

APPOLO STUDY CENTRE

CONTENT FOR JULY TO DECEMBER CURRENT AFFAIRS 2018

JULY-2018

NATIONAL

P.M. Four Point Strategy

PM's 4 point strategy to double Farmer's income by 2022

- Reducing cultivation costs,
- Ensuring profitable prices,
- Processing farm waste and
- Creating non-farm sources of income

Sports India

SAI (Sports Authority of India) – to be renamed as 'Sports India'
(Key info – SAI established in the year 1984)

Sambalpur Railway Division

Sambalpur Railway division of East Coast Railway Zone – becomes 1st Railway division in the entire country to eliminate all unmanned level crossings – after the erection of the highest ever, 6 Limited Height Subways between 2 stations in one day.

World's largest Mobile Factory

- ❖ South Korean consumer electronics major, Samsung has set up the world's largest mobile phone factory in Noida, Uttar Pradesh. The facility was inaugurated jointly by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

Parbhani Shakti

India's first biofortified sorghum (jowar), with significantly higher iron and zinc than regular sorghum, was formally launched. Developed by ICRISAT it was released for cultivation by Vasantrya Naik Marathwada Krishi Vidyapeeth (VNMKV), Maharashtra.

Saathi

- ❖ The Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has launched a mobile help centre "Saathi" to reach out to people undertaking the annual pilgrimage to the 3,880-metre high holy cave shrine of Amarnath. The initiative 'Saathi' was launched by Abhay Vir Chauhan, the Inspector General of CRPF (Jammu Sector). The purpose of this initiative is to provide help and information to yatriis staying in camps outside the Bhagwati Nagar base camp in Jammu.
- ❖ The CRPF personnel of the mobile help centre will be visiting various camps in Jammu and apprising the pilgrims about the security measures to be kept in mind. In addition, the trained CRPF personnel of the centre would provide first aid treatment to people in need and would also be distributing medicines.
- ❖ Beside this, a help desk of the CRPF is already functional at the Bhagwati Nagar Base Camp and another named 'Madadgaar' (helper) at the Jammu Tawi Railway Station and other information centres.

ASI

Dharohar Bhawan - New name of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) Headquarters inaugurated by the PM

ASI - Established in the year 1861 by Alexander Cunningham

Breathe India

India's national think tank, NITI Aayog, has suggested a 15-point action plan to tackle air pollution. It emphasises using electric vehicles and

suggests other measures like strict curbs on vehicular emissions and an integrated waste management policy.

“Breathe India - An Action Plan for Combatting Air Pollution”, which includes a list of 15 action points across a range of industries and sectors. The plan calls for “concerted action from all levels of governance, cutting across ministries and departments” and covers “all stakeholders without whose active participation and support the air pollution crisis cannot be tackled.”

“Peters Inn”

‘Peters Inn’ - The new name of the India’s 1st AC dormitory launched by Kochi Metro Rail

27th No Confidence Motion

Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government has won No Condence motion moved in Lok Sabha. This was rst no-trust motion against Narendra Modi government after it came to power in May 2014 and less than year before the next general elections. Key Facts The no-condence motion against the government was moved by a former NDA ally Telugu Desham Party (TDP). In this trust vote, NDA bagged 325 votes against motion, while 126 members voted in favour. Total of 451 out of 534 MPs were present and voted in the house bringing down majority mark required to 226. No-Confidence Motion In a parliamentary democracy, government can be in power only if it commands majority in directly elected House. Article 75(3) of our Constitution of India embodies this rule by specifying that Council of Ministers is collectively responsible to Lok Sabha. But there is no mention of a no-condence motion in the constitution. The Rule 198 of Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business of Lok Sabha provides mechanism for testing this collective responsibility. Rajya Sabha does not have procedure for moving of no-condence motion against Government and also adjournment motion, censure motion. The rule allows any Lok Sabha MP who can garner support of 50 colleagues, to introduce motion of no-condence against the Council of Ministers. Motion of No-condence need not set out any grounds on which it is based. If there are 50 MPs in favour, the motion is admitted and speaker allots date for discussion on the motion. Thereafter, discussion on motion takes place. MPs who support motion highlight government’s

shortcomings. Then Prime Minister or ministers reply to the charges made. If the government loses trust vote, it is expected to resign.

27th No Confidence Motion

Moved by – Telugu Desam party

Overall time taken – 12 hours

Strength – Only 451 MP's out of 534 present in the floor (Majority Mark – 226)

Final verdict – 325-126 in favour of NDA

Parties that didn't participate in the NCM – Shiv sena and BJD; TRS didn't vote but participated

Top 5 Best Governed States

Best Governed States – Top 5 (Large States)

1 Kerala (Topping the index for the 3rd time)

2 Tamil Nadu

3 Telangana

4 Karnataka

5 Gujarat

Small States – Top 5 (With population less than 2 crores)

1 Himachal Pradesh

2 Goa

3 Mizoram

4 Sikkim

5 Tripura

States Providing better living conditions for Kids – Top 3

1 Kerala

2 Himachal Pradesh

3 Mizoram

Index Released by – Public Affairs Centre (Bengaluru)

Since – 2016

Objective – to improve governance in the States

Maternal Mortality and Infant Mortality

Reduction in Maternal mortality and Infant mortality in India (for one lakh births)

Time period - 2011-2013 to 2014-16

Maternal mortality - 167 to 130

Infant mortality - 160 to 130

By 2025, MMR to come down to 70 per one lakh births

Five Subsidiary Banks with SBI

The Merged Banks

- State Bank of Bikaner
- State Bank of Mysore
- State Bank of Patiala
- State Bank of Travancore
- State Bank of Hyderabad

TAMILNADU

Bharat Net Scheme

Tamil Nadu Fiber net corporation - started by Tamil Nadu Government - to implement 'Bharat Net' scheme of providing Rural internet facilities to the villages

INFITT

17th World Tamil Internet Conference - Coimbatore organized by International Forum for Information and Technology in Tamil (INFITT) along with Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, TNAU (Mr Appasamy Murugaiyan - Chair of INFITT)

Lokayukta Bill in Tamilnadu

Tamil Nadu introduces Lokayukta Bill

Introduced by - Mr D Jayakumar, Minister for Personnel & Administrative Reforms

The Composition

Selection Committee - 3

The Chief Minister

The Speaker of the Assembly

The Leader of the Opposition

The Selection committee will select the Chairperson and the members

Appointing authority - Governor

Chairperson - 1

A person who is/has been a High court judge with over 25 years of experience

Judicial Members - 2

Persons who are/have been judges in the High court or have put in 25 years of experience in the State Judiciary with an impeccable record

Non Judicial Members - 2

Persons who have had 25 years of experience in anti-corruption policy, public administration, vigilance, finance and law

Term of chairperson & members- Five years or 70 years of age, whichever is earlier - No second term for Chairperson and members

Salary/Allowance - Will be on par with chief justice of High court for the Chairman & will be equal to that of the salary drawn by the Judges of the High court for the Members

Jurisdiction - MLA's/Former MLA's/Ministers/Former Ministers and all Public servants defined in the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988

It has all the powers of civil court under Code of Civil Procedure, 1908

For False complaints - 1 year imprisonment and a fine of Rs 1 lakh

Adarsh Monuments in Tamilnadu

'Adarsh Monuments' Upgradation by ASI, 'Archaeological Survey of India'

Sites Selected in Tamil Nadu

- 1 - Shore Temple, Mamallapuram
- 2 - Gingee Fort
- 3 - Kailasanathar Temple, Kanchipuram
- 4 - Brihadeeswarar Temple, Thanjavur
- 5 - Sithannavasal caves
- 6 - Vellore Fort
- 7 - Moovar Koil, Kodumbalur

CWDT

Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal - dissolved after 28 years - as per Sec 12 of Inter-State water disputes Act, 1956

CWDT - Constituted - June 2, 1990 - under Sec 4 of Inter-State water disputes Act

Following directions from Supreme Court, the Central Government has constituted the Cauvery Water Management Authority (CMA) to address the dispute over sharing of river water among Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala and Puducherry. In February, 2018 judgement, the Supreme Court had directed centre to form the CMA within six weeks. In the same verdict, the court had also increased Karnataka's share in Cauvery Water marginally.

Cauvery Water Management Authority (CMA)

The newly constituted Cauvery Water Management Authority (CMA) has been created as per the Cauvery Management Scheme earlier framed by Centre and approved by Supreme Court.

Composition and Powers of CMA

The authority will comprise a chairman, a secretary and eight members. Out of the eight members, two will be full time, while two will be part time members from centre's side. Rest four will be part time members from states. The main mandate of the CMA will be to secure implementation and compliance of the Supreme Court's order in relation to "storage, apportionment, regulation and control of Cauvery waters". CMA will also advise the states to take suitable measures to improve water use efficiency. It will do so by promoting use of micro-irrigation, change in cropping patterns, improved farm practices and development of command areas. The CMA will also prepare an annual report covering its activities during the preceding year.

Role of Central Government

The central government will provide help in implementation of the modified award in case of any of the state /UT parties (Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka and Puducherry) do not cooperate in implementing the decision or direction of the tribunal. Initially, centre will contribute Rs. 2 crore for the functioning of the authority.

Cauvery Water Regulation Committee

Along with CMA, the government has also established Cauvery Water Regulation Committee that shall give effect to the decision of the Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal as modified by the Supreme Court

order. This committee will meet every 10 days during months of June and October when the south-west and north-east monsoon set in and again after the monsoon has set in

Star 2.0

Star 2.0 (STAR - Simplified and Transparent Administration of Registration)

The 'online' property registration portal of Tamil Nadu - designed by TCS

Mettur Stanley Reservoir

Mettur Stanley Reservoir - brims with its Full capacity after 4 years on 23rd July, 2018

Aug 4, 2013 - was the Last time it was to its fullest capacity

This was the 39th time in 85 years

Built by - Col W M Ellis

Year - 1934

Total Height - 120 feet

Total water capacity - 93.47 tmc ft

Tamilnadu Forest Policy

Key points

- The state to enforce strictly the norms stipulated by Forest (conservation) Act, 1980
- To increase forest and tree cover to 33% by 2030, as per the Nation Forest Policy, 1988, from the present 21.76%
- To enhance Women participation in village forest communities
- To remove the encroachments inside the reserve forests
- To provide all the required facilities to Forest protection staff
- To train special teams for anti-poaching operations
- To seek the help of local villagers for re-afforestation
- To develop Mangroves as 'Bio shield' along the coast
- To progressively increase the budget allocation for Forest department every year to fulfill these goals of the Policy

- Tamil Nadu - has about 30.92% of the forest declared as 'protected areas' and has
- 15 wildlife sanctuaries,

Objectives of the State Forest Policy include preserving natural forests and wildlife, conservation of ecosystems and their genetic diversity, environmental stabilization, enhancement of forest productivity, augmentation of water resources from the forests, increasing tree cover and climate change mitigation.

Main thrust areas towards achieving the declared objectives of the Tamil Nadu Forest Policy are:

- i. Conservation of Biodiversity, Wildlife and their genetic resources
- ii. Rehabilitation and restoration of Degraded forests
- iii. Coastal Ecosystem conservation and management
- iv. Mitigating / adapting climate change through enhancement of tree cover inside and outside forests
- v. Water augmentation through forest conservation and integrated watershed management
- vi. Involving local people, especially the tribal communities in protection, conservation and wildlife management
- vii. Technology support, Research and Development for scientific forest management
- viii. Ecotourism for providing livelihood to the local people, especially the tribal communities
- ix. Human Resource Development for Forest Management

STRATEGY

1. Conservation of Biodiversity, Wildlife and their genetic resources
2. Rehabilitation and Restoration of Degraded forests
3. Coastal Eco-system conservation and management
4. Mitigating / adapting Climate Change through enhancing tree cover inside and outside forests
5. Forestry Extension for tree cover augmentation, outreach and conservation education for wildlife management support

6. Forest-based industries
7. Water augmentation through forest conservation, integrated watershed management and wetland management
8. Upliftment of the forest dependent women and ensuring a significant role for them in forest management
9. Tribal Development
10. Technology support - Research and Development for scientific forest management
11. Eco-Tourism for supporting conservation
12. Human Resource Development for forestry management

Tamilnadu Disaster Management Vision Plan

The State Disaster Management Perspective Plan 2018-2030 has accorded primacy to the priorities enunciated in the Sendai Framework for risk reduction, Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris agreement on Climate Change agreement and the Hon'ble Prime Ministers 10 Point Agenda. The plan has been prepared, as per the Disaster Management Act 2005 and also relied on the NDMA Guidelines on State Disaster Management Plan. The Plan was developed based on an elaborate consultative process with the DDMA's, Departments of Government, civil society and other multi-stakeholders.

Vision: "To build a safe and disaster resistant Tamil Nadu through systems approach, inclusive development and mainstreaming disaster risk concerns into the development ethos of the State"

Vistar

IIT, Madras - launches the 1st indigenously developed Smart Air purifier, 'Vistar'

It was developed by the IIT-incubated Startup 'AirOK'

STATES

Underground bins Mechanism

Maharashtra, Surat - 1st city to implement mechanized 'Underground' bins for Garbage storage as part of it's Smart City Mission

Tribal Museum

Chattisgarh – to set up 1st of its kind, ‘Tribal Museum’ in its upcoming new capital ‘Naya Raipur’

Happiness Curriculum

Arvind Kejriwal, the Chief Minister of Delhi, launched the ‘Happiness Curriculum’ for students of nursery to Class 8 in government schools on July 2, 2018. The curriculum was launched in the presence of the Dalai Lama. Students across schools can expect a ‘happiness’ period of 45 minutes. Each class will begin with a five-minute meditation session. The Happiness period was designed and prepared by a team of 40 Delhi government teachers, educators and volunteers over a period of six months. It will also include value education and mental exercises.

Global Digital Hub

Kerala - Nissan – to set up World’s 1st Global digital Hub – in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

1st Taxi – Ambulance Service

Delhi – to start India’s 1st Taxi-ambulance services

1st Cyber – Forensic Van

Delhi – launches its 1st Cyber- Forensic Van – to help people in cyber crimes

The Humble Jack

Meghalaya – organizes 1st state level ‘Jackfruit Fruit Festival 2018’ with the theme “The Humble Jack”

‘Stop JE/AES’ to fight encephalitis

Uttar Pradesh - Gorakhpur administration - launches an android based smart phone application named ‘Stop JE/AES’ to fight encephalitis.

ICRISAT

International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid-Tropics (ICRISAT), Hyderabad, Telangana

VAT

Haryana - becomes the 1st state to upload the Photos and details of 'VAT' defaulters in its official Website

Seema Darshan Project

Gujarat - Launches 'Seema Darshan' Project (Border Tourism Project)
Objective - to instill patriotism through a unique initiative at the Wagah border to promote Border tourism

Project - to develop infrastructural facilities such as an Exhibition Hall and a Parade ground for the BSF Jawans

NH16

Andhra Pradesh - Mr Nitin Gadkari , Union Min of Road Transport & Highways, lays the Foundation stone for Widening of NH-16 at Vishakapatnam - to improve connectivity between Chennai & Kolkata - under Bharatmala Pariyojana Scheme

The Minister also said that the Centre is considering the development of Vodarevu Port in Prakasam district, Andhra Pradesh - as it has only one port at Vizag currently.

Bharatmala - It is a Central-government funded Road & Highway project scheme

Established - 31 July, 2015

Iron Ore Handling Unit

Andhra Pradesh - ESSAR builds India's largest Iron Ore handling unit in Vishakapatnam

1st Defence Incubation Centre

Andhra Pradesh - to get the 1st Defence Incubation Centre at Mangaluru (Defence Innovation centre was started in Jan 2018 at Coimbatore)

1st Cultural University

Assam - 1st 'Cultural university' at Majuli

Sulabh Jal Project

Bihar - Sulabh Jal project - launched in Darbhanga district by Sulabh International - to provide World's Cheapest Clean drinking water (at 50p/litre)

Tallest Government Office Building

Andhra Pradesh - L&T to build India's Tallest Government Office Building at Amaravati

Bansagar Canal Project

Bansagar Canal project - in Mirzapur

Witch Hunting Bill 2015

Assam - to proclaim 'Witch Hunting (Prohibition, Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2015

It prohibits any person from calling or identifying any other person as 'witch' by words, signs or indications

It imposes a penalty of Rs 5 lakh or imprisonment upto 7 years for anyone indulging in Witchcraft

Pangolin

Odisha - launches a Police drive to identify 'Pangolin' smuggling racket within the state

Pangolin - is the only scaly mammal in the world.

Green Mahanadhi Mission

Odisha - launches 'Green Mahanadhi Mission'

Inaugurated by - Mr Naveen Patnaik, CM of Odisha

Objective - a plantation drive to plant 2 crore saplings along the river Mahanadi and its tributaries - to stop the soil erosion and groundwater recharge

Hostess

Kerala - to launch Country's 1st State-run All woman hotel in Thiruvananthapuram

Hostess - Name of the Hotel

Divyangs

Assam - to set up separate directorate for 'Divyangs'

Under the insistence of PM Modi, the word 'Divyangs' is used instead of 'Physically Handicapped'

Project Gandiva

Andhra Pradesh - CM, N Chandrababu Naidu laid the foundation stone of Amaravati International Sports Complex in Vijayawada.

Budget - Rs 60 crores

The Andhra Pradesh government has planned to develop Amaravati, Vizag and Tirupati as sports cities

Chandrababu Naidu also launched 'Project Gandiva'.

Objective - Government will choose students aged between 10-16 years and offer them international level facilities and coaching with an aim to secure medals in Olympic Games in a period of 10 years.

Urban Sanitation Policy

Gujarat - announces 'Urban sanitation policy' - for better solid and liquid waste management in the cities

National Skill Training Institute for Women

Punjab - The permanent campus of "National Skill Training Institute for Women" launched in Mohali

This is the first NSTI Institute for Punjab and only one of its kind in India which is exclusively for women.

PRANAM Act

Assam - to launch the country's 1st of its kind 'Assam Employees 'PRANAM' Act' - from Oct 2, 2018

Legislation - The Government will deduct 10% of an employee's pay and transfer it to the account of the relatives concerned. Another 5% would be deductible if the employee has a differently abled sibling.

Objective - to enable the Government employees take care of their parents and siblings, who might be with physical or mental disabilities

Kala Azar Disease

Kala azar disease outbreak in Kerala

Village affected - Kozhikode's Sooppikkada village

Kala-azar is known colloquially as black fever or Dumdum fever and is associated with high fatality

D-Voter

Assam - Assam Government releases 2nd and Final draft of 'National Register of Citizens' (NRC) on July 30th, 2018

D-voter - It is the short form for 'Doubtful' voters who are disenfranchised during Electoral roll revision for lack of proper credentials

Mobile Open Exchange Zone

Uttar Pradesh - PM lays the foundation stone of India's 1st Mobile Open Exchange (MOX) zone in Noida

"Mobile Tihar"

Chhattisgarh - launches a Smartphone distribution scheme called 'Mobile Tihar' under 'Sanchar Kranti Yojana'

1st Cow Sanctuary

Rajasthan - signs MoU for 1st Cow Sanctuary in the State at Bikaner's 'Napasar' village

COMMITTEES

Sunil Mehta Committee

The Sunil Mehta committee which was formed with a view to tackle Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) and creating credit capacity submitted its report with recommendations to Union Finance Minister Piyush Goyal on July 2, 2018. The Sunil Mehta panel presented project 'Sashakt' and has recommended a five-pronged strategy to deal with NPAs in the country's banking system. The five-pronged strategy includes - SME Resolution Approach (SRA), Bank Led Resolution Approach (BLRA), AMC / AIF led resolution approach, NCLT / IBC approach, and asset-trading platform. The report recommends a five pronged approach for

loans from Rs 50 crore, Rs 50-500 crore and loans above Rs 500 crore. The committee has also suggested an asset trading platform for both performing and non-performing assets.

Atulya Misra Committee

Atulya Misra committee - 'Kurangani Forest Fire'

C.K. Mishra Committee

C K Mishra committee - Air and Water pollution around Taj Mahal

Prof. MM Salunkhe Committee and R.C. Deka Committee

Prof M M Salunkhe committee - UGC on Examination reforms

Prof R C Deka Committee - Constituted by UGC - to regulate fee for Medical courses in Deemed Universities

Rajiv Gauba Committee

Rajiv Gauba Committee - 'Mob Lynching'

P.J. Joseph Committee

P J Joseph Committee - constituted by IRDAI, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India

Justice B.N. Sri Krishna Committee

Justice B N Sri Krishna Committee - 'Data Protection'

R.K. Agarwal Committee

Gujarat - forms R K Agrawal committee to offer solutions for under-utilized Coal based Power plants

K.S. Radha Krishnan Committee

Supreme court verdict

No New vehicle to be sold from September 1 - without the Mandatory Third party insurance cover - for a 3 year and 5 year premium for Four wheel and Two wheel vehicles respectively

Background - The verdict is based on the recommendations of the Justice K S Radha Krishnan committee on Road Safety

The committee noted that only 6 crore vehicles out of 18 crore has the third party insurance, thereby making it 'Mandatory' for the accident victims to claim compensation

ECONOMICS

GDP Projection : Asian Development Bank

Asian Development Bank GDP Projections for India

2018 - 7.3%

2019 - 7.6%

It also projected that India is the fastest growing economy in Asia

Surplus GST Collection : State

Top 3 States with Surplus GST collections

1 Manipur

2 Mizoram

3 Arunachal Pradesh

Project SASHAKT

24 Banks and Financial institutions - Sign Agreement - to speed up Resolution of Bad loans

This is part of the Project SASHAKT - the Report submitted by Sunil Mehta Committee on Stressed Assets Recovery

RANKINGS

SPIN Portal Report of Ministry of New and Renewable energy

SPIN Portal Report of Ministry of New and Renewable Energy

Rooftop solar installations in India have crossed 1 Giga Watt (at 1095.41 MW)

Top 3 states

1 Maharashtra (145.09 MW)

2 Gujarat (136.21 MW)

3 Tamil Nadu (123.91 MW)

Target by 2022 - 40 GW of grid connected rooftop solar capacity

India Largest IT Industries

India's largest IT industries

HCL Technologies surpassed Wipro Ltd - to become India's 3rd biggest software services firm

1st - Tata consultancy services

2nd - Infosys

SCHEMES

DigiYatra

DigiYatra - a facility to be introduced by the Government - to enhance the experience of Air passengers

Coordinator - Min of Civil Aviation

Objective - to reduce the queues at airports and bring efficiency to the boarding process

Process - To access this facility one needs to enrol into DigiYatra program through AirSewa app

In this facility, the image of the passenger will be captured as he/she enters the airport, and then the passenger will be able to go through the full lifecycle of the travel in a hassle-free manner.

The DigiYatra programme will be launched at airports in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Varanasi and Vijayawada.

Meghalaya Milk Mission

Meghalaya Milk Mission - launched by Radha Mohan Singh, Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers Welfare in Shillong

Objective - to achieve the Centre's goal of doubling farmer's income by 2022 through promotion of milk business in the state.

Budget - Rs 215 crores

Purpose - to be used for the activities in dairy farm, chilling centre and the purchase of milch animal.

Mission Satyanishtha

Mission Satyanishtha' - launched by Indian Railways - to wipe out corruption and bring about 'Integrity' among its 13 lakh employees

PMRF Scheme

Prime Minister's Research Fellows (PMRF) Scheme

Government - has announced that this fellowship scheme is now open to all potential researchers from 2019 - and not only from IISc, IITs, NITs etc

This move comes after the offering of only 135 fellowships this year against the possible 1000 positions

Samagra Shiksha

Samagra Shiksha - An Integrated Scheme for school education (with effect from 2018-19) - Launched by the Union Government

It is an overarching programme for the school education sector extending from pre-school to class XII

It aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels of school education.

It is an integration of 3 subsumed earlier schemes - Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan and Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan - which took care of the school education at primary and secondary levels - and Teacher Training

Trafficking of Persons Bill - 2018

Lok sabha - passes the Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2018

Objective - It provides for the prevention, rescue, and rehabilitation of trafficked persons and also to establish National Anti-Trafficking Bureau to investigate trafficking cases

It has also allocated Rs 10 crores for Relief and Rehabilitation committee and Rehabilitation fund

Bill introduced by - Maneka Gandhi, Min for Women and child development

Mahila Shakti Kendra Scheme

Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme - a new Scheme approved by the Union Government

Objective - To empower Rural women

Time period - From 2017-18 upto 2019-20

Chief Minister's Arogya Arunachal Yojana

Arunachal Pradesh - to launch a new health insurance scheme, 'Chief Minister's Arogya Arunachal Yojana'

Objective - to enable the citizens avail cashless health services in empanelled hospitals across the state

Insurance Cover - Rs 5 lakhs per family per year

Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018

Parliament - passes Fugitive Economic Offenders Bill, 2018 - on 25th July 2018

Objective - To prevent evading criminal prosecution by the economic offenders (with Assets of over Rs 100 Crores) fleeing from the country in order to remain outside the jurisdiction of Indian courts

Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana

Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojna - All villages adopted by MP's under the scheme - to be provided Free Wi-Fi services across India by the Government - under 'Bharat Net Project' , which aims to provide 2.5 lakh gram Panchayats the high speed internet services by March 2019

Sansad Adarsh Gram Yojana:-

Launched :- 11 October 2014 (On the birth anniversary of Jayaprakash Narayan)

Launched by - Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi

List of important adoptions under the scheme :-

Narendra Modi - adopted Jayapur village in his constituency Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh.

Sonia Gandhi - adopted Udwa village in her constituency Rae Bareli in Uttar Pradesh.

Rahul Gandhi - adopted Deeh village in his constituency Amethi in Uttar Pradesh.

Sachin Tendulkar - adopted Puttamraju vari

Kandruga(P.R.Kandruga), a village near Gudur in Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh & Donja village in Osmanabad district of Marathwada, Maharashtra.

NITI Aayog and Lupin foundation

NITI Aayog & Lupin Foundation - signs SoI (Statement of Intent) - to work jointly in the Government's Aspirational Districts Development Programme

States of Colloboration - Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Rajasthan
Areas of Colloboration - Social development, Economic empowerment and Infrastructure development

Aspirational Districts Programme - Launched in Jan 2018 - to transform the underdeveloped districts in the country

Medini Puraskar Yojana

Medini Puraskar Yojna - a scheme to award Indian authors for their work in 'Hindi' on Environment, Pollution and Climate changes - Reintroduced by the Min of Environment

Ganga Vriksharopan Abhiyan

Ganga Vriksharopan Abhiyan - Afforestation drive organized by National Mission for Clean Ganga in 5 states

- Uttarakhand
- Uttar Pradesh
- Bihar
- Jharkhand
- West Bengal

It also announced that the week 9th July to 15th July was observed as 'Shubharambh Saptah'

Student Police Cadet Programme

Student Police cadet programme - launched nationally by Mr Rajnath singh, Union Home minister

The programme aims to build relationship between the police and the people through the school students, who will be trained in 'ethics and values' & 'Crime prevention and control'

The programme targets the school students in the classes 8 and 9, without affecting the regular studies

The programme has a budget of Rs 67 crores from the Centre

Bharatmala Scheme

India - is planning to build 1,911 kms of International Roads by 2022 - as per Mr Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Min of State for Road Transport and Highways

Bharatmala scheme - Established - 31 July 2015

Target - 83,677 kms of Road highways at Rs 5.35 lakh crores budget

Special Remission Scheme for prisoners

Special Remission Scheme for Prisoners – Approved by Cabinet

Occasion – On the eve of 150th Birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

Categories of Convicts

Women and Transgender – 55 years and above & completed 50% of sentence period

Male – 60 years and above & Completed 50% of sentence period

Physically challenged – 70% disability and above & Completed 50% of sentence period

Terminally ill convicts

Convicted prisoners – who have completed two-third of their sentence period

Release – Phase I on 2nd Oct 2018; Phase II on 10th Apr 2019 (Champan Satyagraha anniversary) & Phase III on 2nd Oct 2019

Exemptions – Convicts under TADA, POTA, POCSA, FEMA, Money laundering, Prevention of Corruption, UAPA, FICN, NDPS etc.,

Think for Health

‘ThinkForHealth’ – a digital campaign launched by the Organisation of Pharmaceutical Producers of India – in association with Telangana Government

It Calls upon ideas to improve healthcare access in India

Hyderabad - Telangana Government plans to make Hyderabad as the ‘Bio-Pharma’ innovation hub

Jal Bachao, Video Banao, Puruska Pao

“Jal Bachao, Video Banao, Puruskar Pao” – New Contest started by Min of Water Resources – to engage People on the issues of Water Management and Water Conservation

Pradhan Mantri Awaz Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Awaz Yojana (Urban) – Min of Housing & Urban affairs announced that 51 lakh houses have been approved under the scheme – in 3 years after its implementation

Annapoorna Milk Scheme

Rajasthan launches ‘Annapoorna Milk Scheme’ from July 2nd, 2018 As per this,

Students in class I to V - to get 150 ml of milk everyday
Students in class VI to VIII - to get 200 ml of milk everyday

Purna Project

'Purna' project - Launched by Gujarat - to eradicate malnutrition among children as part of the drive called as 'Poshan Abhiyan'

Vaanijya Kal, Aapke Dwaar Scheme

'Vaanijya Kar, Aapke dwaar' scheme - Launched in Uttar Pradesh during 'GST diwas' - under which the tax officials to meet the traders at their shops to resolve issues

Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan

Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (Prime Minister's Safe Motherhood Campaign)

Madhya Pradesh - Awarded 1st Prize for reducing Maternal Mortality rate by 48 digits

Mukhyamantri Kissan Aaye Bahotri Solar Yojana

Delhi - launches a new scheme 'Mukhyamantri Kissan Aaye Bahotri Solar Yojna' - to increase the farmer's income by 3 to 5 times

INTERNATIONAL

International Arbitration Centre (Asia's 1st)

International Arbitration Centre in Tokyo - to be set up as Asia's 1st Arbitration centre for Intellectual Property (IP)

Walking Action Plan

Walking Action Plan - launched by the London Mayor, Mr Sadiq Khan - to make it as World's Most walkable city

Singapore (Abdul Kalam Vision Society)

Singapore - Abdul Kalam Vision society to be set up - to advance his vision for the world

49th International Physics Olympiad

49th International Physics Olympiad, Lisbon, Portugal

5 Students from India bagged Gold medal

1. Bhaskar Gupta (Mumbai)
2. Lay Jain (Kota)
3. Nishanth Abhangi (Rajkot)
4. Pawan Goyal (Jaipur)
5. Siddharth Tiwari (Kolkata)

This is the 1st time in 21 years that all the 5 students in the team have won Top honours

China - was the only other country to win highest number of Golds apart from India

India was won maximum of only 4 Golds in the previous years of Olympiad

AWARDS

Rahul Dravid

Former Indian captain Rahul Dravid and former Australian captain Ricky Ponting have been inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame for their stupendous achievements in international cricket.

IREDA

IREDA (Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency) - receives the UK-India 'Deal of the Year' award

Chennai's CMRL - Gold Rating Award

Chennai's CMRL (Headquarters & Maintenance Depot) - awarded 'Gold rating' - by LEED, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design - under 'New Construction' category

The English Patient

'The English Patient', the wartime love story by Michael Ondaatje, has won the Golden Man Booker Prize at the closing event of the Man Booker 50 Festival in Royal Festival Hall at Southbank Centre in London on July 8, 2018.

□ The prize was instituted to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Man Booker prize. The English Patient is a compelling work of fiction – both poetic and philosophical.

Vikku Vinayakram

‘Vikku’ Vinayakram, Ghatam Maestro – to be conferred with Special Lifetime Achievement Award by Music Academy

India’s ICZM Project

India’s ICZM Project (Integrated Coastal Zone Management) – Wins World Bank’s Internal Award – for exceptional performance in achieving its goals

Jayashree Ullas and Neerjasethi

Two Indian-origin women on Forbes list of ‘America’s Richest self-made women’

British Indian of the year

Ishwar Sharma – A 8 year old Yoga champion kid named as ‘British Indian of the Year’

Aditi Lahiri, Prominent Linguist at Oxford – gets the ‘Inspiring leadership’ award for the work on speech recognition

Champion of Earth Science

Ministry of Earth Sciences – Foundation Day Awards

Key Award Winners

Prof K S Valdiya – Life Time Excellence Award

Dr Kusala Rajendran – National Award for Women Scientist

Miss Asia (Deaf)

Deshna Jain (20), who is from Tikamgarh in Madhya Pradesh, has been crowned the 2018 Miss Asia (Deaf) title.

