

MPSC

INTEGRATED BATCHES 2018-19

CURRENT AFFAIRS

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INTERNATIONAL, INDIA AND MAHARASHTRA

J&K all set for President's rule: dissolves state assembly

- Context: If the state assembly is not dissolved in two months, Jammu and Kashmir may come under President's rule in January.

What's the issue?

- Since J&K has a separate Constitution, Governor's rule is imposed under Section 92 for six months after an approval by the President.
- In case the Assembly is not dissolved within six months, President's rule under Article 356 is extended to the State. Governor's rule expires in the State on January 19.

Governor's rule in J&K:

- The imposition of governor's rule in J&K is slightly different than that in other states. In other states, the president's rule is imposed under the Article 356 of Constitution of India.
- In J&K, governor's rule is mentioned under Article 370 section 92 – 'Provisions in case of failure of constitutional machinery in the State.' Article 370 section 92: Provisions in case of failure of constitutional machinery in the State:
- If at any time, the Governor is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the Government of the State cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of this Constitution, the Governor may by Proclamation:
- Assume to himself all or any of the functions of the Government of the State and all or any of the powers vested in or exercisable by anybody or authority in the State.
- Make such incidental and consequential provisions as appear to the Governor to be necessary or desirable for giving effect to the objects of the Proclamation, including provisions for suspending in whole or in part the operation of any provision of this Constitution relating to anybody or authority in the State.

Related key facts:

- Any such Proclamation may be revoked or varied by a subsequent Proclamation. Any such Proclamation whether varied under subsection (2) or not, shall except where it is a Proclamation revoking a previous Proclamation, cease to operate on the expiration of six months from the date on which it was first issued.
- If the Government or by a Proclamation under his section assumes, to himself any, of the powers of the Legislature to make his laws, any law made by him in the exercise of that power shall, subject to, the terms there of continue to have effect until two years have elapsed from the date on which the proclamation ceases to have effect, unless sooner.
- No Proclamation under this section shall, except where it is a Proclamation revoking a previous Proclamation, be laid before each House of the Legislature as soon as it is convened.

SOUTH ASIAN ASSOCIATION FOR REGIONAL COOPERATION (SAARC)

- Context: Giving a boost to China's long standing demand, Pakistan recently said that it supported active participation of China at the platform of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).
- Why China is demanding a greater role? - China has a status of an observer state in South Asia, however an observer state can get involve with SAARC members on specific initiatives, but they do not have voting rights.
- China entered SAARC as an observer in 2005, supported by most member states.

India's concerns and fears:

- If China is given a greater role, India fears that its neighbours will come together to oppose the country's interests, particularly under the influence of Pakistan and China.
- India's neighbours are attracted to China, because of its greater economic resources, as also it has the potential to counter India.
- China's influence can be witnessed even in Nepal. To enhance strategic ties with Nepal, China has been investing heavily in that country; it has opened land-port between Nepal and Tibet named as Kyirong which will affect the regional strategic balance.
- The growing friendship with China and Pakistan is viewed by many as a joint tactic to offset India's dominance in the South Asian region.
- One of the most famous project, is China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) which strategically aims at providing links between the overland Silk Road and maritime Silk Road.
- Due to this project China becomes one of the major investors in Pakistan.
- It has been agreed that China's entry in SAARC as a full-member can give a push to SAARC to grow as a regional bloc as China's global economic influence can help SAARC in international forum. But, growing alliances between China and Pakistan may work against India and which will hamper the regional progress.
- It has also been feared that China may block the projects which are both strategically and economically important for India.

Way ahead:

- China is becoming member of different regional blocs due to its growing economic and military might.
- China's active and aggressive diplomacy, trade and investments, many cooperative agreements with SAARC nations is thus enabling it to have a greater influence in south Asia.
- India needs to re-think its regional strategies as rise of China will impact India.
- Often it is viewed that the rise of China will decrease India's influence in South Asia.

G20 SUMMIT 2018 BEGINS IN ARGENTINA

- Context: The 2018 G20 Summit is being held in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Nineteen leaders of the world's biggest economies and a representative of the European Union will be holding a meeting on November 30 as part of the G20 summit.
- G20 Summit 2018: It will be the 13th meeting of Group of Twenty (G20) and the first G20 summit to be hosted in South America.
- Theme: The theme of the summit was 'Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development'.
- The leaders of the Group agreed to fix the world trading system, however, only 19 agreed to support the Paris accord on fighting climate change with the United States holding onto its withdrawal

Objective:

- The Group was formed with an aim of studying, reviewing, and promoting high-level discussion of policy issues pertaining to the promotion of international financial stability.
- The forum aims to preempt balance of payments problems and turmoil on financial markets by improved coordination of monetary, fiscal, and financial policies.
- The forum seeks to address issues that go beyond the responsibilities of any one organisation.

Member Countries:

- The members of the G20 consist of 19 individual countries plus the European Union (EU).
- The 19 member countries of the forum are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States.
- The European Union is represented by the European Commission and by the European Central Bank.
- Shaktikanta Das, the former Secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), has been appointed as India's G20 Sherpa till December 31, 2018 for the Development Track of the G20 summit.
- A Sherpa is a personal representative of the leader of a member country at an international Summit meeting such as the G8, G20 or the Nuclear Security Summit and are responsible for thrashing out the details before the meeting of the leaders.

India, Japan & US held trilateral meeting on G20 sidelines :

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, US President Donald Trump and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe held their first trilateral meeting on the sidelines of the G-20 summit to discuss major issues of global and multilateral interests.

- PM Modi quoted that, "The 'JAI' (**J**apan, **A**merica, **I**ndia) meeting is dedicated to democratic values...'JAI' stands for victory (in Hindi)." The JAI meeting was a convergence of vision between the three nations.
- All three leaders agreed on free, open, inclusive and rules-based order to maintain peace and prosperity in Indo-Pacific region.

Government to release Rs 75 commemorative coin to mark 75th anniversary of Tricolour hoisting by Bose

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

Features of coin:

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

First Flag Hoisting by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose:

- Subhash Chandra Bose on December 30, 1943 had hoisted Tricolor for first time on free Indian soil at Cellular Jail of Port Blair during his visit to Andaman and declaring the island as the free territory from the British rule.
- It was much before India attained Independence in 1947. On same occasion, he had announced freedom of Andaman & Nicobar Islands (making it first Indian Territory) from the British rule and renamed them as "Shaheed-dweep" (Martyr Island) and "Swaraj-dweep" (Self-rule Island).
- The island at that time was liberated from British rule by Japan which captured it during World War – II. Major General Arcot Doraiswamy Loganadan of Indian National Army (INA) was made the Governor of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- Azad Hind Government was not merely a Government in Exile anymore but had its own land, own currency, civil code and stamps.

Government of India to observe the remembrance of 100 years of the historical Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre

- Government of India has decided to mark the remembrance of **100 years** of the historical Jallianwalla Bagh Massacre next year. A number of commemorative as well as constructive activities will be taken up during the remembrance period.
- Coin and Postage Stamps: The commemorative coin and postage stamps will be released on 13th April 2019 (the day the incident took place 100 years ago).

- Ministry of Culture will organize cultural activities like kavi sammelan, plays, exhibition, seminars, etc. across the country.
- Committee is constituted to ensure timely implementation to Renovate, upgrade and beautify the Jallianwala Bagh Memorial, and Develop Virtual Reality Theme Based show at the Memorial.

Development of Virtual Reality Theme Based show:

- The Ministry of Tourism earmarked an amount of Rs. 8 crore under Swadesh Darshan Scheme for development of Virtual Reality Theme Based show at the Memorial.
- The Ministry of Culture will provide additional funds, if needed.

Background:

- It is also known as the Amritsar Massacre (dated April 13, 1919) at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, Punjab.
- On 13th April 1919, thousands of people were gathered at Jallianwala Bagh. This day marks the beginning of New Year for the Sikhs, also celebrated as Baisakhi festival all over Punjab.
- Colonel Reginald Dyer had announced curfew and a ban on all processions that even prohibited a group of 4 or more people to meet publicly. However, General Dyer sensed the number of people present there and the secret meeting that was about to take place.
- Thus, he arrived with armed troops and ordered to open fire.
- The troops were ordered to start shooting; this heinous act of violence resulted in extreme mass killing.
- To keep in mind this significance of this place, a trust was founded in 1920 to build a memorial site at Jallianwala Bagh. American architect, Benjamin Polk, built the memorial site which was inaugurated by the then President of India, Rajendra Prasad on 13 April 1961.

