Hindu

SC sets deadline for Verma probe

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Supreme Court ordered the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) to complete its inquiry into the allegations of graft and misconduct against exiled CBI Director in two weeks.
Powers to CVC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The inquiry would be conducted under the supervision of former Supreme Court judge A.K. Patnaik. ● A Bench of SC also clipped the powers of the incumbent at the helm of the agency. ● He will take care of only routine tasks essential to keep the CBI functioning. ● He has been barred from taking any major or policy decisions. ● Govt quoted Section 14 of the CVC Act of 2003 to buttress the fact that CBI was statutorily accountable in its functions.
Source	The Hindu

Govt. notifies rules on granting citizenship

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Union Home Ministry has empowered the Collectors of certain districts in seven States to accept online applications to grant citizenship to “persecuted minorities” from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh living in India. ● A parliamentary committee has been examining the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Bill proposes to grant citizenship to six persecuted minorities: Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians and Buddhists who came to India from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh before 2014.

Source	The Hindu
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Ministerial Panel To Prevent Sex Harassment At Workplace

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A Group of Ministers headed by Home Minister, has been constituted by the government to strengthen the legal and institutional frameworks to deal with and prevent sexual harassment at workplace.
Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The members of the GoM are Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi. ● The GoM will examine the existing legal and institutional frameworks for dealing with matters of sexual harassment of women at workplace. ● The GoM has been set up in the wake of #MeToo movement where several women have publicly named people who had harassed them at their workplace.
Source	The Hindu

Panel on United Nations Sustainable Development Goals

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Union Cabinet approved the setting up of a high-level steering committee chaired by the Chief Statistician of India to review if India was on track to achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). ● The panel would also decide if there was a need to “refine” indicators by reviewing the National Indicator Framework (NIF) periodically, according to a press release announcing the Cabinet decision. ● The steering committee would recommend measures to “mainstream” SDGs into ongoing national policies, programmes and strategic action plans to address the developmental challenges. ● Statistical indicators of the NIF would be the backbone for monitoring of SDGs at the national and State levels and would scientifically measure the outcomes of the policies to achieve the targets under different SDGs. ● Based on statistical indicators, the MoSPI would produce national reports on implementation of the SDGs. ● Advanced IT tools will be used for close and effective monitoring
Source	The Hindu

SC moves to make festivals less noisy

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A Bench of Justices held that only green or improved crackers would be used during religious festivals and other occasions, including weddings.
Applicable nationwide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The judgment reduced the time for bursting crackers during Deepavali and other festivals to two hours: between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. ● For Christmas and New Year, the time slot allowed is just half-an-hour, between 11.55 p.m. and half-past midnight.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The reduced time window is applicable across the country. ● The ban came on the basis of a petition filed by two infants — a six-month-old and 14-month-old — through their fathers in 2015. ● They said the air pollution caused by various factors, especially firecrackers, made Delhi a gas chamber. ● They pleaded for their right to life.
Licensed traders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The court banned the manufacture, sale and use of joined firecrackers (series crackers or 'laris'), holding that they caused huge air, noise and solid waste problems. ● The sale of green and improved crackers would be only through licensed traders. ● It banned online sale through e-commerce websites, including Flipkart and Amazon. ● Any such e-commerce company found selling crackers online will be hauled up for contempt of court, and the court may also pass, in that eventuality, orders of monetary penalties, it warned.
Source	The Hindu

Why are media regulators soft with scribes, asks Z

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Supreme Court said media regulators tend to wear a “velvet fist inside a velvet glove” when it comes to dealing with journalists and media organizations ● Their actions, like revealing the identity of a rape survivor, make them criminally liable.
Role of Regulators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is a crime under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the Indian Penal Code to disclose the identity of victims of sexual abuse, especially if they are children. ● The Supreme Court asked whether statutory bodies like the Press Council of India (PCI), Editors Guild of India, National Broadcasting Standards Authority (NBSA), and the Indian Broadcasting Federation (IBF) have no responsibility to inform the police when a journalist or a media outlet commits such a crime in the course of reportage. ● The court gave three weeks to PCI, Editors Guild and IBF to respond specifically on whether they had a responsibility to inform the police about an offence committed by a journalist or a media organization.
Source	The Hindu

SC bars States from diverting money from CAMPA funds

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Supreme Court has barred State governments from diverting money from their Compensatory Afforestation and Management Planning Authority (CAMPA) funds ● Fund is meant for environmental protection, rehabilitation of displaced persons due to issues like depletion of forest, mining, etc. ● A Bench of JSC ordered the Punjab government to reimburse Rs 1,11,01,420 to its CAMPA funds within a fortnight.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is made clear that no State government can use the funds for any activity other than afforestation.
Why order is important?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The apex court's order came after the Punjab government took Rs. 11 crore from CAMPA funds and to pay its lawyers and other legal expenses. ● This is part of a major effort by the Supreme Court since 1995 to prevent and monitor environmental degradation. ● The idea of having CAMPA funds and authority was introduced by the apex court. ● The periodic orders of the court in this litigation finally led to the birth of The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act of 2016. ● In a March 2018 the total amount in CAMPA funds is tentatively put in the region of Rs. 70,000-75,000 crore approximately and likely to go even higher. ● Availability of these amounts will not only help the States/UTs and local communities to ensure better management of their forest resources.
CAMPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● CAMPA Act is an Indian legislation that seeks to provide an appropriate institutional mechanism: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Both at the Centre and in each State and Union Territory, 2. To ensure expeditious utilization in efficient and transparent manner of amounts released in lieu of forest land diverted for non-forest purpose which would mitigate impact of diversion of such forest land.

Rural Development Ministry survey

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Kuligod in Karnataka's Belagavi district is the country's best developed village. ● More than a third of the gram panchayats ranked in the top 10 are in Andhra Pradesh, according to the findings of an ongoing Rural Development Ministry survey.
What are Findings?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There are 97 panchayats in the top 10 ranks. ● Villages from other States are represented only in single digits. ● At the national level, the data shows progress in some areas and also spotlights discrepancies in respect of targets met under some other government schemes. ● For example, the survey reveals that more than 95% of villages have electricity available for domestic use, while the government had earlier this year claimed that 100% of villages had power connections. ● The survey also shows only 21% of villages having a community waste disposal system. ● About a quarter of all villages have more than 75% of households using clean energy, such as LPG or biogas.

	<p>On top of the charts</p> <p>A total of 97 gram panchayats appear in the top 10 ranks in the list released by the Ministry of Rural Development. The ranking is based on six indicators*</p> <p>Best of the best</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rank</th> <th>Panchayat</th> <th>District</th> <th>State</th> <th>Score</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>Kulagod</td> <td>Belagavi</td> <td>Karnataka</td> <td>94</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Sri Ramapuram</td> <td>Chittoor</td> <td>Andhra Pradesh</td> <td>92</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>Tellapur</td> <td>Sangareddy</td> <td>Telangana</td> <td>92</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Best districts</p> <p>Andhra Pradesh</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chittoor (11 villages in top 97) - Visakhapatnam (10 villages) <p>Tamil Nadu</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vellore (4 villages) - Dindigul (4 villages) <p>State-wise split</p> <p>The highest number of villages in the top 10 ranks is in Andhra Pradesh, while Tamil Nadu stands second</p> <p>Andhra Pradesh: 37</p> <p>Tamil Nadu: 24</p> <p>Karnataka: 8</p> <p>Telangana: 5</p> <p>Madhya Pradesh: 4</p> <p>Others: 19</p> <p>*The indicators are infrastructure, health, women empowerment, economic development, basic village parameters and financial inclusion</p> 	Rank	Panchayat	District	State	Score	1	Kulagod	Belagavi	Karnataka	94	2	Sri Ramapuram	Chittoor	Andhra Pradesh	92	2	Tellapur	Sangareddy	Telangana	92
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Source	The Hindu																				

POCSO Act: no time bar to report crimes.

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survivors of child sexual abuse can file a police complaint after they become adults. The government clarified that there is no time bar on reporting such crimes.
POCSO Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Law Ministry concurred with the opinion of the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Unlike the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012 does not lay down a time limit for reporting crimes covered under it. The Ministry of Law, after examining the provisions of POCSO Act vis-à-vis provisions of the CrPC has advised that there appears no period of limitation mentioned in Section 19 in regard to reporting of the offences under the POCSO Act, 2012. Section 19 of the POCSO Act, which deals with sexual crimes against children, lays down the procedure for reporting a crime but doesn't specify a time limit or statute of limitation for reporting it. Whereas the CrPC lays down different time-limits for crimes which carry punishment of up to three years, there is no time bar for crimes that would attract a jail term of more than three years.
Source	The Hindu

Victim of a crime should have a say in punishment: Supreme Court

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The victim of a crime should have a say in the punishment of the criminal the Supreme Court has said. In criminal prosecution, the State takes the front seat while the victim becomes a prosecution witness. The crime is primarily considered a wrong against society and the punishment is a deterrent for prospective offenders
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Rationale of order	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With its order, the Supreme Court, has made it clear that the victim or her family, who has suffered the crime, should have an equal say in the punishment of the perpetrator. ● A victim impact statement or a victim impact assessment must be given due recognition so that an appropriate punishment is awarded to the convict ● What may be 'justice' in the rule book may not serve the victim.
Source	The Hindu

An institute for aspiring politicians

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There will soon have an institute in Ghaziabad to learn the nuances of the profession. ● The decision was taken by UP govt. ● This will be a first-of-its-kind institute in the country.
A to Z training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The courses are being designed for the institute and will impart A to Z training to those planning entry into politics and also to the elected representatives. ● The institute will also offer lectures by prominent political personalities, including ambassadors, heads of states and other experts. ● The location of the institute has been selected in the National Capital Region so that those coming to Delhi can easily plan a visit there. ● The institute will be run by the Urban Development Department of Uttar Pradesh
Source	The Hindu

Centre to add Puducherry police to UT force

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Union Home Ministry will soon initiate the process to include the Puducherry police into an amalgamated force ● The move to include Puducherry in the force comes after the Centre last month notified the National Capital Territory of Delhi, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Daman and Diu, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Chandigarh (Police Service) Rules, 2018.
Why this decision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While Chandigarh is a Union Territory, it is also the common capital of Punjab and Haryana States. ● Accordingly, until the latest notification, 60% police officers posted there were from Punjab and 40% were from Haryana. ● These postings, which were till now decided by the respective UT administrators, will hereafter be at the disposal of the Centre. ● A senior government official said the decision to merge the police forces was based on a 2012 report of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) detailing the "corruption and extortion nexus" of policemen posted in Chandigarh.
Source	The Hindu

NRC for Tripura

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Supreme Court issued a notice to the center and the Election Commission of India on a plea seeking that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) be updated to include Tripura.● SC tagged the case to be heard along with a similar case.● The petition emphasized the need for updating the NRC for Tripura● The petitioners prayed for a direction from the court to authorities concerned to update the NRC.● They also sought fencing of the Tripura-Bangladesh border to prevent influx of illegal immigrants.
NRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The NRC is a list of Indian citizens of Assam. It was prepared in 1951, following the census of that year.● The NRC in Assam was updated under the Citizenship Act, 1955, and according to the rules framed in the Assam Accord, to wean out illegal migrants from Bangladesh following a Supreme Court order of 2013.● The process of filing claims and objections with regard to the NRC released by Assam was flagged off on 25 September and will continue till 23 November.
Source	The Hindu



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Environment

Geoparks

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An ancient circular lake created by a meteorite strike in Maharashtra and a hexagonal mosaic of basaltic rocks in an island off Udupi are poised to become global geoparks under a Geological Survey of India (GSI) plan. ● Lonar Lake in Maharashtra and St. Mary's Island and Malpe beach in coastal Karnataka are the GSI's candidates for UNESCO Global Geopark Network status.
Geopark	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An aspiring Global Geopark must have <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A dedicated website, 2. A corporate identity, 3. Comprehensive management plan, 4. Protection plans, finance, and partnerships for it to be accepted. 5. In mid-August, GSI moved ahead with the plan, setting a follow-up time frame of 100 days. ● The Geopark tag is akin to that of a 'World Heritage Site' for historical monuments that can bring India's famed geological features to the global stage. ● Lonar lake is the only known meteorite crater in basaltic rock and is world famous, while St. Mary's island is a unique phenomenon that has been preserved well ● St. Mary's Island, declared a national geo-heritage site in 1975, is estimated to be an 88-million-year-old formation that goes back to a time when Greater India broke away from Madagascar.
Lonar crater	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Lonar crater became a geo-heritage site in 1979. It is relatively young geologically, at just 50,000 years old. ● A meteorite estimated to weigh two-million-tonnes slammed into the Earth, creating a 1.83-km diameter crater where the lake formed. ● It is distinguished by a near-perfect, circular ejecta blanket, which refers to earth thrown up during the collision, around it.
Source	The Hindu