International Cricketer of the Year

Virat Kohli wins International Cricketer of the Year at CEAT awards

Tamil Nadu Cricketer of the Year 2016-17 (Men) - Dinesh Karthik

Tamil Nadu Cricketer of the Year 2016-17 (Women) - D Hemalatha

CONFERENCE & SUMMITS

International Union of Food Science and Technology

India will host the 19th edition of IUFoST World Food Science and Technology Congress 2018 in Navi Mumbai from October 23-27, 2018. The IUFoST stands for 'International Union of Food Science and Technology'. The 5-day event will bring together researchers, academicians, professionals, policy makers and industry leaders from across the globe to showcase innovation, exchange breakthrough ideas and drive policy issues. The focal theme for the 19th edition of the prestigious World Congress of Food Science and Technology is '25 Billion Meals a Day by 2025 with Healthy, Nutritious, Safe and Diverse Foods'. IUFoST 2018 will provide insight on key concepts on recent advances in food sciences, food processing and agriculture technologies.

Data for New India conference

The International Round Table Conference on "Data for New India" has organised by the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) in New Delhi during 9-10th July, 2018. The Conference was inaugurated by D.V. Sadananda Gowda. The purpose of the Round Table Conference is to identify innovative ideas for improving the statistical system in India, taking cue from the best practices followed in advanced countries like Canada, UK and Australia. Such a Conference is being organized in India for the first time. In the Conference, the experts from National and International agencies would deliberate on key statistical issues, such as data governance structure and capabilities, organizational issues, managing data systems in a federal structure and resource mobilization for ensuring quality statistical products to be produced. The conference is expected to suggest measures paving way for initiating the reform process in the Indian Statistical System.

6thBRICS Meeting

The heads of state and government of all five BRICS nations including Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa convened for the 10th BRICS Summit from July 25-27, 2018 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Theme: 'BRICS in Africa: Collaboration for inclusive growth and shared prosperity in the 4th Industrial Revolution'

The summit saw the BRICS leaders come together and discuss various international and regional issues of common concern and adopted the 'Johannesburg Declaration' by consensus. The declaration reaffirms principles of democracy, inclusiveness and agrees to fight unilateralism and protectionism.

28th Meeting of GST Council

28th Meeting of GST Council, New Delhi

Chaired by - Mr Piyush Goyal, Min of Finance, Railways and Coal

Key points approved

Exemption of Sanitary napkins from GST from the earlier 12% levy of tax

Reduction of Slab for Lithium-ion batteries used in Electronic items from 28% to 18%

GST was rolled out on July 1, 2017

PM's Visit - Rwanda, Uganda

PM's Visit to Rwanda

India & Rwanda - sign 8 agreements in the fields of Defence, Agriculture, Trade, Leather and Dairy

India - also extended \$200 million Lines of Credit to Rwanda

India - to open its Mission in Rwanda

India - to gift 200 cows for 'Girinka' programme, which is, 'one cow for every poor family' scheme - launched in 2006

Indian PM, Mr Narendra Modi - 1st Indian PM to visit Rwanda

Rwanda - is the current chair of African Union

President of Rwanda - Mr Paul Kagame

Capital of Rwanda - Kigali

PM's Visit to Uganda

PM - Referred Uganda as 'Pearl of Africa' in his speech

India & Uganda - sign 4 Agreements - in the areas of Defence cooperation, visa exemption for official and diplomatic passport holders, cultural exchange programme and material testing laboratory

India announced two Lines of Credit worth nearly US \$200 million to Uganda

India will also render vehicles, ambulances and cancer therapy machine to Uganda. PM Modi also offered to build a commemoration centre in Kampala in memory of Mahatma Gandhi.

PM Modi - becomes the 1st Indian PM to make keynote address at Ugandan Parliament

Capital of Uganda - Kampala

President of Uganda - Yoweri Museveni

AISHE's Report 2018

The AISHE Report 2018 (The All India Survey of Higher Education)

1st Place - Chandigarh (56.4)

2nd Place - Tamil Nadu (48.6 - Last year 46.9)

3rd Place - Delhi (46.3)

4th Place - Puducherry (45.4)

5th Place - Himachal Pradesh (37.9)

Female Gross Enrolment Ratio

1st Place - Chandigarh (67.7)

2nd Place - Tamil Nadu (48.2)

3rd Place - Puducherry (48.1)

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

Eternal Art

'Eternal Art' - Auditor S Sundararajan

SuganthiEnnaAndalDevanayaki

Sugandhi Enna Andal Devanayaki' - T D Ramakrishnan (Malayalam)

PERSONALITIES

SEEMA Nanda

Seema Nanda - becomes the 1st Indian-American to be appointed as the CEO of the Opposition, Democratic National Committee

Pranjal Patel

Pranjal Patel (Maharashtra) – India’s 1st Visually impaired Woman IAS officer

Dr.MahiTalatSiddiqui

Dr Mahi Talat Siddiqui (Kanpur) – a Muslim women, translates Ramayana into Urdu

Swati B Bawan

Swati B Baruah – becomes the 1st Transgender judge in Assam & 3rd in the Country

Transgender Judges in India

1st – Joyita Mondal (West Bengal)

2nd - Vidya Kamble (Maharashtra)

Tilak Mehta

Tilak Mehta (Mumbai – 13 year old) – launched a logistics start up ‘Papers N Parcels’ (PNP) with its own App – to carry parcels within Mumbai on the same day – along with its partnership of 300 Dabbawala’s.

GautamKaul

Asian Tug-of-war Federation, Bangkok

India’s Gautam Kaul – elected as New President – 1st time an Indian holding this position

Faiz Mohammad

Indian Child, Faiz Mohammad (10 years old) – named as ‘Sustainability Ambassador’ by Dubai Municipality – for his efforts to cut down Plastic bag wastes at Groceries

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Khan Prahari (App)

“Khan Prahari’. Khan Prahari is a tool for reporting any activity taking place related to illegal coal mining like rat hole mining, pilferage etc. One can upload geo-tagged photographs of the incident along with

textual information directly to the system. Hence, both satellite data and human information will be used to capture information on the unauthorised mining activities.

PAT

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully conducted test of Crew Escape System that provides escape mechanism for astronauts if the launch operation is aborted. The crew escape system is being developed as part of the he proposed human spaceight programme. Only three countries United States of America (USA), Russia and China have human space ight programmes.

Train 18

India's rst indigenously designed locomotive-less (engine less) train known as Train 18, breached the 180 kmph speed limit during test run in Kota-Sawai Madhopur section. When this train is made operational, it will become the country's fastest train. It is touted as next generation Shatabdi Express and will connect metros with other important cities. Background Train 18 was rolled out in October 2018 at Chennai's Integral Coach Factory (ICF). Earlier in November 2018, Research Designs and Standards Organisation (RDSO) had announced its trial run successfully. During this trail on tracks in Moradabad division of Northern Railway, this train had ran up to 115 km per hour. The trials proved that train has dened track geometry parameters, curved alignments of specic radius and station yard zones. Major trials of this train are now over with just some more remaining. Once Train 18 becomes operational, it will commence its commercial operations from January 2019. Train 18 It is capable of touching 200 kmph provided the rest of Indian Railways' system such as tracks and signals permit. It will replacing current 30-year-old Shatabdi Express - a day train. Thus it is touted as next generation Shatabdi Express. It will be rst long-distance train without separate locomotive (engine). It has been indigenously developed by Chennai-based Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in just short time span of 18 months. It took investment of nearly Rs 100 crore to build this prototype and subsequent bulk production will bring down the cost. Thus, it will be cheaper compared to imported engine less train. With 16 coaches, it will has same passenger carrying capacity as

that of Shatabdi Express. It has aerodynamically designed driver cabins at both ends for quicker turn-around at destinations. It sports advanced regenerative braking system which saves power. It is fully air-conditioned and offers better passenger comfort and safety, as all equipment are stowed under carriage, so that more space is available on board. It has soft lighting, automatic doors, footsteps and GPS-based Passenger Information System (PIS). It also has onboard Wi-Fi and infotainment, and modular toilets with bio-vacuum systems. Footstep in coach's doorway in this train slides outward when train stops at station, enabling passengers to board or deboard safely with comfort

Medipix

Scientists from New Zealand have performed world's first-ever 3-D, colour X-ray on human. It has potential to improve the field of medical diagnostics. The new device is based on the traditional black-and-white X-ray but incorporates particle tracking technology called Medipix developed by European Organization for Nuclear Research (CERN). Key Facts The Medipix technology developed by CERN works like camera detecting and counting individual sub-atomic particles as they collide with pixels while its shutter is open. This allows for high-resolution, high-contrast pictures. Its small pixels and accurate energy resolution makes this new imaging tool able to get images that no other imaging tool can achieve. The technology is being commercialised by New Zealand company MARS Bioimaging, linked to the universities of Canterbury and Otago which helped develop it. Significance: This colour X-ray imaging technique can produce clearer and more accurate pictures and help doctors give their patients more accurate diagnoses. The images very clearly show difference between bone, muscle and cartilage and also the position and size of cancerous tumours.

Leap Microscope

The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)- Madras has commissioned remotely operable Local Electrode Atom Probe (LEAP) microscope. It is claimed to be world's first remotely operable LEAP microscope, as it can be remotely operated through special terminal by researchers divided geographically. Key Facts LEAP is high-performance microscope that can provide a precise atom-by-atom view of materials. It provides

atomic-scale insights into metallic, which will influence wide spectrum of industries ranging from steel to automobiles and energy to transportation sector. It will also give major thrust to research in nanotechnology, among other fields. The remotely operable LEAP microscope has been developed in a collaborative exercise involving eight top research institutions in country, spearheaded by IIT-M. Other partner institutions are IITs of Bombay, Delhi, Kanpur, Kharagpur and Ropar, International Advanced Research Centre for Powder Metallurgy and New Materials (ARCI) and Board of Research in Nuclear Sciences (BRNS).

VaziraniShul

Vazirani 'Shul' - India's 1st ever Turbine-Electric Hypercar - unveiled by 'Vazirani Automotive', Mumbai - at 2018 Goodwood Festival of Speed, United Kingdom

Taxibots

Taxibots - to be used in Indian Airports - to reduce Carbon Emissions

Taxibots - Pilot controlled semi Robots

Manufacturer - Israel Aerospace Industries

Launched by - KSU Aviation (Gurugram)

Hydro - Solar Panel Project

'Source' - a new 'Hydro-Solar' panel Project - to be launched by 'Swelect Energy Systems Ltd' in association with US-based 'Zero Mass Water'

Objective - It aims at providing pure drinking water using air and sunlight

Cost - Rs 2 lakh/panel

Capacity - 5 litres of water / day

DEFENCE

INS Sahyadri

INS Sahyadri (Indigenous Stealth Frigate) - adjudged Runner-up in 'Innovation Competition' during the Harbour phase - in World's largest

Maritime exercise, RIMPAC 2018 - for integrating Yoga into the Ship regime

Golden Globe Race

Commander Abhilash Tony (Indian Navy) - to participate in the Historic GGR in the indigenously built INSV Thuriya - Golden Globe Race commencing in Western France on July 1st, 2018 - to Complete in April 2019

(Key info -

Abhilash Tony was the only invitee from Asia out of 18 participants, including 1 woman sailor; He was the only Indian to do solo, non-stop sailing in 2012-13 onboard INSV Mhadei.

GGR - Single handed, non-stop circumnavigation around the world using Boat designs and technology prior to 1968, thereby prohibiting Modern day tech's like GPS, Navigational Aids etc.,

Totally 30,000 miles to be covered relying only the traditional methods like stars, physical maps etc.,

It is conducted by UK's Sailing Pioneer Sir Robin Knox Johnston - to commemorate his 50 years of World's first Solo, Non-stop circumnavigation on board Indian-built boat 'Suhaili' in 1968)

INS Sumitra

INS Sumitra, Naval ship - becomes the 1st ever warship to enter 'Port of Sabang' in Indonesia - to be deployed in Malacca Straits

INS Tarangini

INS Tarangini - to Participate in 'Tall ship Races - 2018' at Sunderland, UK - during its 'Lokayan-18' voyage

INS Tarangini - 1st ship of Indian Navy to circumnavigate the Globe in 2003-04 and participated at 'Tall ship Races' in 2007, 2011 and 2015.

It belongs to 1st Training squadron based at Kochi, under Southern Naval command

Peace Missions

Peace Mission 2018

India & Pakistan - to participate together for the 1st time in the multi-nation counter terror war games conducted by SCO in Chelyabinsk

region of Russia from Aug 22 to Aug 29, 2018 - along with the other 6 member countries

SCO - Shanghai Cooperation organization

Established - 2001

Member countries - 8 (Russia, China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, India & Pakistan)

India & Pakistan - admitted in SCO in the year 2017 as 'Full members'

Recent 18th SCO Summit - concluded at Qingdao in June 2018

SPORTS

FIFA World Cup

- France Wins 2018 FIFA World cup Football (15th July 2018)
- Golden Ball award: Luka Modric (Croatia)- Won 3 Man of Matches in 7 games
- Golden Boot award: Harry Kane (England captain) for scoring six goals across six games
- Golden Glove award: Thibaut Courtois (Belgium).
- FIFA Young Player award: 19-year-old Kylian Mbappe (France)- becomes 2nd Teenager to score in the World cup Final after Pele, Brazilian football legend.
- Country - Russia
- The Prize money - \$38 million (about Rs 260 crores)
- Jules Rimet Trophy - Official Name
- Zabivaka - Official Mascot
- Live it up - Official song

Junior Asian Wrestling Championship

Viresh Kundu has won bronze in the 97kg Greco-Roman wrestling category at the 2018 Asian Junior Championships

SUPREME COURT VERDICT

Sabarimala Temple Case

The Supreme Court has ruled that women, of all age groups, can enter temple in Kerala. The apex court in a 4:1 majority said that the temple

practice violates the rights of Hindu women and that banning entry of women to shrine is gender discrimination. A five-judge Constitution bench, headed by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, said that the provision in the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965, which authorised the restriction violated the right of Hindu women to practice religion. The bench, led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra and comprising Justices R F Nariman, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud and , had reserved its judgment in the case on August 2 this year. The temple, dedicated to Lord Ayyappa, is one of the most famous temples in Kerala. The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) manages the temple. It is likely that the ruling will have an impact on all temple and their customs across the state.

What is the Sabarimala case? A group of five women lawyers has challenged Rule 3(b) of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965, which authorises restriction on women “of menstruating age”. They moved the apex court after the Kerala HC upheld the centuries-old restriction, and ruled that only the “tantri (priest)” was empowered to decide on traditions. Senior Advocate Indira Jaising, who represented the petitioners, said the restrictions went against Articles 14, 15 and 17 of the Constitution. She argued that the custom is discriminatory in nature and stigmatised women, and that women should be allowed to pray at the place of their choice.

Temple board of barring women from entering Sabarimala

The temple management has contended in court that without the state’s interference as the Ayyappa devotees form a denomination—a body with a definite identifiable character. They also said that it wasn’t discriminatory as the tradition was born from the belief that the deity is a ‘naishtika brahmachari’ (eternal celibate). Meanwhile, women devotees who ran the #Readytowait campaign opposed the petition as well. The campaign had sprung up in response to #RightToPray. They argued that only women of a certain age are barred from entering the temple and that it is okay to wait till 50 to enter the holy shrine. They also argued that the petitioners were confusing diversity of Hinduism with discrimination.

Kerala govt's stance

While the Kerala government had opposed the entry of women in 2016, it told the SC during the hearing this year that it was in favour of allowing women to pray at the temple. Advocate Jaideep Gupta, representing the state government, said it would support the entry of women of all ages to the temple.

Some observations by the SC during hearing

During the hearing, the apex court observed that “what applies to a man applies to a woman” as well and that “once you open it for public, anyone can go”. The bench also said that a “woman’s right to pray was not dependent on any law but it is a Constitutional right”. “Your (intervener) right to pray being a woman, is equal to that of a man and it is not dependent on a law to enable you to do that,” observed Justice D Y Chandrachud. Justice Nariman had observed that “menstruation is not impure.”

OTHERS

Lok Sabha - passes Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018

Objective_- It proposes to enhance the punishment for the rape of a Child

Key Points of the Bill

Rape of a girl under 12 years: 20 years in jail or life imprisonment or death

Gang-rape of a girl under 12 years: imprisonment for life or death

Rape of a girl under 16 years: Minimum punishment increased from 10 to 20 years, extendable to imprisonment for life

Gang-rape of a girl under 16 years: Imprisonment for life

Rape of women: Minimum punishment raised from imprisonment of 7 years to 10 years, extendable to life

It amends the Indian Penal Code (IPC), 1860

Repeat offenders to be punished with life imprisonment or death

National Crime Records Bureau to maintain a national database and profile of sexual offenders.

Satyashree Sharmila (Ramanathapuram) - 1st Transgender to register as a lawyer in Tamilnadu and Puducherry Bar Council

Kumbakonam Municipality - becomes 1st in the state to use 'Robots' for clearing Manhole sewage blocks

Poet Magudeswaran - conferred with 'Chirpi Literary' Award of Chirpi Foundation

World Heritage Site status

Maharashtra, Mumbai - gets the distinction of UNESCO's World Heritage Site (2nd Indian city), after three of its iconic places, Elephanta, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus & Victorian & Art Deco Ensembles are named as part of the list of 'World Heritage Sites' (Key info - 1st Indian City to get UNESCO's World Heritage Site status - Ahmedabad)

Jharkhand - to get India's 1st Khadi Mall

Longest Lunar Eclipse - Century's Longest Lunar eclipse to occur on July 27-28, 2018

Total Lunar Eclipse - Duration - 1 hour 43 minutes

Total Eclipse - 2 hours 43 minutes (including Partial eclipse)

Blood Moon 2018 - Longest Lunar Eclipse of the Century witnessed on July 27-28, 2018

It is the total lunar eclipse that lasted 103 minutes

It was clearly seen in the Eastern Hemisphere including Central Asia and Eastern Africa.

The best view of the entire eclipse was also visible across the Eastern Europe, Central and East Africa and South East Asia.

Total Lunar Eclipse - It occurs when the Earth comes between the Sun and the Moon and covers the Moon with its shadow called Umbra.

During this time, the Moon turns red, thus, called as 'Blood Moon'

Incidentally, July 27 also marked the day of 'Lunar Apogee Fall' which coincided with the 'Full Moon' day.

The Lunar Apogee - Moon's farthest orbital point from the Earth - making it appear particularly small and distant.

Humanoid Robot, Sophia - visits India to be the part of '7th Forevermark Forum' in Delhi

Sophia - developed by Hongkong-based 'Hanson Robotics'

It was activated on Apr 19, 2015

It was modeled after actress, Audrey Hepburn

It uses Artificial Intelligence, Visual data processing & Facial recognition

In Oct 2017, Sophia was granted Citizenship by 'Saudi Arabia', becoming the 1st ever Robot with a nationality

In Nov 2017, Sophia was named UN Development Programme's 1st ever Innovation champion for Asia-Pacific, becoming the first non-human to be given any UN title

Meghalayan Age - The Newest Phase in the History of Earth is named - after the discovery of the Stalagmite in a cave of Meghalaya

Other 2 New phases in the Earth's History are named as

Middle Holocene Northgrippian Age

Early Holocene Greenlandian Age

The Meghalayan Age - begins around 4200 years ago

Middle Holocene Northgrippian Age - began around 8,300 years ago

Early Holocene Greenlandian Age - began around 11,700 years

All these 3 ages belongs to a part of longer period known as Holocene Epoch - which began around 11,700 years ago

SAFAR - System of Air quality and weather Forecasting And Research - New Advanced weather forecasting system - launched in Chandni Chowk, New Delhi - by Mr Harsh Vardhan, Min for Science and Technology

SAFAR - has an in-built LED display to provide real time air quality index with 72 hour advance forecasting facility

It can track UV-index, PM1, Mercury and Black carbon levels in real time

Pitch Black 2018 – Indian Air Force to participate for the 1st time with 145 air-warriors

Duration – July 24 to Aug 18, 2018

Venue – Australia

Type – Biennial, Airforce warfare exercise hosted by Royal Australian Air Force

PB-18 – 1st PB exercise took place in 1981

This is IAF's 3rd Multilateral Air combat exercise in the last 3 years, after Red flag (US-2016) and Blue flag (Israel-2017) exercises

IAF contingent Composition - 145 air-warriors, including four Sukhoi Su-30 MKIs, an Ilyushin tanker, an Ilyushin Il-78 tanker, a Lockheed Martin C-130J-30 Super Hercules, and a Boeing C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft.

Participating countries - 12 (Australia, Canada, India, Germany, Indonesia, France (New Caledonia), Netherlands, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia and United States)

Note: Candidates are advised to go through and prepare the entire month current affairs other than the given topics.

AUGUST, 2018

e-Aksharayan

e-Aksharayan is an [optical character recognition](#) engine for Indian languages. Some of research work from e-Aksharayan has been published in different conferences and journals

1st Nepal - India Think Tank Summit

The first 'Nepal-India Think Tank' Summit was held in Kathmandu on July 31 to foster greater collaboration and knowledge-sharing among the think tanks of the two countries. It was inaugurated by Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda', the former Prime Minister of Nepal and Co-Chairman of ruling Nepal Communist Party. The summit was jointly organized by the Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs (AIDA) and Nehru Memorial Museum Library (NMML). The purpose of the summit was to support the networks and promote mutual understanding through institutional collaboration on resource sharing for joint events / publications among think tanks of the two countries. The participants including think tanks, policy makers, diplomats, academicians, businesspersons and journalists deliberated on the Indo-Nepal ties and its dimensions in different sessions.

GI Tag Logo and Tagline

Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) under Ministry of Commerce and Industry has unveiled tricolour logo for geographical indication (GI) certified products. The logo has tagline "Invaluable Treasures of Incredible India" printed below it. Key Facts In the open contest, winning logo was designed by Adri Chatterjee and winning tagline was coined by Akancha Tripathi. The purpose of logo and tagline for GI selected is to increase awareness about intellectual property rights (IPRs) and also and importance of GI products in the country. From now on, GI-registered goods will sport logo and tagline to make them more attractive

Solar Charkha Mission

President Ram Nath Kovind launched Solar Charkha Mission under which Government will disburse subsidy of Rs 550 crore to thousands of artisans, generating employment in rural areas. It was launched during the event of Udyam Sangam (National MSME Conclave) on the occasion of World MSME Day (observed on 27 June). Key Facts Under this mission, Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) will cover 50 clusters across the country including in the Northeast and each cluster will employ 400 to 2,000 artisans. Its ultimate aim is to generate employment in rural areas and contribute to the green economy. It also aims at linking ve crore women across the country to the initiative. The mission is expected to create one lakh jobs during the first two years.

Focal Portal

The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) has launched a dedicated portal - Forum of Cargo Owners and Logistics Operators (FOCAL) - to connect cargo owners and shippers with real time data on availability of vessels. The landmark e-connect measure will enable direct interaction among the vessel operators, shippers and cargo owners. It has been designed and developed by the in-house IT Department and the traffic wing of IWAI as part of its preparedness for optimal use of its ongoing capacity development on various National Waterways.

123rd Amendment Bill

The Parliament of India has passed the 123rd Constitutional Amendment Bill, which grants constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC). The bill was passed after the House repealed the NCBC Act, 1993. It will contribute to the empowerment of the OBC communities across India. The bill states that the President may specify the socially and educationally backward classes in the various states and union territories. He may do this in consultation with the Governor of the concerned state. It will give the institution all powers to safeguard the rights of the socially and educationally backward classes and fulfils a long pending commitment of the central govt to the OBCs. The Clause-3 (5) of the Bill gives the

proposed Commission the power to inquire into complaints of deprivation of rights and safeguards. Clause 3 (8) gives it the powers of a civil court trying a suit and allows it to summon anyone, require documents to be produced and receive evidence on affidavit.

Chandrayan 2

Indian Space Research Organisation will most likely launch Chandrayaan-2, the country's second mission to the Moon in the month of February. Chandrayaan-2 The features of the Chandrayaan-2 mission are: Chandrayaan-2 mission is a totally indigenous venture comprising of an orbiter, a lander and a rover. There would be a controlled descent and the lander would soft-land on the lunar surface at a specified site and deploy a rover. The rover would then move around the landing site on the lunar surface in a semi-autonomous mode as decided by the ground commands. The rover will observe the lunar surface and send back the data. This data will be useful for analysis of the lunar soil. The payloads will collect scientific information on lunar topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance, lunar exosphere and signatures of hydroxyl and water-ice. The 3,290-kg Chandrayaan-2 will orbit the Moon and perform the objectives of remote sensing the moon.

2019 Rugby World Cup - Japan

UMANG Platform

UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-Age Governance) is one of the key initiatives under the Digital India program to develop a common, unified platform and mobile app to facilitate a single point of access to all government services. It is envisaged to act as a master application, which will integrate major government services from various sectors such as Agriculture, Education, Health, Housing among others. The application will enable users to access e-Government services from the central Government, the State Governments, local bodies and their agencies. UMANG is conceptualised to bring governance on the finger tips of individuals through 'mobile first' strategy. This multi-lingual app is developed and operated by National e-Governance Division (NeGD), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to fast-track Mobile Governance in India. Its

primary aim is to abridge inconvenience faced by users in managing multiple mobile apps and facilitate a one-stop-solution to avail varied government services. Thus, downloading one mobile app will aid convergence of various efforts, carried out separately, to reach out to the individuals via mobile phones.

OBJECTIVE

- 1) To act as an enabler and facilitator in developing overall mobile based service delivery ecosystem in India.
- 2) Provide easy access for individuals to various services via single Mobile Application, easy to remember short code and single Toll Free number.
- 3) Provide easy discoverability of services, easy manageability and standardisation of service delivery.
- 4) Provide for quick mobile enablement of e-Gov applications/services of Government departments through easy and fast integration, on-boarding, mobile front-end roll-out by bringing their services on this mobile application platform. Provide another value added services to departments via a common platform through integration with Telecom Service Provider and Payment gateway. This will facilitate easy on-boarding of Government departments.

India's 1st Female SWAT Team

India's first all-woman Special Weapons and Tactics (SWAT) team for anti-terrorist operations has been inducted in Delhi Police. The 36 elite women commandos, hailing from north-eastern states, have undergone rigorous training of around 15 months from specialists all across India and abroad to handle urban situations as well as jungle operations. They will be deployed at Red Fort and India Gate during the 2018 Independence Day celebrations. The SWAT team is the brainchild of Amulya Patnaik, the Delhi Police Commissioner.

Santali

Santhali has become the first Indian tribal language to get a Wikipedia edition in its native script. It is a language in the Munda subfamily of Austroasiatic languages & presently has content of about 70,000 words.

The Santhali Wikipedia edition received approval from the Wikimedia Foundation's Language Committee on June 28, 2018 and finally, the Santali Wikipedia site was launched on 2nd August 2018. According to the 2001 census, Santhali is written in Ol Chiki script & is spoken by 6.4 million people in India only. Its speakers live mostly in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and Assam. The language is also spoken in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal. As per the Eighth Schedule to the Constitution of India, Santali is a recognized regional language of India. Wikipedia is available in nearly 300 languages globally as of August 2018.

Prime Minister's 72nd Independence Day Speech

The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressed the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on the 72nd Independence Day.

Independence Day Awards

Sepoy Vrahma Pal Singh - Conferred with Kirti Chakra posthumously.
6 women crew members of Indian Naval Sailing Vessel (INSV) Tarini - conferred with **Nao Sena (Gallantry) medal**
Lt Cdr Vartika Joshi (Captain) & Lt Cdr Pratibha Jamwal, and Lts P Swathi, Vijaya Devi, B Aishwarya and Payal Gupta

Wings app

The Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) has launched a VOIP based service "WINGS". In WINGS, there is no SIM or cable wiring as is a VOIP service through an app. The WINGS service offers unlimited free audio/video calling for one year. The service can be activated with a one-time fee of Rs. 1,099 (Rs 1,297 with GST). Calls can be made using any data connection such as wired broadband, Wi-Fi, 3G or 4G network of any any operator.

Digital Northeast Vision Document 2022

The Digital North East Vision 2022 was released in Guwahati, Assam by Union Minister for Electronics & Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad. It was released in presence of Chief Ministers and IT Ministers of North East States and senior officials of Central Government Ministries including DoT and DoNER etc. First electronics manufacturing cluster in north-eastern region was also inaugurated in Guwahati, Assam.

Digital North East Vision 2022 The vision document emphasizes on leveraging digital technologies to transform lives of people of north east and enhance ease of living. It identifies eight digital thrust areas namely, Digital Infrastructure, Digital services, Promotion of Electronics Manufacturing, Digital empowerment, Promotion of IT and ITes including BPOs, Digital Payments, Innovation & Startups and Cyber security. It has developed state-wise roadmaps for implementing digital initiatives in North East States. Through these, it aims to empower the people of the North Eastern region. Under Digital North East, Union government will invest nearly Rs. 10,000 crore in region over next 4 years to implement more than 400 projects. Digital North East is envisioned as an integral part of Digital India programme. It will help in leveraging power of Information Technology to leapfrog the overall development of North East region and realize its full potential.

'Neta' app

On August 24, the National Electoral Transformation (NETA) mobile application has been launched by former President Pranab Mukherjee wherein voters can review and rate their elected representatives (MPs & MLAs) as well as hold them accountable. The purpose of app is to foster political accountability by being an indicator of the ways in which a leader's performance is being perceived. The app is the brainchild of an entrepreneur Pratham Mittal and is inspired by the US approval system.

India's 1st Biofuel Flight

Budget passenger carrier SpiceJet has successfully conducted India's first-ever test flight powered by biojet fuel between Dehradun and Delhi on August 27, 2018. The 43 minute flight was operated by the airline's Bombardier Q-400 aircraft with total 25 on onboard, including crew. The flight was powered with a blend of 75% Air Turbine Fuel (ATF) and 25% biojet fuel. The biojet fuel, which is made from Jatropha crop, has been developed by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) based in Dehradun along with Indian Institute of Petroleum (IIP). The advantage of using biojet fuel as compared to ATF is that it reduces carbon emissions and enhances fuel efficiency. The biojet fuel has been recognised by American Standard Testing Method (ASTM)

and meets the specification standards of Pratt & Whitney and Bombardier

TAMILNADU

All Women Metro Stations

Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) has converted Shenoy Nagar and Koyambedu metro stations into all-woman metro stations, in a bid to empower the fairer sex. Working two-shifts, a team of 15 women will handle ticketing, customer care and housekeeping at the Shenoy Nagar metro station. This seems to be the latest in the series of measures being taken by railway authorities to ensure safety of women while travelling in trains.

Tamilnadu Good Governance Award 2018

Tamil Nadu - Good Governance Awards 2018 Announced - On The Eve Of Independence Day celebrations

1st place - Registration Department

2nd place - Food and Civil supplies Department

3rd place - Health Department

Best Corporation - Tirupur

Best Municipalities -

1st - Kovilpatti (Tuticorin district)

2nd - Kambam (Theni district)

3rd - Sirgazhi (Nagapattinam district)

Chennai's 2nd Airport

Proposed sites for Chennai's 2nd Airport

Madurantakam, Gummidipoondi, Cheyyur, Uthiramerur

5 new Taluks in Tamilnadu

Kallikudi in Madurai district

Raja SingaMangalam in Ramanathapuram district

Eral in Thoothukudi district

Thisaiyanvilai in Tirunelvelidistrict

Mohanur in Namakkal district

Tamilnadu Fossil Museum

Tamil Nadu Government - has announced that the Fossil Museum in Ariyalur is ready for inauguration

Plastic Free Tamilnadu Campaign

Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami flagged off a campaign Plastic Pollution Free Tamil Nadu and appointed popular actors, including Vivek as brand ambassadors.

Sorkuvai Scheme

Hon'ble Tamil Nadu Chief Minister - announced a budget of Rs 1 crore every year for 'Sorkuvai' scheme, which was earlier announced on June 28th, 2018 in the Assembly The Scheme intends to classify various Tamil words in sync with the everimproving technical jargon, for the usage of Tamil scholars and literature← writers

The Tamil Nadu government has launched an ambitious project to integrate all six Tamil etymological dictionaries, including Winslow and Madras University dictionaries, and create a treasury of words (*Sorkuvai*) for all subjects with English equivalents.