TITLI CYCLONE IS 'RAREST OF RARE'

- Context: The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for Africa and Asia has termed 'Titli', the severe cyclonic storm that devastated Odisha in October, as 'rarest cyclone'.
- More than 200 years of cyclone track history in the Odisha coast reveals that the Titli cyclone is the rarest of rare in terms of its characteristics such as recurvature after landfall and retaining its destructive potential after landfall and recurvature away from the coastal areas for more than two days.

Background:

- Earlier, India Meteorological Department had called the formation of Titli as a 'rarest of rare' occurrence. The severe cyclone had changed its path after landfall.

What can we learn from this?

- The Odisha State Disaster Management Authority (OSDMA) faced challenges in anticipating and managing Titli's impact due to lack of impact based actionable early warning information and prior experience not only in India but also elsewhere.
- The OSDMA, by learning the lessons from Titli cyclone, could evolve measures to minimise impacts in both coastal and non-coastal regions more effectively in future.
- The RIMES has recommended that a detailed risk assessment has to be carried out for Odisha to understand the risks in the light of the Titli devastation.

RECENT CYCLONES:

<u>YEAR</u>	<u>STATE</u>	<u>CYCLONE</u>
2007	Andhra pradesh	Yemyin
2008	Andhra pradesh	Lehar
2012	Andhra pradesh	Nilam
2014	Andhra pradesh	Hudhud
2008	West Bengal	Rashmi
2009	West Bengal	Alia
2017	West Bengal	Mora
2009	Maharashtra	Phyan
2017	Tamil nadu	Ockhi
2018	Tamil nadu	Gaja

STATES**GUJARAT GOVERNMENT WANTS TO RENAME AHMEDABAD AS KARNAVATI**

- Context: Gujarat government is planning to rename Ahmedabad as Karnavati.

Historical background:

- Historically, the area around Ahmedabad has been inhabited since the 11th century, when it was known as Ashaval.
- Chaulukya ruler Karna of Anhilwara (modern Patan) had waged a successful war against the Bhil king of Ashaval and established a city called Karnavati on the banks of the Sabarmati river.
- Sultan Ahmed Shah in 1411 A.D. Had laid the foundation of a new walled city near Karnavati and named it Ahmedabad after the four saints in the area by the name Ahmed.

Recent renamed cities:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Old</u>	<u>New</u>
2007	Uttarakhand	Uttaranchal
2011	Orissa	Odisha
1974	Baroda	Vadodara
1995	Bombay	Mumbai
1996	Cochin	Kochi
2001	Calcutta	Kolkatta
2006	Pondicherry	Puducherry
2014	Belgaum	Belagavi
2016	Gurgaon	Gurugram
2018	Allahabad	Prayagraj
2018	New Raipur	Atal Nagar
2018	Ayodhya	Faizabad

Lucknow stadium renamed after Atal Bihari Vajpayee :

- The newly-built Ekana International Stadium of Lucknow was on November 5, 2018 renamed after former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The stadium will now be known as 'Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee International Cricket Stadium'.
- The stadium was renamed just ahead of the first-ever international cricket match - the T20 International between India and West Indies. The city hosted its first international match at the stadium on November 6, 2018 when India played against West Indies in the second T20 International match.

Similar initiatives undertaken by various states to pay tribute to Atal Bihari Vajpayee:

- Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh announced to rename the upcoming capital Naya Raipur as Atal Nagar.
- Yogi Adityanath-led Uttar Pradesh government also decided to name the proposed Bundelkhand Expressway as 'Atal Path'.
- AIIMS Rishikesh auditorium, a ghat on Sabarmati River in Gujarat and the cyber tower in Mauritius will also be named after him.
- Shivraj Singh Chouhan has sought Central Government's permission to change the name of Habibganj railway station in Madhya Pradesh after him.
- The Himachal Pradesh cabinet also approved the proposal to install a statue of Atal Bihari Vajpayee at Shimla's historic Ridge.

Maharashtra Government to convert decommissioned aircraft carrier INS Viraat into floating museum

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

Salient features :

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

INS Viraat

- It was built in 1943 during Second World War and was first commissioned as HMS Hermes into the British Royal Navy in November 1959. During the Falklands War in 1982, the aircraft carrier had served as flagship of the Royal Navy's task force. British navy had decommissioned in 1985 after 27 years of service.
- It has sailed nearly 11 lakh km, enough to cover the globe 27 times. It had spent 30 years in Indian Navy and 27 years in Royal British Navy. It was commissioned into the Indian Navy on May 12, 1987.
- It had played a major role in Operation Jupiter in 1989 in the Sri Lankan peace keeping operation. It had participated in the standoff Operation Parakram in 2001-20012 when India and Pakistan were engaged in a standoff post the Parliament terror attack.
- Its last operational deployment was for participation in International Fleet Review held at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh in February 2016. INS Viraat holds Guinness Books of record of being the longest serving warship in the world. It was also the last British-built ship serving with the Indian Navy.

2nd Mega Food Park in Maharashtra inaugurated in Aurangabad

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

- Third mega foodpark has been sanctioned by Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries in Maharashtra in Wardha district.

Paithan Mega Food Park

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

Significance

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

Kambala: In news:

- The coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi are all set for kambala (a traditional slushtrack buffalo race) with 18 races lined up for the 2018-19 season.
- The first race, named 'sathya-dharma', was held at Bantwal taluk in Dakshina Kannada on November 24. The last and the 18th 'soorya-chandra' kambala will be conducted at Mangaluru taluk on March 23, 2019.

Legal Issue

- Kambala was not held in the coastal districts during 2016-17 due to a ban imposed by Karnataka High Court in November 2016 on a PIL filed by the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). In view of the apex court verdict on jallikattu, the high court had also stayed this event.
- Later, the President promulgated The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Ordinance 2017, which was valid till January 20, 2018 paving the way for conducting kambala in 2017-18.
- Though PETA challenged the ordinance in the Supreme Court, it refused to pass an interim stay on the Ordinance. Hence some kambalas were held in the last season.
- With the Governor giving approval to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Second Amendment) Act, 2017, and the State government notifying the same in February 2018, kambala organisers can go ahead with the race without the threat of a ban hanging over the event.
- However, PETA has again questioned the constitutional validity of the new law in the Supreme Court in September, 2018 seeking direction to strike it down.

GOVERNMENT SCHEMES

SHE-BOX

- Context: The Ministry of Women and Child Development has linked SHE Box, the online portal to report complaints of Sexual Harassment at Workplace, to all the Central Ministries, Departments and 653 districts across 33 States/Union Territories.
- For prompt disposal of complaints on SHE-Box, each case goes directly to the central/ state authority concerned having jurisdiction to take action in the matter.
- Cases on She-Box can be monitored by the complainants and Ministry WCD, reducing the time taken in case disposal.

About SHE-box:

- What is it? It is an online complaint management system for registering complaints related to sexual harassment at workplace.
- It was launched by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The complaint management system has been developed to ensure the effective implementation of Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (the SH Act), 2013.
- How it works? Once a complaint is submitted to the portal, it will be directly sent to the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) of the concerned Ministry/Department/PSU/Autonomous Body etc. having jurisdiction to inquire into the complaint.
- Through this portal, WCD as well as complainant can monitor the progress of inquiry conducted by the ICC.

Significance of the portal:

- This portal is an initiative to provide a platform to women working or visiting any office of Central Government (Central Ministries, Departments, Public Sector Undertakings, Autonomous Bodies and Institutions etc.) to file complaints related to sexual harassment at workplace under the SH Act.
- Those who had already filed a written complaint with the concerned Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) constituted under the SH Act are also eligible to file their complaint through this portal.
- It is also an effort to provide speedier remedy to women facing sexual harassment at workplace as envisaged under the SHE Act.

Location tracking devices, emergency buttons mandatory for new public service vehicles: Government

- The Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways on October 25, 2018 notified that all new public service vehicles, except auto rickshaws and e-Rickshaws, registered on and after January 1, 2019 will have to be mandatorily equipped with Vehicle Location Tracking (VLT) and Emergency Buttons.
- In case of older public service vehicles, registered up to December 31, 2018, the respective State Governments will notify the date by which these vehicles have to install Vehicle Location Tracking Device and Panic Buttons.
- The VLT device manufacturers would assist in providing the back end services for monitoring the device. With such regulation, the Ministry aims to ensure safety of passengers especially women.