Eastern Ghats face loss of forest cover, endemic plants

Why in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Eastern Ghats spread across Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu has lost almost 16% of its forest area over a span of 100 years, a recently published study shows. ● Researchers from the University of Hyderabad studied historical maps and satellite images from 1920 to 2015 to understand the changes in land use and land cover. ● The forest cover, which was 43.4% of the total geographical area in 1920, has reduced drastically to 27.5% in 2015.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Over the years, about 8% of forest area was converted into agricultural fields, while about 4% converted into scrub or grassland. ● Previous studies have shown that the Eastern Ghats is home to more than 2,600 plant species and this habitat fragmentation and destruction can pose a serious threat to the endemic plants.
What are the reasons?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Previous studies have shown that the Eastern Ghats is home to more than 2,600 plant species and this habitat fragmentation and destruction can pose a serious threat to the endemic plants. ● While agriculture was the main reason for deforestation during the early years, post 1975, mining and other developmental activities such as the construction of dams, roads were the culprits. ● In 1920, the mining area was only 622 sq.km, and in 2015 it had increased to 962 sq.km.
Source	The Hindu

Ganga Task Force(GTF)

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Ganga Task Force (GTF), specially trained by the Ministry of Defence will help with crowd management, spread awareness on keeping the river clean and stop people and industry from polluting the river. The GTF is a unit of the Territorial Army deployed in the services of the Ganga with the approval of Ministry of Defence for four years till December 2020. ● It consists of three companies of over 100 men each to be stationed at Kanpur, Allahabad and Varanasi, with the Battalion headquarters at Allahabad. ● Currently, a “battalion” of 300 personnel has already been trained and stationed in Allahabad.
Mandate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Their functions will include: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Planting trees to check soil erosion, 2. Patrolling sensitive river areas for biodiversity protection, 3. Patrolling ghats, 4. Monitoring river pollution, and assisting during floods/natural calamity in the region. ● The jawans have also been trained by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to measure the health of the river. ● In 2015, the government, had cleared the creation of such a force.
NamamiGange	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The NMCG runs the ‘NamamiGange’ mission to clean the Ganga river. ● It has a ₹20,000-crore, Centrally-funded, non-lapsable corpus and consists of nearly 288 projects.
Source	The Hindu

CYCLONES

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cyclone Titli became the third major cyclone to hit the Odisha-Andhra coastal zone in the last five years, all in October.
Season & frequency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Cyclones have always been frequent in the region. ● What has risen is the “frequency of intense cyclones in the area.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Adjacent to the northwest Pacific, which is one of the world's most active basins for typhoons, the Bay of Bengal receives the remnants of major landfalls in the Philippines, China and South Asia. ● From these places come low-pressure systems that develop into a monsoon depression or a cyclone. ● The reason that cyclones such as Titli, Phailin (2013) and Hudhud (2014) typically strike in October is that: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. wind shear — the difference within wind speeds and direction at two different levels — is low during this time; 2. low wind shear, when combined with surface sea temperatures greater than 26°C, raises the likelihood of cyclones. ● In monsoon season, cyclones are rare because of high wind shear. ● Wind shear refers to a change in wind speed or direction with height in the atmosphere.
Hard to predict	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Scientists say prediction is difficult because of budgetary and meteorological factors. ● In the Atlantic basin, the US has dedicated aircraft that fly directly into the clouds to study moisture levels and gather various data on cyclone profile. ● For Indian cyclones developing over the ocean, scientists say they have to largely rely on satellite images (a top view) that reveals little data on moisture content and intensity. ● Indian scientists get a more detailed picture only when a cyclone is 300-400 km from the coast, which reduces preparation time; Cyclone Titli was additionally hard to read because it turned into a recurving cyclone (it changed direction). ● India acquires storm prediction models from the US and Europe but lacks the resources to upgrade the models regularly, IIT-Bhubaneswar scientists say.
How evacuation is done?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Researchers classify evacuation exercises as preventive, vertical, and shelter-in-place. ● In preventive (or horizontal) evacuation, the impact area is meant to be completely evacuated, but this is a measure rarely taken in India because of poor roads and inadequate public transportation. ● Shelter-in-place evacuation involves fortification of existing houses and community buildings, which again required financial resources. ● In vertical evacuation, people are directed to specially designed buildings within the impact area. ● This strategy was largely followed during Cyclone Titli.
Source	The Hindu

Flood alert in Arunachal Pradesh

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Districts along the Siang river in Arunachal Pradesh have been put on high alert for possible flash floods. ● This development came after China informed India about a landslide blocking a river in Tibet leading to formation of an artificial lake.
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SDRF teams deployed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Six NDRF teams from Kolkata are scheduled to arrive Guwahati and will move to the districts as and when required. ● China first informed India about the landslide and creation of an artificial lake. ● It will reach Arunachal Pradesh and cross the high flood level. ● The reason cited behind the landslide was “natural causes”. ● The water will cross “high flood mark” and the situation is being monitored at the highest level, the official added.
Reasons for landslide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The YarlungTsangpo river is known as the Siang after it enters India at Arunachal Pradesh from the Tibetan region and is called the Brahmaputra once it reaches Assam. ● The Hydrological Bureau of Tibet Autonomous Region has begun to share with the Indian side hydrological information every hour ● Such as the water level and flow rate at the Nuxia hydrological station and the temporary hydrological station downstream of the barrier lake. ● The Chinese side will closely monitor situation of the barrier lake, and continue to notify the Indian side the follow-up developments through bilaterally agreed channels timely.
Source	Indian express

Climate fund allots \$1bn for poor nations

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● U.N.-backed fund to help poor countries tackle climate change have approved more than \$1 billion in new investments after a four-day meeting in Bahrain. ● The Green Climate Fund approved 19 new projects, including a programme to protect freshwater resources in Bahrain. ● Officials also agreed to start seeking new money for the fund next year. ● President Donald Trump’s decision to withhold \$2 billion of the \$3 billion pledged by predecessor Barack Obama has contributed to a fund shortfall.
Green Climate Fund	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Green Climate Fund (GCF) was adopted as a financial mechanism of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) at the end of 2011 in CoP 16. ● The GCF is intended to support projects, programmes, policies and other activities in developing country for combating climate change. ● The GCF finances activities to both enable and support adaptation, mitigation (including REDD+), technology development and transfer (including CCS), capacity-building and the preparation of national reports. ● NABARD has been accredited by Green Climate Fund (GCF) Board as one of the National Implementing Entity (NIE) for GCF in India. ● The South Korea-based fund is considered a key vehicle for climate-related development programmes
Source	The Hindu

Children under 15 at serious risk from polluted air: WHO

<p>Why is it in news?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Every day about 93% of the world’s children under the age of 15 (1.8 billion children) breathe polluted air that puts their health and development at serious risk, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in a new report. ● The report on air pollution and child health released on the eve of the WHO’s first ever global conference on Air Pollution and Health reveals that when pregnant women are exposed to polluted air, they are more likely to give birth prematurely, and have small, low birth-weight children. ● Air pollution also impacts neurodevelopment and cognitive ability and can trigger asthma, and childhood cancer. ● Children exposed to high levels of air pollution may be at greater risk for chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease later in life, the WHO said.
<p>Impacts of air pollution</p>	<div style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;"> <p>Silent killer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Air pollution affects neurodevelopment and cognitive test outcomes, and negatively affects mental and motor development • Damages children’s lung function, even at low levels of exposure • Globally, 93% children under 18 are exposed to PM2.5 levels above WHO guidelines • This includes 630 million children under 5 years, and 1.8 billion children under 15  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In low- and middle-income countries, 98% of all children under 5 are exposed to PM2.5 levels above WHO air quality guidelines. In high-income countries, the figure is 52% • About 6 lakh deaths across the world in children under 15 years were attributed to the joint effects of ambient and household air pollution in 2016 </div>
<p>Source</p>	<p>The Hindu</p>

Moths are key pollinators in Himalayan ecosystem

<p>Why is it in news?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Moths are widely considered as pests, but a recent study by scientists of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has revealed that these group of insects are pollinators to a number of flowering plants in the Himalayan ecosystem. ● the project was titled “Assessment of Moths (<i>Lepidoptera</i>) As Significant Pollinators in the Himalayan Ecosystem of North Eastern India.” ● The analysis of proboscis, a long and thread-like organ used to suck flower sap, of a dozen moth species’ revealed the presence of pollen grains. ● Most of the studies on plant pollinators or plant- pollinator network are focused on diurnal interactions between the insects and plants. ● This particular study is based on plant- moth interactions, as a nocturnal phenomenon. ● The study was carried out in states such as Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and West Bengal.
<p>Unique structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On observing the proboscis under scanning electron microscope, scientist observed that these structures are not only meant for sap sucking but are morphological designed for pollination. ● In some species of moths, the organ is found to be modified into a spine like structure and in others, a lateral canal to arrest and disperse pollen. ● Experts also pointed out that similar studies on ascertaining the role of moths in pollination are being undertaken different parts of the world.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Usually bees, wasps and butterflies are considered as prominent pollinators.● About 90% of the world’s flowering plants are pollinated by animals.● Therefore, pollinators are essential for the genetic exchange among flowering plants and the biodiversity among plants.● In India, estimates put the number of of moth species at nearly 12,000.● Researchers have pointed out that almost two-thirds of common large moth species have declined over the last 40 years in some parts of world.● One of main reasons for the decline is light pollution (an increase in artificial light in moth habitats).
Source	The Hindu



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International Relation

India, Bangladesh: Agreement on enhancing waterways connectivity

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India and Bangladesh signed several milestone agreements for enhancing inland and coastal waterways connectivity for trade and cruise movements. ● Bangladesh agreed to open its Chattogram and Mongla ports for trade with India.
About Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The two countries have signed an agreement to use Chattogram and Mongla Ports in Bangladesh for movement of goods to and from India. ● A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has also been signed for movement of passenger and cruise services. ● In addition to this, an addendum to 'Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade' (PIWTT) between India and Bangladesh has been signed for inclusion of Dhubri in India and Pangaon in Bangladesh as new Ports of Call. ● India proposed permitting 'Third country' EXIM Trade under Coastal Shipping Agreement. ● The Indian side proposed for extension of the protocol routes from Kolkata upto Silchar in Assam. ● Both sides agreed to declare Badarpur on river Barak (NW 16) as an Extended Port of Call of Karimganj in Assam and Ghorasal of Ashuganj in Bangladesh on reciprocal basis. ● Both the sides have also finalised the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for movement of passengers and cruise vessels on Inland Protocol route and coastal shipping routes.
Significance of the agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● These agreements will facilitate easier movement of goods and passengers between the two countries, giving an impetus to trade and tourism. ● The North Eastern states would get connected directly to the ports of Kolkata and Haldia in India and Mongla in Bangladesh through waterways which would facilitate movement EXIM cargo and would also reduce the logistic costs. ● The reconstruction and opening up of Jangipur navigational lock on river Bhagirathi subject to the provisions of the Treaty between India and Bangladesh on Sharing of Ganga Waters at Farakka, 1996. ● This move has the potential to reduce the distance to Assam by more than 450 kms on the protocol routes.
Source	The Hindu

Chabahar Port

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India, Afghanistan and Iran recently held their first trilateral meeting on Chabahar port project during which they reviewed its implementation.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The meeting assumes significance as the strategically-located port on the energy-rich Iran's southern coast was coming under the ambit of US sanctions on Tehran.
Outcomes of the meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The meeting decided to constitute a follow-up committee that would hold its first meeting within two months in Chabahar port. ● The committee aimed at-Finalising protocol to harmonise transit, roads, customs and consular matters for making the route attractive and decrease logistic costs.
Why Chabahar port is crucial for India?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Bypassing Pakistan</u>-The first and foremost significance of the Chabahar port is the fact that India can bypass Pakistan in transporting goods to Afghanistan. ● <u>key gateway to the International North-South Transport Corridor</u>-Chabahar port will boost India's access to Iran, the key gateway to the International North-South Transport Corridor that has sea, rail and road routes between India, Russia, Iran, Europe and Central Asia. ● <u>countering Chinese presence in the Arabian Sea</u>-Chabahar port will be beneficial to India in countering Chinese presence in the Arabian Sea which China is trying to ensure by helping Pakistan develop the Gwadar port. ● Gwadar port is less than 400 km from Chabahar by road and 100 km by sea. ● <u>military alliance</u>- With Chabahar port being developed and operated by India, Iran also becomes a military ally to India. ● <u>Naval Power</u>-Chabahar could be used in case China decides to flex its navy muscles by stationing ships in Gwadar port to reckon its upper hand in the Indian Ocean, Persian Gulf and Middle East. ● <u>Import</u>-Significant boost in the import of iron ore, sugar and rice to India. ● The import cost of oil to India will also see a considerable decline. India has already increased its crude purchase from Iran since the West imposed ban on Iran was lifted. ● <u>sustainable connectivity</u>-Chabahar port will ensure in the establishment of a politically sustainable connectivity between India and Afghanistan. This is will, in turn, lead to better economic ties between the two countries. ● <u>Point to operate humanitarian operations</u>- From a diplomatic perspective, Chabahar port could be used as a point from where humanitarian operations could be coordinated.
Source	The Hindu