The scheme will link all the Tamil words and English words as per their original 'meanings' apart from linking the 'Most Searched' words with pictographic images.

STATE

Rajasthan Bio Fuel Policy

Rajasthan has become the first Indian state to implement the National policy on bio fuels, which was launched by the Union Government in May 2018. The desert State will lay emphasis on increasing production of oilseeds and establish a Centre for Excellence in Udaipur to promote research in the fields of alternative fuels and energy resources.

□ The policy on bio fuels seeks to help farmers dispose of their surplus stock in an economic manner and reduce the country's oil import dependence.

□ It has expanded the scope of raw material for ethanol production by allowing use of sugarcane juice, sugar containing materials, starch

containing materials and damaged food grains like wheat, broken rice and rotten potatoes for ethanol production.

ShaurNahin app

The Himachal Pradesh government has launched “Horn Not Ok” awareness campaign in Shimla and Mandi along with a statewide mobile application ‘shaur nahin’ (no noise).

□ The main aim of the campaign is to spread awareness of unnecessary blowing horn as it creates unnecessary noise pollution.

SwachhaMeraJayate

The Karnataka government has launched a rural cleanliness and sanitation campaign “Swachhameva Jayate” to make every citizen in rural Karnataka take a pledge of cleanliness. The aim of the campaign is to boost the Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2018 (SSG 2018) survey in all the districts with the help of school children.

Andhra Pradesh Thermal Battery Plant

On August 6, the world’s first-ever facility to create thermal batteries has been inaugurated in Andhra Pradesh by the state’s Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu in Amaravati. The thermal battery plant, which is manufactured by the Bharat Energy Storage Technology Private Limited (BEST), is expected to start commercial operations by May 2019.

□ The technology will help in mitigating carbon emissions and is best suited for grid balancing and stabilisations. It will also be used to store energy for telecommunication, commercial establishments, electric vehicles and highway charging stations. It can also be effectively used in remote locations, such as hilly terrains and islands.

□ The BEST also aims to set up a Greenfield Project in India, at an estimated cost of Rs 660 crores, through which nearly 3000 jobs are expected to be created within three years’ time. It must be noted that the thermal battery technology was patented in India by Dr Patrick Glynn in 2016.

One district one product summit

The President of India, Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated the 'One District One Product (ODOP)' Summit in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh on August 10, 2018. The summit has been organised by the Uttar Pradesh government to promote traditional industries and spur local trade.

□ During the summit, with a tagline of 'Nayi Udaan, Nayi Pehchan', the President distributed loan sanction papers to some artisans. The summit is stated to be the first of its kind in the country and is expected to give a big boost to the MSME and handicraft in the state.

Uttar Pradesh is uniquely famous for product-specific traditional industrial hubs across 75 districts, including Varanasi (Banarasi silk sari), Bhadohi (carpet), Lucknow (chikan), Kanpur (leather goods), Agra (leather footwear), Aligarh (locks), Moradabad (brassware), Meerut (sports goods) and Saharanpur (wooden products).

Indias 1st genetic bank

In Hyderabad, India's first genetic bank for wildlife conservation has been inaugurated by Union Minister for Science and Technology Dr. Harsh Vardhan at the Laboratory for Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES) in CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) to protect India's biodiversity and environment.

KanyashreePrakalpa Scheme

West Bengal Government has announced to remove annual family income ceiling in eligibility criteria to be beneficiary under state's UN award winning Kanyashree Prakalpa scheme.

AWARDS

Outstanding Parliamentarian Awards 2018

President Ram Nath Kovind has conferred Outstanding Parliamentarian Awards on five Members of Parliament. Recipients are Dr Najma Heptulla: She is former Rajya Sabha MP. She was selected for this award for the year 2013. Hukumdev Narayan Yadav: He is Lok Sabha MP. He was selected for this award for the year for 2014. Ghulam Nabi Azad: He is Rajya Sabha and was selected for this award for the year for 2015. He is leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha representing Congress party.

Dinesh Trivedi: He is Lok Sabha MP and was selected for 2016.
Bhartruhari Mahatab: He is Lok Sabha MP and was selected for 2017.
He is Biju Janata Dal (BJD) leader. Outstanding Parliamentarian Award
The award was established in 1992 by Shivraj Patil who was then
Speaker of Lok Sabha. Indian Parliamentary Group selects outstanding
sitting Member of Parliament after considering his/her overall
contribution in Parliament. The award is aimed to motivate elected
representatives to work better.

CONFERENCES AND SUMMITS

ASEAN Foreign Ministers Meeting

51st ASEAN Foreign Ministers meeting –Singapore

Chaired by – Lee HsienLoong, Foreign Minister of Singapore

Iran officially joined the Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia.

ASEAN - stands for 'Association of Southeast Asian Nations'

Permanent Members – Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam (10 countries)

The main aim of the meeting is to meet the need for ASEAN countries and also trade union setup between United States and its long-time trading partners, including China, the EU and Canada.

World Congress of philosophy

The 24th World Congress of Philosophy (WCP) was held in Beijing, China from August 13 to 17, 2018. It was organized by the International Federation of Philosophical Societies, and Peking University. Its theme was "Learning To Be Human". This was first time that the quinquennial (once in five year) event was held in China. Key Facts 24th WCP event saw more than 1,000 activities such as plenary sessions, symposia, lectures and roundtables. More than 6,000 philosophers and academics from 121 countries and regions had attended the event. They had shared diverse philosophical thoughts and took part in dialogues focusing on major issues confronting development of global civilization and challenges that mankind will face in the future. World Congress of Philosophy It is global meeting of philosophers held every five years (quinquennially) under auspices of International Federation of

Philosophical Societies (FISP). It was first organized in 1900 in Paris, France and since it has become one of the largest philosophical events in the world. Its purpose is to contribute to development of professional relations between philosophers of all countries, promote philosophical education, and contribute to impact of philosophical knowledge on global problems. Each World Congress is sponsored by one of member societies in different country, which assumes responsibility for organization of that Congress.

4thBIMSTEC Summit

The fourth Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) summit was held in Kathmandu, capital of Nepal. The theme of the summit was 'Towards a Peaceful Prosperous, and Sustainable Bay of Bengal Region'. India was represented by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This was his fourth visit to Nepal after becoming Prime Minister in 2014. Key facts enhancing collaboration in areas of regional connectivity, coastal shipping, space, energy, transport and tourism were focus of the summit. Besides, countering terrorism, enhancing regional connectivity and boosting trade were dominant agenda of 4th BIMSTEC summit. Other leaders who attended this summit are Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, Myanmar President U Win Myint, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Thailand's Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha and Bhutan's Chief Justice and Chief Advisor to interim government Dasho Tshering Wangchuk. Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) BIMSTEC is regional grouping of seven countries in South Asia and South East Asia lying in littoral and adjacent areas of Bay of Bengal constituting contiguous regional unity. It was established on 6 June 1997 through Bangkok Declaration. It is headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The first BIMSTEC summit was held in Thailand in 1997, second in India in 2008 and the third in 2014 in Myanmar. Member countries: India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka from South Asia and Myanmar, Thailand from South East Asia. They are collectively home to around 1.5 billion people which constitute around 22% of global population and has a combined gross domestic product of \$2.8 trillion. BIMSTEC's prime objectives: Promote technological and economic cooperation among

south Asian and south East Asian countries along the coast of the Bay of Bengal. BIMSTEC is sector-driven cooperative organization, starting with six sector including trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and services. In 2008, it was expanded to embrace eight more sectors including agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change. India and BIMSTEC India has been pushing for making BIMSTEC vibrant forum for regional collaboration as cooperation under South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) framework is not moving forward. India has been maintaining that it was difficult to proceed with SAARC initiative under current circumstances citing continuing support to cross-border terrorism from Pakistan. Pakistan was also blocking connectivity initiatives such as SAARC Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA). BIMSTEC excludes Pakistan. India is now pushing for similar pact motor vehicle agreement in BIMSTEC with an aim to enhance regional trade.

3rd Indian Ocean Conference

The third edition of Indian Ocean Conference was held in Hanoi, capital city of Vietnam from 27-28 August 2018. It was inaugurated by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and her Vietnamese counterpart Pham Binh Min, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Vietnam. Key Facts The third edition of the Conference was organised by India Foundation in association with Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam, S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS), Sri Lanka and Bangladesh Institute of International and Strategic Studies. Its theme was "Building Regional Architectures". It will see participation from around 35 countries and have speakers from 25 countries. Indian Ocean Conference It has been initiated by Delhi based think tank India Foundation along with its partners from Singapore, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. It is annual conference that aims to bring together Heads of States/Governments, Ministers, thought leaders, scholars, diplomats, bureaucrats and practitioners from across the region on a single platform. So far, two successful editions of conference were hosted in 2016 and 2017 in Singapore and Sri Lanka respectively. Both Conferences were supported by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) of India and had seen participation from over 35 countries.

18 Point Kathamandu Declaration

The 4th BIMSTEC Summit concluded in Kathmandu with signing and adoption of Kathmandu Declaration by all the seven members (India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Thailand). After conclusion of summit, current chair of BIMSTEC, Nepal PM KP Sharma Oli also handed over Chairmanship of next (5th) BIMSTEC Summit to Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena. During this summit, foreign ministers of BIMSTEC member countries had signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on establishment of BIMSTEC Grid Interconnection. Kathmandu Declaration 18-point Kathmandu Declaration aims to enhance effectiveness of BIMSTEC Secretariat by engaging it in various technical and economic activities in the region. It acknowledges importance of trade and investment as one of major contributing factors for fostering economic and social development in the region. It also deplored terrorist attacks in all parts of the world, including in BIMSTEC countries, and strongly condemned terrorism in all its forms. It also reiterated strong commitment of BIMSTEC countries to combat terrorism and called upon all countries to devise comprehensive approach in this regard. Member countries also agreed to expedite conclusion of BIMSTEC Convention on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and called upon member states for its early ratification. It also expressed satisfaction that many member states have ratified BIMSTEC Convention on Cooperation in Combating International Terrorism, Transnational Organized Crime and Illicit Drug Trafficking. BIMSTEC countries also agreed to establish seamless multimodal transportation linkages and smooth, synchronised and simplified transit facilities through the development, expansion and modernisation of highways, railways, waterways, sea routes and airways in the region. They also decided to speed up efforts to conclude BIMSTEC Coastal Shipping Agreement and BIMSTEC Motor Vehicle Agreement as early as possible taking into account special circumstances and needs of the member states. BIMSTEC countries also decided for early conclusion of BIMSTEC Free Trade Area (FTA) negotiations, and directed the BIMSTEC Trade and Economic Ministerial Meeting and its subsidiary bodies, including Trade Negotiating Committee, to expedite finalisation of all related agreements

of FTA as early as possible. BIMSTEC countries also called for exploring possibility of establishing BIMSTEC Development Fund with voluntary contributions from member states. The fund will be utilised for research and planning of BIMSTEC and financing of projects, and other activities of regional organisation

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

TESS Satellite

The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) is the next step in the search for planets outside of our solar system, including those that could support life. The mission will find exoplanets that periodically block part of the light from their host stars, events called transits. TESS will survey 200,000 of the brightest stars near the sun to search for transiting exoplanets. TESS launched on April 18, 2018, aboard a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket.

Geofen -11

China successfully launched Gaofen-11, an optical remote sensing satellite, as part of the country's high-resolution Earth observation project. It was launched on board of Long March 4B rocket from Taiyuan Satellite Launch Center in northern Shanxi Province.

Wow app

FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO), the women's wing of Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) has launched WOW (Wellness of Women) mobile application aimed at creating awareness on preventive healthcare for women across the country. WOW app is backed by Chennai-based Apollo Hospitals Group that offers access to renowned doctors and provides health tips.

Rashmi Robot

Ranjit Srivastava, the Ranchi-based software developer, has claimed to develop the world's first Hindi speaking realistic humanoid robot and India's first lip-synching robot. Srivastava developed an Indian version of a social humanoid robot 'Sophia' that was developed by a Hong Kong based company. The robot can speak Hindi, Bhojpuri and Marathi

along with English. It uses Linguistic Interpretation (LI), Artificial Intelligence (AI), visual data and facial recognition systems.

Android 9.0

Android 9 Pie is one of the most ambitious projects of Google that aims to better the Android experience by learning from its users and adapting to their usage patterns. Android 9 Pie will first roll out to Google's own Pixel phones.. Google's latest Android version brings a range of UI changes and new features. The top ten features of Android 9 Pie

Aerogel

Scientists have developed Aerogel, a transparent heat-resistant superinsulating gel using beer waste. It may be used to build greenhouse-like habitats for human colonised on extraterrestrial habitats such as Mars or Moon.

Aditya L1

The India Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is set to launch rst solar mission Aditya-L1 in 2019. It will be India's rst dedicated scientific mission to study sun. The mission aims to put 1,500-kg heavy class Aditya-L1 satellite into halo orbit around Lagrangian point L1, a point between Sun and Earth. This point is at a distance of about 1.5 million km from earth.

4D Ceramic Printing

Scientists have successfully developed the world's first 4D printing for ceramics, that can be used to create complex, shape-changing objects. 4D printing is conventional 3D printing combined with the additional element of time as the fourth dimension, where the printed objects can re-shape or self-assemble themselves over time with external stimuli, such as mechanical force, temperature, or a magnetic field.

Aeolus Satellite

European Space Agency (ESA) has successfully launched wind-sensing satellite named Aeolus into orbit on board of Vega rocket from French

Guyana. It is world's first wind-sensing satellite dedicated to map Earth's wind on global scale

DEFENCE

MAITREE 2018

Joint military exercise Maitree 2018 between Indian Army and Royal Thai Army was conducted in Thailand from 6 to 19 August 2018. It contributed immensely in developing mutual understanding and bonhomie between armies of both countries in order to counter terrorism.

RIMPAC 2018

The world's largest international maritime warfare exercise Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC-2018) will see participation of 26 countries, including India. The exercise will be held from June 27 to August 2, 2018 in and around Hawaiian Islands and Southern California. The theme for this year's RIMPAC exercise is "Capable, Adaptive, Partners." Four countries Brazil, Israel, Sri Lanka and Vietnam are participating for first time.

HELINA Helicopter

Indigenously developed Helicopter launched Anti-Tank Guided Missile (ATGM) 'HELINA' was successfully flight tested from Indian Army Helicopter at Pokhran range. The weapon system was tested for its full range. About Test: ATGM HELINA weapon system was released smoothly from Army Helicopter. After its launch it tracked target all through its course and hit it with high precision.

HELINA is helicopter launched version known of NAG ATGM, designed and developed indigenously for Indian Army under integrated guided missile development programme (IGMDP). It is manufactured by India's sole missile producer, state-owned Bharat Dynamics Limited. HELINA is one of the most advanced Anti-Tank Weapons in the world.

SCO Peace Mission 2018

Opening Ceremony Exercise SCO Peace Mission 2018

Exercise Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Peace Mission 2018, the latest in 'Peace Mission' series formally started on 24 August 2018 at Chebarkul, Russia.

The exercise will provide an opportunity to the armed forces of SCO nations to train in counter terrorism operations in urban scenario in a multinational and joint environment.

SPORTS

18th Asian Games 2018

Asian Games, also known as Asiad, is a continental multi-sport event. It will be conducted every four years from all over Asia. The Games were regulated by the **Asian Games Federation (AGF)** from the 1951 Asian Games, officially known as the First Asian Game in New Delhi, India, until the 1978 Games.

i. The Games are recognized by the **International Olympic Committee (IOC)** and are described as the second largest multi-sport event after the Olympic Games.

ii. Forty-six nations have participated in the Games, including Israel, which was excluded from the Games after their last participation in 1974.

- **2022:- 19th Asian Games** is scheduled to take place in **Hangzhou, China.**
- **2014 :-Asian Games** has conducted in Incheon, **South Korea.**

iii. **India ranked 8th in 2014 Asian Games.** India bagged 57 medals including 11 Gold, 10 Silver and 36 Bronze in 2014 Asian Games.

Asian Games 2018



18th Asian Games also known as **Jakarta-Palembang 2018** held from 18 August to 2 September 2018. Indonesia hosted second time after 1962. The Asian Games are being co-hosted in two cities;

- the Indonesian capital of Jakarta and Palembang,
- the capital of the South Sumatra province for the first time.

Cenderawasih, a rare species of a bird in Indonesia had been selected as emblem for the 2018 Asian Games. But later this has been dropped and three new mascots were unveiled.

Motto	Mascots
"Energy of Asia"	Bhin Bhin - a greater bird of paradise
	Atung - a Bawean deer
	Kaka - a Javan rhinoceros

- i. The mascots **Bhin Bhin, Atung, and Kaka** represent the **Eastern, Central, and Western** regions of Indonesia and also **strategy, speed and strength** respectively.
- ii. There are 45 nations have participated in 18th Asian Games. There are 465 events in 40 sports. The opening and closing ceremonies of the Games will be held at Gelora Bung Karno Main Stadium in Jakarta.
- iii. **Lucia Francisca Susy Susanti** is a retired Indonesian badminton player who carried torch light at the 18th Asian Games.
- iv. **The sport of bridge** has been introduced for the first time in the Asian Games 2018.

Kho-Kho gets recognition from Olympic Council of Asia

- The **Olympic Council of Asia (OCA)** has given recognition to India's indigenous sport of Kho-Kho, The decision to recognise Kho-Kho was taken in the General Assembly of the OCA held here on August 19 2018.
- Kho-Kho will now be included as a demonstration sport in the Asian Indoor Games, with the possibility of being included as a **discipline in the next Asian Games**, official sources told PTL.

Overview of Asian games 2018:-

- i. The 2018 Asian Games closing ceremony was held on 2nd Sep.2018 at the **Gelora Bung Karno Main Stadium in Jakarta**.
- ii. **China led the medal table for the 10th consecutive time**. Chinese multinational holding conglomerate Alibaba founder Jack Ma and gold medal swimmer Sun Yang promoted their birth city Hangzhou, as the city will host the 2022 Asian Games.
- iii. North Korea and South Korea march under the Korean Unification Flag at the opening ceremony and, for the first time, compete as a unified team in some events. They won one and first gold medal as a unified team.
- iv. Japanese swimmer Rikako Ikee was announced as the **most valuable player (MVP)** of the 2018 Asian Games.
- v. For the first time, **eSports and Canoe Polo** were contested as demonstration sports.
- vi. The 6 world, 18 Asian and 86 Asian Games records were broken during the event of 2018 Asian Game.

2018 Asian Games Medal Table

Rank	Country	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	China (CHN)	132	92	65	289
2	Japan (JPN)	75	56	74	205
3	South Korea (KOR)	49	58	70	177
4	Indonesia (INA)	31	24	43	98
5	Uzbekistan (UZB)	21	24	25	70
8	India (IND)	15	24	30	69

India is participating with 572 in 36 sports. It is India's 18th appearance at the Asian Game.

- Javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra was the flag bearer for India at the opening ceremony of the Games.
- Indian women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal was India's flag-bearer at the closing ceremony.

Highlights:-

i. India finished the 18th Asian Games with 69 medals which became highest number of medals in Asian Games since it participated. They won 15 gold, 24 silver and 30 bronze medals.

ii. India beats its previous best medal count of 65 at the 2010 Asian Games in Guangzhou, China.

iii. Govindan Lakshmanan was disqualified after winning bronze in the men's 10,000m event due to stepped out of the track during one of the laps at the Asian Game.

APPOINTMENTS

Manjula Chellur

Justice [Manjula Chellur](#) has been appointed as the new chairperson of [Appellate Tribunal](#) for [Electricity](#) (ATE)

COMMITTEES

Somnath Committee

ISRO -S. Somnath, committee Objective - to study the Possibilities of establishing the 3rd Launch pad of Satellites at Kulasekarapattinam, Tuticorin district and also to launch the proposed Manned space mission in 2022 from this new Launch pad

Bhaskar Rammurthi Committee

Union Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD) has proposed to set up ve-member committee to suggest changes to JEE (Advanced) in the wake of an inadequate number of candidates qualifying entrance test this year. The committee will be headed by IIT-Madras director Bhaskar Ramamurthy.

SCHEMES

SevbhojYojana

Government introduces new scheme 'Seva Bhoj Yojna' Scheme seeks to reimburse Central Share of CGST and IGST on Food/Prasad/Langar/Bhandara offered by Religious Institutions
The Ministry of Culture, Government of India has introduced a new scheme namely 'Seva Bhoj Yojna' with a total outlay of Rs. 325.00 Crores for Financial Years 2018-19 and 2019-20.

YuvaNestam Scheme

Yuva Nestam Scheme has been launched by the Andhra Pradesh CM for the unemployed graduate candidates of the state. AP Mukhyamantri Yuva Nestam will give the benefits Up to 12 lakh youth of the state. The last of AP Mukhyamantri Unemployment Scheme Online Registration is 25th December 2018 so hurry up and make sure your Online Registration in the Yuva Nestam Scheme.

KanyaUttanYojana

Mukhyamantri Kanya Utthan Yojana has launched by Bihar CM Nitish Kumar to promote the girls of the state. Under this Kanya Utthan Yojana the girl child of the state will get total INR 54100 from their birth to the marriage. The main objective of this Scheme is to promote the birth ratio and living standard of the Child. The girl child who will pass the intermediate will get the INR 10000 and the girl child who will pass the graduation will get the INR 25000.

Kanya Utthan Yojana Bihar Details

Benefits Of Bihar Kanya Utthan Yojana

It will improve the Girl Birth Ration in the State.
It will give the financial support to the Girl child.
Scheme will make the better future of the child.
This scheme will improve the education level in the State.

Brief Summary of Bihar Kanya Utthan Yojana

SC & ST Bill 2018

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2018 which was passed by the Lok Sabha on 6th August 2018, has been passed by the Rajya Sabha today. Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Shri Thaawarchand Gehlot today moved the Amendment Bill, 2018 in Rajya Sabha.

Point-wise details: Section 18A has been inserted to nullify conduct of a preliminary enquiry before registration of an FIR, or to seek approval of any authority prior to arrest of an accused, and to restore the provisions of Section 18 of the Act.

Section 18A, inserted in the Act, states that:-

- (1) For the purpose of the PoA Act,-
 - (a) preliminary enquiry shall not be required for registration of a First Information Report against any person; or
 - (b) the investigating officer shall not require approval for arrest, if necessary, of any person, against whom an accusation of having committed an offence under the PoA Act has been made and no procedure other than provided under the PoA Act or the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, shall apply.
- (2) The provision of section 438 of the Code shall not apply to a case under the Act, notwithstanding any judgment or order or direction of any Court.

RUSA Scheme

Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), launched in 2013 aims at providing strategic funding to eligible state higher educational institutions. The central funding (in the ratio of 60:40 for general category States, 90:10 for special category states and 100% for union territories) would be norm based and outcome dependent. The funding would flow from the central ministry through the state governments/union territories to the State Higher Education Councils before reaching the identified institutions. The funding to states would be made on the basis of critical appraisal of State Higher Education Plans, which would describe each state's strategy to address issues of equity, access and excellence in higher education.

Objectives

The salient objectives of RUSA are to;

Improve the overall quality of state institutions by ensuring conformity to prescribed norms and standards and adopt accreditation as a mandatory quality assurance framework.

Usher transformative reforms in the state higher education system by creating a facilitating institutional structure for planning and monitoring at the state level, promoting autonomy in State Universities and improving governance in institutions.

Ensure reforms in the affiliation, academic and examination systems.

Ensure adequate availability of quality faculty in all higher educational institutions and ensure capacity building at all levels of employment.

Create an enabling atmosphere in the higher educational institutions to devote themselves to research and innovations.

Expand the institutional base by creating additional capacity in existing institutions and establishing new institutions, in order to achieve enrolment targets.

Project SWAYAM

The Ministry of HRD has embarked on a major and new initiative Project called 'Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds' (SWAYAM), which will provide one integrated platform and portal for online courses. This covers all higher education subjects and skill sector courses. The objective is to ensure that the every student in our country has access to the best quality higher education at the affordable cost.

FAME India Scheme

The Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles (FAME) India was launched in 2015 under National Electric Mobility Mission (NEMM). It aims at promoting eco-friendly vehicles in the country. The scheme is being administered by the Heavy Industries Ministry.

Objectives

- Provide fiscal and monetary incentives for adoption and market creation of both hybrid and electric technologies vehicles in the country.
- Incentivise all vehicle segments, including two-wheelers, three wheeler auto, passenger four-wheeler vehicle, light commercial vehicles and buses.

Mandate: Support hybrid or electric vehicles market development and its manufacturing eco-system in country in order to achieve self-sustenance in stipulated period. It covers hybrid and electric technologies like a strong hybrid, plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicles.

Four focused areas: Technology development, demand creation, pilot projects, and charging infrastructure.

Biju Swasthya Kalyan Yojna

Scheme name	Biju Swasthya kalyan Yojana/ Odisha healthcare scheme
Launched by	CM Naveen Patnaik, Odisha government
Announced on	12 th June
Official launch date	15 th August
Supervised by	Odisha government
Target	Improve the overall health care structure of Odisha state
Beneficiary	People of Odisha, especially poor people
Toll Free Helpline Number	18003456769

Advanced and financed by Odisha government: this scheme is developed by the government of Odisha and will be catering to the residents of the state. So all the financial issues will be taken care of by the state. 2 other health associated schemes: other than Biju Swasthya kalyan Yojana, the state has also declared execution of Universal health coverage and Drop back Assistance. These schemes jointly will work towards the betterment of Odisha's health. Universal Health coverage (UHC):

O-SMART

Cabinet approves Umbrella scheme "Ocean Services, Technology, Observations, Resources Modelling and Science (O-SMART)" of Ministry of Earth Sciences

Impact:

The services rendered under the O-SMART will provide economic benefits to a number of user communities in the coastal and ocean sectors, namely, fisheries, offshore industry, coastal states, Defence, Shipping, Ports etc. Currently, five lakhs fishermen community are receiving this information daily through mobile which includes allocation of fish potential and local weather conditions in the coastal waters. This will help in reducing the search time for fishermen resulting savings in the fuel cost.

Implementation of O-SMART will help in addressing issues relating to Sustainable Development Goal-14, which aims to conserve use of oceans, marine resources for sustainable development. This scheme (O-SMART) also provide necessary scientific and technological background required for implementation of various aspects of Blue Economy.

The State of Art Early Warning Systems established under the O-SMART Scheme will help in effectively dealing with ocean disasters like Tsunami, storm surges.

The technologies being developed under this Scheme will help in harnessing the vast ocean resources of both living and non-living resources from the seas around India.

RythuBima

Government of Telangana has conceptualized and implementing an innovative scheme named as Farmers Group Life Insurance Scheme (Rythu Bima) in addition to other initiatives in agriculture sector. This scheme is first of its kind and unique in the country as it is implemented based on farmer-wise online land data base through Information Technology and Online Portals and MIS that are being used by all the outreach officers for effective and efficient implementation.

The main objective of the Farmers Group Life Insurance Scheme (Rythu Bima), is to provide financial relief and social security to the family members/ dependents, in case of loss of farmer's life due to any reason.

Note : Candidates are advised to go through and prepare the entire month current affairs other than the given topics.

APPLO
STUDY CENTRE

CONTENT FOR SEPTEMBER MONTH CURRENT AFFAIRS TEST

Government Schemes and Initiatives

1. Aapoorti

- A new Mobile App of 'Indian Railways e-procurement System' (IREPS)
- The new App provides information and data related to e-tendering and e-auction activities of Indian Railways
- To improve the ease of doing business with Indian Railways

2. Paryatan Parv

- The Ministry of Tourism is organizing the festival of tourism "Paryatan Parv 2018" in collaboration with other Central Ministries, State Governments and Stakeholders at Rajpath Lawns in New Delhi from September 17 and will continue across the country till 27th of this month.
- The idea behind the festival is to draw focus on the benefits of tourism, showcasing the cultural diversity of the country and reinforcing the principle of Tourism for All.
- The 2nd edition of Paryatan Parv will have three main components- Dekho Apna Desh, Tourism for All and Tourism and Governance.
- The 18 theme-based pavilions have been set up by the states. More than 3000 events'll be organized in collaboration with other Central Ministries and States during the festival.

3. Swachhata Hi Seva Campaign

- The Swachhata hi Seva Campaign 2018, a Jan Andolan for Swachhata - on September 15, 2018
- It will be observed in the run-up to the 4th anniversary of the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) on October 2, 2018

- It will culminate with the Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention from September 29 to October 2, 2018 marking the launch of 150th birth year celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi
- The various events scheduled as part of the campaign includes
 - Sep 15 - School Engagement 'Cleanliness Shramdaan'
 - Sep 16 - **Swachhata Sabhas in villages**
 - **Sep 17 - Seva Diwas led by Ministers**
 - **Sep 22 - Railways Swachhata Divas**
 - **Sep 25 - Antyodaya Divas by Swachhagrahis**

4. PISA - Program for International Student Assessment

India - to participate in International 'PISA 2021' competency test for 15-year old school students - ending the boycott of PISA

PISA 2021 - Chandigarh

PISA - Programme for International Student Assessment - Background

- It was introduced in the year 2000 by Organisation for Economic Cooperation Development (OECD)
- It's a competency test in the subjects of Mathematics, Science and Reading for 15-year old school students
- As on date, around 80 countries participate in this 'once-in-every' 3 year test
- In 2015, Singapore, Japan and Estonia were ranked as top three countries, in that order.
- India participated in 2009 'PISA' with 16000 students from 400 schools across Tamil Nadu and Himachal Pradesh, but ranked poorly at 72nd place among 74 participant countries
- Hence, India decided to boycott the subsequent PISA tests

5. HIV/AIDS Act, 2017

- The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued a notification for bringing the Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017 in force from 10th September, 2018.
- The Act, safeguards the rights of people living with HIV and affected by HIV.
- The provisions of the Act address HIV-related discrimination, strengthen the existing programme by bringing in legal accountability, and establish formal mechanisms for inquiring into complaints and redressing grievances.
- The Act seeks to prevent and control the spread of HIV and AIDS, prohibits discrimination against persons with HIV and AIDS.
- The Act lists various grounds on which discrimination against HIV positive persons and those living with them is prohibited.
- These include the denial, termination, discontinuation or unfair treatment with regard to:
 - (i) employment,
 - (ii) educational establishments,
 - (iii) health care services,
 - (iv) residing or renting property,
 - (v) standing for public or private office, and
 - (vi) provision of insurance (unless based on actuarial studies).
- The requirement for HIV testing as a pre-requisite for obtaining employment or accessing health care or education is also prohibited.
- Every HIV infected or affected person below the age of 18 years has the right to reside in a shared household and enjoy the facilities of the household.
- The Act also prohibits any individual from publishing information or advocating feelings of hatred against HIV positive persons and those living with them.
- As per provisions of the Act, a person between the age of 12 to 18 years who has sufficient maturity in understanding and managing the affairs of his HIV or AIDS affected family shall be competent to act as a guardian of another sibling below 18 years of age to be applicable in the matters relating to admission to educational establishments, operating bank accounts, managing property, care and treatment, amongst others.
- As per the provisions of the Act, every person in the care and custody of the state shall have right to HIV prevention, testing, treatment and counseling services.

6. Ayushman Bharat

- **PM - inaugurates World's largest health insurance scheme 'Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana' (PMJAY)**, also known as 'Ayushman Bharat' or the 'National Health Protection Mission' (AB-NHPM) - at Ranchi, Jharkhand on September 23, 2018
- On the occasion, the PM also launched a **toll free number '14555'** for the people to get more information about Ayushman Bharat scheme
- The scheme will become operational from September 25, 2018, the birth anniversary of Deendayal Upadhyay
- The scheme, dubbed 'Modicare', will provide free coverage of up to Rs 5 lakh per family per year in any government or selected private hospitals all over India
- It covers about 10.74 crore beneficiary families and about 50 crore Indian citizens
- The scheme has an estimated budget of Rs 12,000 crore with 60% funding from Centre and 40% from the respective states
- The National Health Agency (NHA), the apex body implementing the scheme, has already launched the website (mera.pmjay.gov.in) for the scheme
- So far 25 states & 6 UTs have signed MoUs with the Union Government to implement the programme over the next two to three months
- The states Telangana, Odisha, Delhi, Kerala and Punjab have not signed the MoUs till now
- States will be required to form a 'State Health Agency' to implement the scheme
- On Sep 9th, 2018, Government had announced that 'Child cancer' would also be covered under the scheme
- Jharkhand was chosen to launch the scheme as it was one of the most backward state with poor health infrastructure

7. NDSO - National Database on Sexual Offenders

- India - becomes 9th country in the world to release 'National Registry of Sexual Offenders' on September 20, 2018.