Operational procedure for implementation of VLT cum Emergency buttons:

- The Ministry has sent an advisory to all the states as well in this regard. The States are required to ensure execution of this order and check fitment and functional status of the VLT device in the public service vehicles at the time of checking of the vehicles for fitness certification.
- Command and Control Centres will be setup by the State or VLT manufacturers or any other agency authorised by the State Government.
- These centres will provide interface such as state emergency response centre, the transport department or Regional Transport Offices and its designated agencies.
- These centres will also provide feed to the 'VAHAN' data base or the relevant data base of the State with regard to the over speeding device 'healthstatus'. The details of each VLT device will be uploaded on the VAHAN database by the VLT device manufacturer using its secured authenticated access.
- The VLT device manufacturers or their authorised dealers will install the VLT devices in public service vehicles and register the devices along with details of vehicle on the corresponding backend systems in real-time.
- The public service vehicle owners have to ensure that the VLT devices installed in their vehicles are in working condition and regularly send required data to the corresponding backend system.
- VLT device manufacturers will get their devices tested for conformity of production every year after the first certification from the testing agencies referred to in Rule 126 of the Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989.
- The testing agencies will upload the details of the VLT devices certified by them on the VAHAN database.
- The State or Union Territories will publish Internet Protocol address (IP address) and Short Message Service Gateway (SMS gateway) details of their respective emergency response system where VLT devices will send the emergency alerts on press of emergency button.

POLITY

Quota For Marathas

In News

- After months of protests, the Maratha community has secured promise of reservation in government jobs and educational institutions. The proposal has been cleared by the Maharashtra legislature to provide **16%** reservation.
- Previous government in 2014 moved to of seats in government jobs and educational institutions but it was stayed by the Bombay High Court.
- As per Article 340 of the Constitution, the term socially and educationally backward class (SEBC) is being used for the OBCs.

Rationale For Grant Of Reservation

- As Per Recommendation of SBCC: Maharashtra government has defended this by saying that it is in line with the recommendations of a State Backward Class Commission (SBCC) report, mandating reservations for Marathas under a new separate SEBC category.
- General Backwardness: As per the report's assessment, Marathas are socially and educationally backward, with minuscule representation in government services and the State is liable to take action considering the extraordinary and exceptional conditions.
- According to the MSBCC's report, the percentage of Marathas below poverty line was **37.28 %**, higher than the 25 % base; the percentage of those with small and marginal land-holdings among Marathas was **62.78 %**, much higher than the base 48.25 % which is considered for social economic backwardness. The grading for education (post Class X and Class XII) also showed Marathas lagged behind the national average literacy index. The community registered the highest number of suicides, especially in the agriculture sector.

Opposition To The Move

- Above 50% Limit: Creating a separate category now would increase the overall quota beyond the 50% limit which the Supreme Court has set.
- Not backed with data: The SBCC's reported findings that a significant proportion of Marathas constitute a socially and educationally backward class do not square with available data. As with Jats in Rajasthan and Patels in Gujarat, they enjoy a socioeconomic status closer to that of the forward classes and castes in Maharashtra.
- Marathas comprises just 12% of population: The **Kunbi community**, a sub-caste of the Marathas, which is considered backward, claims that if Kunbis are removed from this 30% figure, then the *Marathas would be just 12%*. So, if the Maharashtra government offers reservation of 15-16% to the Marathas, claiming that they are 30% of the state's population, then the matter could be legally challenged. (Kunbis are already included in the OBC quota)
- No social stigma: There is no reason to argue that Marathas face any social stigma that calls for affirmative action.
- Reservation just to dole put benefits: The demand for reservations in this case is less an acknowledgement of social backwardness from a politically powerful community and more a call for the accrual of welfare benefits to less well-off sections among the community.
- Political motivation: The Cabinet's nod is in any case born of political exigency, not socioeconomic reasons.

- Perception based reservation: The assertions of backwardness by sections of dominant communities such as Marathas, Patels and Jats have largely been due to perceptions about the relative inability to move up the economic ladder and the lack of adequate employment opportunities amid a sluggish agrarian economy.
- Claim by other communities: There are more than 300 different castes vying for just 27% reservations for OBCs, an exclusive 16% reservations for Marathas could see similar communities who do not enjoy reservations to stake claim by arguing that the 'socially and educationally backward caste class' criteria tag for Marathas suit them too.

Way Forward

- As judicial scrutiny is bound to be brought to bear on the government's decision, it will be well advised to look at measures to alleviate the State's prolonged agrarian distress and the lack of adequate jobs, problems that affect all sections of society.
- Thus, reservation is indeed an instrument to rectify social and educational backwardness, but it does not have solutions for every social and economic ailment. The government will have to expand the economic cake and create fresh opportunities so that people, especially young people, who leave agriculture are absorbed in non-farm sectors.

NATIONAL GREEN TRIBUNAL (NGT)

- Context: Stating that State governments had failed to curb stubble burning, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Chief Secretaries of Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to draw up a plan to provide economic incentives and disincentives to farmers.

What's the issue?

- Stubble burning is adversely affecting environment and public health. The problem has not been fully tackled and the adverse impacts on the air quality and consequent impacts on the citizens' health and lives are undisputed.

What needs to be done- Supreme Court's observations?

- The problem is required to be resolved by taking all such measures as are possible in the interest of public health and environment protection.
- Incentives could be provided to those who are not burning the stubble and disincentives for those who continue the practice.
- The existing Minimum Support Price (MSP) Scheme must be so interpreted as to enable the States concerned to wholly or partly deny the benefit of MSP to those who continue to burn the crop residue.
- Secretary, Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare has also been directed to be present to "find a lasting solution."
- The Central government should convene a meeting with the States.

About the National Green Tribunal (NGT):

- What is it? NGT has been established under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010 for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.
- Ambit: The tribunal deals with matters relating to the enforcement of any legal right relating to environment and giving relief and compensation for damages to persons and property.
- Members: Sanctioned strength: currently, 10 expert members and 10 judicial members (although the act allows for up to 20 of each).
- Chairman: is the administrative head of the tribunal, also serves as a judicial member and is required to be a serving or retired Chief Justice of a High Court or a judge of the Supreme Court of India.
- Selection: Members are chosen by a selection committee (headed by a sitting judge of the Supreme Court of India) that reviews their applications and conducts interviews. The Judicial members are chosen from applicants who are serving or retired judges of High Courts.
- Expert members are chosen from applicants who are either serving or retired bureaucrats not below the rank of an Additional Secretary to the Government of India (not below the rank of Principal Secretary if serving under a state government) with a minimum administrative experience of five years in dealing with environmental matters.
- Or, the expert members must have a doctorate in a related field.
- Other facts: The Tribunal is not bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be guided by principles of natural justice.
- The Tribunal's dedicated jurisdiction in environmental matters shall provide speedy environmental justice and help reduce the burden of litigation in the higher courts.
- The Tribunal is mandated to make and endeavour for disposal of applications or appeals finally within 6 months of filing of the same.

MATERNITY BENEFIT ACT

- Context: In a bid to encourage employers, especially in the private sector, to implement the extended 26-week maternity leave law, the Labour Ministry is planning to refund them for seven weeks' worth of wages for women workers with a wage ceiling up to 15,000 per month.
- The Ministry is in the process of getting budgetary approvals for the 400 crore incentive scheme.

Need for incentives:

- In March 2017, the Centre amended the Maternity Benefit Act to increase paid maternity leave from 12 to 26 weeks for all women employees in establishments employing ten or more people. However, while implementation of the provision was good in the public sector, it was poor for those with private sector or contract jobs.
- There is also a wide perception that private entities are not encouraging women employees because if they are employed, they may have to provide maternity benefit to them, particularly 26 weeks of paid holiday.

- Therefore, the extended maternity leave has become a deterrent for female employees who are asked to quit or retrenched on flimsy grounds before they go on maternity leave.