China and Japan: Turning from competition to cooperation

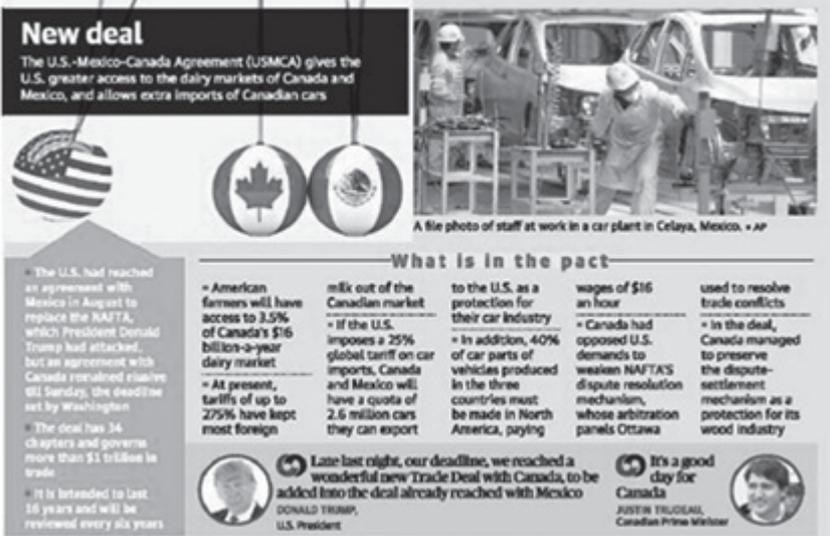
Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In a sign of a thaw, Mr. Abe visited china- the first visit by a Japanese leader to China in 11 years. ● Faced with the threat of a trade war with the United States, China and Japan have decided to work together to develop new overseas markets, by focusing on collaboration instead of competing with each other.
Visit outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This new cooperation showcases Japanese Prime Minister's "pragmatism," notwithstanding his strong nationalistic instincts.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By bolstering investment in other countries, the governments of Asia's two biggest economies will aim to form a new model of economic cooperation between them. ● The meeting between the two leaders was followed by the signing of a slew of agreements, which covered energy cooperation, military confidence building measures in the East China Sea, infrastructure development and joint development of hi-end technology. ● Agreement on hi-end technology and intellectual property- Focusing on cutting-edge know-how, an agreement was signed to establish a discussion platform on hi-end technology and intellectual property. ● Agreement on joint development of gas fields in the East China Sea- an initiative that was stalled in 2008, when tensions over islands, called Diaoyu by China and Senkaku by Japan, spiraled. ● Joint search and rescue missions- In south china sea waters. ● Bilateral currency swap- signed a bilateral currency swap dealt of \$ 26.7 billion—around 10 times as larger than a previous agreement that has expired. ● Denuclearisation of North Korea- Two leaders reiterated that denuclearisation of North Korea was necessary.
Source	The Hindu

India and France bilateral exercises

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India and France are in discussions for a bilateral tri-service military exercise to take forward the strategic cooperation while also exploring ways to operationalize the logistics agreement.
Bilateral Exercises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Shakti- Between Armies ● Varuna- Between Navies ● Garuda- Between Air forces
More in news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● This will be India's third such joint exercise. ● The first joint tri-service exercise was held with Russia in October last year and has finalized one with the U.S. to be held next year. ● India and France signed a logistics pact in March this year which gives access to their militaries to each other's bases for logistics support. ● While the agreement gives India access to French military bases all over the world on a "reciprocal basis," of particular interest for New Delhi are the three French bases in the Indian Ocean —Reunion Island, Djibouti and Abu Dhabi. ● These three bases would give- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Indian Navy and the Air Force operational turnaround to the far end of the Indian Ocean, 2. Improving its monitoring and surveillance of the region, 3. In the backdrop of increased Chinese presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
Source	The Hindu

U.S., Canada: free trade pact

<p>Why is it in news?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● <u>Canada and the U.S.</u> reached a deadline deal on a new free trade pact that will include Mexico, after more than a year of talks to revamp a pact President Donald Trump had labelled a disaster.
<p>More in news</p>	 <p>New deal The U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) gives the U.S. greater access to the dairy markets of Canada and Mexico, and allows extra imports of Canadian cars.</p> <p>A file photo of staff at work in a car plant in Celaya, Mexico. • AP</p> <p>What is in the pact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The U.S. had reached an agreement with Mexico in August to replace the NAFTA, which President Donald Trump had attacked, but an agreement with Canada remained elusive till Sunday, the deadline set by Washington. • The deal has 34 chapters and governs more than \$1 trillion in trade. • It is intended to last 16 years and will be reviewed every six years. • American farmers will have access to 3.5% of Canada's \$16 billion-a-year dairy market. • At present, tariffs of up to 275% have kept most foreign milk out of the Canadian market. • If the U.S. imposes a 25% global tariff on car imports, Canada and Mexico will have a quota of 2.6 million cars they can export to the U.S. as a protection for their car industry. • In addition, 40% of car parts of vehicles produced in the three countries must be made in North America, paying wages of \$16 an hour. • Canada had opposed U.S. demands to weaken NAFTA's dispute resolution mechanism, whose arbitration panels Ottawa used to resolve trade conflicts. • In the deal, Canada managed to preserve the dispute-settlement mechanism as a protection for its wood industry. <p>Late last night, our deadline, we reached a wonderful new Trade Deal with Canada, to be added into the deal already reached with Mexico. DONALD TRUMP, U.S. President</p> <p>It's a good day for Canada. JUSTIN TRUDEAU, Canadian Prime Minister</p>
<p>Source</p>	<p>The Hindu</p>

U.K. immigration plan

<p>Why is it in news?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recently Britain's Prime Minister Theresa May released Uk immigration plan.
<p>U.K. immigration plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indian citizens and other non-EU citizens will have the same immigration rights as EU citizens in the U.K., under a system that will give priority to high skilled workers. ● However, the new system will introduce even further restrictions on the ability of Indian workers and their families to come to the U.K., requiring any family to be sponsored by the employer.
<p>Source</p>	<p>The Hindu</p>



International events

Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To eliminate the need for manual scavenging, the Centre has launched a challenge asking innovators, NGOs, research institutions, companies and cities to propose technology and business solutions to clean urban sewers and septic tanks without human entry. The challenge will be part of the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention to be held on October 18 this year.
Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It will be launched at the 150th anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi. It will be a first-of-its-kind International Sanitation Convention. Ministers from over 70 countries will be invited and taken on a 'Gandhi Trail' in Gujarat. The government will use the occasion to "showcase its performance" and "success story" in the Swachh Bharat programme in the past four years, which was launched on October 2, 2014, and have a face-to-face dialogue with the world leaders to share their experiences on sanitation programmes.
Source	The Hindu

2nd World Conference on Access to Medical Products: Achieving the SDGs 2030

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India with the support of World Health Organization is organized the '2nd World Conference on Access to Medical Products – Achieving the SDGs 2030' at New Delhi.
Objectives of the conference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main objective of the 2nd World Conference 2018 is to take forward the recommendations from the 1st World Conference 2017 and build on the work done for access to medical products in the context of SDGs, including trade agreements. The specific objectives are- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> To promote an enabling ecosystem in the context of WHO's 13th Global Programme of Work for access to medical products; Foster new approaches in innovation landscape for medical products and health technologies for accelerating research and innovation; and Identify knowledge, information and policy options on the interface of international trade and health to achieve SDG 2030 goals.
Source	The Hindu, PIB

Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres is in Delhi to participate in the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● He said that the world body must fully support India's leadership on climate change and its development plans.
<p>Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The 17 SDGs and 169 targets are part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development adopted by 193 Member States at the UN General Assembly Summit in September 2015 ● It came into effect on 1 January 2016. ● These goals are the result of an unprecedented consultative process that brought national governments and millions of citizens from across the globe together to negotiate and adopt the global path to sustainable development for the next 15 years. 
<p>United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2018 report</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2018 report, number of hungry people in world has risen for first time in more than decade. ● There are now approximately 38 million more undernourished people in the world, rising from 777 million in 2015 to 815 million in 2016. ● The report is an overview of progress towards achieving 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (SDG), which consists of 17 goals and 169 targets. . <p><u>Key Highlights of report</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Key Factors for rinsing Hunger: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Conflict, drought and disasters linked to climate change are among the key factors causing this reversal in progress. ➤ Violent conflict is now one of the main drivers of food insecurity in 18 countries and it has led to the forced displacement of record high 68.5 million in 2017. ● Improvements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The number of people living on less than \$2 a day declined from 26.9% of the world's population in 2000 to 9.2% in 2017. ➤ The mortality rate for children under five has dropped by almost 50% the least developed countries. ● South Asia: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The region (which also includes India) has seen child marriage rates plunge, with girl's risk of getting married in childhood dropping by 40% from 2000 to 2017.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The water stress levels for many countries in region are above 70%, indicating fast-approaching water scarcity.● More than nine out of 10 people living in urban areas around world are breathing polluted air, with southern Asia scoring worst in this area.● While electricity and sanitation deficits in south Asia are still poor, but efforts are being made to close the gap. <p>Need to achieve deadline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Just 12 years left to 2030 deadline, achieving 2030 SDG Agenda requires immediate and accelerated actions by countries along with collaborative partnerships among governments and stakeholders at all levels.
Sources	The Hindu,UN.org



Important International/Regional organizations, Institutions, agencies, Prizes

UN Human Rights Prize 2018

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recently, UN announced Rights Prize winners for 2018. ● Asma Jahangir, Rebeca Gyumi, Joenia Wapichana and Front Line Defenders are honoured by the UN for promoting human rights.
More in news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights is an honorary award given for outstanding achievement in human rights. ● Prize was established by the UN General Assembly in 1966 and was awarded for the first time on December 10, 1968, on the twentieth anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. ● The Prize is an opportunity not only to give public recognition to the achievements of the recipients themselves, but also to send a clear message to human rights defenders the world over that the international community is grateful for, and supports, their tireless efforts to promote all human rights for all.
Source	The Hindu

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India questioned Pakistan's commitment to fighting terrorism following reports that Jamaat-udDawa and its associate group Falah-I-Insaniyat Foundation are no longer on the list of banned organisations. ● Pakistani position of not extending the Presidential ordinance is a complete turnaround from its submission to the international Financial Action Task Force (FATF) that put it on a "greylist" earlier this year.
FATF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is an inter governmental policy making body ● It aims to establish international standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing. ● It was established in 1989 during the G7 Summit in Paris (France) to combat the growing problem of money laundering. ● It comprises over 39 countries. ● India is a member. ● FATF Secretariat is housed at the headquarters of the OECD in Paris. ● Initially it was only dealing with developing policies to combat money laundering. But in 2001 its purpose was expanded to act against terrorism financing. <p>Objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Set standards and promote effective implementation of legal, regulatory and operational measures for combating money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.

	<p>Functions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Set international standards to combat money laundering and terrorist financing. 2. Assess and monitor compliance with the FATF standards. 3. Conduct studies of money laundering and terrorist financing methods, trends and techniques. 4. Respond to new and emerging threats, such as proliferation financing (used for promoting proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons)
Source	The Hindu

Seoul Peace Prize

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Seoul Peace Prize Committee has decided to confer 2018 Seoul Peace Prize on Prime Minister Narendra Modi. ● PM Modi has been selected for award in recognition of his dedication for improving international cooperation, raising global economic growth, accelerating Human Development of people in India by fostering economic growth and furthering development of democracy through anti-corruption and social integration efforts.
Seoul Peace Prize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was established in 1990 to commemorate success of the 24th Olympic Games held in Seoul, South Korea. ● It was established to crystallize Korean people's yearning for peace on Korean Peninsula and in the rest of the world. ● It is awarded biennially to those individuals who have made their mark through contributions to harmony of mankind, reconciliation between nations and world peace.
Sources	The Hindu

Fusion Energy Conference (FEC 2018)

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The 27th Fusion Energy Conference (FEC 2018) was held recently in Gandhinagar, Gujarat. ● It was organised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and hosted by Department of Atomic Energy and Gandhinagar-based Institute of Plasma Research.
Fusion Energy Conference (FEC 2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aim-To provide a forum for the discussion of key physics and technology issues as well as innovative concepts of direct relevance to the use of nuclear fusion as a source of energy. ● The scientific scope of FEC 2018 is intended to reflect the priorities of this new era in fusion energy research.
IAEA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The IAEA is the world's centre for cooperation in the nuclear field. It was set up as the world's "Atoms for Peace" organization in 1957 within the United Nations family. ● The Agency works with its Member States and multiple partners worldwide to promote the safe, secure and peaceful use of nuclear technologies.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It seeks to promote the peaceful use of nuclear energy, and to inhibit its use for any military purpose, including nuclear weapons. ● IAEA reports to both the United Nations General Assembly and Security Council. ● The IAEA has its headquarters in Vienna, Austria. ● The IAEA serves as an intergovernmental forum for scientific and technical cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology and nuclear power worldwide.
Source	The Hindu, IAEA

Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● U.S. President confirmed that the U.S. would pull out of the Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty with Russia, a crucial Cold War-era treaty banning the development, testing and possession of short and medium range ground-launched nuclear missiles with a range of 500-5,000 km. ● The treaty, signed in 1987, was central to ending the arms race between the two superpowers, and protected America's NATO allies in Europe from Soviet missile attacks.
INF Treaty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● INF is a 1987 arms control agreement between the United States and the Soviet Union (and later its successor state, in particular the Russian Federation). ● It is for Elimination of Their Intermediate-Range and Shorter-Range Missiles. ● The INF Treaty eliminated all nuclear and conventional missiles, as well as their launchers, with ranges of 500–1,000 kilometers (310–620 mi) (short-range) and 1,000–5,500 km (620–3,420 mi) (intermediate-range). ● The treaty did not cover sea-launched missiles. ● However, the scope of the US President's ability to withdraw from Senate-approved treaties without Congressional approval has been called into question.
Source	The Hindu