- India's first-ever online and centralised National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO) has been launched by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh in New Delhi.
- The database will have a record of the name, photographs, address, fingerprint and other details of convicted sexual offenders. It has information about 4.5 lakh sexual offenders.
- It is an initiative under the National Mission for Safety of Women. The database will be maintained by the National Crime Records Bureau under the Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The database will be made available to law enforcement agencies for various purposes including investigation and employee verification.

8. India Cooling Action Plan

- India - becomes the 1st country in the World to develop a draft 'India Cooling Action Plan' (ICAP) and a booklet on 'Montreal Protocol - India's Success Story'.
- Prepared by - The Ozone Cell of Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change.
- Released by - Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Released on : 2018 World Ozone Day
- Addresses cooling requirement across sectors and lists out actions which can help reduce the cooling demand. This will help in reducing both direct and indirect emissions.
- It provides a 20-year projection for 2037-38 to provide sustainable cooling with the need of protecting the ozone layer.
- The thrust of the ICAP is to look for synergies in actions for securing both environmental and socio-economic benefits. The overarching goal of ICAP is to provide sustainable cooling and thermal comfort for all while securing environmental and socio-economic benefits for the society.
- The Montreal Protocol is the only environmental treaty, which enjoys universal ratification of 197 UN numbers countries, to protect the stratospheric ozone layer by phasing out the production and consumption of ozone-depleting substances (ODS).

9. NDCP 2018

- **Union Cabinet - approves National Digital Communications Policy-2018**
- It replaces existing National Telecom Policy-2012
- **Highlights of the Policy**
- Create 40 lakh new jobs and attract \$100 billion investment, by 2022
- Ensure 100% broadband connectivity to all with 50 Mbps speed & 5G services, by 2022
- **Creation of New Schemes**
 - BharatNet - Providing 1 Gbps to all by 2020 and upgradable to 10 Gbps by 2022
 - GramNet - Connecting all key rural development institutions
 - NagarNet - Establishing 1 million public Wi-Fi hotspots in urban areas
 - JanWiFi - Establishing 2 million Wi-Fi hotspots in rural areas

Target to improve Inclusive Development Index (IDI) ranking from 134 in 2017 to be within 'Top 50 nations' in ICT Development Index

To establish National Digital Grid by creating National Fibre Authority

10. **PM-AASHA**

- Cabinet Approvals on 12th Sep 2018
- **Approval of New Umbrella Scheme "Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay SanraksHan Abhiyan" (PM-AASHA)**
- The Scheme is aimed at ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers for their Agricultural produce
- It has 3 Components namely -
 - Price Support Scheme
 - Price Deficiency Payment Scheme
 - Pilot of Private Procurement and Stockist Scheme

11. **India Post Payments Bank**

- **PM, Narendra Modi - launches 'India Post Payments Bank' (IPPB) at Talkatora stadium in New Delhi**

- IPPBs will provide a range of products such as savings and current accounts, money transfer, direct benefit transfers, bill and utility payments, and enterprise and merchant payments

12. Rail Sahyog

- Railways Minister Piyush Goyal on September 11, 2018 launched the 'Rail Sahyog' web portal to provide a platform for the Corporates and Public Sector Units (PSUs) to contribute to creation of amenities at or near Railway Stations through Corporate Social Responsibility funds.
- The app launch was in line with PM Narendra Modi's vision for a New India by 2022.
- It was a part of various initiatives undertaken recently by Indian Railways for upgrading its infrastructure, technology, hygiene among host of other things for an enhanced passenger experience.

Rail Sahyog web portal

- The web portal www.railsahyog.in will enable desirous companies to show their willingness on the portal by registering their requests.
- The requests will be processed by Railway officials. Based on the principle of first come first serve, the requests will be shortlisted and selected applicants will be intimated to deposit the funds with Railways or with nominated agencies like RITES/RAILTEL etc.
- The nominated agency will get the work executed thereafter. This simple & transparent portal will provide an opportunity for industry, companies and associations to collaborate with Railways.
- This portal will not only be beneficial for passengers but also for neighbourhood of Railway vicinity.
- The portal has been envisaged as a platform for all, including individuals as also private & public organisation, to contribute towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities in association with Indian Railways.
- It will remove all hurdles faced by the companies for cooperation with Railways.

13. Parakram Parv :

- **2nd anniversary of Surgical strikes - PM inaugurates the 3-day event 'Parakram Parv' at the Combined Commanders' Conference in Jodhpur**
- **To mark the Surgical strikes of Indian Army on Sep 29, 2016**

14. Agmark online system

- Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare launched online software for processing applications related to quality certification mark 'Agmark' for agricultural products.
- Agmark is certification mark that assures conformity to set of standards approved by Government agency Directorate of Marketing and Inspection.
- It is legally enforced by Agricultural Produce (Grading and Marking) Act of 1937 (and amended in 1986).
- Agmark online system is being implemented across the country to conduct quality control functions and it will be available 24×7.

15. Model International Center for Transformative Artificial Intelligence

Model International Center for Transformative Artificial Intelligence - to be set up by NITI Aayog, Intel, and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in Bengaluru, Karnataka

16. SATAT

- **Dharmendra Pradhan, Union Petroleum Minister - to launch 'SATAT' initiative on Oct 1, 2018, the penultimate day of the ongoing Swachhta Hi Seva campaign**
- SATAT - Sustainable Alternative towards Affordable Transportation
- It aims to promote Compressed Bio-Gas as an alternate fuel and intends to set up more CBG production units in the country
- It plans to roll out 5,000 Compressed Bio-Gas plants across India in a phased manner, with 250 plants by the year 2020, 1000 plants by 2022 and 5000 plants by 2025

17. **Coffee Connect' app and 'Coffee KrishiTharanga' project**

- **Government - launches 'Coffee Connect' app and 'Coffee KrishiTharanga' project**
- These were the initiatives of Coffee Board of India for the overall technological advancement of the coffee sector
- **Coffee production statistics**
- It has to be recalled that India is the 6th largest Coffee producer in the world after Brazil, Vietnam, Colombia, Indonesia and Ethiopia
- In India, Karnataka (54%), Kerala (19%) and Tamil Nadu (8%) are largest coffee producing states
- Coffee Board of India was set up under an Act of Parliament in 1942 to provide research, development and promotion of Coffee from India

18. **Global Mobility summit 'MOVE'**

- PM - to inaugurate India's 1st ever Global Mobility summit 'MOVE' - New Delhi on Sep 7, 2018
- **5 Themes of the Summit**
 - **Electrification and alternative fuels**
 - **Reinventing public transport**
 - **Goods transport and logistics**
 - **Data analytics**
 - **Mobility**
- NITI Aayog's 1st Global Mobility Summit 2018: MOVE, New Delhi (Sep 7 and 8, 2018)
- **PM Modi -unveiled a mobility road map** for more investments in manufacturing electric vehicles and increased use of public transport for travel
- He explained his vision for the future of mobility in India with 7C's -
 - **Common**

- Connected
- Convenient
- Congestion-free
- Charged
- Clean
- Cutting-edge

19. e-Vidhan & NeVA

- National e-Vidhan Application (NeVA) - is a digital application that provides 'online' information about day-to-day functioning of Legislative houses
- The mobile NeVA app is also available, which is already used by the Assemblies of the following states, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Sikkim, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry, Manipur
- e-Vidhan - is the Mission mode project - which aims to digitize and make the functioning of state's legislatures 'paperless'

20. e-Sahaj

- Recently, the Union Home Secretary Rajiv Gauba has launched an online 'e-Sahaj' portal for grant of security clearance to businesses.
- The portal will facilitate an applicant to submit application online and also to view the status of his application from time to time.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs is the nodal authority for granting security clearances in certain sensitive sectors before issue of licence/permit, contract etc, to companies by the administrative Ministry.
- The purpose of national security clearance is to evaluate potential security threats, including economic threats, and provide risk assessment before clearing investment and project proposals in key sectors.

21. e- VBAB

- Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Telecommunications Consultants India Ltd (TCIL) have signed an Agreement for

the implementation of e-VidyaBharati and e-AarogyaBharati (e-VBAB) Network Project.

- The project is hailed as a digital bridge of knowledge and health between India and Africa.

e- VBAB Network project

- E-VBAB Network Project is primarily a technological upgrade and extension of the Pan-African e-Network Project (Phase 1) which was implemented in 48 partner countries across Africa from 2009 till 2017.
- The Phase 1 of the Project successfully imparted tele-education (e-VidyaBharti) and tele-medicine (e-AarogyaBharti) by linking educational institutions and hospitals in India with those from the participating African countries.
- The e-VBAB Network Project will be completely funded by the Government of India for its entire duration and will be open for participation to all our partner countries in Africa.
- The Project will be another important milestone in our development partnership with Africa.

22. Loo Review campaign

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, under the aegis of Swachh Bharat Mission - Urban (SBM - U), has partnered with Google to launch Loo Review campaign to encourage all local guides in India to rate and review public toilets on Google Maps.
- This campaign is part of a feature which allows all citizens to locate public toilets in their cities on Google Maps, Search and the Assistant and also provide feedback on the same.
- The joint campaign to be run throughout October and November 2018 is an effort to increase the awareness and ease of locating public toilets across India.
- The campaign will involve and engage Local Guides in India to rate and review public toilets on Google Maps, and use the hashtag #LooReview for the chance to be featured on Google Local Guides' social channels.
- Local Guides are people who share reviews, photos, and knowledge on Google Maps to help people explore the world.
- Currently, 500+ cities in India with more than 30,000 toilets with the name of "SBM Toilet" are live on Google Maps.

23. Poshan Maah

- The Government of India (GoI) will observe September as National Nutrition Month (NNM) across the country to mark the fight against malnutrition.
- During this month, various programmes have been organized by the Women and Child Development (WCD) Ministry to spread broad awareness on the issues related to malnutrition like stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia and low birth weight in children.
- The Nutrition Month will also focus on adolescent girls, pregnant women and lactating mothers to eliminate the deficiencies prevailing in the Health sector.
- The NNM will be celebrated every year with the aim to bring down stunting of children in the age group of 0-6 years from 38% to 25% by 2022.

24. **Indian Culinary Institute**

- Vice President - inaugurates the country's 1st ever 'Indian Culinary Institute' at Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh.
- It is promoted by Union Ministry of Tourism.
- The ICI building was designed by National Building Construction Corporation (NBCC).
- The main objective of ICI is to institutionalize mechanism to support efforts intended to preserve, document, promote and disseminate Indian Cuisine.

25. **Swadesh Darshan scheme**

- Chhattisgarh - India's 1st Tribal circuit tourism project under 'Swadesh Darshan scheme' inaugurated at Gangrel, Chhattisgarh on Sep 14th, 2018.
- It covers 13 sites in Chhattisgarh which are Jashpur, Kunkuri, Mainpat, Kamleshpur, Maheshpur, Kurdar, Sarodadadar, Gangrel, Kondagaon, Nathiya Nawagaon, Jagdalpur, Chitrakoot and Tirthgarh.
- Under the tribal circuit theme of the scheme the Ministry of Tourism has sanctioned 4 projects to Nagaland, Telangana & Chhattisgarh for Rs. 380 crore.
- The Swadesh Darshan scheme was launched in 2014 -15 for development of thematic circuits in the country in a planned and prioritized manner.

26. **Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna**

- The ESI (Employee's State Insurance) Corporation has approved a Scheme named "Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojna" for Insured Persons (IP) covered under the Employees' State Insurance Act, 1948.
- This scheme is a relief payable in cash directly to their Bank Account in case of unemployment and while they search for new engagement.

27. **Bharat ke Veer**

- **Bharat Ke Veer** is a fund-raising initiative by the [Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India](#) on behalf of members of the Indian Armed Forces.
- The initiative was launched by Home Minister [Rajnath Singh](#) and supported by the noted Hindi film actor [Akshay Kumar](#).
- It allows donations of up to Rs.15 lakhs to an individual's account and donations to the "Bharat Ke Veer" corpus.
- The official anthem of Bharat Ke Veer' was launched on 20 January 2018 by Home Minister Rajnath Singh along with Akshay Kumar.

28. **Mobilise Your City(MYC) programme**

- India & France - signs an Implementation Agreement on 'Mobilise your city' in New Delhi on September 7.
- The aim of MYC is to support three pilot cities - Nagpur, Kochi and Ahmedabad - in their efforts to reduce their Green House Gas (GHG) emissions related to urban transport by implementing urban mobility plans at local level and to help India at national level to improve their sustainable transport policy.
- The MYC is part of an international initiative which is supported by the French and the German Governments and was launched at 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) meeting in December 2015.

29. **Swayangsiddha:**

- **Swayangsiddha (means 'Self-reliance') - A new scheme launched by West Bengal - to combat Human trafficking**
- **The scheme will be executed by West Bengal Police**

- Groups of students in the age group of **12 to 21** in schools and colleges, known as 'Swayangsiddha Groups', will be formed
- They would assist in spreading awareness and empowering the young boys and girls against trafficking and child marriages
- As the per the NCRB data **West Bengal** has highest recorded case of trafficking among the States.

30. **Krishna Kutir :**

- Uttar Pradesh - 'Krishna Kutir', a shelter home for 1000 helpless Widows - inaugurated at Vrindavan in Mathura, Uttar Pradesh on Aug 31, 2018.
- It was set up by the Ministry of Women and Child Development under its 'Swadhar Greh Scheme' for abandoned women.

31. **MOVE Cyclathon**

- NITI Aayog flagged off MOVE Cyclathon, a cycle rally to promote cleaner, accessible modes of transport.
- It was organized as part of 'Mobility Week' which will see 17 events in seven days from 31 August to 6 September 2018.
- This event aimed to encourage Cycling for a healthier life & a less polluting city and spread the message of a shared, connected, and zero-emission mobility in the country.

32. **Malanad Malabar cruise tourism project'**

- Kerala - has been sanctioned Rs 80.37 crore under 'Swadesh Darshan scheme' to develop Theme-based 'Cruise tourism' in the state
- The project is to be called as 'Malanad Malabar cruise tourism project'
- The 3 approved cruises in Kannur district are
 - Malabari Cuisine and Culinary Cruise (Muthappan Cruise)
 - Valapattanam River- Theyyam Cruise
 - Mangrove Cruise
- At present, there are 13 thematic circuits that are developed under 'swadesh darshan' scheme
- They are Buddhist Circuit, North-East India Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife

Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit and Heritage Circuit

33. 'Mil Banchey Madhya Pradesh'

- Madhya Pradesh government organized a day-long mass teaching programme, 'Mil Banchey Madhya Pradesh' (Let's read together, Madhya Pradesh).
- The objective of this Programme is to raise awareness about the importance of education.
- In this program, people from various sections of society (people' representative, motivators etc..) can participate as volunteers and read knowledgeable books of curriculum to motivate students.

34. UN-NITI Aayog SDF 2018 - 2022

- India & United Nations - signs a 5-Year 'Sustainable Development Framework' (UNSDF) for '2018-2022'
- The NITI Aayog is the national counterpart for the UN in India for the operationalization of the UNSDF

35. WHO'S 'SAFER' Programme

- **SAFER**, a new initiative and technical package outlining five high-impact strategies that can help governments reduce the harmful use of alcohol and related health, social and economic consequences.
- SAFER is the newest WHO-led roadmap to support governments in taking practical steps to accelerate progress on health, beat noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) through addressing the harmful use of alcohol, and achieve development targets.
- **SAFER** provides five high-impact strategic actions that are prioritized for implementation to promote health and development:
 - **Strengthen** restrictions on alcohol availability.
 - **Advance** and enforce drink driving countermeasures.
 - **Facilitate** access to screening, brief interventions, and treatment.
 - **Enforce** bans or comprehensive restrictions on alcohol advertising, sponsorship, and promotion.
 - **Raise** prices on alcohol through excise taxes and pricing policies.

36. e-Rythu

- The government of Andhra Pradesh launched a mobile platform, e-Rythu (e-farmer in Telugu).
- It enables small-scale farmers to market their produce at reasonable prices.

37. National Rail and Transportation Institute

- **India's 1st Railway University - started functioning at Vadodara, Gujarat.**
- This institute is located in the National Academy of Indian Railway (NAIR) having about 55 acres of campus.
- It is India's first university focused on transport-related education, multidisciplinary research and training.
- NRTI will offer multi-disciplinary programmes designed to cater to the needs of India's transportation sector.
- To ensure best-in-class delivery of education, NRTI will follow a highly experiential and unique inter-disciplinary pedagogical approach.
- It is established as a deemed to be university under de-novo category. NRTI currently offering its flagship undergraduate programmes in Transportation Technology and Management.

38. First Dog park in India

- **Telangana - The country's 1st ever dedicated Dog park was set up in Hyderabad**
- India's first exclusive and certified 'Dog Park' is spread over 1.3 acres. The park has been developed by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) at a cost of Rs. 1.1 crore on a site which was earlier a dump yard.
- The park has dog training and exercise equipment, splash pool, two lawns, an amphitheatre, separate enclosures for big and small dogs among other facilities.
- According to a survey, there are about 2.5 lakh pet owners in the West Zone and the Central Zone limits of the city which are nearer to the park. The park is certified by Kennel Club of India and would be inaugurated within 10 days.

39. Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention - 18.

- The Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention from September 29 to October 2, 2018 marks the launch of 150th birth year celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi.
- The Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention (MGISC-2018) will be organized by the Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in New Delhi.
- It will be a 4-day international conference that will bring together Sanitation Ministers and other leaders in WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) from around the world.
- The purpose of the Convention is to share sanitation success stories and lessons from the participating countries.
- It will culminate on October 2nd, Gandhi Jayanti, which is also celebrated as the Swachh Bharat Diwas. Several mass mobilisation events and campaigns are being planned across the States in the run up to this Day.

40. Khule me Shauch Ki ghanti bajao - Siti bajao

- Lucknow Municipal Corporation launched an anti-open defecation campaign, titled "Khule me shauch ki ghanti bajao - siti bajao"
- whistleblowing campaign against open defecation

41. Gandhi March

- India - organized 'Gandhi March' in Netherlands March' from the iconic Peace Palace at The Hague in Netherlands to Grote Kerk on September 25.
- To launch the 2-year long celebrations of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- the 'Gandhi March' will see participation of people of all nationalities and around 20 ambassadors of different countries.
- On the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti on October 2, marked as International Day of Non-Violence, five other events will be held in The Hague, Amsterdam, Utrecht and Zoetermeer.

- The Netherlands has a special connection to India and Mahatma Gandhi. There are around thirty streets in the country named after Mahatma Gandhi.

42. Safe City project for women

- Union Home Ministry - Allocates Rs 3000 Crore For Special Women Safety Programmes
- The programmes would be implemented in 8 major cities, Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Lucknow from 2018-19 to 2020-21.
- The objective is to make the cities safer for women by addressing different aspects such as street lighting, safer public transport, improved policing and others.
- **Women Safe City Project** - consists of Transit dormitories for women and children, smart LED streetlights, Public panic buttons, all-women police patrol teams, one-stop crisis centres, forensic and cybercrime cells

43. India's Longest rail-cum-road bridge

- The Bogibeel Bridge is a combined road and rail bridge over the Brahmaputra River in Assam, which is expected to complete at the end of 2018.
- Sited about 17 km downstream of Dibrugarh town, the 4.94km bridge will facilitate road and rail connectivity between Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
- The bridge is 32m above the water level of the Brahmaputra. It has 3 lane roads on top and double line rail below.
- Upon completion, Bogibeel will be the longest rail-cum-road bridge in India and 2nd longest bridge over the Brahmaputra after Dhola-Sadiya Bridge which is a road bridge of length 9.15 km.

44. India's first coal - gasification fertiliser plant

- PM Narendra Modi - launched India's 1st Coal-Gasification Fertiliser plant in Talcher, Odisha.
- The coal gasification-based fertilizer plant is being developed by Talcher Fertilizers Limited (TFL).

- The Coal-gasification based fertilizer plant comes with pet coke blending .
- On completion, this plant will have a capacity of producing 1.27 Million Metric Tonnes Per Annum (MMTPA) of Neem coated prilled urea.
- Neem coated urea reduces leaching of nitrogen into soil and checks diversion of urea from agriculture uses.
- Pollutants like Carbon Dioxide (CO₂) produced by this plant will be recycled for the production of Urea and other by-products

45. Plan Bee

- Indian Railways has come up with an initiative called “Plan Bee” to prevent speeding trains from hitting elephants crossing tracks.
- The plan involves setting up of devices near tracks, which emit the ‘buzzing’ sound of swarming bees.
- Already “Plan Bee”, launched in November 2017 at Northeast Frontier Railways (NFR), has been got a great success.

46. PUDA 360

- Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh launched PUDA 360, an e-properties module to facilitate online property transactions
- It will bring greater efficiency and transparency in the functioning of Punjab Urban Planning and Development Authority (PUDA).
- The online process would also make the e-auction more convenient and give a common platform to the promoters/builders/individuals for advertising their projects/properties online.
- It would also help to check delays in sanction of Building Plans, issuance of No Objection Certificate, issuance of Conveyance Deed and Transfer of Property etc.

47. Swachh Dhara

- **Andhra Pradesh - CM flags off ‘Swachh Dhara’ Program at Amaravati**
- **It was launched with the main objective of providing clean drinking water across the state**

48. First ever gender neutral hostel

- The Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai's Deonar has become the first campus in India to have a gender-neutral hostel.

- After the Supreme Court scrapped Section 377 of the IPC that criminalised homosexuality, India has become the first-ever country to have a gender-neutral hostel.

49. Airavata scheme

- The Government of Karnataka has launched 'Airavata Scheme', a first-of-its-kind scheme that will create more self-employment opportunities.
- It will boost livelihood options for rural and semi-urban youth and the scheme is Targeted especially at the young men and women of SC/ST communities.
- In the first phase, the department has signed an agreement with Uber.
- Under this, the government will provide a financial grant of Rs 5 Lakhs each to identified beneficiaries from the SC/ST community.

50. Jal Marg Vikas Project

- The Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) on NW-1 is being implemented with the financial and technical support of the World Bank. The Project entails development of fairway with 3 meters depth between Varanasi and Haldia (Phase-I) covering a distance of 1380 km at an estimated cost of Rs. 5369 crore with target for completion in six years. The following sub-projects of this Project have commenced:

- (i) Construction of Phase - I (A) of the multimodal terminal at Varanasi at a cost of Rs. 169.70 crore.
- (ii) Construction of Phase - I of the multimodal terminal at Sahibganj at a cost of Rs. 280.90 crore.
- (iii) Construction of new navigation lock at Farakka at a cost of Rs. 359.19 crore.

Science & Technology

1. Polarimetry Doppler Weather Radar

- ISRO - has inaugurated 'S-Band Polarimetry Doppler Weather Radar' at Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

- It will be used for the observation of weather systems and to provide early warning of severe weather conditions.
- It has an operational range of upto 500 km.
- It has been indigenously developed by Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL), Bengaluru.
- This is the 7th Radar manufactured in the country under “Make in India” Concept.
- The Doppler Weather Radar (DWR) is used for the observation of the weather system up to a range of 500 km and helps in early warning of severe weather events.
- The DWR provides detailed information on a storm’s internal wind flow and structure, while conventional radars are able to track and predict cyclones.
- The polarimetric capability of the DWR will significantly improve the accuracy of rainfall estimation leading to accurate and timely flash flood warnings.

2. ICESat - 2

- NASA - launches its most-advanced space satellite ‘ICESat-2’ to precisely measure Earth’s sea ice, glaciers and oceans from Vandenberg Air Force base in California on September 15, 2018
- The half-ton, USD 1 billion satellite was launched aboard a United Launch Alliance (ULA) Delta II rocket
- ICESat-2 - acronym for ‘Ice, Cloud and land Elevation Satellite-2’
- ICESat-2 will carry a photon-counting laser altimeter, ATLAS (Advanced Topographic Laser Altimeter System)
- This instrument will measure height by determining how long it takes photons to travel from the spacecraft to Earth and back
- The new laser, ATLAS, will fire 10,000 pulses of green light in one second, compared to the original ICESat which fired 40 times a second

- The mission will provide insight into Earth's frozen regions -- the Cryosphere -- which is rapidly changing with our warming climate
- The first ICESat, which was launched in 2003 and ended in 2009, revealed the disappearance of ice from coastal areas of Greenland and Antarctica

3. Apsara - U

- Apsara-U (Apsara Upgraded) - is the new, refurbished version of India's oldest Nuclear research reactor 'Apsara'

Apsara - Background

- It was the first nuclear research reactor in Asia, developed indigenously in Aug 1956
- It was the concept of Dr Homi Bhabha, the father of Indian Nuclear programme, in the year 1955
- The name 'Apsara' was coined by India's 1st Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru
- It was a Light water moderated reactor with maximum power output of 1 MW thermal, using enriched uranium

4. World's first hydrogen fuel cell train

- Germany - rolls out World's first Hydrogen-powered Passenger train 'iLint'
- It was manufactured by French company, Alstom and does not produce any emissions and noise
- These trains are equipped with 'fuel cells' that produce electrical power by combining Hydrogen with oxygen
- The excess energy is stored in the 'Lithium-ion' batteries within the train
- These trains can be refueled at stations and can run for 1000 km on a single full capacity of Hydrogen

5. Mid-air refuelling of LCA Tejas

- Indian Air Force - successfully carries out 1st ever 'Mid-air' refueling of indigenously developed Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) 'Tejas'
- LCA Tejas is the world's smallest and lightest supersonic fighter aircraft in its class.

- It was named as 'Tejas (Radiance)' by former PM, Atal Bihari Vajpayee
- The LCA Programme in India was started in 1980's to replace MiG-21 fighter aircrafts
- It was inducted into IAF in 2016 and commenced its operations from Sulur Air Force Station in Tamil Nadu in July 2018 as part of 'Flying Daggers' of 45 Squadron of IAF

6. Smart border fence

- India's first 'smart fence' pilot project was launched by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh along the Indo-Pak border at the BSF Headquarters in Ploura, Jammu on September 18, 2018.
- The purpose of the project is to make security system more strong and effective.
- The smart fencing uses a number of devices for surveillance, communication and data storage.
- The pilot project entails deploying laser-activated fences and technology-enabled barriers to plug vulnerable gaps along frontiers.
- The system provides for round-the-clock surveillance on the border and in different weather conditions be it dust storm, fog or rain.
- The initiative is part of the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS) proposed to be deployed at these two borders by the Government of India (GoI) as part of its decision to completely seal the two borders to stop infiltration and illegal migration.

7. TESS

- NASA's 'TESS' - discovers 2 earth-like exoplanets 'Super-Earth' and 'Hot-Earth'
- TESS, Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite - launched in April 2018 to detect exoplanets
- It is a one year mission with a budget of \$337 million

Super-Earth

- It is named as **Pi Mensae c**
- It is 60 light-years away
- It orbits its sun every 6.3 days

Hot - Earth

- It is named as **LHS 3844 b**
- It is 49 light-years away
- It orbits its sun every 11 hours
- Both the planets are too hot to support life

8. Japan's Mini space elevator

- Japan - to conduct the trial of World's 1st mini 'Space elevator' next week
- It was developed by the researchers at Shizuoka university and will be sent to space in a H-2B rocket
- It resembles a 'box' of 6 cm length, 3 cm width and 3 cm height
- It will be moving in a container, along a 10 cm cable suspended in space between 2 satellites

9. HOPE mission

- UAE - to send 2 Astronauts to International space station on a mission
- The 2 new astronauts are 34-year-old Hazza al-Mansouri and 37-year-old Sultan al-Neyadi
- The country had already announced plans to become the first Arab country to send an unmanned probe to orbit Mars by 2021, naming it "Hope"
- The first Arab in outer space was Saudi Arabia's Sultan bin Salman Al-Saud, who flew on a US shuttle mission in 1985
- In the long-term, the UAE plans to build a "Science City" to replicate life on Mars and aims to create the first human settlement on the red planet by 2117.

10. WAYU

- Dr Harsh Vardhan, Minister for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences and Environment, Forest and Climate change - inaugurated Air pollution control device 'WAYU' (Wind Augmentation Purifying Unit) at 2 traffic junctions in New Delhi

- WAYU - developed by - Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI) as part of 'Technology Development Project' being funded by 'Department of Science and Technology'
- This device can purify the air in an area of 500 square meters at a maintenance cost of Rs 1500 per month

11. ASTRA BVRAAM

- Indian Air Force - successfully tests 'Astra', indigenous 'Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile' from Su-30 fighter Aircraft at Kalaikunda Air Force Station, West Bengal
- The missile successfully engaged a manoeuvring target (UAV 'Banshi') with high precision.
- Astra was developed by DRDO together with IAF.
- It is single stage solid fuelled missile and it is an all-weather missile.

12. Dickinsonia

- It is the earliest animal on geological record - a strange oval creature with rib like segments running along its body that lived on Earth 558 million years ago.
- The fossils of this animal were recently discovered.
- Researchers found the fossil in a remote area near the White Sea in the northwest of Russia.

Key facts:

- Dickinsonia grew up to 1.4 metres in length.
- It was part of the Ediacara Biota that lived on Earth 20 million years prior to the 'Cambrian explosion' of modern animal life.
- The 'Cambrian explosion' was when complex animals and other macroscopic organisms - such as molluscs, worms, arthropods and sponges - began to dominate the fossil record.

13. Prahar

- The indigenously developed surface-to-surface Short-range tactical ballistic missile “Prahara” has been successfully flight tested by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from complex-III of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur, Odisha.
- Fuelled by a solid propellant, Prahara is about 7.3 m long and can carry a payload of 200 kg.
- The missile has a strike range of 150 Km.
- It is a quick-reaction, all-weather, all-terrain, highly accurate battlefield support tactical weapon system. It is equipped with a state-of-the-art navigation, guidance and electro-mechanical actuation systems with latest onboard computer.
- The missile is capable of carrying different types of warheads & will operate as battle field support system to the Indian Army.

14. Cyclone - 30

- Cyclone-30 – India’s biggest Cyclotron for Medical application – becomes operational in Sep 2018 at **Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre**, Kolkata.
- India’s biggest cyclotron facility “Cyclone-30” has become operational at the Kolkata-based Variable Energy Cyclotron Centre (VECC) under the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) for treatment of cancer.
- The facility produces a 30MeV beam that will be used to produce radioisotopes for medical imaging & diagnosis.
- The Cyclone-30 is in the first phase of production generating Fluoro Deoxyglucose (FDG), a radioisotope used for date imaging and oncological tissue imaging.
- It will be the first and only facility in the country to produce Germanium 68 isotopes, which is used in the diagnosis of breast cancer.
- Simultaneously, it will also produce Palladium 103 isotopes, which is used for the treatment of prostate cancer.
- The machine has a capacity of catering to 60 to 90 patients in a day.
- In its future stages, the machine will also work on the production of Iodine 123 isotopes, which can help detect thyroid cancer.
- The machine can also be used for research in the fields of material science and nuclear physics.

15. MPATGM

- DRDO - successfully conducts trials of indigenously developed 3rd Generation 'Man Portable Anti-Tank Guided Missile (MPATGM)' on Sep 15th, 2018
- It is expected to replace second generation 'Milan' (French missile) and Konkur (Russian missile) which are in service with Indian Army
- At present, India Army has indigenously developed third generation anti-tank guided missile (ATGM) Nag, but it is not portable

16. Eye RoV TUNA

- **EyeROV TUNA - India's 1st underwater robotic drone** - handed over to Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL) of Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for Research activities.
- India's first underwater robotic drone "EyeROV TUNA" was launched and handed over to Kochi-based DRDO lab "Naval Physical and Oceanographic Laboratory (NPOL)".
- The drone can send real-time videos of ships and other underwater structures to help with their repair and maintenance.
- It will be used by NPOL for research and development activities which in turn would result in a commercial product for defence purposes.
- The robotic drone can be navigated up to a depth of 50 meters to take real-time HD video images to examine ship hulls or undersea cables or bridge moorings and can eliminate the need for costlier and riskier manual inspection by divers.
- The first commercial Remotely Operated Vehicle (ROV)/underwater drone "EYEROVTUNA" was developed by EyeROV Technologies, a company incubating at the Kalamassery-based Maker Village which is said to be the largest hardware incubator in the country.