The Maternity Benefit Act:

- The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, applies to establishments employing 10 or more than 10 persons in factories, mines, plantation, shops & establishments and other entities.
- The main purpose of this Act is to regulate the employment of women in certain establishments for certain period before and after child birth and to provide maternity benefit and certain other benefits. The Act was amended through the Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017.
- The amendment has brought in major changes to the law relating to maternity benefits. These are: It extends the period of maternity benefit from 12 weeks to 26 weeks of which not more than eight weeks can precede the date of the expected delivery.
- This exceeds the International Labour Organisation's minimum standard of 14 weeks and is a positive development. However, a woman who has two or more surviving children will be entitled to 12 weeks of which not more than six weeks can precede the date of the expected delivery.
- Women who legally adopt a child below the age of three months or a "commissioning mother" will be entitled to maternity benefit for 12 weeks from the date on which the child is handed over to her. A commissioning mother is defined as a biological mother who uses her egg to create an embryo implanted in another woman.
- It gives discretion to employers to allow women to work from home after the period of maternity benefit on mutually agreeable conditions. This would apply if the nature of work assigned to the woman permits her to work from home
- It requires establishments having 50 or more employees to have a crèche facility, either separately or along with common facilities. Further, employers should allow the woman to visit the crèche four times a day, which "shall also include the interval for rest allowed to her."
- It introduces a provision which requires every establishment to intimate a woman at the time of her appointment of the maternity benefits available to her. Such communication must be in writing and electronically.

Justices Hemant Gupta, R. Subhash Reddy, M R Shah and Ajay Rastogi were sworn in as judges of SC

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

Salient features :

- These four new judges of SC were appointed by President Ram Nath Kovind under Article 124 based on the recommendation of SC Collegium comprising CJI Ranjan Gogoi, Justice Madan B Lokur, Justice Kurian Joseph, Justice A K Sikri and Justice S A Bobde.

- With this total number of judges at the Supreme Court rose to 28. The sanctioned strength of Supreme Court judges in 31 including Chief Justice.
- Prior to this elevation, Justice Gupta served as Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court; Justice Rastogi as Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court; Justice Shah as Chief Justice of the Patna High Court and Justice Reddy as Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court.

APPOINTMENTS

Sunil Arora appointed as new Chief Election Commissioner

- Sunil Arora on December 2, 2018 assumed charge as the 23rd Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) of India succeeding O P Rawat, who demitted the office on December 1, 2018 after completing his tenure.
- President Ram Nath Kovind had officially announced Arora's appointment to the post on November 26, 2018. The 62-year-old was appointed to the Election Commission on August 31, 2017. He was brought in to fill the vacancy created by former CEC Nasim Zaidi's retirement.

Term:

- A CEC of the Election Commission can have a term of six years or hold office till the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier. The post of Chief Election Commissioner is generally given to the senior-most election commissioner within the Election Commission.

About Sunil Arora

- Sunil Arora is a 1980 batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan Cadre, who has held top positions in various government departments and ministries.
- Prior to being appointed as a top bureaucrat in the central government, he served as the secretary to the Chief Minister from 1993 to 1998. He served as the principal secretary of CM Vasundhara Raje from 2005 to 2008.
- He also handled Information and Public Relations (IPR), Industries and Investment Departments in the state besides having district postings in Dholpur, Alwar, Nagaur and Jodhpur.
- He was later appointed as the Secretary in the Union Minister of Information and Broadcasting and the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship.
- He has also served as the joint secretary in the Ministry of Civil Aviation from 1999 to 2002.
- He also worked in finance, textile and planning commission during his long career as a bureaucrat.
- He also worked as chief managing director of the Indian Airlines for a period of five years, with two years as additional charge and three years as full charge.
- He was her principal secretary from 2005 to 2008. He had retired from service in April 2016, following which he was appointed as advisor to Prasar Bharti and then as director general & CEO of Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs.

Other Details

- The Election Commission will hold the 2019 general election under him.
- Besides the Lok Sabha polls, Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, Odisha, Maharashtra, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim are also scheduled to be held next year.

Election Commission of India (ECI)

- It is permanent and independent constitutional body established directly by Constitution of India under Article 324 to ensure fair and fair elections in the country.
- **Composition:** It is multi-member body and currently has three members including Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and two election commissioners (ECs). They all are appointed by the President.
- **Service conditions and tenure of office CEC and ECs:** They are determined by an act of parliament titled The Chief Election Commissioner and Other Election Commissioners (Conditions of Service) Act, 1991. They hold office for term of six years or until they attain age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- **Powers CEC and ECs:** They have equal power and receive equal salary, allowances and other perquisites, which are similar to judge of Supreme Court. In case of difference of opinion amongst CEC and Election Commissioner, matter is decided by Commission by majority.

Arvind Saxena appointed as Chairman of UPSC

- The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind on November 28, 2018 appointed Arvind Saxena as the new Chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC).
- The term of his appointment will be from the date he enters the Chairman office till August 7, 2020 when he attains the age of 65 years or till further orders, whichever is earlier.
- The Government had appointed Saxena as the acting Chairman of UPSC in June 2018. He took over charge from Vinay Mittal who had completed his term.

About Arvind Saxena

- Arvind Saxena studied civil engineering at the Delhi College of Engineering and did his M.Tech. in systems management from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), New Delhi.
- In 1978, he was selected for the Civil Services and joined the Indian Postal Service.
- In 1988, Saxena started working at the Cabinet Secretariat, where he specialised in the study of strategic developments in neighbouring countries.
- In his decade's long career, Saxena has served in different countries as well as in the States of Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh.
- He joined as a member of the Union Public Service Commission on May 8, 2015 and has been performing the duties of the post of Chairman, UPSC since June 20, 2018.

- He was appointed as a member of UPSC in May 2015 after he completed his stint as the Director of Aviation Research Centre (ARC).
- He has also previously worked in India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) after he joined it in 1988.
- Saxena has received several awards for his excellent services such the awards for Meritorious Services in 2005 and Distinguished Services in 2012.

About UPSC

- The Union Public Service Commission is a constitutional body that conducts prestigious civil services examination for bureaucratic positions such as the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Foreign Service and Indian Police Service (IPS) among others.
- The commission was established under Article 315 of the Constitution of India. It comprises Chairman and ten Members, who are appointed and removed by the President.
- The term of the members and the chairman is six years or until they attain the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- The commission reports directly to the President and can advise the government through him, although such advice is not binding on the government.
- Being a constitutional authority, UPSC is amongst the few institutions which function with both autonomy and freedom, along with the country's higher judiciary and lately the Election Commission.

Ashok Kumar Gupta appointed as Chairperson of Competition Commission of India

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

Competition Commission of India (CCI):

- CCI is quasi-judicial statutory body established under The Competition Act, 2002. It was established in October 2003 and became fully functional in May 2009.
- Section 8(1) of the Act provides CCI shall consist of Chairperson and not less than two and not more than six Members. Presently, Chairperson and four Members are in position.
- It has been functioning as collegium right from its inception. It functions under Ministry of Cooperate Affairs.
- CCI aims to eliminate practices that adversely affect competition in different industries and protect interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade.

- Its seeks to eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in markets of India.
- It also gives opinion on competition issues on reference received from statutory authority established under any law and undertakes competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.

UNICEF Appoints Indian athlete Hima Das as India's first ever Youth Ambassador

- The United Nations Children's Fund-India (UNICEF) on November 14, 2018 appointed Asian Games gold-medalist sprinter Hima Das as India's first ever Youth Ambassador.
- UNICEF India works along with the Central Government to ensure that children born in India get the best start in life, thrive and develop to his or her full potential.
- Recently, Hima clinched a Gold medal in Women's 4x400 metre relay event at the 2018 Asian Games, held from August 18 to September 2, 2018 at Jakarta, Indonesian. She also won Silver in the Women's 400m Race event with a clock timing of 50.59 seconds.

About Hima Das

- Hailing from Nagaon district of Assam, Hima Das took up serious running in 2017.
- In July 2018, Hima scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman athlete to win a gold medal in the women's 400m final race at the IAAF World Under-20 Athletics Championships in Tampere, Finland.
- With the win at IAAF World Under-20 Athletics Championship, Das became the first Indian woman, be it junior or senior, to win a gold medal at any level in a World Championship.
- She is also the first Indian woman to win a gold medal at any athletics meet at the world level.
- Das had earlier clocked an Indian U-20 record of 51.32 seconds to finish sixth in the Commonwealth Games 400m final in Gold Coast in April 2018.
- Nicknamed the 'Dhing Express', Hima was among the 20 sportspersons to be recommended for the Arjuna Award.
- In October 2018, Hima joined Indian Oil Corporation as a Grade 'A' HR Officer.