International Court of Justice

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The International Court of Justice (ICJ) in Hague has directed the United States to lift sanctions on Iran linked to humanitarian concerns, in a move welcomed by Tehran. ● The United Nations' top court issued an interim order directing the United States to lift sanctions linked to humanitarian goods and civil aviation imposed against Iran.
International Court of Justice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● International Court of Justice – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Its is the primary judicial branch of United Nations and settles legal disputes and provides advisory opinions submitted to it by its member states.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. ICJ is a civil court. 3. UNSC enforces its court's rulings. 4. ICJ is composed of 15 judges elected for 9 years term by the UNGA and UNSC. 5. International Court of Justice is one of the most important guarantors of peace, security and co-operation among states. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India and ICJ- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Justice Dalveer Bhandari currently serves as permanent judge at ICJ. 2. Recent ruling by ICJ, awarded Bangladesh more than 9,700 square miles in the Bay of Bengal, ending a maritime dispute spanning more than three decades.
Source	The Hindu, ICJ

India's re-election to United Nation's Human Right Council

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India has been elected to the United Nation's top human rights body, UNHRC for a period of three years beginning January 1, 2019, by getting 188 votes in the Asia-Pacific category, the highest number of votes among all candidates.
United Nations Human Right Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Human Rights Council was established by the UN General Assembly in 2006 to replace the UN Commission on Human Rights. ● The United States, which withdrew from the Council earlier this year, received a symbolic one write-in vote. ● HOW ELECTIONS ARE CONDUCTED- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Human Rights Commission has 47 members, selected each year by the UN General Assembly for staggered 3-year terms on a regional group basis. 2. No member country may occupy a seat for more than two consecutive 3-year terms. 3. To get elected to the Council, countries needed a minimum of 97 votes. 4. The seats are distributed among the United Nation's regional groups as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● African States: 13 seats ● Asia-Pacific States: 13 seats ● Latin American and Caribbean States: 8 seats ● Western European and other States: 7 seats ● Eastern European States: 6 seats
About UNHRC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is an inter-governmental body within the United Nations system. ● It is responsible for strengthening the promotion and protection of human rights around the globe and for addressing situations of human rights violations and make recommendations on them. ● It was created by UNGA on 15 March 2006 by adopting resolution 60/251 to promote human rights globally. ● It had replaced former UN Commission on Human Rights. ● Headquartered: Geneva, Switzerland. ● Members: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. UNHRC is made up of 47 UN member states which are elected by UN General Assembly (UNGA) with specific number of seats allocated for each region of the globe.

	<p>2. The term of each seat is three years, and no member may occupy a seat for more than two consecutive terms.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Functions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Members of the council work to engage countries on improving human rights. 2. They make decisions ranging from exposing violations to recommending that UN Security Council make referral to International Criminal Court (ICC). 3. UNJRC does not have authority to take action but can exert significant pressure on violating country. ● The council works closely with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and engages the United Nations' special procedures. ● The General Assembly can suspend the rights and privileges of any Council member that it decides has persistently committed gross and systematic violations of human rights during its term of membership. ● The suspension process requires a two-thirds majority vote by the General Assembly.
Source	The Hindu, UNHRC

Booker Prize 2018

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Northern Irish author Anna Burns has won the 2018 Man Booker Prize for her novel '<i>Milkman</i>', which is her third full-length novel. ● The book is about an 18-year-old girl, known as "middle sister", who is sexually harassed by an older paramilitary figure, called the "milkman". ● Anna Burns has become the first Northern Irish author to win the Man Booker prize.
Booker Prize	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Man Booker Prize was launched in 1969. ● It aims to promote the 'finest in fiction' and is awarded each year to the book adjudged as the best novel of the year written in English and published in the United Kingdom. ● Sponsored by Man Group, the foundation also awards £2,500 and a designer bound copy of their book to each of the six shortlisted authors. ● The winner and shortlisted authors are also guaranteed a worldwide readership as well as a dramatic spike in book sales.
Sources	The Hindu, Indian express

IMF Quotas

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India has called for quota reforms so that share of emerging nations increases in line with their growing economic position.
More about IMF Quotas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● What are IMF Quotas? – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The IMF is a quota-based institution. Quotas are the building blocks of the IMF's financial and governance structure. 2. An individual member country's quota broadly reflects its relative position in the world economy. Quotas are denominated in Special Drawing Rights (SDRs), the IMF's unit of account.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Multiple roles of quotas: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Resource Contributions: Quotas determine the maximum amount of financial resources a member is obliged to provide to the IMF. 2. Voting Power: Quotas are a key determinant of the voting power in IMF decisions. Votes comprise one vote per SDR100,000 of quota plus basic votes (same for all members). 3. Access to Financing: The maximum amount of financing a member can obtain from the IMF under normal access is based on its quota. 4. SDR Allocations: Quotas determine a member's share in a general allocation of SDRs. ● Quota reviews: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The IMF's Board of Governors conducts general quota reviews at regular intervals (no more than five years). 2. Any changes in quotas must be approved by an 85% majority of the total voting power, and a member's own quota cannot be changed without its consent. ● About IMF: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The IMF, along with the World Bank, was conceived in 1944 at a conference in Bretton Woods, in the US state of New Hampshire. 2. It aims to preserve economic stability and to tackle – or ideally prevent – financial crises. Over time, its focus has switched to the developing world. 3. The IMF is funded by a charge – known as a “quota” – paid by member nations – based on a country's wealth. 4. The IMF also acts as a lender of last resort, disbursing its foreign exchange reserves for short periods to any member in difficulties.
Source	The Hindu.

International Court of Arbitration and Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The NITI Aayog and ICC International Court of Arbitration had recently organised a Workshop on Best Practices in International Arbitration in New Delhi. ● The workshop is part of on-going efforts to institutionalize and streamline dispute resolution to make India a hub for doing business.
What is Arbitration?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Arbitration is a settlement of dispute between two parties to a contract by a neutral third party i.e. the arbitrator without resorting to court action. ● The process can be tailored to suit parties' particular needs.
The International Court of Arbitration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The International Court of Arbitration is a branch of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) and one of the world's leading institutions for providing international arbitration services. ● The International Court of Arbitration is known for resolving international commercial and business disputes, administering more than half of all arbitration disputes worldwide. ● The ICC seat is located in Paris.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The International Chamber of Commerce is an international business organization with hundreds of thousands of member companies in over 130 countries spanning virtually every sector of private enterprise.
Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) is an international organization based in <u>The Hague, the Netherlands</u>. The PCA was created in The Hague by treaty in <u>1899</u>. ● It is not a court and <u>does not have permanent judges</u>. The PCA is a permanent bureaucracy that assists temporary tribunals to resolve disputes among states (and similar entities), intergovernmental organizations, or even private parties arising out of international agreements. ● The cases span a range of legal issues involving territorial and maritime boundaries, sovereignty, human rights, international investment, and international and regional trade. ● The decision of the arbitrators is <u>binding</u> in all cases on the parties.
Source	PIB

IORA- Delhi declaration

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 21 countries in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) recently adopted the Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy in the Indian Ocean Region. ● The declaration was the outcome of the 2nd IORA Renewable Energy Ministerial Meeting.
The Delhi declaration on Renewable Energy in the Indian Ocean Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It calls for collaboration among IORA member states in meeting the growing demand for renewable energy in the Indian Ocean littorals, development of a common renewable energy agenda for the Indian Ocean region and promote regional capacity building. ● The declaration also calls for promotion of technology development and transfer, strengthening of public private partnerships in renewable energy and collaboration among IORA member states and the member nations of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). ● IORA member countries resolved to collaborate with the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). As per the declaration adopted, IORA member nations will also collaborate with the ISA member nations to exchange knowledge and share views and potential interests in the renewable energy sector. ● Additionally, IORA member nations and IRENA will undertake the expansion of the Global Renewable Energy Atlas, the world's largest-ever joint renewable resource data project, coordinated by IRENA, thereby creating the Indian Ocean region's first and most comprehensive map and database which can then be used to tap the sizable renewable energy potential of the region.
About IORA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Indian Ocean Rim Association was set up with the objective of strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean Region with 21 Member States and 7 Dialogue Partners. ● The IORA is a regional forum, tripartite in nature, bringing together representatives of Government, Business and Academia, for promoting co-operation and closer interaction among them.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● It is based on the principles of Open Regionalism for strengthening Economic Cooperation particularly on Trade Facilitation and Investment, Promotion as well as Social Development of the region.● India, Australia, Iran IR, Indonesia Thailand, Malaysia, South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Singapore, Mauritius, Madagascar, UAE, Yemen, Seychelles, Somalia, Comoros and Oman are members of IORA.
Source	PIB



Miscellaneous

World's longest sea bridge

<p>Why is it in news?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chinese President inaugurated a 55-km bridge that will deepen the integration of Hong Kong and Macao with the rest of China.
<p>More about Sea bridge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The world's longest sea-crossing bridge will be at the heart of an integrated Greater Bay Area (GBA) covering 11 major neighbouring cities, which include Hong Kong, Macao, Guangzhou and Shenzhen. ● The giant GBA comprising 68 million people is expected to rival the San Francisco Bay Area of the U.S., as well as the Tokyo Bay Area of Japan. ● The new sea bridge will connect the east and west sides of the Pearl River Delta of the South China Sea. ● Zhuhai is a city on the Chinese mainland, which will be connected with the two Special Administrative Regions of Hong Kong and Macau. 
<p>Source</p>	<p>The Hindu</p>



4

Economics

RBI eases borrowing norms for oil firms

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The central bank liberalized external commercial borrowings (ECB) policy to allow state-run oil marketing companies to raise external debt for working capital purposes. ● The move comes in light of the rupee's drop to a record low following rise in global crude oil prices.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Reserve Bank of India will permit oil marketing firms to raise overseas funds with minimum average maturity period of 3 or 5 years under the automatic route. ● It lifted the individual borrowing limit set at \$750 million under the ECB framework. ● In response to the RBI's move, the Indian Oil Corporation said it would help the oil marketing companies (OMCs) in the long run. ● It also said that the move will make loans cheaper and would also give it flexibility to hedge prudently based on market conditions.
External Commercial Borrowings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● External Commercial Borrowings is basically a loan availed by an Indian entity from a non-resident lender. ● Most of these loans are provided by foreign commercial banks and other institutions. ● The significance of ECBs their size in India's balance of payment account. ● In the post reform period, ECBs have emerged a major form of foreign capital like FDI and FII.
Source	The Hindu, Indian Economy.

RBI leaves repo rate unchanged at 6.50%

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its fourth bi-monthly meet today left the repo rate unchanged at 6.50%. ● The reverse repo rate remains at 6.25 per cent.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The monetary policy stance has changed from neutral to 'calibrated tightening'. ● The RBI stated that headline inflation is estimated to accelerate to 4.5 per cent by March 2019 quarter with upside risks. ● The central bank also stated in its policy document that FY19 GDP growth target remains unchanged at 7.4 per cent. ● CPI inflation is seen at 4 per cent in July-September and 3.9-4.5 per cent in October-March. ● As per the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), following pose substantial risks to the growth and inflation outlook : ● Global headwinds in the form of escalating trade tensions.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Volatile and rising oil prices, and ● -Tightening of global financial conditions ● It is, therefore, imperative to further strengthen domestic macroeconomic fundamentals, MPC said.
Concepts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is a committee of the Central Bank in India (Reserve Bank of India), headed by its Governor. 2. MPC is entrusted with the task of fixing the benchmark policy interest rate (repo rate) to contain inflation within the specified target level. 3. The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is formed under the RBI with six members. 4. Three of the members are from the RBI while the other three members are appointed by the government. ● Repo Rate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Repo rate is the rate at which the Reserve Bank of India lends money to commercial banks in the event of any shortfall of funds. 2. Repo rate is used by monetary authorities to control inflation. 3. In the event of inflation, central banks increase repo rate as this acts as a disincentive for banks to borrow from the central bank. 4. This ultimately reduces the money supply in the economy and thus helps in arresting inflation.
Source	The Hindu.

WPI inflation rises to 5.13%

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Wholesale Price Index (WPI)-based inflation jumped to a two-month high of 5.13 per cent in September. ● The rise in inflation is primarily due to hardening of food prices and rise in cost of petrol and diesel.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The WPI-based inflation stood at 4.53 per cent in August and 3.14 per cent in September last year. ● Food articles witnessed hardening of prices with deflation at 0.21 per cent September as against 4.04 per cent in August. ● Deflation in vegetables was 3.83 per cent in September, compared to 20.18 per cent in the previous month, indicating relative rise in prices. ● Inflation in 'fuel and power' basket in September was 16.65 per cent. ● Individually, in petrol and diesel it was 17.21 per cent and 22.18 per cent, respectively, and for LPG it was 33.51 per cent.
Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● WPI index reflects average price changes of goods that are bought and sold in the wholesale market. ● Wholesale price indexes report monthly to show the average price changes of goods sold in bulk, and they are a group of the indicators that follow growth in the economy. ● WPI includes all the manufactured products and CPI includes food and services part.
Source	Indian Express

UN model on cross-border insolvency

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A government-appointed Insolvency Law Committee (ILC) has recommended adoption of a United Nations model law for dealing with cross-border insolvency cases under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The ILC has recommended the adoption of the UN Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL) Model Law of Cross Border Insolvency. ● UNCITRAL provides for a comprehensive framework to deal with cross-border insolvency issues. ● The UNCITRAL Model Law has been adopted in 44 countries. ● The advantages of the model law are the precedence given to domestic proceedings and protection of public interest. ● While the IBC has been dealing with cases of domestic insolvency, default cases with cross-border implications are currently outside its purview. ● The Code at present does not explicitly provide a framework to deal with the issues of cross-border insolvency. ● The necessity of having such a framework under the IBC arises as many Indian companies have a global presence and many foreign companies have operational across countries including India.
Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● For establishing an insolvency regulation related to entities and individuals, the Parliament has enacted Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016. ● The Code offers a uniform, comprehensive insolvency legislation encompassing all companies, partnerships and individuals (other than financial firms). ● It suggests two options – a restructuring if the firm is viable and liquidation if it is not financially viable. ● The Lok Sabha has passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill 2017 to pave the way for tightening loopholes in existing code and to make resolution process more effective.
Source	Indian Express.