17. Jan Dhan Darshak

- **Arun Jaitley, Min of Finance and Corporate Affairs - launches 'Financial Inclusion Index' and a mobile application called 'Jan Dhan Darshak'**

- The annual Index - ranks the various States on the basis of 3 factors - Access, Usage and Quality of the Financial services
- The mobile app - will act as a guide for the common people to locate any of the financial service touch points (Banks, ATMs, Post offices) at any place in the country

18. psbloansin59minutes.com

- Union Finance Ministry has launched a portal to enable micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to get in-principle approval of loans within hour without need for branch visit.
- The web portal, www.psbloansin59minutes.com, will enable in principle approval for MSME loans up to Rs. 1 crore within 59 minutes for MSMEs.
- The portal is for securing loan approvals only from Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) and 5 Public Sector Banks (PSBs).
- The portal is strategic initiative of SIDBI led five PSB consortium incubated under aegis of Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance.

19. Gaganyaan

- Gaganyaan Mission will be India's first manned space mission that will send 3 persons (Gaganyatris) into space by 2022 (75th Independence year) for a period of 5 to 7 days
- India will be fourth nation in the world after USA, Russia and China to launch human spaceflight mission
- ISRO will use its GSLV Mk-III launch vehicle which can carry heavier payload of Gaganyaan from the new 3rd launch pad
- ISRO - plans to send India's 2nd Lunar mission 'Chandrayaan-2' on January 3, 2019
- ISRO - unveils 'Space Suit' and 'Crew model' for Gaganyaan Mission on Sep 6, 2018 at the 6th Bengaluru Space Expo
- Gaganyaan - ISRO to work together with Russia's ROSCOSMOS - for the country's 1st manned space mission
- The agreement for the same was signed during the talks between PM, Narendra Modi and Russian President, Vladimir Putin

- As per the MoU, ROSCOSMOS will fly an Indian astronaut to International Space Station (ISS) on board the Soyuz spacecraft in 2022 for a short training mission
- ISS is a habitable artificial satellite in low Earth's orbit
- Former IAF pilot, Rakesh Sharma was first Indian to travel to space - as part of Soviet Union's Soyuz T - 11 expedition, launched on April 2, 1984 of Intercosmos programme
- Gaganyaan Mission - will send 3 Indian astronauts (Gaganyatris) into space by 2022 - for a period of 5 to 7 days
- India, thus becomes the 4th country in the world after USA, Russia and China to send humans into space
- V R Lalithambika, Director, Directorate of Human space programme - has been entrusted by ISRO to oversee the 'Gaganyaan' project of sending 3 humans into space by 2022
- She is the veteran of more than 100 space missions and a vital member of the team behind the launch of a record 104 satellites in one go on Feb 15, 2017

20. PSLV-C42

- ISRO - to launch PSLV-C42 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota on the night of Sep 16, 2018
- It will carry two earth observation satellites, NovaSAR and S1-4, from the United Kingdom to space
- The satellites are owned by Surrey Satellite Technologies Ltd., which signed a commercial launch contract with Antrix Corporation
- NovaSAR is an S-Band synthetic aperture radar satellite, which will be useful to map forest, land use and monitor ice cover, flood and disaster
- S1-4 is a high resolution optical Earth observation satellite that will be used for surveying resources, urban management and monitoring of the environment and disasters
- This will be the 44th PSLV (polar satellite launch vehicle) series launch of ISRO and the 1st commercial launch for this year

21. Space Technology Incubation centre at Tripura

- Tripura - CM, Biplab kumar Deb inaugurates '**Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) Technology Incubation Centre**' in Agartala, The centre is functioning from the campus of National Institute of Technology (NIT), Agartala
- It was launched at the 1st edition of 'SPACETRONICS' organised by the India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA)
- Through such incubation centres, ISRO is looking to incubate start-ups that would build applications.
- Within the next 6 months, ISRO plans to set up five more space technology incubation centres at Jalandhar in Punjab, Bhubaneswar in Odisha, Nagpur in Maharashtra, Indore in Madhya Pradesh and Tiruchirapalli in Tamil Nadu.
- Each centre will be set up at a cost of Rs 2 crore.

22. FOXSI Mission

- NASA's Focusing Optics X-ray Solar Imager, or FOXSI, a sounding rocket mission, is soon set to stare directly at the Sun and search for nanoflares - miniature explosions invisible to the naked eye - using its X-ray vision, the US space agency said.
- The FOXSI mission will take its third flight from the White Sands Missile Range in White Sands, New Mexico
- Derived from the nautical term "to sound", meaning to measure, FOXSI rockets make brief 15-minute journeys above the Earth's atmosphere for a peek at space before falling back to the ground. FOXSI will travel 190 miles up, above the shield of Earth's atmosphere, to view the Sun.
- The first FOXSI flight was in 2012, during which it successfully viewed a small solar flare in progress, and its second in 2014, when it detected the best evidence at the time of X-ray emission from nanoflares.

23. HY-1C satellite.

- China - has launched 'Haiyang-1C', a new Marine satellite on LongMarch-2C rocket from Taiyuan Satellite Launch Centre
- It is mainly to monitor its maritime waters and to study the impact of climate change on the ecosystem
- It will monitor ocean colour, water temperatures, suspended sediment concentrations and dissolved organic matter in the marine ecosystem
- The satellite was developed by the **China Spacesat Company Ltd.** under the **China Academy of Space Technology**
- **The next satellite in the series 'HY-1D' is expected to be launched in 2019**

24. MINERVA - II 1

- Japan - becomes the World's 1st country to land 2 Robotic Rovers in Asteroid Ryugu
- It is also the first man made robot to have landed in an asteroid
- The 'MINERVA-II1' rover that landed in the Asteroid had 2 rovers, Rover-1A and Rover-1B
- The rovers were aboard the Hayabusa2 spacecraft, developed by Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency
- In October, Hayabusa2 is scheduled to deploy a larger rover called 'MASCOT'

25. ICGS Vijaya

- ICGS Vijaya - An Offshore Patrol Vehicle
- It Has Been Delivered To Indian Coast Guard By L&T On 30th Aug, 2018
- The Indian Coast Guard has commissioned indigenously built patrol vessel 'Vijaya' in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. It is capable of carrying limited pollution response equipment to contain oil spill in sea.
- The 98-metre Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPV) was designed and built by Larsen & Toubro India at Kattupalli shipyard and is fitted with advanced navigation and communication equipment, sensors and machinery.

- The ship is designed to carry one twin engine helicopter and four high speed boats, including two inflatable boats for boarding, search and rescue, law enforcement and maritime patrol operations.
- The vessel is fitted with a 30 mm gun and will be fitted with a 12.7 mm gun with a Fire Control System (FCS).
- It will be based at Paradip Port, Odisha and be deployed in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for surveillance and other duties.

26. Bedaquiline

- The Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry has launched new anti-TB (Tuberculosis) drug Bedaquiline
- It was launched by the Union Health Minister J P Nadda as part of the TB national programme
- Initially the drug will be made available in six public hospitals in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Guwahati and Ahmedabad.
- Later it will be introduced in 104 districts across ve States. Bedaquiline is a new anti-TB drug for treatment of Multidrug-resistant tuberculosis.
- It specically targets Mycobacterial ATP synthase, an enzyme which is essential for the supply of energy to Mycobacterium tuberculosis and most other mycobacteria.

27. Adobe Digital Disha

- Software major **Adobe** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (**MoU**) with the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship** to launch an “**Adobe Digital Disha**” programme across vocational institutes in India.
- The programme is focused on helping vocational institutes leverage the power of a free online and mobile graphic design app “**Adobe Spark**” to integrate creativity and digital literacy into classrooms and curriculum.
- Along with the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and Directorate General of Training (DGT), “**Adobe Digital Disha**” expects to touch the lives of over one million students and teachers across India by the year 2020.

28. Model BH205E

- The Bharat Earth Movers Limited (BEML) has recently launched an indigenously designed and developed India's first 205T Electric Drive Rear Dump Truck (Model BH205-E) in its Mysuru plant, with an objective of strengthening the 'Make in India' initiative.
- This new rear dump truck is expected to address the growing demand for higher capacity equipment in the mining industry.
- BH205E is powered by Tier -II emission compliant Modular Common Rail Electronic Engine with 2300 HP.
- The AC drive system has been engineered to provide exceptional haul road performance with reduced maintenance.
- The truck weighs 335 tonnes. It has been developed for use in the project of Northern Coalfields Limited (NCL), Singrauli.

29. System 001 Project

- Ocean Cleanup Foundation - Launches The World's 1st Ocean Cleanup Exercise Of 'Great Pacific Garbage Patch' From San Francisco At An Estimated Budget Of USD 32 Million
- Ocean cleanup Foundation - is an organization founded by a Dutch innovator, Boyan Slat (24 years old)
- The cleanup system 'System 001', also called as 'Wilson' is a 2000 foot long plastic cleaning array, which is propelled by wind and waves so as to passively catch plastic debris in front of it.
- It will be able to collect 50 tons of plastic in the 1st year
- The Great pacific garbage patch is a collection of marine debris in the North pacific ocean
- It has 79000 tons of plastic debris in the form of 1.8 trillion tiny pieces

30. India's first embryo transplanted calf

- India's first female calf is born using embryo transplant technology.

- The project was supervised by the Department of Animal Husbandry, Jammu in collaboration with the National Dairy Development Board.
- The calf of 'Sahiwal' breed was born to a crossbreed Jersey cow at the Central Cattle Breeding & Research Farm.
- Embryo transfer is a process of transferring an embryo from the reproductive tract of a donor female to a uterus of a female recipient with intent to establish a pregnancy. This technique is used for both humans and animals.

CONFERENCES

1. **International Ayurveda Congress**

- The 4th International Ayurveda Congress (IAvC) 2018 has been inaugurated by Minister of State for AYUSH Shripad Yesso Naik at Leiden, the Netherlands on September 1.
- The congress would focus on promotion and propagation of Ayurveda in the Netherlands and its neighbouring countries of Europe.
- The 2-day congress is jointly organized by International Maharishi Ayurveda Foundation (Netherlands), All India Ayurvedic Congress (New Delhi) and the International Academy of Ayurveda (Pune) in association with the Indian Embassy in the Netherlands.
- A special Seminar is also organized by the Indian Embassy titled “India-Netherlands collaboration in Healthcare, including Ayurveda”.

2. **BIMSTEC summit**

- 4th BIMSTEC Summit to be held in Kathmandu, Nepal in August 2018 July 21, 2018
- The fourth edition of Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) will be held in Kathmandu, capital city of from 30 to 31 August, 2018.
- Nepal is the current chair of BIMSTEC.
- The main focus of summit will be to increase connectivity between BIMSTEC nations including roads, airways and transmission lines.

- It will also give top priority connectivity and poverty alleviation.
- Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectoral, Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) BIMSTEC is the sub-regional group of seven countries in South Asia and South East Asia lying in littoral and adjacent areas of Bay of Bengal constituting contiguous regional unity.
- It was established on 6 June 1997 through Bangkok Declaration.
- It is headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- Member countries: India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka from South Asia and Myanmar, Thailand from South East Asia.
- BIMSTEC's prime objectives: Technological and economic cooperation among south Asian and south East Asian countries along the coast of the Bay of Bengal.
- BIMSTEC is sector-driven cooperative organization, starting with six sector including trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries.
- In 2008, it was expanded to embrace eight more sectors including agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counterterrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change.

3. WOSA 2018

- India is hosting the 4th edition of World Summit on Accreditation (WOSA 2018) in New Delhi from September 7 with theme "Challenges and Opportunities in Outcome-Based Accreditation".
- The focus of the 3-day summit is on challenges and opportunities in outcome-based accreditation.
- The WOSA 2018 will bring about new ideas and help in establishing new trends of identifying opportunities and challenges in professional education world-wide.
- The Summit is a biennial event organized by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA).

4. World Hindu Congress

- The Vice President of India, M. Venkaiah Naidu will address the 2nd World Hindu Congress (WHC) 2018, which is scheduled to be held in Chicago, United States on September 7 to 9.

- Apart from addressing the congress, Mr. Naidu will also participate in a programme organized by 14 Telugu Associations of the US at Hindu Temple of Greater Chicago.
- He will also participate in bilateral discussions with several world leaders, who are attending this event, on the sidelines of this Congress.
- The WHC is a global platform for Hindus to connect, share ideas, inspire one another, and impact the common good.
- It offers Hindus an opportunity to introspect towards improvement and tap into their collective resources to seek tangible solutions to the most pressing issues of this age.
- The global event also marks the commemoration of 125th Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's Historic Speech at the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1893.

5. **Asia-Europe Meeting**

- 3rd ASEM Conference on "Global Ageing and Human Rights of Older Persons" was held at Seoul, South Korea.
- The Indian delegation was led by Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment. International Institutions including the United Nations, regional Institutions such as UNESCAP (UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific), UNECE (United Nations Economic Commission for Europe), European Union, ASEAN, GANHRI (Global Alliance for National Human Rights Institutions) and other International NGOs also attended this Conference.
- It was jointly organized by South Korea and National Human Rights Commission of Korea.

6. **International Women Entrepreneurs summit**

- Nepal is hosting the International Women Entrepreneurs Summit (IWES) 2018 in Kathmandu with theme "Equality begins with Economic Empowerment" from September.
- The main purpose of the 3-day summit is to bring together achievers, women business leaders, professionals, international service providers, resource organizations, experts, government representatives and other

stakeholders with a focus on innovative economic transformation through discussions and collaborations.

- The delegates from the SAARC, ASEAN, EU, Africa, Arab countries and China participating in the summit.
- The event is organised by the South Asian Women Development Forum (SAWDF).

7. **MahaBiz 2018**

- The 3rd edition of acclaimed International Business Conference 'MahaBiz 2018' will be held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE) on 12th and 13th October 2018.
- MahaBiz is considered a bridge for business opportunities between Maharashtra state and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region.
- GCC is a political and economic alliance of six Middle Eastern countries.
- It includes Saudi Arabia, UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain and Qatar.
- MahaBiz 2018 proposes to bring together businesses, investors and key government decision makers on a common platform to share and discuss various opportunities in over 10 different industry sectors.
- The event will be attended by more than 400 delegates from India, Gulf countries and Africa.

8. **Women only Foreign Minister Conference**

- The first-ever women-only foreign minister conference was held in Montreal, Canada on September 21-22, 2018.
- The aim of the conference was to highlight women's key role in politics and decision making processes.
- The meeting was co-chaired by Canada's top diplomat Chrystia Freeland, and the foreign affairs representative of the EU, Federica Mogherini.
- The foreign ministers from almost 20 countries discussed topics including international security and peace.
- The conference is also being attended by female top diplomats from Andorra, Bulgaria, Costa Rica, Croatia, the Dominican Republic, Ghana, Guatemala, Honduras, Indonesia, Kenya, Namibia, Norway, Panama, South Africa, Rwanda, Saint Lucia and Sweden.

9. **COCON XI**

- Kerala Police is going to host a 2-day International Cyber Security Conference 'COCON XI' in Kochi on October 5th and 6th, 2018.

- COCON, an annual event, is conducted as part of the International Information Security Day.
- Kerala Police will partner with British Columbia-Canada based POLCYB (Society for the Policing of Cyberspace) and ISRA (Information Security Research Association), a registered non-profit organization for organizing the event.

10. International Solar Alliance

International Solar Alliance (ISA) is conceived as a **coalition of solar resource rich countries** to address their special energy needs and will provide a **platform to collaborate** on addressing the identified gaps through a common, agreed approach. It is also called as the International Agency for Solar Technologies and Applications (IASTA). It aims to spread cheap solar technology across the globe with pooled policy knowledge. The alliance includes around **120 countries** that support the “Declaration on the occasion to launch the international solar alliance of countries dedicated to the promotion of solar energy”.

The Paris declaration on International Solar Alliance states that the countries share the **collective ambition** to undertake **innovative and concerted efforts** for **reducing the cost of finance and cost of technology** for immediate deployment of **competitive solar generation**, financial instruments to **mobilise more than 1000 Billion US Dollars** of investments needed by 2030 for the massive deployment of affordable solar energy and to pave the way for future solar generation, storage and good technologies.

MISSION AND VISION

ISA’s Mission and Vision is to provide a **platform for cooperation** among solar resource rich countries where **global community** including bilateral and multilateral organizations, corporates, industry, and stakeholders can make a positive contribution to the **common goals of increasing utilizing of solar energy** in meeting energy needs of ISA member countries in a **safe, convenient, affordable, equitable and sustainable manner**

OBJECTIVE

The overarching objective is to create a collaborative platform for increased deployment of solar energy technologies to **enhance energy security & sustainable development; improve access to energy and opportunities for better livelihoods in rural and remote areas** and to **increase the standard of living.**

ISA will work with partner countries in the **identification of national opportunities to accelerate development** and deployment of existing clean solar energy technologies, the potential for which largely remains untapped. The increased deployment of solar technologies will benefit the countries in terms of direct and indirect **employment opportunities** generated and the economic activity that will be triggered through electricity and solar appliance access to predominantly rural households

ACTIVITIES

- To achieve the objectives, ISA, by way of **supplementing the national efforts of the countries**, through appropriate means will undertake following activities:
- **Collaborations** for joint research, development and demonstration, sharing information and knowledge, capacity building, supporting technology hubs and creating networks;
- Acquisition, diffusion and indigenization and absorption of **knowledge, technology and skills** by local stakeholders in the member countries;
- Creation of **expert groups** for development of common standards, test, monitoring and verification protocols;
- Creation of **partnerships** among country specific technology centers for supporting technology absorption for promoting energy security and energy access;
- **Exchange of officials/technology specialists** for participation in the training programs on different aspects of solar energy in the member countries;
- Encourage companies in the member countries to **set up joint ventures**;
- **Sharing of solar energy development experiences, analysis** on short- and longer-term issues in key energy supply, financing practices, business models particularly for decentralized applications and off-grid

applications, including creation of local platforms focusing on implementation solutions and grass root participation;

- Establish **new financial mechanisms to reduce cost of capital** in the renewable energy sector and innovative financing to develop; and
- **Collaborate with other multilateral bodies** like International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA), Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (REEEP), International Energy Agency (IEA), Renewable Energy Policy Network for the 21st Century (REN), United Nations bodies; bilateral organizations; Corporates, industry, and other stakeholders can contribute towards the goal of increasing utilization of solar energy in ISA member countries.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

To achieve the objectives, ISA will have five key focus areas:

- **Promote solar technologies and investment** in the solar sector to enhance income generation for the poor and global environment
- **Formulate projects and programs** to promote solar applications
- Develop **innovative Financial Mechanisms** to reduce cost of capital
- Build a common Knowledge e-Portal
- Facilitate **capacity building** for promotion and absorption of solar technologies and R&D among member countries.

These focus areas will cater to:

- **Grid connected solar power** (Solar parks, Solar thermal projects, Rooftop solar projects, Canal top projects, Solar on water bodies, Farmers and unemployed youths as generators)
- **Off-grid and decentralized applications** (Village electrification and mini-grids, Solar lanterns, Mobile chargers, Solar powered telecom towers, Milk chilling centers, Potters wheels, Solar spinner for weavers, street lights, Solar pumps, Solar heating/cooling, etc.).

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

ISA is proposed to be a **multi country partnership organization** with membership from solar resource rich countries between the two tropics.

ISA's **proposed governance structure** would consist of:

- An Assembly
- A Council
- A Secretariat

PROJECTS

To achieve the goals and objectives, and subject to mutual deliberations, following action points have been identified as **short term priorities**, to be taken up by ISA:-

- Assisting member countries in **drafting solar policies**;
- **E-Portal** to offer 24/7 real time suggestions for solar projects;
- Work with ISA member countries **to strive for universal access** to solar lighting;
- Preparation of **Detailed Project Reports** and sharing of best-practices and successful case studies;
- **Exchange best practices** and work with member countries in designing financing instruments to mitigate risk and catalyse partnerships to boost investment;
- **Share perspectives** on developing electricity systems;
- **Development of standards**, specifications and test protocols for solar energy systems;
- **Generate and diffuse key learning** on new technologies;
- **Encourage collaboration in solar resource mapping** in member countries and in deployment of suitable technologies;
- **Facilitate preparation of plans** for solar energy development and deployment;
- **Encourage industry cooperation** among ISA member countries;
- Forge cooperative linkages on **development of Centre of Excellence for R&D** in ISA member countries; and
- **Designing training programs** for students/engineers/ policy makers, etc. and organizing workshops, focused meetings and conferences.

DEFENCE EXERCISES :

- **KAZIND 2018** - a Joint army exercise to be conducted by India and Kazakhstan in Otar region, Kazakhstan
- **SLINEX-2018** - Joint Naval exercise to be conducted by India & Sri Lanka - at Trincomalee, Sri Lanka from Sep 7 to 13, 2018
- **Yudh Abhyas 2018** - India & United States to conduct their annual Combat exercise at Chaubatia, Uttarakhand from Sep 16th to 29th, 2018
- **Milex-2018** - 1st ever BIMSTEC anti-terror military exercise to be held at Pune in Maharashtra from Sep 10th to 18th, 2018.
 - BIMSTEC - Bay of Bengal initiative for multi-sectoral technical and economic cooperation
 - Countries to participate - Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar and Sri Lanka
 - Nepal and Thailand to send only 'observers' and chose not to participate in the exercise
- **Nomadic Elephant 2018** - Bilateral military exercise between India and Mongolia - commenced in Ulaanbaatar, Capital of Mongolia
- **Vostok 2018 (East 2018)** - Russia to launch its' biggest Military drill in history with 3,00,000 troops on Sep 11, 2018
- **Sagarmatha Friendship-2** - a Joint Military exercise between Nepal and China to take place in Chengdu, China
- **Mt Everest Friendship Exercise-2018 (Sagarmatha Friendship-2018)** - The 2nd edition of Nepal-China Joint Military exercise commenced in China's South western Sichuan Province
- **Aviandra 18** - Joint Air exercise between India and Russia commences in Lipetsk, Russia from Sep 17th to 28th, 2018
- **Kakadu 2018** - Australia. KAKADU 2018 is the 14th edition of the exercise.
 - Exercise KAKADU, which started in 1993, is the premier multilateral regional maritime engagement exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and supported by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF).
 - The exercise is held biennially in Darwin and the Northern Australian Exercise Areas (NAXA).
 - Exercise KAKADU derives its name from Kakadu National Park, which is a protected area in the northern territory of Australia, 171 km south-east of Darwin.

- During the exercise, professional exchanges in harbour and diverse range of activities at sea, including complex surface, sub-surface and air operations would enable sharing of best practices and honing of operational skills.
- **'IOWave18'** - A multination Indian ocean-wide Tsunami Mock exercise began on Sep 4, 2018 in Indian ocean - to be participated by India along with other 23 nations
- **'Rapid Trident'** - Annual joint military exercise conducted by Ukraine with United States and other NATO member countries, kicked off in Lviv region of Ukraine

INDIA AND ITS NEIGHBOURS

1. India and Bangladesh

- India - Bangladesh Friendship Product Pipeline Project construction - inaugurated by PM, Narendra Modi and Bangladesh PM, Sheikh Hasina
 - It is first such pipeline through which refined diesel will be supplied from India to Bangladesh
 - It is a 130 km long pipeline connecting Siliguri in West Bengal to Parbatipur in Bangladesh
 - It has 6 km within the Indian territory and the rest falls on the Bangladesh territory.
 - Indian leg of the pipeline project will be implemented by Assam-based Numaligarh Refinery Limited and Bangladeshi leg will be implemented by Bangladesh Petroleum Corporation
- Bangladesh - allows India to use its 'Chittagong' and 'Mongla' ports - to transport the cargo from and to the north eastern states

- On September 27, the joint border conference was held between India and Bangladesh at Aizawl, Mizoram and delegates from both sides expressed their deliberations on the border issues between the two countries. The conference led to a vital discussion on the need for demarcation of the border between the two countries along Mizoram. From the Indian counterpart, Survey of India Director Sanjay Kumar headed the Indian delegation.

2. India and Nepal :

- The Government of Nepal has appointed former Member of Parliament and renowned Indian actress Jaya Prada as Goodwill Ambassador for tourism and culture for four years. Tourism is one of the important sources of employment and income generation in Nepal and India is the biggest source market for Nepal. As per officials, the appointment of Jaya Prada will strengthen age old cultural ties between the two countries and help in promoting Nepal's tourism in India. The Govt. of Nepal has decided to observe the year 2020 as the 'Visit Nepal Year' with a target of at least two million international arrivals every year.
- **India & Nepal - signs MoU to build Railway line** - between Raxaul city in Bihar, India to Kathmandu, capital of Nepal
- **Nepal-Bharat Maitri Pashupati Dharamshala** , a rest house for Pilgrims - opened by Indian PM, Modi along with Nepal PM, K P Sharma Oli in Kathmandu, Nepal

3. COMCASA :

- 1st Edition of 'India-US' 2+2 Dialogue
- India & US - have signed "**Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement(COMCASA)**" in New Delhi on September 6, 2018
- It enables US to sell more sensitive, critical and encrypted 'US military equipment' to India
- The next 2+2 meeting is scheduled to be held in the United States in 2019

- The 2+2 talks were agreed upon by US President, Donald Trump and Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi during their meeting in June 2017
- In the first round of the 'two-plus-two dialogue' in New Delhi, India and the United States signed military communications pact "COMCASA" , which will give India access to advanced new defence systems like armed drones and will enable the Indian armed forces to exploit existing US-origin platforms much more efficiently.
- COMCASA is an India-specific version of the Communication and Information on Security MoA (CISMOA). It comes into force immediately & is valid for a period 10 years. The term "COMCASA" stands for Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) and is one of the four foundational agreements that the U.S. signs with allies and close partners to facilitate interoperability between militaries and sale of high end technology.
- COMCASA allows India to procure transfer specialised equipment for encrypted communications for US origin military platforms like the C-17, C-130 and P-8Is.

AWARDS :

1. Champion of the Earth Award

- "UN Champions of the Earth Award 2018",the highest Environmental honour of the United Nations.
- Cochin International Airport, Kerala - won the '2018 Champions of the Earth Award' for its Entrepreneurial Vision in the use of sustainable energy
- The award was jointly conferred to PM Modi and French President Emmanuel Macron in the 'Policy Leadership category' for their efforts to create the International Solar Alliance (ISA)
- PM Modi was also acknowledged for his resolve to eliminate all single use plastic in India by 2022.

2. Magsaysay Awards

- Two Indians, Dr. Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk received the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay Award for 2018 on August 31. The award, which is regarded as the Asian version of the Nobel Prize, was established in 1957.
- The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation, in its citation, stated that Wangchuk was recognised for his uniquely systematic, collaborative and community-driven reform of learning systems in remote northern India, thus improving the life opportunities of Ladakhi youth.
- Vatwani was recognised for his tremendous courage and healing compassion in embracing India's mentally-afflicted destitute. Beside them, Youk Chhang from Cambodia, Maria de Lourdes Martins Cruz from East Timor, Howard Dee from the Philippines and Vo Thi Hoang Yen from Vietnam are the other winners of the 2018 award.

3. Pacific Asia Travel Association Gold Awards

- The Kerala Tourism has bagged two prestigious gold awards of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) for its innovative marketing campaigns at Langkawi, Malaysia during PATA Travel Mart 2018. The Kerala Tourism got the first gold for its 'Yalla Kerala' travel advertisement print media campaign in the Gulf countries. It showcased the state's greenery and backwaters.
- The 2nd gold award came for an innovative poster that Kerala Tourism had developed for the 3rd edition of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB), the biggest contemporary art show in South Asia.
- The poster featured a colourful boat & fishermen and could be put up straight as well as upside down. The Campaign and Posters were developed and designed by Stark Communications, the Advertising Agency of Kerala Tourism.
- The PATA Awards are presented to outstanding entries in four principal categories: Marketing; Education and Training; Environment, and Heritage and Culture.

4. UN Interagency Task Force Award

- Manoj Jhalani – UN Interagency Task Force (UNIATF) Award

5. National Water Awards

- In view of the importance of water resources management in India, the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has instituted National Water Awards with the objective to encourage all stakeholders to manage their water resources efficiently and create a water consciousness in the country.
- The objective of the awards is to encourage all stakeholders including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Gram Panchayats, Urban Local Bodies, Water User Associations, Institutions, Corporate Sector, Individuals etc. for adopting innovative practices of ground water augmentation by rainwater harvesting and artificial recharge, promoting water use efficiency, recycling & reuse of water and creating awareness through people's participation in the targeted areas resulting into the sustainability of ground water resources development, adequate capacity building etc.

6. Pakistan Dental Association's Humanitarian Award

- Chennai based Craniomaxillofacial surgeon, Dr S M Balaji – awarded the Pakistan Dental Association's 'Humanitarian Award'

7. National Sport Awards 2018

Winners from Tamil Nadu in the National Sport Awards 2018

- ★ **G Sathiyam** – Table Tennis – Arjuna Award
- ★ **A Srinivasa Rao** – Table Tennis – Dronacharya Award

8. National Clean School Award

- **Puducherry** – bags the Top position in 'National Clean School' Award of HRD Ministry
- 2nd Place – won by Tamil Nadu

9. Sarala Puraskar

- Noted Odia poet Satrugna Pandav will be honoured with the prestigious 39th edition of the 'Sarala Puraskar' award 2018 for his poetry

collection 'Misra Dhrupad'. The award, which carries a cash prize of Rs 5, 00,000 and a citation, will be presented to Pandav on October 26.

- The 'Sarala Puraskar' was instituted by eminent Odia industrialist late Dr Bansidhar Panda and late Ila Pnada in 1979 and awarded every year by the Indian Metals Public Charitable Trust (IMPACT). Beside Pandav, two other eminent personalities of Odisha will also be honoured for their contribution in the field of music and art.
- Pandeet Umesh Chandra Kar will be awarded the 'Ila Panda Sangeet Samman' and Binod Moharana will receive the 'Ila Panda Chitrakala Samman'. They will receive a cash award of Rs 1, 50,000 each along with citations.

10. Shilp Guru & National Award

- Union Minister of Textiles presented 'Shilp Guru' and National Award to Master craft persons at a function held at Raipur, Chhattisgarh.
- Eight 'Shilp guru' and 25 National awards were presented for the year 2016.

Committees

1. Injeti Srinivas Committee

- **Government - constitutes a high-level committee under Injeti Srinivas, Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) - to review the existing framework on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and suggest roadmap for a coherent policy**

2. D.K. Jain Committee

- The Supreme Court has appointed a 3-member committee headed by D.K. Jain, a former judge of the court, to probe the harrowing arrest and alleged torture of former space scientist Nambi Narayanan in the 'ISRO spy scandal' that turned out to be fake.
- A 3-judge Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dipak Misra also awarded Mr. Narayanan Rs. 50 lakh in compensation for the mental cruelty he suffered all these years. The Centre would take care of the committee's facilities and expenses.

3. Amitava Roy Committee

- **Supreme Court - constitutes 3-member committee under former SC judge, Amitava Roy** - to look into the problems in Jail and suggest reform measures
- The committee will look into the inhuman conditions across the 1,382 prisons in India and suggest remedial measures for the same.

ISSUES

1. Section 377 of IPC

- **Supreme Court - legalizes 'Homosexuality' and partially strikes down Section 377 on Sep 6, 2018**
- The 5 Judge constitution bench overruled the 'Suresh Kaushal' judgement in 2013, based on the interpretation of 4 Articles -
 - ★ Article 14 (Right to Equality)
 - ★ Article 15 (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth)
 - ★ Article 19 (Freedom of Speech and Expression)
 - ★ Article 21 (Right to Life and Right to Privacy)
- The bench comprised of Chief Justice Dipak Misra, Justices R F Nariman, A M Khanwilkar, D Y Chandrachud and Indu Malhotra

Section 377 - History

- ★ It exists right from 1860, when the Indian penal code came into existence
- ★ It criminalises any unnatural carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, providing a punishment with imprisonment for life, or for a term which may extend to 10 years, and shall also be liable to pay a fine.