IMPORTANT DAYS AND DATES

National Milk day – 26th November

- National Milk Day is celebrated in the memory of **Dr. Verghese Kurien** who was the architect of the "**Operation Flood**", which was launched by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) in year 1970.
- It is the programme which led India to become one of the largest producer of Milk and now India is self sufficient to meet its dairy needs.

- 26th November is the birthday of father of white revolution Dr. Verghese Kurien.

National Education Day: 11 November

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

Background:

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

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad:

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

INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN (IDEVAW) :- 25TH NOVEMBER

- Context: International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (IDEVAW) is observed every year across the world on 25 November.
- Aim: To raise awareness about violence against women and girls, end violence against women. It also seeks to show that prevention is possible against violence of women.
- Theme and its significance: "Orange the World: #HearMeToo". It aims to reinforce UNiTE Campaign's commitment to create world free from violence for all women and girls and reaching out to most marginalized people including migrants, refugees, indigenous peoples, minorities and populations affected by natural disasters and conflicts.

Background:

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

Violence against women:

- **Definition:** The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as “any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life.
- Violence against women is a human rights violation. It is a consequence of discrimination against women, in law.
- It is also in general practice and persisting inequalities between men and women. It impedes, progress in many areas, including poverty eradication, peace and security and combating HIV/AIDS.
- Violence against women continues to be a global pandemic, but is not inevitable but prevention is possible and essential.

National Press Day: November 16

- The National Press Day (NPD) is celebrated every year on November 16 as symbolic of free and responsible press in India.
- This was the day on which Press Council of India (PCI) started functioning as moral watchdog to ensure that not only did press maintain high standards expected from this powerful medium but also that it was not fettered by the influence or threats of any extraneous factors.

Press Council of India (PCI):

- PCI is a statutory body with mandate to act as watchdog to oversee conduct of the print media. It derives its mandate from Press Council Act, 1978.
- It consist of Chairman (who has by convention, been a retired judge of Supreme Court) and 28 other members off whom 20 represent press, five are nominated from two Houses of Parliament and three represent cultural, literary and legal fields.
- It is statutory, quasi-judicial body acting as watchdog of press. It adjudicates complaints against and by press for violation of ethics and for violation of freedom of press respectively.

World Diabetes Day: 14 November

- World Diabetes Day was observed every year across the world on 14 November to raise awareness about diabetes. Observance of day aims to pursue multilateral efforts to promote and improve human health and provide access to health-care treatment and education.

- The theme for World Diabetes Day 2018 and 2019 is “The Family and Diabetes”.
- The two-year theme timeframe has been chosen to raise awareness of the impact that diabetes has on the family and support network of those affected and promote role of family in management, care, prevention and education of diabetes.

Background:

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

Diabetes:

- Diabetes is a chronic, progressive non-communicable disease (NCD) characterized by elevated levels of blood sugar (blood glucose).
- It occurs when (i) the pancreas does not produce enough of the insulin hormone, which regulates blood sugar (ii) the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces.
- Type 1 diabetes occurs when the body doesn't make enough insulin, and type 2 diabetes occurs when the body doesn't make or use insulin very well, causing glucose to remain in the blood, which can lead to serious problems.
- The main symptom of diabetes is excess fatigue, frequent urination, dysentery, excessive thirst, etc. Diabetes can also be genetic, but its main cause is obesity, lack of adequate nutrition, etc. Insulin injection is given to the patient suffering from type 1 diabetes. Prevention of type 2 diabetes is quite possible.

ECONOMICS AND HRD

COMPETITION COMMISSION OF INDIA

- Context: A 'National Conference on Public Procurement & Competition Law' is being organised by the Competition Commission of India (CCI) with a view to scale up Competition Advocacy and reach out to important stakeholders in public procurement ecosystem.
- The National Conference is being organised in association with Indian Institute of Corporate Affairs (IICA), a think tank under the aegis of Ministry of Corporate Affairs.
- Ashok Kumar Gupta has been appointed as the chairperson of the Competition Commission of India (CCI). It was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).

About Competition Commission Of India:

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) was established under the Competition Act, 2002 for the administration, implementation and enforcement of the Act, and was duly constituted in March 2009.
- Chairman and members are appointed by the central government. The following are the objectives of the Commission:
- To prevent practices having adverse effect on competition.
- To promote and sustain competition in markets.

- To protect the interests of consumers.
- To ensure freedom of trade.

Functions of the commission:

- It is the duty of the Commission to eliminate practices having adverse effect on competition, promote and sustain competition, protect the interests of consumers and ensure freedom of trade in the markets of India.
- The Commission is also required to give opinion on competition issues on a reference received from a statutory authority established under any law and to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.

The Competition Act:

- The Competition Act, 2002, as amended by the Competition (Amendment) Act, 2007, prohibits anticompetitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and M&A), which causes or likely to cause an appreciable adverse effect on competition within India.

India ranked 77th World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index

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

About other countries:

- New Zealand topped the charts followed by Singapore, Denmark, Hong Kong, China and Republic of Korea as top 5.
- **China** has moved up from its previous rank of 78 to 46th place.
- Among the neighbours, Pakistan is ranked 136, Sri Lanka is at 100th rank, Nepal at 110, Bangladesh at 176th and Bhutan at 81st.
- Among the other BRICS nations, Brazil at 109th, Russia stands at 31, South Africa at 82nd.

Ease of Doing Business Index

- The index ranks 190 countries based on 10 indicators across the life-cycle of a business, from "starting a business" to "resolving insolvency."

- These 10 indicators are: Starting business, Dealing with construction permits, Getting electricity, Registering property, Getting credit, Protecting minority investors, Paying taxes, Trading across borders, Enforcing contracts and Resolving insolvency.
- Each one of these indicators carry equal weightage. In case of India, Delhi and Mumbai are only two cities surveyed by World Bank for this rankings.

India's performance in EODB 2018

- Its jump in ranking in EODB 2019 was aided largely by improvement in areas such as “trading across borders”, “dealing with construction permits”, “getting electricity”, “getting credit” and “starting a business”.
- It has improved in rank in six out of ten indicators. It has moved closer to international best practice. India's score also improved to 67.23, a gain of 6.63 from last year.
- The most dramatic improvements by India was registered in indicators related to ‘construction permits’ (improved to 52 from 181) and ‘trading across borders’ (rose to 80 from 146).
- However, compared to last year, India saw its ranking dip on various other parameters, such as “registering property”, “protecting minority investors”, “paying taxes” and “resolving insolvency”.
- It is among top ten economies improving most across three or more areas alongside countries such as Afghanistan, Djibouti, China, Azerbaijan, Togo, Kenya, Côte d'Ivoire, Turkey and Rwanda.
- It is only other country, alongside Djibouti, to be in top ten for second year in row. Two economies with largest populations — China and India — demonstrated “impressive reform agendas”.
- It made starting business easier by integrating multiple application forms into general incorporation form. India also replaced value-added tax (VAT) with GST for which registration process is faster.

SCI-TECH

ISRO successfully launches communication satellite GSAT-29

- Communication satellite GSAT-29 was launched successfully by the second developmental flight of Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle Mark III (GSLV MKIII-D2) from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota.

GSAT-29:

- Communication satellite GSTA-29 weighing 3,423 kg is a multiband and multi-beam satellite. The mission life will be 10 years.
- The satellite's Ku-band and Ka-band payloads will cater to the communication needs of people residing in remote parts of the country especially those from Jammu & Kashmir and North-Eastern regions.
- Similarly, the satellite's Q/V-Band communication payload will help in demonstrating the future high throughput satellite system technologies.
- Additionally, the onboard Geo High Resolution Camera will help in carrying out high resolution imaging.

- The onboard Optical Communication Payload will showcase a very high rate data transmission through optical communication link. This unique laser based optical communication is being tested for the first time by the ISRO.

GSLV MKIII:

- GSLV MKIII is ISRO's fifth generation three stage heavy lift launch vehicle. The launch vehicle is capable of placing satellites weighing 4000 kg in GTO.
- The first stage constitutes two massive boosters with solid propellants. The core with liquid propellant and the cryogenic engine constitutes the second and third stages respectively.
- The weight of GSLV Mark III is 641 tons roughly equals the weight of five fully loaded passenger aircrafts. GSLV MarkIII, which took 15 years to make, is the heaviest among India's operational launch vehicles.
- Also, with only 43 meters tall, it is also the shortest launch vehicles. GSLV MKIII will be used to launch Chandrayaan-2 and Gaganyaan missions.