Government Policies and Taxation

Sovereign gold bonds

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The government has decided to step up issuance of sovereign gold bonds. ● It is aimed to shift a portion of investment demand towards “paper gold” to trim physical purchases and contain their damaging impact on trade balance.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Applications for the bonds will be accepted for four days each month before the issuance. ● The bonds carry a 2.5 per cent annual interest for investors. ● The government has budgeted to garner as much as Rs 5,000 crore from all the three gold schemes this fiscal. ● The three schemes are : <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The sovereign gold bond 2. Gold monetisation scheme 3. Indian gold coin ● The government has decided to promote gold bond scheme, conscious of the fact that that hiking the customs duty on gold from the current 10 per cent to trim imports also raises risks of smuggling.
Sovereign Gold Bonds (SGBs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● SGBs are government securities denominated in grams of gold. ● They are substitutes for holding physical gold. ● Investors have to pay the issue price in cash and the bonds will be redeemed in cash on maturity. ● The Bond is issued by Reserve Bank on behalf of Government of India. ● As part of efforts to cut down gold imports and lower the current account deficit, the government had launched the Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme. ● The scheme retains the incentives offered in the earlier tranche—of 2.5% interest rate and capital gains tax exemption on redemption.
Source	Indian Express, RBI.

Draft Electronics Policy

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology has released a draft National Electronics Policy on 10th October 2018. ● The draft policy aims to create a \$400-billion electronics manufacturing industry by 2025.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The draft National Policy on Electronics (NPE) aims to promote domestic manufacturing to spur economic development. ● The draft policy proposes to double the mobile phone production from 500 million to 1 billion by 2025. ● Draft policy to provide support for significantly enhancing availability of skilled manpower in the electronics system design and manufacturing industry. ● However, it did not detail and aim for job creation in the sector.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 20 greenfield electronic manufacturing clusters and 3 brownfield EMC projects have been sanctioned with the project outlay of Rs 3,898 crore. ● The policy proposes to push development of core competencies in all the sub-sectors of electronics including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Electronic Components And Semiconductors, ➤ Defence Electronics, ➤ Automotive Electronics, ➤ Industrial Electronics And ➤ Strategic Electronics. ● The draft also proposes suitable direct tax benefits for setting up of a new manufacturing unit or expansion of an existing unit.
Modified Special Incentive Package scheme (M-SIPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to the draft, the government plans to end modified special incentive scheme with schemes that it will find easier to implement such as interest subsidy and credit default guarantee etc. ● Modified Special Incentive Package scheme (M-SIPS) was launched in 2012. ● M-SIPS was to provide for capital subsidy of 25 per cent for Electronics Industry located in non-SEZ area and 20 per cent for those in SEZ areas.
Source	Indian Express, The Hindu.

Overhaul GDP norms: MPs

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Estimates Committee of Parliament pointed out the current manner in which the GDP is measured needs an overhaul as it provides an incomplete estimation of economic activity.
More in the news	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px;"> <p>Need for change</p> <p>Why the committee insists that the measurement of India's Gross Domestic Product needs an overhaul? A look at the reasons cited:</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It does not measure the depletion of natural resources ▪ It ignores the economic contribution of women in running households ▪ It does not factor the change in the output quality </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> <p>due to technological advances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ It does not factor the impact of artificial intelligence in employment ▪ It does not measure whether GDP adds to happiness of the citizens </div> </div>  </div>
Source	The Hindu.

Tax-GDP Ratio

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Given the sharp rise in the number of Income-Tax returns filed and an increase in the number of taxpayers, the direct tax-GDP ratio touch a decadal high of almost 6 per cent.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The average tax paid by corporates has jumped 55 per cent in 2016-17. ● In the case of individuals, the average tax paid has increased by 26 per cent.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Legislative and administrative measures, combined with enforcement efforts by the Tax Department helped to check tax evasion. ● The Tax Department data also show better compliance among salaried taxpayers vis-à-vis non-salaried taxpayers. ● Currently India's tax-to-GDP ratio is 11.9%. ● The good news is that it has been inching up in the past years and despite a growth slowdown, it was at 11.6% in fiscal 2018. ● For fiscal 2019, the target is of 12.1%.
Tax-GDP ratio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Tax GDP ratio shows the tax revenue for a country measured in terms of GDP. ● For example, if India's tax GDP ratio is 15%, it means that the government gets 15% of its GDP as tax contribution from the public and entities. ● The tax-GDP ratio shows the richness of the government's exchequer. ● The government's ability to spend on socio-economic development programs, military, salary, pension heads etc., depends on tax GDP ratio.
Source	Indian Express, IiveMint

Currency swap agreement between India and Japan

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India and Japan signed a currency swap agreement worth \$75 billion during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Japan. ● The agreement will bolster the country's firepower as it battles a steep drop in the rupee's value.
What is Currency Swap ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A currency swap typically involves the exchange of interest and sometimes of principal in one currency for the same in another currency. ● Interest payments are exchanged at fixed dates through the life of the contract. ● It is considered to be a foreign exchange transaction and is not required by law to be shown on a company's balance sheet.
More in the news	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px;"> <h3 style="margin: 0;">Liquidity Boost</h3> <p>WHAT IS CURRENCY SWAP: One country exchanges its national currency for that of another or even a third one</p> <p>INDIA-JAPAN SWAP: India can acquire yen or dollars from Japan up to \$75 billion in exchange for rupees. The exchange has to be reversed after an agreed period</p> <p>TERMS OF AGREEMENT: The facility is entered into between central banks of two countries. The terms of the swap and its cost are also included. The exchange rate is typically fixed for a transaction. The borrowing bank pays interest for use of funds</p> <div style="float: right; background-color: #e0e0e0; padding: 5px; width: 200px;"> <p>How Does It Help</p> <p>RBI's \$393-billion chest gets a one-shot \$75 billion boost</p> <p>There is no immediate cost; only when an amount is drawn</p> <p>Short-term liquidity mismatches can be met quickly</p> <p>It improves market sentiment, curbs speculative pressure on the rupee</p> <p>Foreign investors will draw comfort from the arrangement</p> </div> </div>

Source	The Hindu, Economic Times.
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Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) meet

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) presided by Finance Minister reviewed the current global and domestic economic situation and financial sector performance. ● RBI Governor Urjit Patel, financial sector regulators and top officials of the Finance Ministry attended the meeting.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The council discussed the issue of real interest rate, current liquidity situation, including segmental liquidity position in NBFCs. ● The panel decided that the regulators and the government will keep a close watch on developments and take all necessary measures. ● The panel also deliberated on the issues and challenges of Crypto Assets/ Currency. ● The council also suggested encouraging the use of Distributed Ledger Technology, as announced in the Budget 2018-19.
Cyber Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● FSDC took note of the developments regarding strengthening of Cyber Security in Financial Sector. ● This includes progress made towards setting up of a Computer Emergency Response Team in the Financial Sector (CERT-Fin) under a Statutory Framework. ● The Council also deliberated on the need for identifying and securing critical information infrastructure in financial sector.
Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) is an apex-level body constituted by the government of India. ● The FSDC is headed by the Finance Minister and comprises the RBI Governor, the SEBI Chairman, and heads of regulators such as PFRDA, IRDAI. ● Finance Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Secretary, Department of Financial Services and Chief Economic Adviser are also members of FSDC. ● It works to strengthen and institutionalise the mechanism of maintaining financial stability. ● Other Objectives of FSDC are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Financial stability 2. Financial sector development 3. Financial literacy 4. Financial inclusion 5. Macro prudential supervision of the economy.
Source	The Hindu, PIB.



Industrial Sector

Factory growth slows to 4.3%

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Industrial production slowed to 4.3% in August, due in large part to a drastic deceleration in the manufacturing, mining, and consumer durables sectors.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to the data released by the Central Statistics Office, the index of industrial production (IIP) fell from 6.5% in July to 4.3% in August. ● The volatility in the IIP growth rate indicates that industrial recovery remains uneven and fragile ahead of the festive season. ● The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) latest business expectations index, however, shows industrial activity improved in the July quarter.
IIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is the number denoting the condition of industrial production during a certain period. ● IIP shows the status of industrial activity, you can find out if the industrial activity has increased, decreased or remained same. ● It is important for the IIP to reflect true industrial trends, which in turn has an impact on the policy decision-making. ● These figures are calculated in reference to the base year. Currently the base year is 2011-12. ● Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is released by the Central Statistics Office (CSO) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. ● It dose not consider measuring of informal sector activity . Same with the PMI.
Source	The Hindu.



Telecom Sector faces loss

Service Sector

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The telecom sector is likely to experience three more quarters of losses, hurt by high levies and "unsustainable tariffs", director general of industry body ● Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) has said.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The statement from the Association said the present tariffs are sustainable for long-term health of the industry. ● Another issues that have added to the operators' woes are : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ High incidence of levies. ➤ Licence fee and spectrum usage charges ➤ Upfront payment for radio waves. ● Industry has already suffered losses from last two quarters, and expected to face another loss.
Tariff war	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In 2016, Reliance Industries launched Jio, a new fourth-generation wireless service that disrupted the telecom industry by offering free calls and cheap data on mobile phones. ● Jio's entry set off a tariff war, forcing Airtel, Vodafone and Idea (now Vodafone Idea Ltd.) to cut tariffs. ● This had dented the industry's financial metrics and deepened the impact of regulatory decisions like cut in termination charges.
Telecom sector in India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India is currently the world's second-largest telecommunications market with a subscriber base of 1.17 billion. ● The Indian mobile economy contribute substantially to India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). ● With 493.96 million internet subscribers, as of March 2018, India stands second in terms of total internet users. ● Rise in mobile-phone penetration and decline in data costs will add 500 million new internet users in India over the next five years, creating opportunities for new businesses.
Source	The Hindu, IBEF.



Infrastructure

Solar capital cost to go up: ICRA

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to ICRA, the imposition of safeguard duty by the government on imported photovoltaic modules and rupee depreciation are estimated to increase the capital cost of solar power projects by 20-25%.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In a report on the wind and solar sectors, ICRA said while bidding activity has remained strong, several key concerns remain, including rising interest rates. ● The rising interest rates are putting pressure on the bid tariffs as well as on the viability of the wind and solar projects having tariffs less than Rs.3 per unit. ● Another challenge faced by the renewable energy sector is that winning developers in recent bids are having trouble in securing connectivity and open access to inter-state transmission network. ● This has resulted in cancellation or capacity downsizing of some of the bids. ● In order to protect the domestic solar industry, India has imposed a 25 percent safeguard duty on solar cell imports for a year to July 29, 2019.
Photovoltaic module	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Solar panel refers to a panel designed to absorb the sun's rays as a source of energy for generating electricity or heating. ● A photovoltaic (in short PV) module is a packaged, connect assembly of typically 6×10 solar cells. ● Solar Photovoltaic(PV)absorbs sunlight as a source of energy to generate electricity. ● Photovoltaic modules constitute the photovoltaic array that is made up photovoltaic system that generates and supplies solar electricity in industrial and residential areas.
Source	The Hindu.



Miscellaneous

U.S. growth, rupee fall will boost Indian exports: Assocham

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to a report by Assocham, India's exports hold a promising outlook with the U.S. economy growing coupled with the rupee depreciation leading to enhanced net revenue realisations.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The U.S. emerged as the top export destination for India, with \$47.9 billion worth of shipments in the last fiscal followed by the UAE and Hong Kong. ● The U.S. economic growth accelerated by 4.2% in the second quarter of this year, its fastest pace in about four years. ● The U.S. accounts for about 16% of India's total merchandise exports of \$303 billion in the fiscal 2017-18 with the annual growth of 13.42%. ● It is the largest market for Indian exports, both for merchandise and services. ● So, when the U.S. grows at its current pace, it augurs very well for the total Indian exports' basket. ● Engineering goods, chemicals, gems and jewelry are among the major items of exports to the US from India.
Rupee factor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A sharp drop in rupee may have caused a burden on the country's import bill, but the net realisations for exporters have increased significantly. ● While exports have shown a growth of about 19% in dollar terms, the rupee realisations for the export shipments went up close to 30%. ● With further streamlining of exporters' GST refunds, their competitiveness should also improve, helping them in the global market.
Source	The Hindu

Growth in India firming up: World Bank

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The world bank's latest report on south Asia has revealed that the Indian economy is growing at a firm rate and will see further acceleration. ● It said that the Indian economy appears to have recovered from the temporary disruptions caused by demonetization and the introduction of GST.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As per the report, Growth in India is firming up and projected to accelerate to 7.3% in the 2018-19 fiscal and 7.5% the next two years. ● However, domestic risks and a less benign external environment impact the macro-economic outlook. ● The report credited a robust growth in the second half for the turnaround, which was led by manufacturing sector (that grew at 8.8 per cent versus 2.7 per cent in the first half) and domestic consumption, which grew at 7 per cent. ● Agriculture growth also improved, and services growth held steady at 7.7 per cent, the report said. ● On the demand side, the pick-up in growth was reflected in a sharp acceleration in gross fixed capital formation to 11.7 per cent in the second half, from 3.4 per cent in the first.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● World bank also said that high oil prices and an uncertain global trade environment may pose challenges for the current account.
World Bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The World Bank Group (WBG) was established in 1944 to rebuild post-World War II Europe under the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). ● Today, the World Bank functions as an international organization that fights poverty by offering developmental assistance to middle-income and low-income countries. ● There are 189 member countries that are shareholders in the IBRD, which is the primary arm of the WBG. ● To become a member, however, a country must first join the International Monetary Fund (IMF). ● The World Bank Group consists of five organizations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development. 2. The International Development Association. 3. The International Finance Corporation. 4. The Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency. 5. The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes.
Source	Indian Express.