Main Petitioners

- ★ Naz Foundation
- ★ Bharatnatyam dancer, Navtej Singh Johar

- ★ Chef, Ritu Dalmia
- ★ Business executive, Ayesha Kapur
- ★ Hoteliers, Aman Nath and Keshav Suri
- ★ Journalist, Sunil Mehra
- ★ Activist, Harish Iyer and
- ★ A group of IIT alumni

2. Verdict on Sabarimala Issue

- **Supreme court - allows the entry of Women of all ages into the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple in Kerala**
- The five-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court comprising CJI Chief Justice Dipak Misra and Justices Rohinton Nariman, AM Khanwilkar, DY Chandrachud, and Indu Malhotra struck down Rule 3(b) of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules, 1965 by a 4:1 majority on September 28, 2018
- The lone dissenting judgement was written by the only female judge, Justice Indu Malhotra who said the entry is the prerogative of a specific group of pilgrims and should be left to their beliefs
- The bench held that denial of entry to women violated Article 14 of the Constitution – the right to equality

3. Aadhaar validity

- **Supreme Court - Uphelds most of the Provisions of the Aadhaar Act, 2016 on Sep 26, 2018 by a 4-1 majority among the 5-judge Constitution bench**
- Of the 5 Judges, Chief Justice Dipak Misra, and Justices A.K. Sikri, A.M. Khanwilkar, Ashok Bhushan validated the provisions of the Aadhaar with few restrictions, while Justice D.Y. Chandrachud held that the entire Aadhaar project is 'Unconstitutional'

Overview of the Key Judgement

- ★ Aadhaar - PAN Linkage mandatory
- ★ Aadhaar - Not needed for CBSE, NEET, UGC and school admissions
- ★ Aadhaar - Not needed for mobile connections and for opening bank accounts

- ★ [Aadhaar](#) - a must for availing facilities of welfare schemes and government subsidies
- ★ Section 57 of the Aadhaar Act allowing private entities to use Aadhaar for verification purpose - Cancelled
- ★ Section 33(2) of the Aadhaar Act allowing UIDAI to share data with specially authorised officers in the interest of national security - Cancelled
- ★ Section 47 of the Aadhaar Act struck down - Any individual can file complaints now
- ★ No child can be denied benefits of any scheme if he/she doesn't have Aadhaar card
- ★ Aadhaar metadata cannot be stored for more than six months - So far, the limit was 5 years

4. Kerala Flood

- Kerala - appoints 'KPMG' as 'Project consultant Partner' for rebuilding the state after the recent floods
 - ★ Central Government had earlier declared the floods as "calamity of a severe nature" or Level 3 Calamity
 - ★ The floods were the worst to hit the state in the last century, after 1924's massive floods, affecting all the 14 districts and 1/6th of the population directly
- **Operation Madad** : The operation was launched to assist state administration and undertake disaster relief operations due to unprecedented flooding in many parts of Kerala following incessant rainfall and release of excess water from Idukki and other dams. Under it, Naval helicopters were also deployed for ferrying divers, power tools, axes and relief material to flooded areas to augment ongoing relief operations. Moreover, 50-men contingent was also positioned at Naval Armament Depot (NAD) Aluva fully equipped for assistance in any kind of eventuality. In addition, Naval Hospital, INHS Sanjivani also rendered medical assistance as required. Naval personnel from INS Venduruthy also have set up community kitchen.
- **Operation Sahyog**: Indian Army has deployed its men and machinery into disaster relief and rescue operations at Kannur, Kozhikode, Wayanad and Idukki after incessant rain and landslides hit various northern districts of the state. Karnataka and Kerala Sub area Headquartered at Bangalore was controlling the "Operation Sahyog" in Kerala. It has

deployed total of eight columns of army personnel in various parts of Kerala in which two columns were exclusively kept for worst-hit Idukki district. In addition, 80 army personnel from Madras Regiment were deployed for ongoing rescue and relief operation for tourists at Pallivasal in Idukki. The army constructed temporary bridges for the evacuations of the stranded people from the isolated villages.

5. Triple Talaq

- Union Cabinet - approves 'Triple Talaq ordinance' making Triple Talaq an offence on Sep 19th, 2018
- Earlier, the Supreme court held that the Islamic practice of 'instant' triple talaq as unconstitutional on Aug 22, 2017
- The verdict was delivered by a 5-judge bench led by the then Chief Justice J S Kehar, holding that it was violative of Article 14 and Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

TAMILNADU

1. Coastal Zone Management Plan

- Tamil Nadu government submitted the final draft of 'Coastal zone management plan' to the Union ministry of Environment, Forests and climate change.
- The plan divides 1,076 km long coastline into 6 categories (6 CRZs - Coastal Regulation Zone) to preserve its marine ecology, covering 13 TN coastal districts and 28 islands.
- The state has 1 Marine National Park that is Gulf of Mannar.

2. New ICT Policy

- The Tamil Nadu government announced a revised Information Communication Technology Policy 2018, catering to information technology (IT), information technology-enabled services (ITeS), MSME and the start-up sectors.
- The State last saw an IT policy rolled out during the DMK's rule in 2008.

- The policy focuses on three main areas: first, incentivising investment, employment and intellectual capital creation; second, it aims to integrate this with initiatives of Vision 2023; and lastly, pay more attention to start-ups and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).
- The policy states that the government will evolve appropriate mechanisms for ensuring the job security of IT professionals while keeping the interests of the IT industry and industry practices in other States in mind. The interventions will include encouraging movement away from services to product-based industries, reskilling of middle-level employees, creating ecosystems for start-ups and angel investments.
- The policy also provides administrative incentives for IT/ITES Companies to get exemption from certain provisions of the Tamil Nadu Shops and Establishment Act, 1947 and the Tamil Nadu Industrial Establishment (National and Festival Holidays) Act, 1958.
- It allows flexibilities in labour laws without compromising on labour welfare and permits women to work in three shifts, including the night shift, provided all security arrangement, facilities of rest rooms and safe transportation are arranged.
- The policy will evolve mechanisms for ensuring the job security of IT professionals at the same time keeping in mind the interest of the IT industry. It also allows companies to self-certify on maintenance of statutory registers and filing of a single common annual returns, besides reimbursement of 50 per cent of the cost towards quality certification, market development assistance and relaxation of FSI to a maximum extent of 100 per cent in designated IT/ITeS Parks.
- The policy envisages incubating investors and promoting research parks in the State via the PPP model.
- Provisions for instituting awards for promoting a green IT industry and Single Window Facilitation for easy clearances also find a place in the policy.

3. TN SMART app

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Authority (TNSDMA) will launch 'TN-SMART', a web application to collate data related to disaster management and provide flood alerts in specific areas this month.

- ❖ The disaster support system called Tamil Nadu - System for Multi-hazard potential impact Assessment and Emergency Response Tracking (TN-SMART) will collate existing data on the earlier disasters and also assess the impact of the weather forecast issued by the meteorological department.
- ❖ This real-time risk assessment system will help provide flood alerts across the State and prepare for response.
- ❖ The system would be in place to tackle the oncoming North-east monsoon and aid in decision making, said Commissioner of Revenue Administration K. Satyagopal.
- ❖ The TNSDMA has engaged a consultant through Tamil Nadu Urban Infrastructure Financial Services Limited for real-time forecasting of flood warnings for the Adyar, Cooum, Kosasthalaiyar and Kovalam basins.
- ❖ There are plans to install automatic weather stations and rain gauges in river basins and also flow meters in storm water drain network to assess impact of flooding. Alerts on inundation in specific areas would be provided based on the rainfall and increase in the water level of the rivers, he said.
- ❖ Such data collated by other departments like Water Resources Department would also be utilised for the flood forecast in the city and neighbouring districts.
- ❖ The real-time data would also help in deciding on mitigation and rescue measures. It will however take time for the system to be implemented as it is a three-year project.

MISCELLANEOUS :

1. Vorombe Titan

- Vorombe Titan - named as World's Largest ever bird - by **Zoological Society of London's 'Institute of Zoology'**

2. Battle of Haifa

- **India & Israel - commemorated Centenary of 'Battle of Haifa' on Sep 23, 2018**
- It marked the completion of 100 years of liberation of Haifa in Israel by the Indian troops in 1918
- Indian Army commemorates September 23 as 'Haifa Day' every year, paying tribute to the two Indian Cavalry Regiments, Mysore and Jodhpur Lancers that helped to liberate Haifa.
- On this day, in 1918, the Indian soldiers from the Mysore, Hyderabad and Jodhpur Lancers liberated the strategically important city of Haifa, known for its deep water bay in the eastern Mediterranean.
- The sacrifice made by the Indian soldiers is honoured and memorialized in 7 cemeteries across Israel, from Jerusalem to Haifa. Close to 900 Indian soldiers are buried in these cemeteries, which act as an immortal testimonial for their heroism.
- The Indian Army commemorates September 23 every year as Haifa Day to pay its respects to the two brave Indian Cavalry Regiments "Mysore and Jodhpur Lancers" that helped liberate the city following a dashing cavalry action by the 15th Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade.

3. Ease of Living Index

Top Performing States in "Ease of Living Index" under AMRUT (Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation) Scheme -Released by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs

- ★ **1st - Andhra Pradesh**
- ★ **2nd - Odisha**
- ★ **3rd - Madhya Pradesh**

4. China - Maldives Friendship bridge

- China-Maldives Friendship Bridge was recently unveiled in Maldives
- Becomes the 1st first cross-sea bridge in the Island

5. Maralal Camel Derby

- The 2018 edition of Maralal International Camel Derby event was held at Maralal town in Kenya. It is best Kenya's best known and most prestigious camel race that attracts both local and international competitors.
- It is an entertaining festival of fun and local competition that brings this small desert town to life.

6. 'TX2' Programme

- Nepal - becomes the 1st country in the world to double its Tiger population - as part of World Wildlife Foundation's (WWF) 'TX2' programme
- On the occasion of National Conservation Day on Sep 23, 2018, Government of Nepal announced that there are an estimated 235 wild tigers in the nation from around 121 in 2009
- WWF and Nepal had earlier set 2022 as deadline for doubling the tiger population
- Nepal was the first country to achieve global standards in managing tiger conservation areas, an accreditation scheme governed by the Conservation Assured Tiger Standards (CA | TS)
- The World Wildlife Foundation had launched its ambitious TX2 programme at the St Petersburg Tiger Summit in 2010
- As per the estimates in 2016, India has the highest tiger population with 2226 tigers, followed by Russia with 433 and then Indonesia which had 371 tigers
- China had less than five and Vietnam less than seven in 2016

7. Nahargarh Biological park.

- **Rajasthan - Rajasthan's 1st Lion safari inaugurated at Nahargarh Biological Park, Jaipur**
- It is located about 12 km from Jaipur on the Jaipur-Delhi highway.
- The visitors will be able to see lions in their natural habitat in the park spanning 38 hectares and enclosed by a fence.
- The Safari will be thrown open for the tourists from October 2018.

8. Kartarpur Sahib pilgrim corridor

- In a significant decision, the Union Cabinet approved the building and development of the **Kartarpur corridor from Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district to the international border, in order to facilitate pilgrims from India to visit Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur on the banks of the Ravi river**, in Pakistan, where Shri Guru Nanak Devji spent eighteen years. Pilgrims would then be able to visit the holy shrine throughout the year.
- The Kartarpur corridor will be implemented as an integrated development project with Government of India funding, to provide smooth and easy passage, with all the modern amenities.
- Government of India will put in place suitable facilities for smooth passage of pilgrims. Government of Pakistan will be urged to recognize the sentiments of the Sikh community and to develop a corridor with suitable facilities in their territory as well.
- The gurdwara in Kartarpur stands on the bank of the Ravi, about 120 km northeast of Lahore. It was here that Guru Nanak assembled a Sikh community and lived for 18 years until his death in 1539. The shrine is visible from the Indian side, as Pakistani authorities generally trim the elephant grass that would otherwise obstruct the view. Indian Sikhs gather in large numbers for darshan from the Indian side, and binoculars are installed at Gurdwara Dera Baba Nanak.
- Sikh jathas from India travel to Pakistan on four occasions every year – for Baisakhi, the martyrdom day of Guru Arjan Dev, the death anniversary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and the birthday of Guru Nanak Dev. These Indian pilgrims are given access to all gurdwaras in Pakistan.

9. Chabahar port

- On September 11, India, Iran and Afghanistan held their first tripartite meeting in Kabul during which implementation of the Chabahar port project and a host of other issues discussed. The Indian delegation was led by Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale while the Iranian team was headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi. Afghan Deputy Foreign Minister Hekmat Khalil Karzai chaired the meeting.
- The meeting focused on consolidating economic cooperation, including Chabahar, as well as enhancing cooperation on counter-terrorism, counter-narcotics, and continuing support to the peace and reconciliation

process that is led and owned by Afghanistan. As per officials, the three sides agreed to hold the next round of consultation in 2019 at an appropriate time in India.

- The Chabahar port is being considered a gateway to golden opportunities for trade by India, Iran and Afghanistan with central Asian countries.

10. Khirki Mosque

- The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has stumbled upon a hoard of medieval period metal coins during the conservation of Khirki Masjid, a 14th century mosque in South Delhi.
- The mosque close to the satpula, a seven arched bridge on the edge of southern wall of Jahapanah (the fourth city of Delhi), was a fort built by the prime minister of Feroz Shah Tughlaq around mid-14th century.

11. New Diamond ship

- Chennai port (ChPT) has become the first major port to handle a very large crude carrier (VLCC) inside the port basin.
- The VLCC New Diamond was the largest ship to be handled by the port till date.

12. Nepal-Bharat Maitri Pashupati Dharmashala

- **Nepal-Bharat Maitri Pashupati Dharamshala** , a rest house for Pilgrims – opened by Indian PM, Modi along with Nepal PM, K P Sharma Oli in Kathmandu, Nepal.
- It is a rest house for pilgrims, which is located on the banks of the Bagmati River.
- The Dharmashala is build with the Indian assistance and has provision for family rooms, kitchen, dining hall, library and some multipurpose halls to meet the requirements of the travellers and families on pilgrimage to Pashupatinath Temple.

13. Marbat festival

- Maharashtra – ‘Marbat festival’ is celebrated in Nagpur, Maharashtra
- The 150 year old festival is celebrated only in Nagpur
- During the festival, effigies representing the evil forces called ‘Marbats’ of Kali (black) and Pivli (yellow) are burnt

14. India's first corn festival

- In Madhya Pradesh, India's first corn festival is being held in Chhindwara from September 29 to bring together researchers, industrialists, farmers and other stakeholders from across the country to explore the unrealized potential of the city in becoming a hub for corn based industries.
- The 2-days festival is one of a kind international event. Chhindwara is the largest corn producing district in Madhya Pradesh with productivity of 5200Kg per hectare. In 2017-2018, the production is 12 lac ton corn from 2, 60,000 hectare - highest in the state.
- Chhindwara is very well connected with Nagpur (130 km) and Wardha dry port (175 Km) via national and state highways. Hence, the city is best suited for developing Corn based industries.

15. World Heritage Irrigation structures in India

Telangana's 127-Year-Old Sadarmatt Anicut And The Iconic Pedda Cheruvu Tank - Gets "Heritage Irrigation Structure" Status

16. Mangkhut Typhoon.

- Typhoon Mangkhut - made landfall on the northeastern tip of Luzon island in the **Philippines** with top-of-the-scale Category 5 winds of 165 mph
- **Hurricane Florence** - had arrived at **North Carolina's coast in United States** after weakening to a Category 1 storm with 90 mph winds
- Hurricanes and typhoons are the same type of storm; both are tropical **cyclones**, but those that occur in the Pacific west of the International Date Line are called typhoons

17. Indra Jara Festival

- **Indra Jatra festival - commences in Kathmandu, Nepal**
- In Nepal, the famous Indra Jatra festival 2018 is being celebrated in Kathmandu with gaiety and religious fervor. The 8-day long annual festival is observed to worship Indra, the lord of rain and good harvest. It also marks end of monsoon and beginning of harvest season and festivity. The chariot procession and mask dances are the main attraction of Indra Jatra.

- On fourth day of festival the chariot procession of living Goddess Kumari, Lord Ganesha and Lord Bhairav began from historic Basantapur Durbar Square on Monday. Nepal's living Goddess Trishna Shakya made her first public appearance after she was appointed in September 2016. President Bidya Devi Bhandari and thousands of people attended the Jatra celebrations.

18. Nai Talim

- A Book on experiential learning based on Mahatma Gandhi's 'Nai Talim' (basic education) was released by Union Minister for Human Resource & Development (HRD).
- It contains the basic principles of Gandhi's 'Nai Talim', along with the work and education curriculum for schools, D.Ed, B.Ed and faculty development programmes for teachers.
- It has been brought out simultaneously in 13 languages in consultation with the state councils of educational research and training

19. Exam warrior

Exam Warriors by Narendra Modi is an inspiring book for the youth. Written in a fun and interactive style, with illustrations, activities and yoga exercises, this book will be a friend not only in acing exams but also in facing life.

Non-preachy, practical and thought-provoking, Exam Warriors is a handy guide for students in India and across the world.

Governor Banwarilal Purohit released the first copy of Paritchaikku Bhayamen, the Tamil translation of Exam Warriors – a compilation of speeches made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi offering advice to students, during various occasions in different parts of the country.

Exam Warriors was translated into Tamil by V. Insuvai and published by The Alliance Co. The book, a compilation of speeches of Prime Minister Modi, including those delivered in his 'Mann ki Baat' radio programmes,

is primarily aimed at encouraging the student community against the odds in life, starting from facing examinations in their student life.

20. Jaipur Literature Festival :

Rajasthan – Jaipur Literature festival was held in Houston, Texas, United states on 14th and 15th Sep, 2018

21. Nuakhai Agricultural Festival

- The agricultural festival of Nuakhai has started in Odisha on 13th September 2018. The word 'nua' means new and 'khai' means food, so the name means the farmers are in possession of the newly harvested rice.
- The festival is seen as a new ray of hope, held the day after the Ganesha Chaturthi festival. During this harvest festival of western Odisha, new produce Nabannis offered to presiding deities. After offering the Nabann, people relish different types of foods prepared from the newly harvested crop.

OTHERS

- ◆ **Justice Tahira Safdar** - sworn in as 1st Woman Chief Justice in Pakistan's Balochistan High court.
- ◆ **Pranab Bardhan (60 years) and Shibhnath Sarkar (56 years) (West Bengal)** - won Gold in Men's pair Bridge event - becoming the oldest to win an Asian Gold for India
- ◆ **Amit Panghal, Boxing** (22 yrs, Haryana) - defeats current Olympic champion, Hasanboy Dusmatov of Uzbekistan to win Gold in Mens light fly weight (49 kg) event
- ◆ **Dr B K Misra, Eminent Neurosurgeon (Mumbai)**- Conferred With The Prestigious 'Dr B C Roy National Award, 2018' As 'Eminent Medical Person Of The Year'

- ◆ Japanese swimmer **Rikako Ikee** (18 years) - became the **1st woman** to win six gold medals at a single Games - was named as the Most Valuable Player (MVP) of the Games
 - She won 6 Golds in 50m and 100m freestyle, 50m and 100m butterfly as well as the 4 x 100m freestyle and medley relays apart from 2 Silver medals
 - She is the first female winner of the award, which has been presented at every Games since the 1998 edition in Bangkok
- ◆ **Justice Ranjan Gogoi** - will take charge as the next 'Chief justice of India' (46th CJI) on 3rd Oct, 2018
 - ★ He has earlier served as a judge in Guwahati High Court and also as Chief Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court
- ◆ **Dr Poonam Khetrapal Singh** - was re-elected as Regional Director for South East Asia of World Health Organisation
- ◆ **Mega Icons** - series by National Geographic channel
 - Hosted by Actor Madhavan
 - 5 Indians - Dr. Abdul Kalam, Kamal Hasan, Dalai Lama, Virat Kohli, Kiren Bedi
- ◆ **Door step delivery of Government services** - Delhi - 40 services - Dial 1076- Mobile Sahayak - Rs.50 per service.
- ◆ **Project Unnati** - Ministry of Shipping - To enhance the operational and Financial performance of major ports
- ◆ **TVET Skills Park** - Bhopal, MP - India's first Global multi skills park - Technical and Vocational Education and Training(TVET)
- ◆ Andhra Pradesh - to launch '**Yuva Nestam scheme**' for providing 'unemployment allowance' to the state's youth from October 2018
- ★ The scheme provides an allowance of Rs 1000 for the unemployed youth in the age group of 25 years to 35 years

Note : Candidates are advised to go through the entire month current affairs other than the given topics.

APPOLO STUDY CENTRE

CONTENT FOR OCTOBER & NOVEMBER MONTH CURRENT AFFAIRS 2018

OCTOBER, 2018

TAMIL NADU

- ◆ Hon'ble CM - announced that "The Chennai Muffosil Bus Terminus", popularly known as Koyambedu Bus Stand, will be renamed as Puratchi Thalaivar Dr MGR Bus Stand
- ◆ Tamil Nadu Government - sets up 'Tamil Nadu Water Resources Conservation and Rivers Restoration Corporation'
 - ★ The new agency to be set up at the budget of Rs 6000 crore will mobilize resources from various agencies to take up water resources conservation projects in the state
- ◆ The Online Payment Receipt System for the various Driving licence activates - were inaugurated in the K K Nagar RTO in Chennai on 1st Oct, 2018 by M R Vijayabaskar, Min of transport
 - ★ This is a **first-of-its-kind** initiative in the entire country
- ◆ "Vayoshreshtha Samman - 2018" Awards
 - ★ Vice President of India, M Venkaiah naidu - conferred the awards to 13 eminent senior citizens and institutions in recognition of their services on the occasion of 'International Day of Older Persons' this year
 - ★ Tamil Nadu got 2 awards and Karnataka got 3 awards this year
 - ★ Y G Rajalakshmi Parathasarathy, Founder of Padma Seshadri Bala Bhavan, Chennai - received the 'Senior Citizen' Award

- ★ **Madurai district** - adjudged the winner for providing best service to the Elderly people during the year 2017-18
- ★ The current District collector of Ramanathapuram, **Veera Raghava Rao** was the **district collector** of Madurai during the said tenure and he received the **award for the Madurai district**

- ◆ **Presidency Higher secondary school for Girls, Egmore - becomes the state's first Smart Classroom in the Government schools**
 - ★ The classroom, designed by a Japanese Firm, was inaugurated by K A Sengottaiyan, School Education Minister
 - ★ He also released the new shades of School uniform for Government school students studying in Class I to X
 - ★ **Elementary** kids will have a '**Green shade**' uniform and **Middle school** students will have '**Sandal shade**' uniform from the next academic year

- ◆ **Chennai Music academy - to confer 'Lifetime achievement award' to Ghatam maestro, Vikku Vinayakram on Oct 10, 2018**
 - ★ He was awarded **Padma Shri in 2002** and **Padma Bhushan in 2014**
 - ★ In the year 2012, Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowship, the highest honour in the performing arts was conferred to him by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, India's National Academy for Music, Dance and Drama
 - ★ He was the **first South Indian musician** to win the **Grammy Award** for **Best World Music Album** for his participation in Mickey Hart's *Planet Drum*, in which he played ghatam and morsing
 - ★ In 1997, Music academy conferred '**Sangeetha Kala Acharya**' Award to the exponent

- ◆ **Government - announces 24 x 7, toll-free telephone number of '1077' to contact 'District Collector Office' and '1913' to contact 'Chennai Corporation' - for flood related informations and queries**

- ◆ **Tamil Nadu Government - to establish a 'Faculty Training centre' at the Government College of Technology, Coimbatore**

- ★ The centre will provide training and development programs for teachers from colleges across the state
 - ★ The construction of Rs 9-crore training centre will be completed by December 2018 and it is expected to start functioning from June 2019
 - ★ The centre will conduct industry-oriented training programs for the faculty members from Government, Government-aided and self-financing colleges across the state
 - ★ It is being built with various facilities like Seminar halls, virtual classrooms, a mini auditorium, a library and a video conferencing facility along with a separate hostel for outstation faculties
- ◆ **Tamil Nadu Police - identifies the culprits faster now with a new Fingerprint ID system, 'FACTS 7.0 (Fingerprint Analysis and Criminal Tracing System)', developed by Tata Consultancy Services (TCS)**
- ★ The system that costs Rs 1.70 crore has been in use, since Oct 4, 2018
 - ★ The fingerprint reading devices are installed at all the district headquarters and police commission rates, linking them to the state crime records bureau's (SCRB) data base in Chennai
 - ★ 36 Police stations are linked to the data base of the crime records bureau that has more than five lakh fingerprints
- ◆ **Thamirabarani Maha Pushkaram - begins on Oct 11, 2018 at Papanasam in Tirunelveli district and will be observed till October 23**
- ★ The event was last organised in 1864 on the Thamirabarani river course in Tirunelveli and Tuticorin districts
 - ★ The Pushkaram is organised once in every **12 years** for the **12 zodiac signs**
 - ★ Each of the 12 signs has a holy river, where the Pushkaram is organized
 - ★ Thamirabarani was the holy river for the Viruchigam Rasi (Scorpio)
 - ★ Pushkaram is celebrated when Guru Peyarchi (transit of Jupiter from one zodiac sign to the other) takes place
 - ★ Since the pushkaram is being **organized after 144 years** (after completion of 12 zodiac cycles) it is called a maha pushkaram

- ◆ Modernised International Cruise Terminal at Chennai Port – inaugurated by Pon Radhakrishnan, Union Minister of state for shipping and K J Alphons, Union Minister of state for tourism - on Oct 12, 2018
- ★ The terminal was constructed at a budget of Rs 17.24 crore in an area of 2,880 square metres
- ★ The cruise terminal at the port will be the first on the east coast in the country
- ★ All other four cruise terminals are on the west coast - Mumbai, Mormugao, Mangalore and Kochi
- ★ The Chennai port, on an average, receives up to 10 cruise vessels a year

- ◆ Tamil Nadu Government – to conduct an ‘International Chess championship’ for School students in Tamil Nadu under the name of former CM, J Jeyalalitha
- ★ A budget of Rs 29 crore has been allocated for the same, as per K A Sengottaiyan, State’s Education Minister

- ◆ Tamil Nadu Government – announces new rules & fares for Trekking in the state’s Forests
- ★ **New Rules**
 - Only organisations registered with the forest department will be allowed to organise treks
 - Trekking routes have been divided into three – easy, moderate and tough
 - Trekkers have to get permission from district forest officers - from wildlife wardens in sanctuary areas and from deputy directors in tiger reserves - before setting out
 - While going on easy and moderate treks, the group (a minimum of five people) will have to take one guide along
 - When a group of five opts for a tough trekking route, apart from the guide they also have to take along a forest department employee
 - The new rules also specify periods when treks are banned, the routes to be used and the time that can be taken

- ◆ Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit - presented the late 'Dr. Mohan Dharia Rashtranirman Puraskar Award' on agricultural scientist 'M.S. Swaminathan'
- ★ Prof. Swaminathan, a Padma Vibushan awardee, announced that the ₹1 lakh prize money associated with the award would be used to institute another award, '**Dr. Mohan Dharia Award for Coastal Ecological Security**'
- ★ The new award will be given to a lady scholar studying at the University of Mumbai in the field of Life Science - with particular attention to the conservation of mangroves along the Maharashtra coast
- ★ **Chief Minister of Maharashtra**, Devendra Phadnavis attended the event at Raj Bhavan, Chennai

- ◆ **Gummidipoondi Revenue Officials - launched a new scheme 'Kutti Police' in Kavrapettai Primary School**
- ★ As per the scheme, school students from Standard I to VIII will be selected for monitoring civic issues like helmetless driving, driving without seatbelt, drunken driving, traffic signal violations etc., within their families and the best family will be awarded later

- ◆ Tamil Nadu Government - increases sub-quota in recruitments for Sports persons to 3% on Oct 16, 2018 - from the present 2% announced on Aug 15, 2018
- ★ Hon'ble Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Edapaadi K Palaniswami announced the decision during a function in Chennai

- ◆ **Tutor 365, a new e-learning analytical software - launched by the Chief Educational Officer, Trichy district**
- ★ It helps the students to prepare for the board exams in Class XI and XII
- ★ The test-based analysis and learning tool has a set of more than 40,000 questions covering state board and CBSE syllabus along with the competitive exams
- ★ It is created by a company called '**Ebek**'

- ◆ A new 'refurbished' butterfly garden - has been reopened for public at the Arignar Anna Zoological Park, Vandalur
- ★ The Butterfly park was inaugurated by the former CM, J Jayalalithaa in Sep 2015 at an area of 2.7 hectares inside the Zoo
- ★ The park was closed down after the impact of Cyclone, Vardah
- ★ The park has around **40 types of butterflies** at present and hopes to increase the count soon

- ◆ **Tamil Nadu - to set up LokAyukta by February 1, 2019**
- ★ The undertaking for the same was given to the Supreme Court by the Government

- ◆ **IIT, Madras - develops the country's first 3D Printing 'Construction Technology'**
- ★ The Civil Engineering department of IITM has established a 3D Printing Lab '**IIT Madras Printability Lab**' in association with an Additive manufacturing Startup '**Tvasta Manufacturing Solutions**' - to develop this technology for the Mass market
- ★ It aims to develop a specific process to build a single-storeyed house of 320-sq.ft within 3 days
- ★ It intends to build India's first 3D printed house within the next 6 to 8 months

- ◆ **TN-SMART - the new web-based GIS system and its Mobile App - were launched by the Hon'ble CM, Edappadi K Palaniswami**
- ★ The system and App will strengthen the response and recovery management during Disasters such as Floods, cyclone etc.,
- ★ **SMART - Multi hazard potential impact assessment and Emergency response tracking**
- ★ It was developed by the Government in association with RIMES of Thailand (**RIMES - Regional Integrated Multi-hazard Early warning System for Africa and Asia**)
- ★ The App would alert users with forecasts and analysis during emergencies

◆ **Golden temple in Sripuram - wins the World's best Green temple award**

- ★ The temple near Vellore bagged the award given by Exnora International, an Environmental service organization

◆ **Government - to unveil the portrait of S S Ramasami Padayatchi, a famous leader and founder of Tamil Nadu Toilers' Party - in the state assembly**

- ★ This was announced by the Hon'ble CM, Edappadi K Palaniswami in Chennai
- ★ He also highlighted the proposed construction of a memorial for the leader with his statue, at Manjakuppam in Cuddalore district
- ★ A budget of Rs 2.15 crore has been earmarked for the purpose

◆ **R Vinolee of Tamil Nadu - becomes the first woman from the country to finish 2 Ironman events within the designated time limit**

- ★ Vinolee was the only Indian woman to participate in the Ironman triathlon events held in Spain and Italy
- ★ Ironman events are organised by the World Triathlon Corporation
- ★ They involve 180 km of cycling, 42 km of running and 3.8 km of swimming and can take up to 17 hours to complete successfully
- ★ They are tougher than an Olympic triathlon event (40 km cycle, 10 km running and 1.5 km swimming)
- ★ Vinolee is a native of Ogalur village in Perambalur district

◆ **Coimbatore - gets India's first Police booth with Bio toilet**

- ★ It is set up at the Coimbatore Medical College traffic signal on Avinashi Road
- ★ Coimbatore based Park Group, in collaboration with Pathfinder Business Analysis Private Limited, is setting up the facility at an estimated Rs 4 lakh as a corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative

STATE

- ◆ Karnataka – becomes the 1st state in the country – to give legal protection to good Samaritans who help accidents victims with emergency medical care within the ‘Golden Hour’
- ★ This was made legal with the President giving his consent to the ‘Karnataka Good Samaritan and Medical Professional (**Protection and Regulation during Emergency Situations**) Bill, 2016’ under Article 200 of Constitution
- ★ ‘Golden hour’ in medical term is the first hour after traumatic injury when emergency treatment is very crucial
- ★ Under this law, Karnataka government will provide financial help to good samaritans who help victims in timely manner
- ★ It also seeks encourage people to offer first aid to victims without fear of harassment in hands of police and investigations