Significance:

- With the success of this flight, the Indian Space programme has achieved a significant milestone as the heaviest launcher (GSLV MKIII) lifted off the heaviest satellite (GSAT-29).
- The success of this mission is also an important milestone for the Indian space programme as it showcases the self-reliance of ISRO in launching heavier satellites.
- Also, the launch also signifies the completion of the experimental phase of GSLV MarkIII. The first successful mission of GSLV MarkIII was in 2014.
- In 2017, GSLV Mark III-D1 placed 3150 kg GSAT-19, a high throughput communication satellite into Geostationary Transfer orbit (GTO).
- The launch of GSAT-29 communication satellite will pave for bridging the digital divide in the country. The launch of the satellite is also expected to aid Digital India Programme.
- The satellite is also intended to serve as a test bed for several new and critical next generation payload technologies.
- GSAT-29 is the 33rd communication satellite of India. The successful flight of GSAT-29 will constitute a series of experimental flights that will help in developing the heaviest rocket for the manned space missions of the ISRO.
- ISRO's manned mission Gaganyaan is expected to lift of three Indian astronauts into space for a seven days trip to the Low-Earth Orbit. The mission is slated for 2022.

INS Tarangini returned after 205-day world tour

- On October 31, 2018, the sail training ship of Indian Navy, **INS Tarangini** based at **Kochi**, returned after a seven-month sail across the world.
- The ship sailed over 22000 nautical miles across 15 ports in 13 countries in **205** days.
- The voyage named '**Lokayan 18**' was flag-ged off on April 10 from Kochi to sail across the Arabian Sea, Red Sea, Suez Canal, Mediterranean Sea, Strait of Gibraltar, North Atlantic Ocean, Bay of Biscay, English Channel and North Sea, right up to Norway.
- It also participated in the culminating event of the 'Three Festival Tall Ships Regatta' at Bordeaux, France, as well as the 'Tall Ships Races Europe 2018'.

- The ship was received by Rear Admiral RJ Nadkarni, VSM, Chief of Staff, Southern Naval Command.

KONKAN 18: India-United Kingdom Navy exercise begins in Goa:

- On 28th November 2018, the bilateral **KONKAN** exercise between the **Indian Navy** and the **Royal Navy** of the **United Kingdom** started off at **Goa**. KONKAN-2018 will be conducted from **28 Nov to 06 Dec 2018**.
- The Bilateral KONKAN exercise provides a platform for the two Navies to periodically exercise at sea and in harbour, so as to build interoperability and share best practices.

Salient features :

- The harbour phase is scheduled from 28 Nov to 30 Nov 18, followed by the sea phase from 02 to 06 Dec 18.
- The Royal Navy will be represented by HMS Dragon, a Type 45 Class Destroyer equipped with an integral Wildcat helicopter.
- The Indian Navy will field INS Kolkata, the first ship of latest Kolkata class destroyers; equipped with integral seaking, besides IN submarine and maritime patrol aircraft, Dornier.
- Besides exercises at sea, KONKAN-2018 will also incorporate professional interactions and sports fixtures. The 10th edition of **Indo-Russian** joint military exercise EX INDRA-2018 concluded on 28 November 2018.

ISRO launches India's first hyperspectral imaging satellite along with 30 foreign satellites- PSLV-C-43

- On 29th November 2018, the Indian Space Research Organisation's (**ISRO**) **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C43)** successfully launched 31 satellites from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota.
- The rocket injected the country's first **Hyper Spectral Imaging Satellite (HysIS)**, dubbed 'Sharp Eye', in its intended orbit besides 30 small commercial satellites from various countries into the orbits requested by the customers.

Salient features :

- HysIS is an earth observation satellite built around ISRO's Mini Satellite-2 (IMS-2) bus weighing about 380kg. The mission life of the satellite is five years.
- The HysIS satellite will be used for a wide range of applications including agriculture, forestry, soil/geological environments, coastal zones and inland waters, etc.

- The 30 satellites are one each from Australia, Canada, Colombia, Finland, Malaysia, Netherlands and Spain, and 23 from the USA and the total weight of these satellites was about 261.50 kg.
- The next big event for the Indian space organisation will be its awaited mission to the moon – **Chandrayaan-2** – in early 2019.
- The PSLV, a workhorse of ISRO, has so far launched 44 Indian and nine satellites built by students from Indian universities besides launching 269 international customer satellites. This was **45th flight** of PSLV and 13th one in the Core Alone configuration.

India successfully conducted night trial of Agni-I ballistic missile

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

Agni-I missile

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

Dharma Guardian-2018: First India-Japan military exercise begins in Vairengte, Mizoram

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

Dharma Guardian

- In this exercise, Indian Army will be represented by 6/1 Gorkha Rifles, while Japanese Ground Self-Defence Force will field its 32 Infantry Regiment. The emphasis of this exercise will be on building interoperability.

- Armies of both countries will jointly train, plan and execute series of well-developed tactical drills for neutralization of likely threats that may be encountered in urban warfare scenario. Moreover, experts from both sides will also hold detailed discussions to share their expertise on varied operational aspects.

SHAKTI- INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS MICROPROCESSOR

- The researchers from Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) have designed India's first indigenous microprocessor called 'Shakti'.
- It is aimed at developing industrial-grade microprocessors and other components of the microprocessor ecosystem.
- It will also help to reduce dependency on imported microchips and risk of cyber-attacks. Microprocessors are brain of all computing and electronic devices and are used to operate larger high-speed systems and supercomputers.

Shakti microprocessor

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

Significance

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

Parashakti

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

Nuclear submarine INS Arihant completes first deterrence patrol

- India's first indigenous nuclear submarine INS Arihant has successfully completed its first deterrence patrol.
- The development signifies that underwater warship has completed its maiden long-range mission with live nuclear-tipped missiles.

Salient features :

- During deterrence patrol, a nuclear submarine carries nuclear missiles on board, where command and control protocols for its operations are fully tested by its crew.
- The term deterrence patrol is meant to deter an adversary from launching a first nuclear-strike since SSBN (Ship Submersible Ballistic Nuclear) can launch retaliatory strike within minutes.
- With this, India completed its survivable nuclear triad by adding maritime strike capability to land and air-based delivery platforms for nuclear weapons.
- It makes India sixth country — after US, Russia, UK, France and China — to have fully operational nuclear triad.

INS Arihant:

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

Nuclear triad capability of India:

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

India-Indonesia naval exercise ‘Samudra Shakti’ begins in Indonesia

- The inaugural edition India, Indonesia Bilateral Naval Exercise ‘Samudra Shakti’ was held at the port of Surabaya, Indonesia.
- The aim of the exercise is to strengthen bilateral relations, expand maritime cooperation, enhance interoperability and exchange best practices.

Samudra Shakti:

- The exercise started with Harbour Phase which encompassed planning and briefing on various activities, professional interactions, cross deck visits, sports fixtures and social interactions.
- It was progressed by Sea Phase which included operations such as joint manoeuvres, helicopter operations, surface warfare exercise, ASW exercise and anti-piracy exercises.
- Indian Navy was represented by INS Rana of Eastern Fleet based at Visakhapatnam under Eastern Naval Command, which is deployed in South East Asia.

Indra 2018: India, Russia joint military exercise held in Jhansi, UP

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

EXERCISE INDRA 2018:

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

Important Joint Military Exercises:

<u>CODE NAME</u>	<u>COUNTRIES</u>
Indra	India and Russia
Simbex	India and Singapore
Salvex	India and U.S.
Yudh Abhyas	India and U.S.
Vajra prahar	India and U.S.
Slinex	India and Sri Lanka

Mitra Shakti	India and Sri Lanka
Sampriti	India and Bangladesh
Nomadic Elephant	India and Mongolia
Varuna	India and France
Shakti	India and France
Surya Kiran	India and Nepal
Jimex	India and Japan
Garuda Shakti	India and Indonesia
Lamitye	India and Seychelles
Naseem Al Bahr	India and Oman
Al Nagah	India and Oman
Hand-in-hand	India and China
AUSINDEX	India and Australia
Maitree	India and Thailand
Ajeya Warrior	India and United Kingdom
Konkan	India and United Kingdom
Milan	Multi-nation Naval exercise in the Indian Ocean
Malabar	Trilateral Naval exercise between India, Japan and United States from 2015 and bilateral between India and United States from 1992 to 2014

SPORTS AND AWARDS

Mary Kom clinches gold in World Boxing Championship

- Mary Kom created history on November 24, 2018 by winning her **sixth** world championship gold at the 10th World Women's Boxing Championships, held in New Delhi, India.
- Speaking on her historic win, Mary Kom said that it is very special as she was under pressure, especially because of the change in her weight category. "I won my last Worlds gold in 2010 and then the change of weight for Olympics happened.