India to grow at 7.3% in 2018: IMF

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The 'World Economic Outlook' report by IMF, forecasted a growth rate of 7.3% for India in the current year of 2018 and that of 7.4% in 2019. ● In 2017, India had clocked a 6.7 per cent growth rate.
More in the news	<p>Findings of the report:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The acceleration reflected a rebound from transitory shocks (Demonetisation and GST), with strengthening investment and robust private consumption. ● India's medium-term growth prospects remain strong at 7¼ per cent, benefiting from ongoing structural reform. ● important reforms have been implemented in the recent years: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Goods and Services Tax, ➤ The inflation-targeting framework, ➤ The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, and ➤ Steps to liberalise foreign investment and make it easier to do business. ● India to retain its fastest growing economy tag if the projections turns to reality. ● China was the fastest growing economy in 2017 as it was ahead of India by 0.2 percentage points. ● Over the medium term, growth is expected to gradually slow to 5.6 per cent as the economy continues to make the transition to a more sustainable growth path with continued financial de-risking and environmental controls. ● Emerging Asia continued to register strong growth, supported by a domestic demand-led pickup in the Indian economy.

<p>International Monetary Fund (IMF)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The IMF, also known as the Fund, was conceived at a UN conference in Bretton Woods, New Hampshire, United States, in July 1944. ● The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is an organization of 189 countries. ● The IMF's primary purpose is to ensure the stability of the international monetary system—the system of exchange rates and international payments that enables countries (and their citizens) to transact with each other. ● Its other objectives are : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Working to foster global monetary cooperation, ➤ Secure financial stability, ➤ Facilitate international trade, ➤ Promote high employment and sustainable economic growth, and ➤ Reduce poverty around the world. ● IMF is headquartered in Washington, D.C.
<p>Source</p>	<p>Indian Express, IMF.</p>

Human Capital Index 2018

<p>Why in the news ?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The World Bank released its first report on Human Capital Index (HCI), which placed India at the 115th position. ● India is placed lower than Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Bangladesh.
<p>More in the news</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The report ranked 157 economies on parameters like child mortality, health and education. ● Singapore topped the poll. It is followed by South Korea, Japan, Hong Kong and Finland. ● The World Bank gave India a score of 0.44 of the total 1.0, lower than the average for its income-level countries. ● In simple terms, it shows that the children born in India today will be 44 per cent as productive when they grow up as they could be if they enjoyed complete education and full health. ● Girls fared slightly better at 0.45 than boys, who scored 0.43. ● The government, however, expressed reservation over the report questioning its utility.
<p>Government's Stand</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reacting strongly to these observations, the finance ministry said the HCI score for India did not reflect the key initiatives that were being taken for developing human capital in the country. ● It named programmes to counter the World Bank's findings. such as <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. SamagraShikshaAbhiyan, 2. Ayushman Bharat Programme, 3. Swachh Bharat Mission, 4. Pradhan MantriUjjwalaYojana, and 5. Pradhan MantriJandhanYojana. ● It also said Aadhaar identification system had enabled India to make direct cash transfer of about \$ 64 billion to citizens, improving governance and social protection.

Human Capital Index(HCI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Human Capital Index(HCI) seeks to measure how well governments enable their people to reach their full potential. ● The index quantifies the contribution of health and education to the productivity of the next generation of workers ● The HCI is part of the World Development Report (WDR) launched by World Bank.
Source	Indian Express, Business Standard.

Wealth per adult in India at \$7,020, China at \$47,810

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To 343,000, who are collectively worth around \$6 trillion.As per the Credit Suisse report, India created a whopping 7,300 more millionaires during the 12 months to mid-2018. ● The total number of dollar-millionaires.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The wealth per adult stayed flat at \$ 7,020 (around Rs 515,970) as against \$47,810 in China (Rs 35.14 lakh). ● Globally, Switzerland remains the richest nation in the world in terms of wealth per adult with \$530,240 in mid-2018, followed by Australia (\$ 411,060). ● The country has 404,000 adults in the top one per cent of global wealth holders, which is a 0.8 per cent share. ● Personal wealth in India is dominated by property and other real assets, which make up 91 per cent of estimated household assets. ● Over the 12 months, non-financial assets grew by 4.3 per cent, accounting for all of the wealth growth in India.
Disparity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● While wealth has been rising in India, not everyone has shared in this growth. ● There is still considerable wealth poverty, reflected in the fact that 91 per cent of the adult population has wealth below \$ 10,000 (around Rs 735,000). ● At the other extreme, a small fraction of the population (0.6 per cent of adults) has a net worth over \$ 100,000 (Rs 73,50,000). ● However, owing to India's large population, this translates into 4.8 million people.
Source	Indian Express.

Generalised System of Preferences(GSP)

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Indian Exporters appear to be confused on whether exports to the U.S. eligible for duty-free entry into the U.S. under the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP). ● Under the GSP, the U.S. grants eligible countries duty-free entry into the country for about 4,800 products.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The U.S. is now reviewing whether India is still eligible for GSP benefits, even as the Indian government is maintaining that exporters can still receive the benefits. ● There is policy uncertainty and the resultant confusion are leading to a diversion of orders meant for India to neighbouring countries.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● One of the largest exporter-bodies has said that its members have not been receiving the benefits since December 2017.● However, the Engineering Export Promotion Council of India has claimed that its members are still availing of the GSP benefits.● It is affecting India's MSME exporters.
What is GSP ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a U.S. trade program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world.● It provides preferential duty-free entry for up to 4,800 products from 129 designated beneficiary countries and territories.● India's case, GSP enables duty-free entry of 3,500 product lines in US markets.● GSP was instituted on January 1, 1976, by the Trade Act of 1974.● A wide range of industrial and agricultural products originating from certain developing countries are given preferential access to US markets.
Source	The Hindu.



The UNIOUFE Academy

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Social

Probe into type-2 polio virus contamination

<p>Why in the news ?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The government has ordered a probe after traces of poliovirus type 2 were found in some batches of oral polio vaccine (OPV). ● The type-2 polio virus contamination had detected in the vials used for immunisation in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Telangana.
<p>More in the news</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The last case due to type-2 wild poliovirus globally was reported from Aligarh in India in 1999. ● India was declared polio free in 2014 and the last case was reported on 13 January 2011. ● India eliminated the type-2 strain in 2016, and the type-2 containing poliovirus vaccine (ToPV) was phased out in April 2016. ● Children born after April 2016 in India have no immunity to type-2 polio virus. ● Traces of polio type-2 virus were found in some batches of oral polio vaccine (OPV) manufactured by a Ghaziabad-based pharmaceutical company. ● According to the ministry official, the contamination came to light after surveillance reports from Uttar Pradesh showed signs of the virus in stool samples of some children. ● The OPVs were sent for testing which confirmed that some of them were contaminated with type-2 virus. <div data-bbox="432 1187 1273 1740" style="border: 1px solid gray; padding: 5px;"> <p>What is polio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious viral disease, mainly affecting children ■ According to WHO, the virus is transmitted from person-to-person, mainly through the faecal-oral route <p>STRAINS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are three types of polio virus strains — P1, P2 and P3 ■ P2 was eradicated globally in 1999 ■ India attained a polio free status in 2014 after successfully eliminating the wild P1 and P3 strains  <p>VACCINATION SCHEDULE</p> <p>OPV: At 6 weeks, 10 weeks and 14 weeks</p> <p>IPV: At 6 weeks and 14 weeks</p> <p>OPV booster: Between 16 and 24 months</p> </div>
<p>Source</p>	<p>The Hindu.</p>

Toilet-for-all: WHO

<p>Why in the news ?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The World Health Organization (WHO) launched the first global guidelines on sanitation and health.
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It said world will not reach the goal of universal sanitation coverage by 2030 unless countries make comprehensive policy shifts and invest more funds.
More in the news	<p>WHO guidelines :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● By adopting WHO's new guidelines, countries can significantly reduce the diarrhoeal deaths due to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene. ● For every US \$1 invested in sanitation, WHO estimates a nearly six-fold return as measured by lower health costs, increased productivity and fewer premature deaths. ● Worldwide, 2.3 billion people lack basic sanitation (with almost half forced to defecate in the open). ● They are among the 4.5 billion without access to safely managed sanitation services – in other words a toilet connected to a sewer or pit or septic tank that treats human waste. ● Without proper access, millions of people the world over are deprived of the dignity, safety and convenience of a decent toilet. ● Current sanitation programmes are not achieving anticipated health gains and there is a lack of authoritative health-based guidance on sanitation. ● Sanitation is a fundamental foundation of human health and development and underpins the core mission of WHO and ministries of health worldwide.
WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health. ● It was established on 7 April 1948, and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. ● The WHO is a member of the United Nations Development Group. ● WHO strive to combat diseases – communicable diseases like influenza and HIV, and non-communicable diseases like cancer and heart disease.
Source	The Hindu.

No trial in sewer death cases

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The study on deaths due to sewer and septic tank cleaning since 1992 has been released on 4th October. ● It is released by the RashtriyaGarimaAbhiyan (RGA) — an NGO partnering with the Union Ministry of Social Justice for an ongoing manual scavenging census.
More in the news	<p>Findings of the study :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The first Information Reports (FIR) were filed in only 35% of the cases; none led to a trial or prosecution of any sort. ● Only 31% of affected families received cash compensation, while none received the rehabilitation or alternative jobs to which they are entitled by law. ● The study covered a sample group of 97 deaths in 51 incidents across 11 States. ● The NGO says it had identified 302 deaths in 140 incidents in those States, but admits the actual numbers could be even higher. ● The Ministry reported 323 deaths nationwide in 2017 alone.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In some cases, an official cover-up meant there was no acknowledgement of a death. ● According to some experts, govt.is not taking into account the question of who will have to clean the septic tanks, while it builds toilets through its Swachh Bharat Abhiyan.
Source	The Hindu.

Global Hunger Index 2018

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India ranks a low 103th out of 119 countries on the Global Hunger Index (GHI) released on 11th October 2018. ● India is at the high end of the “serious” category.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The GHI captures the multidimensional nature of hunger based on four indicators - <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Undernourishment (share of the population with insufficient calorific intake). 2. Under-5 child wasting (Low weight for height). 3. Under-5 child stunting (low height for age). 4. Under-5 child mortality. ● Findings of the report : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● At least one in five Indian children under the age of five are ‘wasted’. ● Wasting means they have extremely low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition. ● India’s ranking has dropped three places from last year. ● India has shown improvement in three of the indicators over the comparable reference years. ● The percentage of undernourished people in the population has dropped from 18.2% in 2000 to 14.8% in 2018. ● The child mortality rate has halved from 9.2% to 4.3%. ● Child stunting has dropped from 54.2% to 38.4% over the same period.
Global scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Globally, the level of hunger still falls into the “serious” category, despite improvement over the last two decades. ● The Index projects that at the current rate of progress, 50 countries will fail to reach the “low” hunger category by 2030. ● This puts the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 2, which aims to end hunger by 2030, in jeopardy.
Global Hunger Index (GHI)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is a tool designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger at global, regional, and national levels. ● GHI scores are calculated each year to assess progress and setbacks in combating hunger. ● The GHI is designed to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Raise awareness and understanding of the struggle against hunger, ● Provide a way to compare levels of hunger between countries and regions, ● Call attention to those areas of the world where hunger levels are highest and where the need for additional efforts to eliminate hunger is greatest. ● The report is jointly published by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Concern Worldwide, and Welthungerhilfe.