- ◆ Assam – becomes the 1st state in the country – to launch ‘Wage Compensation’ scheme for Pregnant women working in tea estates
- ★ The scheme will be launched by Assam Chief Minister Sarbanand Sonowal on October 1, 2018 in Guwahati
- ★ Under the scheme, an amount of Rs 12,000 will be given to the pregnant women in 4 installments –
 - Rs 2,000 in the first trimester
 - Rs 4,000 in the second trimester,
 - Rs 3,000 for institutional delivery
 - Rs 3,000 for registration of the child's birth
- ★ The women will also be given a maternity leave from the third trimester of pregnancy till three months after delivery
- ★ In the Annual Health Survey of 2012-13, Assam recorded one of the highest maternal mortality rates in India, with over 300 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births (National Average – 130) and around 404 deaths in the state’s tea estates

- ◆ West Bengal - The country’s 1st Flood forecast and Early warning system – inaugurated at Kolkata

- ★ It was established by The **Kolkata Municipal Corporation** with the support of the **Asian Development Bank**
- ★ It will provide real-time data on rainfall intensity, temperature, air quality and other climate-related data

- ◆ Tripura - to set up country's 1st 'Flute performance research institute' - to highlight 'flute' as a traditional musical instrument
- ★ The institute will conduct research on the various types of bamboo in Tripura to make the better quality 'flutes' for national and international markets

- ◆ Jharkhand - is constructing India's largest War memorial - as per Raghubar Das, CM of Jharkhand
- ★ Stories of the slain soldiers' bravery will be written in the war memorial, which will have a replica of the Kargil War
- ★ The Government has also hiked the compensation amount to the kin of the soldiers who died while serving the country from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 10 lakh

- ◆ Madhya Pradesh - announced to form a 'Gau Mantralaya' (Cow Ministry) in the state - as per the CM, Shivraj Singh Chouhan
- ★ The Ministry will work towards the preservation and protection of cows in the State

- ◆ Delhi - becomes the 1st state in the country to digitize 'RTO' operations in the entire country
- ★ From Oct 1, 2018, the issuance of driving license, learners' license and vehicle's registration certificate goes '**online**' in the state
- ★ Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Goa etc., are expected to have an online system in place to apply for driving license very soon
- ★ From 1 October, all the 13 licensing offices of Delhi will be declared as 'e-RTOs' in the state

- ◆ Odisha - launches its own 'Food Security Scheme' for the benefit of those who were left out of 'National Food Security Act' (NFSA)

- ★ The '**State Food Security Scheme**', launched by Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik, will benefit around 25 lakh poor people who were left out
- ★ The government will spend Rs 442 crore per year for implementation of the scheme
- ★ The NFSA was implemented in the state in **2014**
- ★ Under the scheme, the beneficiaries will get **5 kg of rice** per person per month at the rate of Rs 1 per kg similar to NFSA

- ◆ National Khadi Festival 2018 - organized by 'Khadi and Village Industries Commission' in Mumbai
- ★ The festival, which aims to promote Khadi products, was inaugurated on Oct 2 on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti
- ★ **Khadi and Village Industries Commission - formed under the 'Khadi and Village Industries Commission Act of 1956'**

- ◆ Assam - hosted the 3rd highest national flag and tallest from the average city elevation in the entire country - during the birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi
- ★ The **319.5 feet flag pole** is the highest in the country with respect to the average elevation of the city
- ★ Considering only the height of the flag pole, it is ranked the **third highest** in the country after the **one on Indo-Pakistan border at Attari (360 ft)** and **Pimpri Chinchwad Bhakti Shakti Chawk, Pune (351 ft)**

- ◆ Bihar - India's 1st 'National Dolphin Research Center' to come up at Patna, Bihar
- ★ It will be set up next month on the banks of the **Ganga river** in the Patna University premises
- ★ It will play an important role in the conservation efforts and research to save the endangered mammal

- ◆ Maharashtra - launches a 'website' and a 'mobile application' - to analyse the drought situation in the state by collecting data on rainfall, crop situation and underground water

- ★ The state's '**Relief and rehabilitation ministry**' developed the website called '*Maha Madat*' with the help of the **Maharashtra Remote Sensing Application Centre (MRSAC)**

- ◆ **Rajasthan - launches a 'Free electricity scheme' to the farmers of the state**
 - ★ As per the scheme, more than **12 lakh** farmers of the state will receive free electricity up to **Rs 10,000** for a year on their agricultural electricity connection
 - ★ Upon successful payment of the bill by the farmers, a Direct Benefit transfer (DBT) with maximum of **Rs. 833 per month** would be deposited to the accounts of the farmers
 - ★ The scheme will be effective from Nov 2018
 - ★ The state Government has allotted Rs 40,000 crore for Electricity infrastructure development

- ◆ **Arunachal Pradesh - launches 2 new schemes, the Chief Minister's 'Sashakt Kisan Yojana' and Chief Minister's 'Krishi Samuh Yojana'**
 - ★ They are aimed to increase the income of farmers by 2022

- ◆ **Haryana - to set up 'Kavach', an anti-terrorist force in the state**
 - ★ The force will comprise of specially trained recruits from the **state police**, to deal with security challenges
 - ★ For this, Haryana police recruits will be trained by the **National Security Guard (NSG)**

- ◆ **Karnataka - Country's first 'India-Israel Innovation Centre', an entrepreneurial technology hub - was launched in Bengaluru on Oct 10, 2018**
 - ★ It will help Israeli companies to enter India as local partnerships and Joint ventures
 - ★ It will also boost the entrepreneurship and community development in the country

- ◆ Delhi - Union Environment Minister, Dr Harsh Vardhan inaugurates an 'Air Quality Early Warning System' for the Delhi Region
 - ★ It was designed with the help of American and Finnish models to predict extreme air pollution by 2-5 days in advance
 - ★ An associated website has also been launched, to inform public and agencies about the pollution levels in advance
 - ★ The system has been jointly developed by the scientists of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) Pune, National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting, Noida and India Meteorological Department (IMD)
 - ★ Besides this, the Central Pollution Control Board has constituted a 41 member-team for continuous monitoring
 - ★ The city's air quality usually breaches the 'severe' zone
 - ★ In May 2018, Delhi was declared the most polluted city by the WHO for megacities with a population of 14 million or more
 - ★ It has to be recalled that the **Central Pollution Control Board** is going to implement an emergency action plan called the '**Graded Response Action Plan**'
 - ★ Under the emergency action plan, stringent actions are implemented based on the air quality of the city.

- ◆ Punjab Government - launches 3 Mobile apps to prevent Crop Residue burning
 - ★ The apps are - **i-Khet Machine, e-PEHaL and e-Prevent**
 - ★ The i-Khet Machine will help facilitate farmers to have access to the agriculture machinery or equipment for in-situ management of crop residue
 - ★ The e-PEHaL app will help in monitoring tree plantation.
 - ★ The e-Prevent will have prompt and accurate information about incidents of crop residue burning

- ◆ Uttar Pradesh CM, Yogi Adityanath - announces that Allahabad will soon be renamed 'Prayagraj'
 - ★ The approval for the same has been given by the Governor, Ram Naik

- ★ The renaming may be done before the Kumbh Mela, scheduled to begin in Allahabad on Jan 15, 2019
- ◆ **Uttar Pradesh - becomes the first state in the country to provide compensation for the families of people killed in Animal attacks**
- ★ The state had declared the man-animal conflict as "**State-Declared Disaster**" and announced a compensation of Rs 5 lakh within 24 hours of the incident
- ◆ **Haryana - Country's first-of-its-kind 'National Autism Intervention Research Centre' - opened at Fortis Memorial Research Institute in Gurugram, Haryana**
- ★ It has been started in association with '**Behaviour Momentum India**', the **brain-child of Dr Smita Awasthi**
- ★ The centre will help people suffering from autism to get educated and improve their social skills
- ★ Autism is a lifelong and severe neurobiological disorder affecting nearly one crore children across India
- ◆ **Telangana - Country's 1st Agri and Food business online learning platform 'SRiX Agri-Business Academy' - was inaugurated at the 'SR Innovation Exchange' (SRiX) Campus, Warangal in Telangana**
- ★ It is an Indo-UK collaborative initiative and a technology business incubator under the **Department of Science and Technology, Government of India**
- ★ It will focus on start-ups of **agriculture, cleantech and IoT**
- ★ **Sarras Academies Ltd**, a UK-based company, and **SR Innovation Exchange** have joined together to launch the Academy
- ◆ **Assam - celebrates 'Kati Bihu' festival**
- ★ It is also called '**Kongali Bihu**' or '**Bihu**' festival
- ★ On the occasion of Kati Bihu, women try to ward off evil and pray for a rich harvest by lighting earthen lamps
- ★ The festival derives its name from the Assamese month of Kati

- ◆ **Telangana - 'Bharosa', a 24-hour centre to support women and children affected by violence was inaugurated in Hyderabad**
 - ★ It has been set up on the instructions of the **DGP, Telangana**
 - ★ It would ensure speedy justice to women in distress and has facilities to record statements of children in POCSO cases

- ◆ **Kerala - becomes the 1st Smoke-free State in the entire country**
 - ★ The state has 100% penetration of LPG in its households
 - ★ With 3 bottling plants at **Kochi, Kozhikode, and Kollam**, LPG is being brought to 49.79 lakh customers through 308 distributors.

- ◆ **One of Asia's longest river bridge between Dhubri in Assam to Phulbari in Meghalaya - to be built across Brahmaputra**
 - ★ The 19.3km, four-lane bridge will be built by 2026-27
 - ★ It will cut road travel by 203 km along with the reduction in travel time
 - ★ Currently, the longest river bridge in India is the Dhola-Sadiya bridge (at 9.15 km) also named as Bhupen Hazarika Setu, which was inaugurated by PM, Narendra Modi in 2017

- ◆ **Meghalaya - Government to set up 'National Sports Stadium for Differently-abled' in Meghalaya**
 - ★ It was announced by **Thaawarchand Gehlot**, Union Minister of Social Justice and Empowerment
 - ★ It will be constructed at an estimated cost of over Rs 200 crore
 - ★ The stadium is expected to be completed before the 2022 National Games
 - ★ The **Union Social Justice Ministry** plans to set up national sports stadium for differently-abled persons in **5 states across the country**

- ◆ **Rajasthan - For the first time in the country, Rajasthan to have Braille-enabled Electronic Voting Machines at all the polling stations**
 - ★ They will **benefit visually impaired people**, who will also be provided with the Braille-enabled Voter slips

- ◆ **Punjab - has banned the sale of 'Glyphosate', a Cancer-causing Weedicide**
 - ★ It is classified under '**Group 2A**' cancer causing material with the potential to damage the human DNA
 - ★ Punjab was the fourth State after **Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra** to ban the sale of herbicide
 - ★ Central Insecticide Board and Registration Committee has recommended it only for use in tea gardens and non-cropped areas

- ◆ **Maharashtra - METRO INOX in Mumbai becomes India's 1st Rooftop Solar Powered Cinema and the first Multiplex with Solar panels**
 - ★ The South Mumbai's Largest Multiplex cinema has launched 2 **INSIGNIA** screens which are 100% solar powered
 - ★ The **INSIGNIA** screens also reduces 282 tons of CO₂ during its operational life

- ◆ **Haryana - launches 'Pashu Sanjeevni Sewa' scheme**
 - ★ It provides free of cost health care services to **live stock** through mobile veterinary clinics
 - ★ The service will be pilot-started in the districts of **Jind, Yamunanagar and Nuh**
 - ★ A toll-free number of 1962 is also launched for the farmers to avail the service
 - ★ Each mobile vehicle would have a veterinary doctor, one para vet and one **helper-cum-driver**

- ◆ **Gujarat - Vijay Rupani, CM flags off the 'Ro-Pax' (Roll on/off-Passenger) ferry service - between Ghogha in Saurashtra and Dahej in south Gujarat**
 - ★ The inaugural vessel, Voyage Symphony, will pass through Gulf of Cambay
 - ★ It can carry 60 trucks, five to seven buses, 35-40 cars and an equal number of bikes in addition to 525 passengers

- ★ It was operated by Surat-based Indigo Seaways Pvt Ltd (ISPL) and Gujarat Maritime Board under the public-private partnership model
- ★ In October 2017, PM Narendra Modi launched the passenger ferry, **Island Jade** between Ghogha (Bhavnagar district) and Dahej (Bharuch district)

◆ **Odisha - launches the first-of-its-kind 'EWDS' system - to inform people in advance about any upcoming natural calamities**

- ★ Naveen Patnaik, CM of Odisha inaugurated the system on the occasion of Odisha Disaster Preparedness Day
- ★ **EWDS - Early Warning Dissemination System**
- ★ It is the automatic public address system to alert the people about the possible cyclone, tsunami, etc.
- ★ It will warn the people living along the coast of Odisha from Bhubaneswar through alert siren system from towers installed at 122 locations
- ★ **Odisha Disaster Preparedness Day** is observed every year on **October 29** - the day on which Super Cyclone 'BOB 6' hit Odisha in 1999 and killed more than 10,000 people.

◆ **Punjab - India's first Robotic Dinosaur Gallery - inaugurated in Kapurthala, Punjab**

- ★ It is located within the premises of Pushpa Gujral science city
- ★ It is developed at a cost of Rs 1.50 crore
- ★ The gallery has both robotic as well as manual dinosaurs
- ★ It displays the story of birth and evolution of dinosaurs in a unique way

SPORTS

◆ **Prithvi Shaw - becomes the Youngest Indian to score a Century on his debut Test**

- ★ Prithvi, at the age of 18 years and 329 days - reached the historic mark in 99 balls against West Indies at Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium, Rajkot

◆ **Para Asian Games, Jakarta**

- ★ **Harvinder Singh (Haryana)** - created history by winning India's first-ever Para Asian gold medal in archery
- ★ He won the Gold in the final of W2/ST category of the men's individual recurve event

◆ **Turtle 'Olly' - declared official mascot for the Odisha Men's Hockey World Cup**

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

◆ **NASA - has announced that the World's First crewed flight by a SpaceX rocket to the International Space Station (ISS) will take place in June 2019**

- ★ A flight on Boeing spacecraft is set to follow in August 2019
- ★ It will be the first manned U.S. launch to ISS laboratory since the space shuttle program was retired in 2011
- ★ SpaceX will use its Falcon 9 rocket for its launch
- ★ Boeing's Starliner ship will be propelled into space by an Atlas V rocket made by the United Launch Alliance, a joint venture with Lockheed Martin
- ★ In the long term, NASA will use SpaceX and Boeing to take astronauts to the ISS for regular missions, which last about six months

◆ **Gaganyaan - ISRO to work together with Russia's ROSCOSMOS - for the country's 1st manned space mission**

- ★ The agreement for the same was signed during the talks between PM, Narendra Modi and Russian President, Vladimir Putin
- ★ As per the MoU, **ROSCOSMOS** will fly an Indian astronaut to International Space Station (ISS) on board the Soyuz spacecraft in 2022 for a short training mission
- ★ ISS is a habitable artificial satellite in low Earth's orbit

- ★ Former IAF pilot, Rakesh Sharma was first Indian to travel to space - as part of Soviet Union's Soyuz T-11 expedition, launched on April 2, 1984 of Intercosmos programme
- ★ Gaganyaan Mission - will send 3 Indian astronauts (Gaganyatris) into space by 2022 - for a period of 5 to 7 days
- ★ India, thus becomes the 4th country in the world after USA, Russia and China to send humans into space

◆ "Quintero One" - World's First Full-Scale Hyperloop Passenger Capsule Unveiled

- ★ It was developed by the US-based, Hyperloop Transportation Technologies or Hyperloop TT
- ★ It is a 32-metre, 5 tonne capsule that has 72 sensors, 75,000 rivets and 7,200 square metres of fibre
- ★ It is made out of a special 'dual-layer' smart composite material called "Vibranium"
- ★ It can move at speeds of more than 750 miles (1,200 kilometers) per hour and has a capacity to hold 30 to 40 passengers at a time
- ★ It will be operational in 2019
- ★ HyperloopTT would also build the first Hyperloop system in China in the Guizhou province

India's Association with Hyperloop:-

- ★ In May 2018, Andhra Pradesh signed MoU with Hyperloop TT to set up the Hyperloop transportation system connecting Anantapur, Amaravati, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam (700 to 800 kms)
- ★ Maharashtra government - had signed a pact with the Richard Branson-led, Virgin Group to build the Mumbai-Pune Hyperloop

◆ United States Scientists - have developed World's first Bio-electric medicine

- ★ It is an implantable, biodegradable wireless device which speeds up nerve regeneration and improves healing of damaged nerve
- ★ It operates for about two weeks before naturally absorbing into the body
- ★ It has the thickness of a sheet of paper

- ★ It is powered and controlled wirelessly by a transmitter outside the body
 - ★ It has been successfully tested in rats and yet to be tested on humans
- ◆ **Daksh - A Remotely Operated Vehicle, designed and developed by the DRDO - was inducted in 'Pune Police' on an experimental basis to help in detection and disposal of bombs**
- ★ The vehicle has been developed at the DRDO's Research and Development Establishment (Engineers), Pune
 - ★ It is capable of climbing stairs, towing a suspected vehicle away from a crowded area and break the windshield to handle likely car bombs
- ◆ **Roudram - a new App designed by the student 'Sudha Reddy' of Porur has been launched by the Actor, Kamal Hassan at Chennai's Sri Sairam Engineering College**
- ★ The new App aims at giving assistance to women in times of emergency
 - ★ In times of emergency, the power button of the phone needs to be pressed thrice
 - ★ Then immediately, the emergency contacts, the call centre of the App and the nearby police station will be alerted via 'Net and SMS'
- ◆ **ISRO - has successfully tested 'Vikram', the lander on Chandrayaan ~ 2**
- ★ The **Lander Actuator Performance Test (LAPT)** was performed on the scaled down version of Vikram for a soft and safe lunar landing
 - ★ The tests were carried out in the ISRO propulsion complex in **Mahendra giri, Tamil nadu**
- ◆ **China - to launch its own 'Artificial Moon' by 2020**
- ★ The move aims to replace street lamps and lower electricity costs in its urban areas
 - ★ In China's '**Chengdu**' province, "**Illumination satellites**" are developed - that will shine like a real moon, but eight times brighter
 - ★ These satellites are developed by '**Tian Fu New Area Science Society**' in association with other universities such as **Harbin Institute of Technology** and **China Aerospace Science and Industry Corp**

- ★ These satellites or '**Artificial moon**' will be launched from '**Xichang Satellite Launch Center**' in Sichuan province of Chengdu
- ★ 3 more artificial moons will be launched in 2022, if the experimental trial becomes a success
- ★ Earlier, in 1990 s, Russia used giant mirrors to reflect light from space in an experimental project called '**Znamya**' (**Banner**)
- ★ China also plans to explore the dark sides of moon through its '**Chang'e-4**' lunar probe.

◆ **Physicists from Belarus - discovers new drug 'Bed aquiline' to treat drug-resistant Tuberculosis**

- ★ The trials of the drug has delivered a success rate of **80%** and is hailed as the '**Game changer**' in the treatment of TB

SCHEMES

◆ **Andhra Pradesh - 'Mukhyamantri Yuva Nestham' scheme launched in Amaravati, Capital city of the State on Oct 2, 2018 by the CM, N Chandrababu Naidu**

- ★ According to the scheme, an amount of **Rs. 1000** will be given as monthly **unemployment allowance** to eligible jobless youth of the state
- ★ It would also provide skill training to **10 lakh youth** and **260** training partners have been appointed for this purpose
- ★ The training partners are from various countries including Singapore, UK and Germany

◆ **Odisha - launches 'Nirman Kusuma' scheme - to provide financial assistance to the children of the construction workers for their education in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and polytechnics in the state**

◆ **Karnataka - launches 'Unnati' scheme - to identify and promote entrepreneurs from SC/ST background**

- ★ Unnati, the Rs 20 crore funded scheme, intends to create end-to-end support infrastructure for startups and entrepreneurs from the marginalised backgrounds

- ★ The scheme is open to all the startups that are under four years
- ◆ **West Bengal - launches a new scheme, 'Khadya Sathi' - on the occasion of World food day**
- ★ The scheme intends to ensure food security to more than **8.5 crore** people of the state

REPORTS

- ◆ **1st Human Capital Index - released by World Bank in Bali, Indonesia as part of 'World Development Report 2019'**
- ★ The index ranks 157 countries based on their education and health outcomes on the Productivity
- ★ India is ranked at 115 position in the index with its score of 0.44 on a scale of '0 to 1'
- ★ Singapore is on top of the rankings with a score of 0.88

STATUE OF UNITY

- ◆ **Prime Minister, Narendra Modi - unveils World's tallest Statue 'Statue of Unity' at Kevadia in Narmada district, Gujarat**
- ★ The 182 metres bronze statue is dedicated to India's first Deputy Prime minister and 'Iron Man of India', Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
- ★ It is constructed on a river island called 'Sadhu Bet' on the Narmada River
- ★ The statue was constructed by Larsen & Toubro Ltd at a cost of Rs 2,989 crore within four years
- ★ It was dedicated to the nation on the occasion of 143th birth anniversary of Sardar Patel
- ★ 2 Tamil Nadu Ministers, Kadambur Raju and K Pandiarajan, represented the Government and attended the event
- ★ PM Modi had laid the foundation stone of the project on October 31, 2013 when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat

PERSONALITIES

- ◆ **Tracey Crouch, World's first Minister for loneliness - is set to launch her first 'Anti-loneliness strategy'**
- ★ She was appointed by the UK government in 2018 as it found that the young people can be affected by loneliness more than the elderly

- ◆ **Na. Muthuswamy, Theatre artist and Playwright (82 years)**
- ★ He founded the famous theatre group '**Koothu-p-pattarai**' in 1977
- ★ He gained prominence in 1969 with the play '**Kalam Kalamaga**', which was regarded as one of very first modern plays in Tamil
- ★ Between 2000 and 2007, Koothu-p-pattarai was identified by UNESCO as one among the five learning centres for theatre
- ★ Muthuswamy studied Theru-k-Koothu for about eight years
- ★ Koothu-p-pattarai has over 60 major Tamil theatrical productions to its credit like '**England**', '**Appavum Pillaiyum**', '**Six Characters In Search Of An Author**' and '**Macbeth**' among others
- ★ In the Tamil Film industry, he is known for training prominent actors like Vijay Sethupathi, Vimal, Pasupathi, Kalairani etc.,
- ★ He was awarded the "**Sangeet Natak Akademi**" award in 1999 and the **Padma Shri** in 2012

NATIONAL

- ◆ **All India Council for Technical Education - to establish the country's 1st 'AICTE Training and Learning (ATAL) Academy' in Jaipur, Rajasthan**
- ★ Apart from this, Two more ATAL Academies will also come up at **Thiruvananthapuram (Kerala), Guwahati (Assam) and Baroda (Gujarat)** by next year
- ★ These academies will train Faculties with an upgraded teaching method consisting of a 8-module course for a period of 5 months
- ★ The training will be '**Mandatory**' for new teachers from 2019 and for the promotions of the existing teachers
- ★ AICTE - was established in the year 1945 with its Headquarters in New Delhi

- ★ It comes under the Department of **Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resources Development**
- ◆ **Government - launches the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi**
- ★ The celebrations mark the beginning of the final year of **Swachh Bharat Mission**, which will culminate on Oct 2, 2019, the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

Past Events

- ★ Earlier, PM Narendra Modi launched the countrywide campaign - “**Swachhata hi Seva 2018**” on September 15, 2018 which culminated with ‘**Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention**’ that was held from September 29 to October 2, 2018
- ★ PM had launched the **Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)** on October 2, 2014 with an aim to build a **Clean and Open Defecation Free (ODF) India** by October 2, 2019
- ★ President Ram Nath Kovind launched the logo and the web portal for commemoration of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on September 18, 2018
- ★ The web portal - ‘**<http://gandhi.gov.in>**’
- ◆ Prime Minister - inaugurates the first Assembly of International Solar Alliance at Vigyan Bhawan
- ★ The inauguration of the **2nd IORA Renewable Energy Ministerial Meeting** and the **2nd Global RE-Invest (Renewable Energy Investors’ Meet and Expo)** were also done simultaneously
- ★ The Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr Antonio Guterres, was present on the occasion
- ★ During the inauguration, the PM stressed that **ISA will replace OPEC** in future as the Principal supplier of Energy
- ★ The International Solar Alliance was launched jointly by **Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi** and **French President Francois Hollande** on the first day of the **COP-21 summit at Paris in 2015**

- ◆ Prime Minister - addressed the concluding session of 'Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention' in New Delhi
- ★ The 4-day International conference hosted the sanitation ministers of various countries around the world
- ★ The Prime Minister visited a '**Digital Exhibition**', along with the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Antonio Guterres
- ★ The dignitaries also launched commemorative **postage stamps** on Mahatma Gandhi, and a medley CD based on Mahatma Gandhi's favourite hymn - "**Vaishnav Jana To**"

- ◆ Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) - launches a National Level Entrepreneurship Awareness Campaign, 'Udyam Abhilasha' in 115 Aspirational Districts identified by NITI Aayog across 28 States
- ★ The campaign would provide training to around 800 persons who will further impart entrepreneurship training to the aspiring youths in the state
- ★ The initiative is done on the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

- ◆ Vice President, M Venkaiah Naidu - inaugurated the world's largest dome at the **Maharashtra Institute of Technology's 'World Peace University'** campus at Loni Kalbhor
- ★ It was inaugurated to commemorate the **150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi**
- ★ The '**World Peace Monument**' dome took nearly 13 years to be built
- ★ The monument is of 160 ft. in diameter and 263 ft tall and is larger in area than the dome at St. Peter's Basilica in Vatican City
- ★ The dome is built atop the **MIT World Peace Library** and the **World Peace Prayer Hall**, which are named after the 13th century poet-saint and philosopher Dnyaneshwar, a pivotal figure of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra

- ◆ **Indian Railways** - has launched a new **Project 'UTKRISHT'** -to upgrade **140** rakes of Mail/Express trains in the first phase
- ★ The project includes

- Installing 'Swachh Rail Toilet',
- Fitting of energy-efficient LED lights
- Providing Braille signage & night glow stickers
- Fitting LED panel photo frame in first AC coaches, new types of bottle holders and big size mirrors
- Equipping with new types of fire extinguishers
- ★ The first train to have been revamped - 12311/12312 '**Howrah-Kalka Mail**' of **Eastern Railway** which will be coloured in '**beige and maroon**'

- ◆ **IIT - Kharagpur** - was named the 'National coordinating institute' of the '**Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration**' (SPARC) under the '**Ministry of Human Resource Development**'

SPARC Scheme

- ★ It aims to improve the research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by promoting academic and research collaboration between Indian and foreign institutions
- ★ **28** foreign countries have been targeted in the first phase of the scheme
- ★ Launch - 2018
- ★ Budget - Rs 418 crore for 2018-20

- ◆ **4th Indian International Science Festival (IISF) - begins in Lucknow on Oct 5, 2018**
- ★ Theme - '**Science For Transformation**'
- ★ Organised by - Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Earth Sciences in association with Vijnana Bharati

History

- **1st IISF** - at New Delhi in December 4th, 2015
- In the inaugural event, '**VIBHA**', the '**Largest Practical Science Lesson**' by 2000 students of Delhi schools was conducted, which entered into the '**Guinness Book World Records**'

- **2nd IISF** - at **CSIR-National Physical Laboratory**, New Delhi in December 7th, 2016
- **3rd IISF** - at **IIT, Madras** in **October 13-16, 2017**

◆ **Indian Air Force (IAF) - launches a new mobile health app 'MedWatch'**

- ★ It will provide information about health issues, first aid and nutritional topics to Air force personnel and to the General public
- ★ It was launched on October 8th on the occasion of 85th anniversary of IAF
- ★ It is the first-of-its-kind mobile health app developed by any of the three armed forces
- ★ It's available for download on the website - *www.apps.mgov.gov.in*

◆ **Min of External Affairs - launches 'India for Humanity' initiative** - on the occasion of Mahatma Gandhi's 150th birth anniversary

- ★ The initiative will feature year-long series of artificial limb fitment camps in various countries
- ★ For this initiative, MEA has collaborated with renowned charitable organization, Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS)
- ★ The aim of this initiative is to rehabilitate differently-abled persons around the world and make them as productive members of the society
- ★ Initially, the camps will be held in **12** countries through their Missions with financial support of Indian government

BMVSS -

- ★ Established - 1975 by Dr Mehta
- ★ It is better known by its trademark limb 'Jaipur Foot'
- ★ It has served over 1.73 million amputees with artificial limbs, crutches, calipers, wheel chairs etc.,

◆ **Prime Minister - unveils 64-foot-tall statue of Peasant leader 'Chhotu Ram' at his native village Sampala in Rohtak, Haryana**

- ★ The statue has been sculpted by renowned sculptor and Padma Bhushan-recipient, Ram Vanji Sutar

Sir Chhotu Ram (1881-1945)

- ★ He is regarded as the Messiah of Peasants and fought for farmers rights during the British rule
- ★ He was instrumental in getting the pro-farmers law enacted by the British
- ★ For this feat, he was Knighted (given the title of Sir) in the year 1937
- ★ He was the co-founder of National Unionist Party (Zamindara League) which ruled United Punjab Province in pre Independent India
- ★ He was popularly known as Deen Bandhu (in Urdu as 'Rahbare Azam', which translates as Messiah of poor)

◆ **Country's 1st Biofuel plant - to be set up at Bargarh district of Odisha**

- ★ The proposed 58-acre Second Generation (2G) Ethanol Bio-refinery plant will be set up in Baulsingha village by **Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL)**
- ★ **Proposed Budget - Rs 1000 crore**
- ★ **Commercial production - By 2020**
- ★ **Capacity - 3 crore litre/year of fuel grade Ethanol**
- ★ It will utilise about two lakh tonne of rice straw annually
- ★ It is one among **12** refineries planned in **11 States** in the country
- ★ The National Bio Fuel Policy 2018 - aims to blend 20% of Ethanol to Petrol by the year 2030, from the current levels of 3% to 4%

◆ **2 new cyclones have formed on either side of the Southern Peninsula in India**

- ★ The cyclone in the Arabian sea is named as 'Luban' (name given by Oman) - heading towards Oman
- ★ The cyclone in the Bay of Bengal is named as 'Titli' (name given by Pakistan) - heading towards Odisha

◆ **Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology - unveils draft "National Policy on Electronics 2018" (NPE 2018) for 'Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) Sector' of India**

Highlights

- ★ To create \$400 billion Electronics manufacturing industry by 2025

- ★ To double the target of mobile phone production from 500 million units in 2019 to 1 billion by 2025 (Valued at \$190 billion)
 - ★ It also proposes to set up 20 greenfield and 3 brownfield Electronic manufacturing cluster projects, at an outlay of Rs 3,898 crore
 - ★ Earlier, the first National Policy on Electronics (NPE) was rolled out in 2012
- ◆ **Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) - launches 'Ro-Ro' service from Neamati to Manjuli Island in Assam**
- ★ The service cuts down a road route of 423 km to just 12.7 km through the Brahmaputra River
 - ★ For this, IWAI has procured new vessel, MV Bhupen Hazarika
 - ★ Ro-Ro service - is used to transport wheeled cargo like cars, trucks, trailers etc., by 'rolling in and rolling out' on their own wheels

IWAI

- ★ It is a nodal statutory body that develops and regulates inland waterways for shipping and navigation
 - ★ Established - 1986
 - ★ Headquarters - Noida, Uttar Pradesh
- ◆ **Min of Women and Child Development - to set up a four member committee to examine all the #MeToo cases**
- ★ The four-member committee will comprise senior judicial and legal persons
 - ★ The #MeToo campaign first began as a hash tag on Twitter in 2017, when Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein was accused
- ◆ **Government - lays foundation stone for 'Prime Ministers Museum' at Teen Murti Estate, New Delhi**
- ★ Union Minister for Culture, Dr. Mahesh and Minister for Housing and Urban Affairs, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri laid the Foundation stone
 - ★ Nehru Memorial Museum and Library is already present inside the Teen Murti Estate, the official residence of India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru

- ★ The proposed Museum will be constructed at a cost of Rs. 271 crore
- ★ The Teen Murti House was designed by Robert Tor Russel and built in 1929-30 as part of Edwin Lutyens' imperial capital

★ **Saubhagya scheme**

- Launch - September 25, 2017 to mark the birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya.
- Budget - Rs 16320-Crore
- Target - 100% household electrification in the country by March 31, 2019
- Nodal Agency for implementation - The Rural Electrification Corporation Limited