- The pressure was something I always felt but don't know how to put this gold alongside the earlier five," she reasoned.
- However, Mary distinctly remembered that she had earlier won five straight gold medals at the World Boxing Championship, a feat that hasn't been accomplished by any women boxer before.

Salient features:

- Mary Kom won the sole gold for India by beating Ukraine's Hanna Okhota in a unanimous 5-0 verdict in the 48kg category summit bout.
- The final results read 30-27, 29-28, 29-28, 30-27, 30-27 in favour of Kom. She had beaten Okhota previously this year during a tournament held in Poland.
- Another Indian boxer, Sonia Chahal claimed the silver medal in 57kg bout, after she lost to Wahner Ornella Gabriele of Germany in the finals.
- Besides, two bronze medals were won by Lovlina Borgohain and Simranjit Kaur, after they lost their semi-finals bouts in 69kg and 64kg weight categories respectively.
- Overall, India ended the championships with 1 gold, 1 silver and 2 bronze.
- India's best-ever performance was in the 2006 championship that was held in Delhi, when it had won eight medals, including four gold.
- Recalling her participation in the New Delhi event held in 2006, Mary Kom said that at that time, boxers from fewer countries had participated and the sport was not even included in the Olympics.
- She said that though they won eight medals then, which included four gold medals, the competition is tougher nowadays and considering that fact, their current result, comprising one gold, one silver and two bronze medals, was great.

Key facts:

- The Indian Olympic boxer from Manipur is the only woman to become World Amateur Boxing champion for a record six times.
- She is also the only woman boxer to have won a medal in each one of the seven world championships. She once won silver.
- Nicknamed Magnificent Mary, she is the only Indian woman boxer to have qualified for the 2012 Summer Olympics, competing in the flyweight (51 kg) category and winning the bronze medal.
- She was ranked at the top in AIBA World Women's Ranking Light Flyweight category.
- She also became the first Indian woman boxer to win a gold medal at the 2014 Asian Games, held Incheon, South Korea.
- She is also the first Indian woman boxer to win gold at the 2018 Commonwealth Games, held in Gold Coast, Australia.
- In April 2016, Kom was nominated by the Indian President as a member of the Rajya Sabha, the upper house of the Indian Parliament.
- In March 2017, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports appointed Mary Kom along with Akhil Kumar as national observers for boxing.

- The 35-year-old mother of three was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2013. She is also the recipient of the Padma Shri (2006), Arjuna Award (2003), the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award (2009) and several other such top honours and recognitions.

Conclusion

- Post her historic world championship win, Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh announced that the state government will honour Mary Kom by conferring an appropriate title in recognition to her unprecedented feat of winning the sixth gold medal in the World Boxing Championship and her illustrious career in the field.
- The title would soon be announced in a grand reception ceremony for the boxing ace, to be organised after her arrival in the state.

Anupam Kher Resigns as Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) Chairman

- On 31st October 2018, actor **Anupam Kher** resigned as the chairman of the **Film and Television Institute of India (FTII)**.

Salient features :

- He has resigned due to his commitments to an international TV show for which he will be staying in the U.S.
- His resignation letter has been accepted by Information and Broadcasting Minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore.
- Anupam Kher had replaced Gajendra Chauhan, as Chairman of FTII on October 11, 2017.

Rahul Dravid receives ICC Hall of Fame cap from Sunil Gavaskar

- On 1st November 2018, former Indian cricket captain **Rahul Dravid** was formally inducted into the **ICC Cricket Hall of Fame**.

Salient features :

- Rahul Dravid received his ICC Hall of Fame cap from fellow ICC Cricket Hall of Famer Sunil Gavaskar in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- Rahul Dravid was named in the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame along with Australia's Ricky Ponting and England's Claire Taylor at the ICC Annual Conference in Dublin in July 2018.
- Rahul Dravid is the 5th Indian cricketer to be formally inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame after: Bishen Singh Bedi, Kapil Dev, Sunil Gavaskar and Anil Kumble.
- Rahul Dravid had played 164 Tests and 344 ODIs for India from 1996 to 2012. He had scored 24,177 runs in Tests and ODIs.

Mere Pyaare Prime Minister is the only Asian Film screened at Rome Film Festival

- “Mere Pyaare Prime Minister” was the **only Asian film** that was screened at the **13th** Rome Film Festival held from 18th to 28th October 2018 in Rome.

Salient features :

- On 23 October 2018, the Official Selection of the Rome Film Fest presented 3 productions from 3 different continents.
- From Asia, filmmaker Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra’s upcoming film “Mere Pyaare Prime Minister” was screened.
- The film is produced by Bharathi Mehra. The film speaks about the social issue of open defecation.
- The film focuses on four children living in a slum in Mumbai. One of the kids wants to build a toilet for his single mother and makes an appeal to the Prime Minister.

1971 war hero Vice Admiral (retd) Manohar Pralhad Awati Passed Away

- On 4th November 2018, Vice Admiral (retd) Manohar Pralhad Awati, a veteran of the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, died due to old age related ailments, at Vinchurni village in Satara district, Maharashtra.

Salient features :

- Manohar Pralhad Awati was 91 years old. He had joined the Royal Indian Navy in 1945.
- He was an expert in signal communication. He had commanded Indian naval ships: “Ranjit”, “Vendurthy”, “Betwa”, “Tir”, “Mysore”, etc.
- He was awarded the **Vir Chakra** for his service as the commanding officer of “INS Kamorta” during the 1971 India-Pakistan war.

“Notes of a Dream; The Authorized Biography of A.R. Rahman” by Krishna Trilok was launched

- On 3rd November 2018, Oscar award winning musician A.R. Rahman’s biography “Notes of a Dream: The Authorized Biography of A.R. Rahman” was launched in Mumbai.
- The biography has been written by author **Krishna Trilok**. It has been launched in association with Landmark and Penguin Random House.
- The biography narrates the journey of A.R. Rahman and unveils parts of his creative and personal life that are not known to many people.

Aranima Sinha, world's first Indian woman amputee to scale Everest gets honorary doctorate in UK

- On 6th November 2018, **Arunima Sinha** was awarded an **honorary doctorate** by the University of Strathclyde of United Kingdom in Glasgow, Scotland.
- She has been awarded for her inspirational achievements in mountaineering. She is 30 years old.
- In 2013, she became the **world's first woman amputee to climb Mount Everest**. She is a former Indian national Volleyball player. Her left leg was amputated below the knee after being thrown from a train while resisting a robbery.

Actor Jayant Sawarkar to get Maharashtra government's Natyavarya Prabhakar Panshikar Lifetime Achievement award.

- Marathi actor **Jayant Sawarkar** will be awarded the Maharashtra government's **Natyavarya Prabhakar Panshikar Lifetime Achievement award** in the field of theatre.

Salient features :

- Also, Tabla artist **Vinayak Thorat** will be awarded the Sangeetacharya Annasaheb Kirloskar Lifetime Achievement.
- Both the awards consist of cash prizes of Rs 5 lakh, citation and memento each. Dates for the presentation of the awards have not yet been announced.
- Jayant Sawarkar started his career in Marathi theatre as a backstage artist. His role as a clown in "Samrat Singh" fetched him fame.
- Vinayak Thorat has accompanied top artists like Jitendra Abhisheki, D Datar, Mogubai Kurdikar, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, etc.

Former PM Manmohan Singh launched the book "Fables of Fractured Times"

- On 26th November 2018, Former Prime Minister of India, Shri Manmohan Singh launched a book authored by his former Cabinet colleague **Manish Tewari "Fables of Fractured Times"**.
- Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah was also present during the launch of Manish Tewari's Book.
- The Book is a compilation of articles written by Manish Tewari on a wide array of issues, trends and events of National and International Arena between 2017 and 2018.