Source	The Hindu, Indian Express, ghi.org.
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Tamil Nadu notifies compensation for sexual abuse victims

Why in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The State government has notified the Tamil Nadu Victim Compensation Scheme for Women Victims/Survivors of Sexual Assault/Other Crimes, 2018. ● The decision is in line with the Supreme Court judgment which had approved the suggestion for compensation.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The scheme provides funds for the purpose of compensation to women victims or their dependants who have suffered loss or injury as a result of the offence committed and who require rehabilitation. ● Under the scheme, a rape survivor will get a minimum compensation of Rs.4 lakh. ● In the case of a survivor of gang rape, the compensation would be Rs.5 lakh. ● If the woman has lost her life, her dependant would be entitled to a compensation of Rs.7 lakh. ● The maximum compensation that could be granted in cases of loss of life as well as gang rape is Rs.10 lakh and the maximum compensation for rape could be Rs.7 lakh. ● Survivors and their dependants could apply for compensation before the Tamil Nadu Legal Services Authority (TNSLSA) or the respective District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) with the police FIR. ● The scheme covers offences registered under Sections 326A (acid attack), 354A to 354D (sexual harassment), 376A to 376E (sexual intercourse with wife during separation and allied offences), 304B (dowry death) and 498A (cruelty to wife) of the Indian Penal Code.
Source	The Hindu.

No time bar for crimes under POCSO Act

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The government clarified that there is no time bar on reporting crimes under POCSO. ● Survivors of child sexual abuse can file a police complaint after they become adults.
More about the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Law Ministry concurred with the opinion of the Ministry of Women and Child Development that unlike the Code of Criminal Proceedings (CrPC), the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), 2012, does not lay down a time limit for reporting crimes covered under it. ● Section 19 of the POCSO Act, which deals with sexual crimes against children, lays down the procedure for reporting a crime but doesn't specify a time limit or statute of limitation for reporting it. ● This is an important step for survivors of child abuse, who may try to file a complaint as adults but are turned away at police stations.
POCSO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012 defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Act provides protection to all children under the age of 18 years from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography. ● This is the first time that an Act has listed aspects of touch as well as non-touch behaviour (eg: photographing a child in a obscene manner) under the ambit of sexual offences. ● The Act incorporates child friendly procedures for reporting, recording of evidence, investigation and trial of offences ● The attempt to commit an offence under the Act has also been made liable for punishment for upto half the punishment prescribed for the commission of the offence. ● The Act also provides for punishment for abetment of the offence, which is the same as for the commission of the offence. ● This would cover trafficking of children for sexual purposes. ● The media has been barred from disclosing the identity of the child without the permission of the Special Court.
Source	The Hindu.

Swachh Sarvekshan Grameen-2018

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Haryana was ranked as the best State as per the ranking undertaken by SwachhSarvekshanGrameen 2018. ● Satara District of Maharashtra was ranked as the best district.
Swachh Sarvekshan Grameen-2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation (MDWS) has commissioned “SwachhSarvekshan Grameen-2018” (SSG, 2018) through an independent survey agency. ● The aim is to develop ranking of all districts of India on the basis of quantitative and qualitative sanitation (Swachhata) parameters. ● This ranking will be based on a comprehensive set of parameters including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● District-level surveys of public places like schools, Anganwadis, PHCs, Haat bazaars. ● Panchayat and citizen’s perception of Swachhata and their recommendations for improvement of the program and data from the SBM-G IMIS. ● As part of the Sarvekshan, States and Districts will be ranked for their sanitation and cleanliness status. ● Top performing States and Districts was set to be awarded on 2nd October 2018.
More in the news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As part of SwachhSarvekshanGrameen, 6786 villages in 685 Districts across India were covered. ● 27,963 public places namely schools, anganwadis, public health centres, haat/ bazaars/religious places in these 6786 villages were visited by an independent agency for survey. ● Around 182,531 citizens were interviewed for their feedback in villages on SBM-G related issues. ● Also, citizens were mobilised to provide feedback on sanitation related issues online using an application developed for the purpose. ● The collection of data from Direct Observation were based on physical observation of the sanitation status in public places by the survey agency.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The survey agency used maps and simple handheld device/recording formats to record their observations and findings along with Photographs/ videos, wherever necessary.
Overall Ranking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Top 3 States-1) Haryana, 2) Gujarat 3) Maharashtra ● Top 3 Districts 1) Satara, Maharashtra 2) Rewari, Haryana 3) Pedapalli, Telangana ● States with maximum citizen participation 1) Uttar Pradesh 2) Gujarat 3) Maharashtra ● Districts with maximum citizens' participation 1) Nashik, Maharashtra 2) Solapur, Maharashtra 3) Chittorgarh, Rajasthan
Source	The Hindu, PIB.

Operation Digital Board

Why is it in the news ?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to the statement by HRD minister, the launching of 'Operation Digital Board' across 15 lakh classrooms in the country in the next four years will change the face of education in the country. ● The minister was speaking at the third edition of Excellence in Education conclave.
Operation Digital Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the 65th Meeting of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE), held under the Chairmanship of Union Human Resource Development Minister, a resolution was passed to take steps towards Operation Digital Board. ● As per the resolution, 'Operation Digital Board' is to launch in all schools in five years. ● This will be undertaken jointly by Centre, State, CSR, and community. ● This will improve the quality of education. ● Students will be empowered with 360 degree information with interesting learning experience and teacher accountability will also increase. ● Commitment to ensure Quality, Equity, Accessibility, Accountability and Affordability in education by pro-active action and plan.
Central Advisory Board of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) is the highest advisory body to advise the Central and State Governments in the field of education. ● The idea that there should be a central Advisory Board of Education was first put forward by the Calcutta University Commission (1917-19). ● It was first established in 1920 and dissolved in 1923 as a measure of the economy. ● It was revived in 1935 and has been in existence ever since. ● Almost simultaneously the Government of India Act, 1919 decided to make education mainly a provincial and a transferred subject and to limit the 'control' of the Central Government over it to the minimum.
Source	The Hindu, PIB.



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Science and Technology

5G Technology

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Korean firm Samsung said that it will conduct field trials for 5G in India during the first quarter of 2019. ● Earlier, 5G technology was tested by Airtel and Huawei in Gurugram. ● The global roll-out of 5G commercial services is expected by 2020. ● India government is taking various measures for the sooner deployment of the technology.
5G technology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 5G is wireless communication technology based on third-generation partnership project (3GPP). ● It is next generation mobile networks technology after 4G LTE networks. ● Benefits- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enhanced mobile broadband -It is expected to offer enhanced mobile broadband. 2. Upload and download speed-The 5G technology will offer far greater upload and download speed available at present. 3. Cloud systems-High data speed offered by 5G network will help cloud systems to stream software updates, music, and navigation data to driverless cars. 4. AI and IoT-Moreover, it holds the key to growth of artificial intelligence (AI) systems and enhance IoT. 5. Economy and employment-As per the OECD Committee on Digital Economic Policy, 5G technologies rollout will help in increasing GDP, creating employment and digitizing the economy. 6. Real time solution- Significant contribution in transforming everyday lives of Indians by resolving real issues within e-healthcare, e-education, infrastructure and e-governance. 7. Connectivity-Accelerates the BharatNet programme.
Source	The Hindu, ITU

Train-18: India's first engine-less train

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Train 18, India's first engine-less train for inter-city travel is set to hit the tracks soon.
More in news	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Train 18 is a flagship train set; the first prototype has been built by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, in a record time of 20 months. ● The train is a 100% 'Make in India' project and is claimed to be built at half the cost of a similar train set that is imported. ● T-18 is a self-propelled engine-less train (similar to the Metro trains) and is energy-efficient as its coaches will be fitted with LED lights. ● Coaches will have automatic doors and retractable footsteps,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It will be inter-connected with fully sealed gangways along with a GPS-based Passenger Information System. ● It is provided with of Bio toilets. ● The full AC train is equipped to run at a speed of up to 160 kmph as against Shatabdi's 130 kmph which will cut down travel time by 15%.
Source	The Hindu

Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC)

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Union Government has constituted a new 21-member advisory panel on science, technology and innovation called Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC). ● It will replace earlier Scientific Advisory Committee to Prime Minister and to Cabinet.
About PM-STIAC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Composition: It will be headed by Principal Scientific Advisor to the government of India. It has nine members, including Chairperson. Apart from nine members, it will also have twelve special invitees — eleven ex officio secretaries 10 central ministries, related to science, technology, energy and education, are special invitees to the panel. ● Roles and functions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Advise PM on science, technology, as well as innovation. 2. Coordinate implementation of PMs scientific vision. 3. Aid in formulation and timely implementation of major science and technology missions and evolve interdisciplinary technology development programmes. 4. Advise government on developing 'Clusters of Excellence' in science including city-based R&D clusters. 5. Bring together all science and technology partners from academia and institutes to industries near such centres or cities.
Source	The Hindu

100k GenomeAsia project and Genome sequencing

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A group of Indian scientists and companies are involved with a 100k GenomeAsia project, led out of the National Technological University (NTU), Singapore, to sequence the whole genomes of 100k Asians, including 50,000 Indians.
Significance of project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India is planning a major mission to sequence the genes of a "large" group of Indians — akin to projects in the United Kingdom, China, Japan and Australia — and use this to improve health as well as buck a global trend of designing 'personalised medicine.' ● This was among the key decisions taken at the 1st Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (STIAC) in its first meeting. ● The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare and the Department of Biotechnology would be closely associated with the project.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ever since the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research in 2009 announced that it had sequenced the genome of an Indian, then making India one of six countries to achieve such a feat, several research labs have analysed genes from Indians for disease susceptibility. ● However, no compendium of genes that differentiate Indian populations from, say Caucasian or African genomes exist.
Uses of genome sequencing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Genomics is an interdisciplinary field of science focusing on the structure, function, evolution, mapping, and editing of genomes. ● A genome is an organism's complete set of DNA, including all of its genes. Genomics also involves the sequencing and analysis of genomes through uses of high throughput DNA sequencing. ● Advances in genomics have triggered a revolution in discovery-based research and systems biology to facilitate understanding of even the most complex biological systems such as the brain. ● Cancer is caused by deleterious mutations that accumulate in the genome. Inherited genetic disorders arise due to mutations in DNA that are passed on at birth. Increased risk for developing breast cancer is linked to variations in genes such as BRCA1 in the genome. Sequencing an individual's genome or the tumour genome and comparing it to a reference human genome has helped identify the differences that contribute to the disease. In many cases, it has the potential to help with treatment decisions. ● In pregnant mothers, the blood also contains DNA from the fetus. ● Scientists have developed methods that can sequence the cell-free DNA in mother's blood to monitor the genetic health of a developing baby. ● The genomics revolution has enabled sequencing a large number of organisms including bacteria, plants and animals. ● While it has confirmed the common evolutionary origin of life on earth, it has provided the code for a number of life forms. ● Sequencing of plants including cereals like rice and wheat has set the stage for rapid crop improvement. ● Understanding genomes of livestock such as cattle and goats has created a rich resource of genetic variations that can be used to produce animals with superior traits.
Source	The Hindu

Nobel Prizes 2018

Why is it in news?	Recently, Nobel Prizes 2018 announced in various domains.
Nobel Prizes 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2018- James P. Allison and Tasuku Honjo- For their discovery of cancer therapy by inhibition of negative immune regulation. ● The Nobel Prize in Physics 2018- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Arthur Ashkin -For groundbreaking inventions in the field of laser physics.

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Gérard Mourou - For the optical tweezers and their application to biological systems. 3. Donna Strickland- For their method of generating high-intensity, ultra-short optical pulses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2018- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Frances H. Arnold- For the directed evolution of enzymes. 2. George P. Smith and Sir Gregory P. Winter- For the phage display of peptides and antibodies. ● The Nobel Prize in Literature 2018- The 2018 Nobel Prize in Literature has been postponed. ● The Nobel Peace Prize 2018- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad- For their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict. ● The SverigesRiksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2018- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. William D. Nordhaus- For integrating climate change into long-run macroeconomic analysis. 2. Paul M. Romer- For integrating technological innovations into long-run macroeconomic analysis.
Source	The Hindu, Nobelprize.org

NASA's New Horizons mission

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● NASA's New Horizons probe is on course to fly by the Kuiper Belt object nicknamed Ultima Thule, which is at a distance of 6.6 billion kilometers from Earth. ● This event will set the record for the most distant object ever visited by a spacecraft.
New Horizons mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● New Horizons was launched on 19 January 2006, and has been travelling through space for the past nine years. ● Just over a year after launch, it passed Jupiter and used the giant world's gravity to boost its velocity, as well as making scientific observations. This boost shortened the time to reach Pluto by years. ● The mission will complete what NASA calls the reconnaissance of the classical solar system, and it makes the U.S. the first nation to send a space probe to every planet from Mercury to Pluto. The probe has traveled more than 3 billion miles to reach Pluto. ● The spacecraft was launched in 2006, before the big debate started over Pluto's status as a planet. In August of that same year, the International Astronomical Union reclassified Pluto as a dwarf planet. ● New Horizon's core science mission is to map the surfaces of Pluto and Charon, to study Pluto's atmosphere and to take temperature readings. ● The Kuiper belt- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It sometimes called the Edgeworth–Kuiper belt, is a region of the Solar System beyond the planets, extending from the orbit of Neptune (at 30 AU) to approximately 50 AU from the Sun. 2. It is similar to the asteroid belt, but it is far larger—20 times as wide and 20 to 200 times as massive.

Source	The Hindu, Wikipedia
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Humanoids

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recently the annual International Conference on Intelligent Robots held in Madrid.
Humanoids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A humanoid is something that has an appearance resembling a human without actually being one. ● Although this usage was common in the sciences for much of the 20th century, it is now considered rare. ● The term can refer to anything with distinctly human characteristics or adaptations, such as possessing opposable anterior forelimb-appendages (i.e. thumbs), visible spectrum-binocular vision (i.e. having two eyes), or biomechanicplantigrade-bipedalism (i.e. the ability to walk on heels and metatarsals in an upright position). ● Science fiction media frequently present sentient extraterrestrial lifeforms as humanoid as a by-product of convergent evolution theory. ● A humanoid robot is a robot that is based on the general structure of a human, such as a robot that walks on two legs and has an upper torso, or a robot that has two arms, two legs and a head. ● A humanoid robot does not necessarily look convincingly like a real person, for example the ASIMO humanoid robot has a helmet instead of a face. ● An android (male) or gynoid (female) is a humanoid robot designed to look as much like a real person as possible, although these words are frequently perceived to be synonymous with humanoid. ● Similarly to robots, virtual avatars may also be called humanoid when resembling humans.
Source	The Hindu, Wikipedia

S-400 missile

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● India and Russia concluded the contract for five S-400 'Triumf' missile systems, one of the biggest defence deals in recent times, after the annual summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin. ● Deliveries of S-400 will begin in 24 months, at the end of 2020
S-400 missile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● An S-400 'Triumf' long-range air defence missile system is one of the most advanced long-range defence systems in the world. ● It is referred to as SA-21 Growler by NATO. ● It is an upgraded version of the S-300 defence system and is manufactured by Almaz-Antey. ● It has ● It is capable of firing three types of missiles. Thus, it creates a layered defence been in service in Russia since 2007., and simultaneously engaging 36 targets. ● It has capability to destroy incoming all airborne targets at ranges of up to 400 km.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● With it, India can destroy Pakistani aircrafts even when they are in their airspace. ● India wants to procure long-range missile systems to tighten its air defence mechanism, particularly along its nearly 4,000-km-long border. ● In 2016, India had signed agreement with Russia on Triumf interceptor-based missile system. ● But there has been mounting concerns in India over US sanctions against Russian defence majors export as billions of dollars of military purchases may be impacted because of punitive measure. ● The US had announced sanctions against Russia under CAATSA for its alleged meddling in presidential election in 2016. ● The five S-400 systems will be operated by the Indian Air Force (IAF). ● India is the second export customer, after China to purchase this most advance defence system.
Source	The Hindu, Indianexpress

Digi Yatra” facility

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A mere facial scan will soon enable air travellers to skip long queues and zip through various check points at airports in the country. ● The Centre is set to introduce the “Digi Yatra” facility to start with at the Hyderabad and Bengaluru airports in February.
Digi Yatra initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is an initiative to make boarding pass and security check-ins digital at airports using Aadhaar and mobile phones ● Under Ministry of Civil Aviation ● In this, a digital mode for airport entry and verification of passengers would be used. ● The move is aimed to ease the security and boarding procedure ● The Ministry’s “Digi Yatra” initiative, or biometric-enabled digital processing of passengers, would enable travellers to enter the airport building by scanning a QR code on their mobile phones, after undergoing facial recognition. ● “Digi Yatra” programme would comply with the European Union’s Data Protection Regulation.
Sources	The Hindu



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Internal Security

Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has accorded approval for the Mid Life Upgrade of 17 Dornier Aircraft of Indian Coast Guard (ICG). ● The upgrades will be carried out by M/s Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL), the aircraft manufacturer of India.
Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To counter corruption and speed up decision- making in military procurement, the government of India in 2001 decided to set up an integrated DAC. ● It is headed by the Defence Minister. ● Objective: The objective of the DAC is to ensure expeditious procurement of the approved requirements of the Armed Forces, in terms of capabilities sought, and time frame prescribed, by optimally utilizing the allocated budgetary resources. ● Functions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The DAC is responsible to give policy guidelines to acquisitions, based on long-term procurement plans. 2. It also clears all acquisitions, which includes both imported and those produced indigenously or under a foreign license.
Source	PIB

Barak missile system

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Israel Aerospace Industries has won a \$777 million order for the Barak 8 air defense system for the Indian Navy. ● The deal is with India's state-owned Bharat Electronics Limited to supply LRSAM Air & Missile Defense systems – the marine version of the Barak 8 system.
Barak-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Barak-8 (Lightning 8 in Hebrew), also known as LR-SAM or as MR-SAM is an operational air and missile defense system used by Israeli Navy as well as by Indian Navy and air forces. ● It has been jointly developed by Israel Aerospace Industries (IAI) and India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), Israel's Administration for Development of Weapons and Technological Infrastructure, Elta Systems, Rafael and some other Indian defence companies. ● Features: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Length-4.5 meters , 2. Diameter-0.225 meters and 3. Weight-275 kg including 60 kg warhead. 4. Speed-It has <i>maximum speed of Mach 2 with maximum operational range of 70 km</i> (which has been increased to 100 km).

	<p>5. It has dual pulse rocket motor as well as Thrust vector control and possesses high degrees of maneuverability at target interception range.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Capabilities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The missile provides broad aerial and point defence against wide range of threats to marine arena from the air, sea or land. 2. It is designed to defend against variety of <i>short-to-long-range airborne threats</i>, including fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, drones and projectiles. 3. It incorporates state-of-the-art phased array multi-mission radar, two-way data link, and flexible command and control system, enabling users to simultaneously engage multiple targets day and night and in all weather conditions.
Sources	The Hindu,

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Prime Minister recently chaired the sixth meeting of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) at New Delhi. ● Prime Minister emphasized on the need for better coordination between the various stakeholders and undertake more joint exercises to bring about effective response to save life and property. ● He stressed upon the need to bring in global expertise in the field of disaster management.
National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● On 23 December 2005, the Government of India enacted the Disaster Management Act, which envisaged the creation of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), headed by the Prime Minister, and State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) headed by respective Chief Ministers, to spearhead and implement a holistic and integrated approach to Disaster Management in India. ● NDMA, as the apex body, is mandated to lay down the policies, plans and guidelines for Disaster Management to ensure timely and effective response to disasters. Towards this, it has the following responsibilities: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lay down policies on disaster management. 2. Approve the National Plan. 3. Approve plans prepared by the Ministries or Departments of the Government of India in accordance with the National Plan. 4. Lay down guidelines to be followed by the State Authorities in drawing up the State Plan. 5. Lay down guidelines to be followed by the different Ministries or Departments of the Government of India for the Purpose of integrating the measures for prevention of disaster or the mitigation of its effects in their development plans and projects. 6. Coordinate the enforcement and implementation of the policy and plans for disaster management. 7. Recommend provision of funds for the purpose of mitigation. 8. Provide such support to other countries affected by major disasters as may be determined by the Central Government.

	<p>9. Take such other measures for the prevention of disaster, or the mitigation, or preparedness and capacity building for dealing with threatening disaster situations or disasters as it may consider necessary.</p> <p>1. Lay down broad policies and guidelines for the functioning of the National Institute of Disaster Management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Significance: ● There was no institutional framework for disaster management earlier, but after the setting up of NDMA, a mechanism has been developed not only for disaster management, but also for disaster risk reduction. ● India got appreciation due to NDMA's work at Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting on Disaster management held in Kyrgyzstan last month. India had extended help to earthquake-hit Nepal in 2014 and also India had sent NDRF team to Japan for help. ● It's time to further strengthen the legal and institutional systems in place for disaster management.
Sources	The Hindu, NDRF

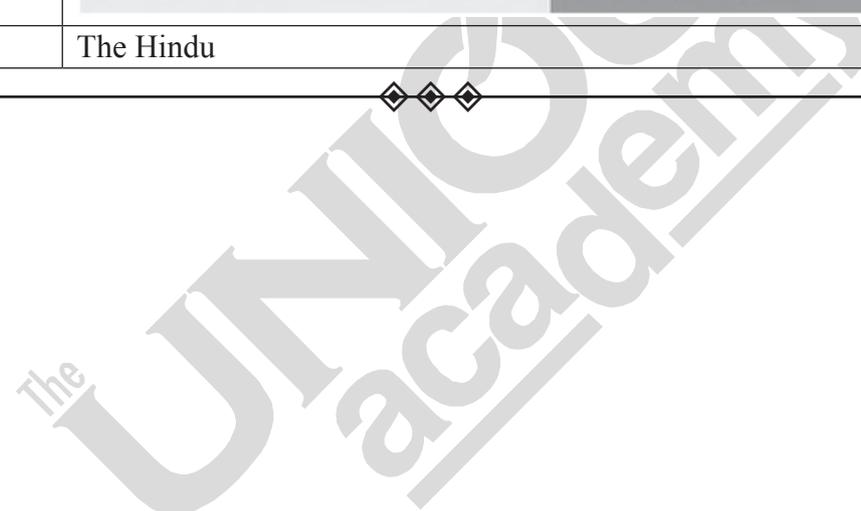
Strategic Policy Group

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The government has set up Strategic Policy Group or SPG to help the National Security Council, which advises the Prime Minister on matters of national security and strategic interests.
Strategic Policy Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Composition: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It will be headed by National Security Advisor. 2. Its members include the NITI Aayog vice chairman, cabinet secretary, the chiefs of the three defence services, the RBI governor, the foreign secretary, the home secretary, the finance secretary and the defence secretary. 3. The secretary of the Department of Defence Production and Supplies, the scientific adviser to the defence minister and the secretary, cabinet secretariat will also be members of the panel. 4. The other members are secretary, department of revenue; secretary, department of atomic energy; secretary, department of space; director, Intelligence Bureau, and secretary, National Security Council Secretariat. 5. Representatives of other ministries and departments will be invited to the meetings of the group as and when necessary. ● Functions: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It will assist the National Security Council and undertake among other tasks, a long-term strategic review of country's security affairs. 2. It will be the principal mechanism for inter-ministerial coordination and integration of relevant inputs in the formulation of national security policies. ● Meetings: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The NSA will convene the meetings of the SPG and the cabinet secretary will coordinate implementation of the group's decisions by union ministries and departments, and state governments.

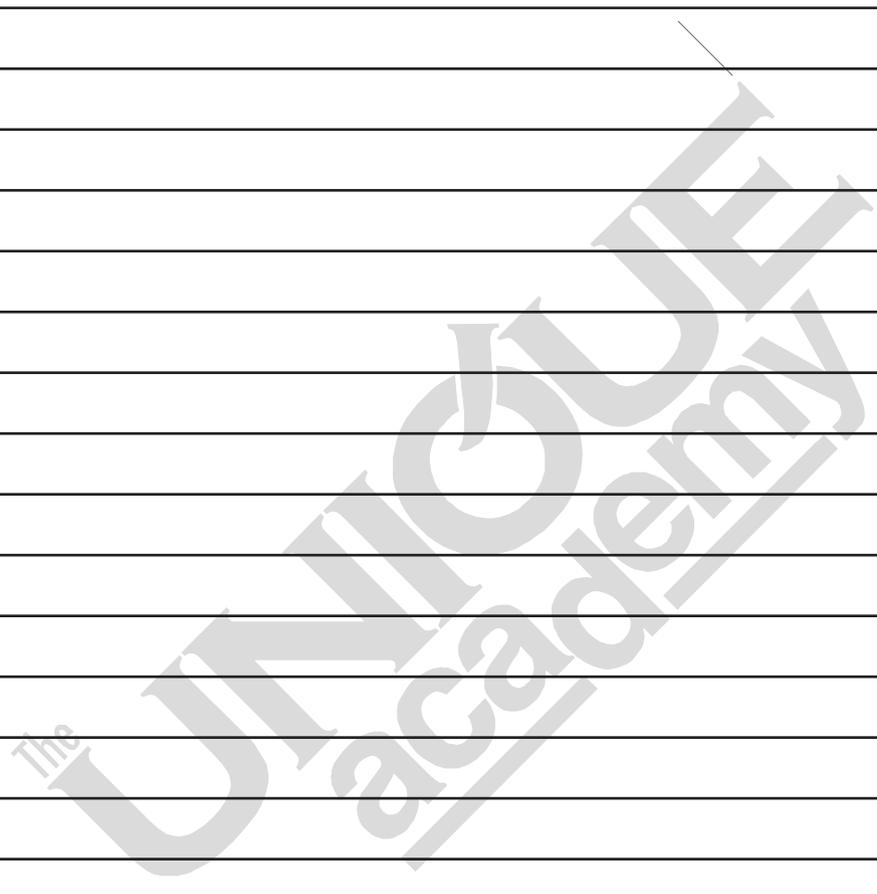
Source	PIB
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MiG-29

Why is it in news?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Indian Air Force's beast — MiG-29 — has gained in strength and ferocity after an upgrade, giving the force, battling a shortage of fighter aircraft, a much-needed boost.
MiG-29	<div style="background-color: #f0f0f0; padding: 10px;"> <p>What is polio</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious viral disease, mainly affecting children ■ According to WHO, the virus is transmitted from person-to-person, mainly through the faecal-oral route <hr/> <p>STRAINS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ There are three types of polio virus strains — P1, P2 and P3 ■ P2 was eradicated globally in 1999 ■ India attained a polio free status in 2014 after successfully eliminating the wild P1 and P3 strains <div style="float: right; text-align: center;">  </div> <div style="float: right; background-color: #808080; color: white; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p>VACCINATION SCHEDULE</p> <p>OPV: At 6 weeks, 10 weeks and 14 weeks</p> <hr/> <p>IPV: At 6 weeks and 14 weeks</p> <hr/> <p>OPV booster: Between 16 and 24 months</p> </div> </div>
Source	The Hindu



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