Salient features :

- The Book "**Fables of Fractured Times**" deals with India's engagement with different nations, the challenges and its foreign policy and contemporary concerns in India's geopolitics.

- Manish Tewari, the National Spokesperson of the Indian National Congress is a leading Supreme Court Lawyer and former Minister of Information and Broadcasting in the UPA Government.
- **Some Other Books authored by Manish Tewari:** Tiding of the troubled times, Decoding a Decade: The Politics of Policymaking.

Harvard University selects Malala Yousafzai for 2018 Gleitsman Award for promoting girls' education

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

Malala Yousafzai

- Malala was born on 12 July 1997 in Mingora city in Swat province of Pakistan. At the age of 11 she had caught international attention as female education activist after writing for the BBC about life under the Taliban in Pakistan under pseudonym Gul Makai.
- Her campaign had led to Taliban assassination attempt near that left her severely wounded after she was shot in head in 2012.
- Later she had founded nonprofit Malala Fund to support her work. At present she is student at Oxford University in England.
- **Awards and Honours:** In 2014, at the age of 17 she was awarded Nobel peace prize, becoming youngest Nobel Laureate in the history of Nobel award. She had shared this award with Indian children's rights activist Kailash Satyarthi.
- She also has been honoured with National Youth Peace Prize (2011), Mother Teresa Awards for Social Justice (2012), Simon de Beauvoir Prize (2013), Sakharov Prize for Freedom of Thought (2013), Anna Politkovskaya Award (2013).
- United Nations in her honour has declared 12 July as 'Malala Day'.

Jawahar Lal Sarin presented with France's highest civilian honour

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

Legion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour):

- It is the highest civilian award given by the French government to person for his outstanding service to France, regardless of the nationality.
- It was instituted in 1802 by Napoleon Bonaparte. The order (merit for both military and civil merits) is divided into five degrees of increasing distinction: Chevalier (Knight), Officier (Officer), Commandeur (Commander), Grand officier (Grand Officer), and Grand-croix (Grand Cross).

- Actors Amitabh Bachchan and Shahrukh Khan were also awarded in 2007 and 2014. Other Indians who were also awarded are Amartya Sen, Ravi Shankar, Zubin Mehta, Lata Mangeshkar, JRD Tata and Ratan Tata among others.

Wipro Chairman Azim Premji conferred with highest French Civilian Honour

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

Legion d'Honneur (Legion of Honour):

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- The order (merit for both military and civil merits) is divided into five degrees of increasing distinction: Chevalier (Knight), Officier (Officer), Commandeur (Commander), Grand officier (Grand Officer), and Grand-croix (Grand Cross). President of France is the Grand Master of the Order of the Legion of Honour.
- Some of the past Indian recipients of this prestigious award include renowned scientist and Bharat Ratna awardee C N R Rao, superstar Shah Rukh Khan, Amitabh Bachchan Amartya Sen, Ravi Shankar, Zubin Mehta, Lata Mangeshkar, JRD Tata and Ratan Tata among others.

IMPORTANT BOOKS AND AUTHORS: 2018

<u>SR. NO</u>	<u>NAME OF BOOK</u>	<u>AUTHOR</u>
1	The Way I See It - a Gauri Lankesh Reader	Chandan Gowda.
2	'Across the Bench - Insight into the Indian Military Judicial System	Lt Gen Gyan Bhushan
3	"Vedvigyan Alok"	Acharya Agnivarat Naishthik
4	'The English Patient'	Michael Ondaatje
5	Winning like Sourav: Think & Succeed Like Ganguly'	Abhirup Bhattacharya
6	"Warlight" 'Winning like Sourav: Think & Succeed Like Ganguly'	Michael Ondaatje
7	"Gandhi: The years that changed the world (1914-1948)"	Ramachandra Guha.
8	No Spin	Shane Warne
9	'281 and Beyond'	VVS Laxman
10	Atal Ji Ne Kaha	Brijendra Rehi
11	'The Rule Breakers'	Preeti Shenoy
12	The Paradoximal Prime Minister and 29- letter word Floccinaucinihilipilification	Shashi Tharoor

13	Maharana Pratap: The Invincible Warrior	Rima Hooja
14	Caliiing Sehmat	Harinder Sikka
15	Exam Warriors	Narendra Modi
16	Imperfect	Sanjay Manjrekar
17	The diary of domestic diva	Shilpa Shetty
18	The Coalition Years	Pranab Mukherjee
19	Immortal India	Amish Tripathi
20	Unstoppable: My Life so Far	Maria Sharapova
21	Matoshree	Sumitra Mahajan

UNIQUE BULLETS

1. Which Nobel Prize winner will be honoured by Harvard University for her work promoting girls' education? -Malala Yousafzai.
2. Yeshwant Deo, who passed away recently, was the veteran personality of which field? - Music
3. Who has been sworn-in as the new Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court? - Naresh Harishchandra Patil
4. The world's largest airport 'Under One Roof' has officially opened in which city?- Istanbul
5. India's first Justice City will come up in which of the following cities? Amaravati
6. The scientists of which Indian organisation has recently developed less polluting firecrackers named – SWAS, SAFAL & STAR? - CSIR
7. Who has been selected for 2018 Ezhuthachan Puraskaram, the highest literacy prize of the Kerala government? - M Mukundan
8. Who has become the first Indian to win an Asian Snooker Tour event? - Pankaj Advani
9. Which is the only Indian film has been included in BBC's 100 best foreign language films list of the 21st century? - Pather Panchali
10. Which Indian Sculptor designed the world's 'tallest statue' 'Statue of Unity'? - Ram V. Sutar
11. The Jharsuguda Airport of Odisha will be renamed after which eminent freedom fighter of the state? - Surendra Sai
12. What is the theme of the United Nations for 2018 World Cities Day (WCD)? - Building Sustainable and Resilient Cities
13. RBI has started process to set up PCR for capturing borrowers' details. The acronym "PCR" stands for? - Public Credit Registry

14. On which date, the 2018 World Tsunami Awareness Day (WTAD) is observed on which date? - November 5
15. The Union government has awarded which state police for citizen services under an e-governance project "CCTNS"? - Assam
16. The Government of India (GoI) has recently approved operationalisation strategy for Operation Greens for which of the following crops? - Tomato, Onion and Potato
17. Which sports journalist is the author of the book "The Fire Burns Blue: A History of Women's Cricket in India"? - Karunya Keshav]
18. What is the theme of the 2018 National Ayurveda Day (NAD) of India? - Ayurveda for Public Health
19. Who has been appointed the new Secretary General of Lok Sabha? - Snehlata Shrivastava
20. Which IIT has developed a portable solar-powered cold storage device with a 500 kg capacity? - IIT Madras
21. What is the theme of the 2018 World Science Day for Peace and Development? - Science, a Human Right
22. Who is the author of the book "Notes of a Dream The Authorized Biography of A.R. Rahman"? - Krishna Trilok]
23. The first-ever bilateral naval exercise 'Samudra Shakti 2018' has started between India and which country? – Indonesia
24. India has recently signed pact with which country to collaborate on cancer research? United Kingdom ISRO has successfully launched GSAT-29 satellite into space from which launch vehicle? - GSLV Mk III
25. Which of the following international personalities will be chief guest at the 2019 Republic Day parade of India? - Cyril Ramaphosa- South African president
26. What is the theme of the 2018 World Pneumonia Day (WPD)? - Stop Pneumonia: Invest in Child Health
27. India's first specialized hospital for elephants has opened in which of the following cities? - Mathura
28. Which of the following words has been chosen 'Word of the Year 2018' by Oxford Dictionaries? - Toxic
29. What is the theme of the 2018 World Toilet Day (WTD)? - When Nature Calls
30. The INDO-Russian joint exercise "INDRA 2018" has started in which of the following cities? - Jhansi
31. Which Indian organisation has developed a new technology 'Impact Based Forecasting

Approach' to monitor impact of rain & deal with natural disasters? - IMD

32. What is the theme of the 2018 International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (IDEVAW)? - Orange the World: #HearMeToo

33. The University of Auckland has signed its first strategic partnership with which of the Indian institutes for research tie-up? - IIT Kharagpur

34. The chairman of UPSC is appointed by President under which of the following articles of constitution? - Article 316

35. Which launch vehicle has successfully launched ISRO's HysIS satellite into the orbit? - PSLV-C43