◆ **Government - launches 'Swasth Bharath Yatra', a national campaign on the occasion of World Food Day on October 16, 2018**

- ★ The campaign, led by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), highlights the importance of eating safe food and stay healthy
- ★ Under it, a pan-India 'cycle rally' is organized to propagate a powerful message 'Eat Right India'
- ★ In this rally, about 7,500 cyclists will participate in over 18,000 km travelling across six tracks through almost every state and UT over a period of 100 days
- ★ The cyclathon will end in New Delhi on January 27, 2019

◆ **Government - signs MoU with Lady Irwin College - for establishing 'ROSHNI'-Centre of Women Collectives-led social action**

- ★ The MoU was signed by 'The Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihood Mission' (DAY-NRLM) of the Ministry of Rural Development
- ★ Roshni is technically and financially supported by the UNICEF India
- ★ It will be located in the college's Department of Development Communication
- ★ It is dedicated to spread awareness among women on aspects of health and nutrition

- ★ DAY-NRLM aims to reach out to 8-10 crore rural poor household in a time bound manner till they come out of Poverty
- ★ Roshni aims to work with women collectives for social action on Food, Health, Nutrition and WASH interventions through self-help groups
- ★ It will learn from Swabhimaan, a collaborative initiative of DAY- NRLM and UNICEF India, launched in 2016
- ★ Swabhimaan was started in 5 poorest DAY-NRLM resource blocks in 4 districts of 3 Indian states Bihar, Chhattisgarh and Odisha, catering to women's health and nutrition
- ★ The 'Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Rural Livelihood Mission' was launched as the Aajeevika - National Rural Livelihoods Mission (NRLM) in 2011

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana

- ★ '**Jan Aushadhi**' is a project launched by the Union Government in 2008 to provide quality medicines at affordable prices for all
 - ★ The first '**Jan Aushadhi Medical Store**' was opened on November 25, 2008 at Amritsar in Punjab
 - ★ Currently, there are more than 4200 PMBJP Kendra functional in 34 states and union territories across India
 - ★ As a result, over 700 medicines and 154 surgical and consumables are available in the basket for sale
- ◆ **CSIR - develops 'Oneer™', a new "Drinking Water Disinfection System"**
- ★ The **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research - Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (CSIR-IITR)** of Lucknow has developed the new technology and transferred it to the company, '**Bluebird Water Purifiers**'
 - ★ The technology undertakes continuous treatment of water and eliminates all disease causing pathogens
 - ★ It provides access to safe and clean drinking water at a cost of just 2 paise per litre
 - ★ It is of 450 LPH capacity which can be scaled up to 5000 to 1 lakh litre per day and is also maintenance and membrane free

- ★ It can also be solar powered and in line with the Government's 'Make in India' initiative
- ◆ **Train 18 - India's first Self-propelled, Engine-less train to be introduced by Indian Railways**
 - ★ It is all set to replace another revolutionary 'Shatabdi Express' trains in future, which were launched in 1988
 - ★ The first train will run between **Delhi and Bhopal** replacing the existing Shatabdi running between the cities
 - ★ Relying on self-propulsion units, instead of locomotives, Train 18 will be able to attain speeds of **160 kmph**
 - ★ The first prototype of Train 18 has cost around Rs 5-6 crore per coach, which is expected to reduce further and it is only 50% of the cost of similar imported coach
 - ★ It is a 16 coach all air-conditioned AC chair car with aircraft-like comforts for the passengers
 - ★ The major advantages of train 18 are -
 - Less costlier
 - Less Maintenance due to its 3-phase propulsion system and new generation bogies
 - Greener way of travelling as it does not have locomotives
 - Less weight as it has neither locomotives nor power cars
 - Less energy required due to less weight
 - Less travel time (atleast 15% reduction in time with a standard speed of 130 kmph as in Shatabdi due to its higher acceleration)
- ◆ **India's highest tricolor flag - unfurled at the iconic Haj House in Mumbai by Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, Minister for Minority Affairs**
- ◆ **North Central Railways - launches 2 Mobile Apps 'NCR RASTA (Railway assets Summarised Tracking Application) and Yatri RASTA (Railway Approach to Station Tracking Application) - for its employees and passengers respectively**

- ★ NCR RASTA - will be helpful for railway staffs to locate its assets and reach them using Google Navigation, in case of any emergency
- ★ Yatri RASTA - will be helpful for General public to locate the railway stations easily
- ★ **North Central Railways**
 - It is one of the 17 railway zones in the country
 - It is also called as 'Workhorse of Indian Railways' and 'Heartbeat of Indian Railways'
 - Headquarters - Allahabad
 - Divisions - Allahabad, Jhansi and Agra
 - Largest station - Kanpur
- ◆ **Four Himalayan Peaks near Gangotri Glacier - named after the former PM, Atal Bihari Vajpayee**
 - ★ The peaks have been named **Atal-1, 2, 3 and 4**
 - ★ They are located at a height of 6,557, 6,566, 6,160 and 6,100 metres on the right flank of Gangotri glacier
 - ★ The climbers team led by **Colonel Bisht** recently scaled the newly named peaks and hoisted Indian tricolor on each of them
 - ★ **Colonel Amit Bisht** is the principal of Nehru Institute of Mountaineering
 - ★ The former Prime minister, A B Vajpayee, passed away in New Delhi on August 16, 2018
- ◆ **Prime Minister - dedicates 'National Police Memorial' to the Nation in New Delhi - on the occasion of 'Police Commemoration Day 2018'**
 - ★ It has been built in recognition of the supreme sacrifice made by police personnel since independence
 - ★ Every year, **21 October** is observed as the **Police Commemoration Day** in memory of the **10 policemen killed** in an ambush by **Chinese** troops in **1959** in **Ladakh's Hot Spring** area
 - ★ Since Independence of the country, 34,844 police personnel have been martyred, with 424 losing their lives this year alone
 - ★ The Wall of Valour has the names of all 34,844 policemen engraved on granite

- ★ The memorial has been erected on 6.12 acres of land in **Chanakyapuri**, at the northern end of **Shanti Path**
- ★ The central sculpture of the memorial is a 30 feet monolith made of a single piece of granite, weighing 238 tonnes
- ◆ **The Prime Minister - also inaugurated a 'Police Museum'** depicting History, Uniforms, Artifacts and gear of central and state reserve police forces
- ★ The museum is a first of its kind, and is located below the police memorial as an underground facility
- ◆ Prime Minister - announces a 'National Award' in the name of 'Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose' - for those involved in Disaster relief operations
- ★ It was announced on the occasion of **75th anniversary** of Bose's formation of **Azad Hind Government**, India's first independent government on October 21, 1943
- ★ The award will be announced every year on January 23rd on Netaji's birthday
- ★ The award will help to recognize exemplary services rendered by **National Disaster Response Force (NDRF)** and **State Disaster Response Force (SDRF)** personnel in rescue and relief works during any disaster
- ◆ **Angriya - India's 1st ever Passenger Cruise Ship service - launched between Mumbai and Goa**
- ★ Launch by - **Nitin Gadkari, Minister of Shipping, Ports and Road Transport**
- ★ It is a joint venture between **Mumbai Port Trust** and **Angriya Sea Eagle Pvt Ltd**
- ★ It will make four trips a week between Mumbai and Goa with no halts in between
- ★ The luxury ship has 104 rooms and can accommodate 399 passengers at a time with 67 crew members
- ★ The tickets of the cruise are priced between Rs 7,000 and Rs 12,000
- ★ The ship has been **built in Japan** and is 131 meter long and 120 metre-wide

- ★ It has been named after the first **Maratha Navy Admiral, Kanhoji Angre** and the great '**Angria bank coral reef**' near Vijaydurg, Maharashtra
- ★ Mumbai, Chennai and Kochi are the 3 Indian cities that are looking at developing cruise lining facilities

- ◆ e-Mitra Mobile App - has been launched to complement the Aspirational District Programme of the Government
- ★ The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has identified 117 Aspirational Districts for transformation
- ★ The '**Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child and Adolescent health**' (RMNCH+A) program is an important pillar to be transformed under the '**Aspirational Districts Programme**'
- ★ The e-Mitra app is an mobile integrated Toolkit for **RMNCH+A** statistics from different sources

- ◆ **Prime Minister - to launch "Main Nahin Hum" Portal and App on October 24, 2018**
- ★ The portal, which works on the theme "**Self 4 Society**", will enable IT professionals and organizations to put their efforts towards social causes in a single platform

- ◆ **Indian Railways - to launch its 'UTS Mobile App' nationwide for buying 'Unreserved Tickets Online' from 1st November, 2018**
- ★ The Scheme was launched in Mumbai in 2014 and later expanded to Delhi-Palwal and Chennai city
- ★ As of now, the Railways have already implemented the scheme in 15 of its zones with the **North East Frontier Railway** and **West Central Railway** being the remaining two zones.
- ★ UTS mobile app can be used to book train tickets and to buy platform tickets and monthly passes

- ◆ **Train 18 - India's first 'Engineless' train - set for trials on October 29, 2018**
- ★ After the initial trials, the train will undergo further testing with '**Research Design and Standards Organisation**'

- ★ The 16 coach train has a Stainless steel body with the driver cabin at both the ends
- ★ The fully air-conditioned train will be tested at a speed of **180 km per hour**
- ★ It was developed by the Chennai-based '**Integral Coach Factory**' (ICF) within a period of just 18 months at a budget of Rs 100 crore
- ★ It will replace the **Shatabdi Express**, which was launched in 1988

◆ **Ministry of HRD - launches the web portal of 'SPARC' scheme**

- ★ **SPARC - "Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)"**
- ★ The scheme aims to improve the research ecosystem of the higher educational institutions by means of collaborations with other renowned global institutions
- ★ The scheme was approved by the Indian Government in August 2018 at a total cost of Rs 418 crore
- ★ It will be implemented up to March 31, 2020
- ★ Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur has been chosen as the National Coordinating Institute to implement the programme
- ★ Under the scheme, 600 joint research proposals will be awarded for 2 years
- ★ All Indian Institutions ranked in the overall top-100 or category-wise top-100 in the India Rankings (NIRF) are eligible to apply

◆ **Indian Railways - to build World's highest Railway line linking New Delhi and Ladakh running along the Indo - China border**

- ★ The proposed **Bilaspur-Manali-Leh Line** would become the world's highest railway line upon completion
- ★ The **465 km railway** line would be constructed at a cost of Rs 83,360 crore
- ★ The proposed railway line will be the world's highest at **5,360 metres above mean sea level**

★ Keylong station along the route will be constructed inside a tunnel at the height of 3000 metres which is a first in India

◆ **The new Web portal of 'IMPRESS' scheme - launched by Prakash Javdekar, Minister for HRD**

- ★ IMPRESS - "Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences"
- ★ It is launched at a total cost of **Rs.414 Cr** up to 31.3.2021
- ★ Under the Scheme, **1500** research projects will be awarded for a period of 2 years
- ★ **Indian Council of Social Science and Research (ICSSR)** will be the project implementing agency

◆ **Mammals of India - a Citizen-Science repository of Indian mammals - launched in September 2018**

- ★ The website of the repository is 'www.mammalsofindia.org'
- ★ It is an online, peer-reviewed, accessible-to-all portal
- ★ It was developed by scientists from the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) in Bangalore
- ★ As on date, 768 images of 161 species of mammals, were uploaded
- ★ It will have individual species pages for all Indian mammals with specific information

◆ **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) labs - have developed 'Green' crackers - as announced by Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, Environment, Forest & Climate Change**

- ★ They are named as -
 - **SWAS - safe water releaser**
 - **SAFAL - safe minimal aluminium**
 - **STAR - safe thermite cracker**
- ★ He also said that for the first time in India, an Emission testing Facility has been established at CSIR-NEERI
- ★ The new crackers have been developed by scientists of two national labs –
- ★ Central Electrochemical Research Institute (CECRI) in Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu

- ★ National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) in Nagpur
- ★ Field trials were conducted at Sivakasi, Tamil Nadu
- ★ The new crackers have less noise, less Particulate emissions, less smoke and also cheaper

INTERNATIONAL

- ◆ **Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations - announced to celebrate 2023 as 'International Year of Millets' - agreeing to the request of India**
 - ★ The year now falls within the UN 'Decade of Action on Nutrition 2016-2025'
 - ★ India is celebrating the year 2018 as the 'National Year of Millets'
- ◆ **World's longest sea bridge between China and Hong kong - to open for public on October 24, 2018**
 - ★ The bridge called 'Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge' is 55 km long and is situated in the Ling ding yang waters of the Pearl River Estuary
 - ★ The construction of this bridge started in December 2009
 - ★ It will reduce travel time between Hong Kong and Zhuhai, in China, from 3 hours to 30 minutes
- ◆ **World's largest amphibious Plane 'Kunlong' built by China - completes maiden test flight**
 - ★ The aircraft 'AG600' was developed by the state-owned aircraft firm 'Aviation Industry Corporation of China'
 - ★ It took off from the Zhanghe Reservoir and landed on the water in Hubei province's Jingmen
 - ★ It will be mainly used for maritime rescue, fighting forest fires and marine monitoring
- ◆ **China - successfully tests World's largest unmanned transport Drone 'Feihong-98' (FH-98)**

- ★ It was developed by the 'China Academy of Aerospace Electronics Technology'

INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

◆ 19th India-Russia Annual Bilateral Summit

- ★ India - signed a \$5.43 billion (Rs 40,000 crore) deal - to procure 5 advanced 'S-400 Triumph' missile systems from Russia
- ★ The system is expected to be delivered by 2020
- ★ Russian President Vladimir Putin is on a two-day visit to India
- ★ Apart from S-400 missile system deal, India and Russia exchanged 8 agreements with each other for collaboration in the areas of Foreign affairs, Economic development, Railways, Transport, Space, Nuclear field, MSME sector and Fertilisers
- ★ India-Russia cooperation is based on the 1971 Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation between the countries
- ★ **S - 400 Triumph**
 - It is the upgradation of S-300 missile systems
 - It is a surface-to-air missile system that can target enemies' aircraft in the sky from the ground surface
 - It is Russia's most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence system
 - It has an operational range of 380 km
 - The S-400 missile system was manufactured by 'Almaz-Antey' and has been in service in Russia since 2007

DEFENCE

- ◆ 6th edition of IBSAMAR - a joint Multi-National Maritime Exercise between the Indian, Brazilian and South African Navies - is being held at Simons Town, South Africa
- ★ The last edition of IBSAMAR (IBSAMAR V) was conducted off Goa, from 19th to 26th, February 2016

◆ **Sahyog-Hop Tac 2018 - A joint Naval exercise between India & Vietnam kicks off the Chennai Coast on Oct 4, 2018**

- ★ The One-day exercise will see three ships, one helicopter and one Dornier plane from the Indian Coast Guard and the visiting ship of the Vietnam Coast Guard, CBS 8001
- ★ Sagar Manjusha of the National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT) will also participate in the exercise

◆ **India - launches 'Operation Samudra Maitri' in Central Sulawesi Province of the Republic of Indonesia - to help victims of earthquake and tsunami in Indonesia**

- ★ India has sent two IAF Aircrafts, C-130J and C-17 along with medical personnel and relief material
- ★ Also, 3 Indian Naval Ships - INS Tir, INS Sujatha and INS Shardul are set for sail to carry out humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) operations

◆ **Indian Air force - successfully conducts the flight trials of 'Astra' - Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile - from September 26 to October 3, 2018 at Integrated Test Range (ITR), Balasore, Odisha**

- ★ These final development trial tests make the missile ready for induction in service in 2019
- ★ Astra is developed by DRDO as a 'Single stage Solid fuelled' Missile
- ★ It weighs 154 kg and has a payload of 15 kg conventional explosives
- ★ It can strike both short range (up to 20km) and long range (up to 80 km) targets
- ★ It has various electronic counter-measure systems making it hard to detect
- ★ It has a maximum speed of Mach 4 (four times speed of sound)

◆ **Sahyog HOP TAC-2018 - First India-Vietnam joint Coast Guard exercise - held in Bay of Bengal off Chennai Coast**

★ **Indian Participation**

- Coast Guard ships Shaurya, Arnvesh
- In-receptor boat C-431
- Dornier aircraft and Chetak helicopter

- Sagar Manjusa vessel of National Institute of Ocean Technology (NIOT)

◆ **JIMEX 18 - The 3rd edition of Japan-India Maritime Exercise commences at Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh**

- ★ It aims to improve the best practices between the Navies of two countries
- ★ Duration - Oct 7 to 15, 2018 (8 days) - 4 days each of Harbour phase and Sea phase
- ★ Indian representation
 - INS Satpura, multipurpose stealth frigate
 - INS Kadmatt, Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette & Missile Corvette
 - INS Shakti, fleet tanker
 - P8I long range maritime patrol aircraft
 - One submarine
 - Integral helicopters
- ★ The Japanese fleet includes JMSDF Ships Kaga, an Izumo Class Helicopter Destroyer and Inazuma, a Guided Missile Destroyer
- ★ JIMEX - Inaugurated in Jan 2012 off the Japanese coast
- ★ The last (second) edition of JIMEX was conducted in Dec 2013 off Chennai coast, India

◆ **IND-INDO CORPAT - 32nd Edition of Coordinated Patrol between India & Indonesia - starts in Belawan, Indonesia from October 11 to 27, 2018**

- ★ During the exercise, Ships and aircraft from both countries will undertake patrolling on respective sides of 236 nautical miles long International Maritime boundary line
- ★ The patrolling will be conducted in 3 phases, followed by closing ceremony at Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Island
- ★ The patrolling exercise takes place since 2002 to keep Indian Ocean region 'safe and secure'

Indian participation

- ★ Indian Naval Ship (INS) Kulish, a Kora class missile corvette

- ★ Dornier, Naval maritime patrol aircraft from Andaman and Nicobar command
- ◆ **Indian Navy - inducts its first 'Deep Submergence Rescue Vessel' (DSRV) at its base in Mumbai**
 - ★ The second DSRV would be added to its base in Vishakhapatnam by 2019
 - ★ The DSRV can be deployed at short notice for providing assistance to submarines in distress
 - ★ It is capable of rescuing 24 people at depths of up to 600m
 - ★ The countries that currently have DSRVs in their naval fleet include Singapore, United States, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, UK, Sweden and Australia
- ◆ **1st India-US Tri services drill - to take place in 2019 in India**
 - ★ US will be the 2nd country after Russia with whom India undertakes Tri services exercise
 - ★ The announcement of this exercise was formally made after the first '2+2' dialogue held in Sep 2018 in New Delhi

India and US exercises

- Military - Yudh Abhyas - Last conducted in Sep 2018
- Air Force - Cope India - Last conducted in 2009
- Navy - Malabar (along with Japan) - Last conducted in June 2018
- ◆ **7th edition of Hand-in-Hand (HIH) combat military drill - between India and China - to resume in December in the Chengdu region of China**
 - ★ The annual exercise was cancelled after the Doklam stand-off in 2017
- ◆ **Dharma Guardian - The first joint military exercise between India and Japan - to be held at the Army's Counter-Insurgency Warfare School at Vairengte (Mizoram) from November 1 to 14, 2018**
 - ★ 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

◆ **Combat Drills in November/December 2018**

- ★ **Dharma Guardian** - between India and Japan military in Mizoram from Nov 1 to 14 - will be the first-ever joint land military exercise between the two countries
- ★ **Indra** - a Mechanised infantry exercise between India and Russia at Babina from November 16 to 29
- ★ **Vajra Prahar** - Combat drills between the Special Forces of India and US at the Mahajan field firing ranges from November 19 to December 2
- ★ **Hand-in-Hand** - Army drill between India and China to resume after the Doklam stand-off in 2017 (Last held in 2016 at Pune)

◆ **Cope India** - a trilateral air exercise to be jointly conducted by India, US and Japan

- ★ It was a bilateral air exercise between India and United States so far
- ★ It will be hosted by the Indian Air Force in December
- ★ The planning conference to finalize the modalities will be held in Kalaikunda, West Bengal
- ★ The three countries already are engaged in trilateral naval war games under the name '**Malabar Naval Exercise**'
- ★ The first '**Cope India**' exercise was conducted at IAF air force station in Gwalior from February 2004
- ★ The exercise was repeated in 2005, 2006, and 2009

◆ **Indian Army** - to undertake a challenging expedition called 'Round the Indian Peninsula'

- ★ It is a wind sailing expedition from Haldia on the east coast up to Porbandar on the west
- ★ It is organised by EME Sailing Association, Secunderabad
- ★ It intends to spread awareness about Ocean pollution by collecting samples of polluted water from seas
- ★ It is led by Major Alok Kumar Yadav with an expedition team of about 50 sailors
- ★ The expedition has been undertaken for the first time in an Ocean-going '**Bavaria Class**' 44-feet Sail Yacht

- ★ The team would touch all major parts along the Indian coast line including Vishakhapatnam, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Mangaluru, Goa, and Porbandar
- ★ It is expected to be completed in about 45 days

COURT VERDICT

◆ **Supreme Court - allows the bursting of Crackers during all the festivals with a set of Stringent conditions**

- ★ The SC bench comprising Justices AK Sikri and Ashok Bhushan permitted the sale of green and low emission crackers alone in the country

Highlights of the Verdict

- ★ Firecrackers with reduced emission and decibel levels (as per its July 2005 verdict) only will be permitted during all festivals
- ★ Sale of firecrackers will happen only through licensed vendors
- ★ A ban on the online sale of firecrackers - with due responsibility on the e-commerce portals to adhere the same
- ★ **Time limit fixation -**
 - On Diwali, people will only be allowed to burn crackers between 8 pm and 10 pm
 - The time limit for New Year and Christmas has been set from 11:45 pm to 12:15 am.
- ★ **Central Pollution Control Board -** to monitor air quality 7 days before and 7 days after Diwali.
- ★ In Delhi-NCR region, crackers to be burst only in the designated areas identified by Central Pollution Control Board

◆ **Supreme Court - ruled that there will not be any sale of BS-IV (Bharat Stage-IV) vehicles from April 1, 2020**

- ★ The ruling was made by a three-judge bench headed by Justice Madan B Lokur
- ★ The bench clarified that only **BS-VI** compliant vehicle will be sold in India from April 1, 2020
- ★ Back in 2016, the Government announced the direct transition from BS-IV to BS-VI, skipping past BS-V norms, by April 1, 2020

- ★ The BS-IV norms were in force across the country since April 1, 2017
- ★ **'Bharat Stage'** emission standards were introduced in 2000 as per the recommendations of RA Mashelkar Committee
- ★ Delhi has already made the transition to BS-VI Standards
- ★ Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, NCR and Pune will make the transition from January 1, 2019

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- ◆ **2nd edition of 'Goa Maritime Symposium-2018'** - was inaugurated by Admiral Sunil Lanba, Chief of Naval Staff at INS Mandovi at Goa
 - ★ The symposium aims to promote maritime security in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**
 - ★ **Theme - "Building Stronger Maritime Partnerships in IOR"**
 - ★ On the occasion, "**Naval War College Journal**", an academic collection of papers from various writers on maritime strategy and security was released
 - ★ The inaugural symposium was held in November 2016
- ◆ **12th Asia-Europe Meeting Summit** - begins in Brussels, Belgium on Oct 18, 2018
 - ★ Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu leads the Indian delegation for the two-day summit
 - ★ Theme 2018 - '*Global Partners for Global Challenges*'
 - ★ Participation - **30 European and 21 Asian countries**, besides top representatives of the European Union and Secretary General of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)
 - ★ Topics for discussion - Connectivity, trade and investment, sustainable development, climate change, terrorism, migration, maritime security and cyberspace
 - ★ This will be the first multi-lateral summit the Vice President will be attending after taking office in August 2017
- ◆ **12th ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) and 5th ADMM-Plus - held in Singapore** on October 19th and 20th, 2018

- ★ India was represented by Defence Minister, Nirmala Sitharaman
- ★ This was second time Singapore has chaired ADMM since its establishment in 2006 and first time to chair ADMM-Plus since its establishment in 2010 in Hanoi, Vietnam
- ★ ASEAN - Association of Southeast Asian Nations
 - ★ Member countries (10) - Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Philippines, Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Brunei and Laos
- ◆ **7th Meeting of Education Ministers of SCO nations** - held in Astana, Kazakhstan
 - ★ India was represented by Minister of State (MoS), Human Resource Development, Satyapal Singh
 - ★ SCO - Shanghai Cooperation Organization
 - ★ Founded - June 2001
 - ★ Headquarters - Shanghai, China
 - ★ Founding Members - Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan
 - ★ Newly added Members - India and Pakistan (June 2017)
 - ★ Observer countries - Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia
 - ★ Dialogue partners - Sri Lanka, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Cambodia and Nepal
- ◆ **5th edition of 'Women of India Organic Festival'** - kicks off at Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, New Delhi
 - ★ It is organized by the **Ministry of Women and Child Development** from **26th October to 4th November, 2018**
 - ★ It is the **country's largest Organic festival**
 - ★ It aims to **boost organic culture and promote Women Organic Farmers and Entrepreneurs**
- ◆ **A 4-day international dance festival titled "Udbhav Utsav"**- starts in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh
 - ★ **It was inaugurated by Farhod Arziev, Uzbekistan Ambassador to India**
 - ★ This is the 15th year for this festival, sponsored by the Greenwood group of schools

- ★ Dance troupes from Bulgaria, Turkey and Sri Lanka along with 25 teams from India are participating in the festival
- ◆ **STAPCOR - 2018 - An International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs - begins at Bangaram Island, Union Territory of Lakshadweep**
- ★ The 3-day conference, starting on October 24, was inaugurated by **Dr Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**
- ★ About 150 delegates, both International and National, are participating in the event
- ★ Theme - **“Reef for Life”**
- ★ It has to be recalled that **International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)** has declared year 2018 as **‘International Year of the Reef’**
- ★ Great Barrier Reef, located in Coral Sea, off the coast of Queensland in north-east Australia is largest Coral reef in the world
- ★ The major reef formations in India are restricted to Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kachchh, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands
- ★ Corals are often called **“Rainforests of the sea”**
- ★ They occupy less than 0.1% of world’s ocean area, but provides home for at least 25% of all marine species
- ◆ **6th North East Festival & 15th Indian International Centre Festival - held in New Delhi**
- ★ Theme 2018 - ‘Experiencing the North East’
- ★ The festival is conducted by the North Eastern Council, Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) as part of ‘Destination North East’ series
- ★ It features various activities showcasing the cultural heritage of North East

COMMITTEES

◆ **Government - constitutes a panel of Judges - to look into the legal framework to control sexual harassment at workplaces after the impact of #MeToo campaign**

- ★ In early 2013, a three-member committee headed by former judge J.S. Verma including Justice Leila Seth and senior lawyer Gopal was formed
- ★ The committee had termed Sexual Harassment Bill “unsatisfactory”
- ★ It also said that the bill did not reflect the spirit of the ‘Vishakha guidelines’ framed by the Supreme Court in 1997 for the sexual harassment at the workplace

◆ **The Panel of Governors - submitted its report titled ‘Approach to Agriculture : A Holistic Overview’ - on doubling the farmers income by 2022 - to the President Ram Nath Kovind**

- ★ The committee was headed by **Uttar Pradesh Governor Ram Naik**
- ★ It made **21** major recommendations, including the proposal for setting up a **KRISHAK SHIKAYAR NIVARAN CELL** or farmer’s grievances addressal system in **every** district
- ★ The other Governors in the Committee, appointed by the President, are -
 - Acharya Devvrat, Governor of Himachal Pradesh
 - Ram Naik, Governor of Uttar Pradesh
 - Vajubhai Vala, Governor of Karnataka
 - Anandiben Patel, Governor of Madhya Pradesh

BOOKS AND AUTHORS

- ◆ Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu - releases the autobiography "Enadhu Porattam" of Ma.Po.Si on Oct 12 in Chennai
- ◆ Stephen Hawking's final book "Brief Answers to the Big Questions" - launched by his Children

AWARDS

- ◆ James P. Allison and Tasuku Honjo - conferred 2018 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine - for their discovery of cancer therapy by stimulating the ability of immune system to attack tumour cells
- ★ The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine is one of five Nobel Prizes established in 1895 by Swedish chemist Alfred Nobel, the inventor of dynamite, in his will

First winners

- ★ Male - 1901 - German physiologist, Emil von Behring - for his work on serum therapy and the development of a vaccine against diphtheria
- ★ Female - 1947- Gerty Cori for her role in elucidating the metabolism of glucose.
- ◆ 2018 Nobel Prize in Physics - **Arthur Ashkin of US, Gérard Mourou from France and Donna Strickland of Canada will share 770,000 Pounds of the Award**
- ★ Ashkin, of Bell Laboratories in New Jersey, wins half of the prize for his development of "optical tweezers" that grab particles, atoms, viruses and other living cells with their laser beam fingers
- ★ Mourou and Strickland receive a quarter of the prize each "for their method of generating high-intensity, ultra-short optical pulses
- ★ Strickland, a laser physicist at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, becomes the first woman to win the physics Nobel since Maria Goeppert Mayer was honoured in 1963
- ★ Strickland is only the third woman in history to win the physics prize

- ★ For the first time since 1949, the Swedish Academy has postponed the announcement of the 2018 Nobel Literature Prize until next year
- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi - receives “UN Champions of the Earth award”, the highest environmental honour of the United Nations on October 3, 2018 from Antonio Guterres, UN Secretary General at a special ceremony in New Delhi
- ★ The award was announced on September 26, 2018, on the sidelines of 73rd UN General Assembly in New York.
- ★ Prime Minister Modi has been selected in the ‘Leadership category’ for his exemplary work in setting up the International Solar Alliance (ISA) along with the French President, Emmanuel Macron
- ★ Other Winners
- ★ Cochin International Airport in Kerala - world's first fully solar-powered airport
- ★ Joan Carling, Filipino environmental activist
- ★ Beyond Meat and Impossible Foods - Plant-based food alternative providers
- ★ China’s Zhejiang’s Green Rural Revival Programme - for the transformation of the once polluted area of rivers
- ★ The awards were established in 2005 under the United Nations Environment Programme
- ★ It recognizes 5-7 laureates annually and so far 84 laureates were bestowed with the honour
- ◆ Mahatma Gandhi - to be awarded ‘posthumously’ the ‘US Congressional Gold Medal’
- ★ The award highlights his contribution towards promotion of peace and non-violence
- ★ The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest civilian honour given by the US Congress.
- ★ The resolution for the award was moved by Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney from New York on 23rd September 2018.

- ★ It was co-sponsored by Indian American lawmakers Tulsi Gabbard, Ami Bera, Raja Krishnamoorthi, Ro Khanna and Pramila Jayapal
- ★ The Past winners of the Honour includes Mother Teresa (1997), Nelson Mandela (1998), Pope John Paul II (2000), the Dalai Lama (2006), Aung San Suu Kyi (2008), Muhammad Yunus (2010) and Shimon Peres (2014)
- ◆ Nobel Prize 2018 in Chemistry – awarded to Dr Frances H. Arnold (USA) *for her work on the 'Direct evolution of enzymes'* and George P. Smith (USA) and Sir Gregory P. Winter (UK) *"for the phage display of peptides and antibodies"*
- ★ With this Nobel, Dr Frances Arnold becomes the second woman in 55 years and 5th woman overall, to win the prestigious award
- ★ Dr Frances H Arnold will be awarded 'Half' of the 1.01 million dollar prize money while the remaining half goes jointly to the other winners, George Smith and Gregory Winter
- ★ Dr Frances Arnold, 62, is a professor of chemical engineering at the California Institute of Technology George Smith is from the University of Missouri and Winter, 67, is from the MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology at Cambridge
- ★ This is the MRC laboratory's twelfth Nobel so far Joachim Frank, Richard Henderson, and Jacques Dubochet were awarded the Nobel Prize in Chemistry in 2017 “for developing cryo-electron microscopy for the high-resolution structure determination of biomolecules in solution
- ◆ Nobel Peace Prize 2018 – conferred to 'Denis Mukwege' and 'Nadia Murad' for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict

Denis Mukwege

- ★ Mukwege, a Gynecologist and surgeon, has long worked to treat thousands of women and girls affected by rape and sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

- ★ Mukwege has earned the moniker "The man who mends women" for his work at Panzi Hospital in the eastern DRC city of Bukavu, which he founded in 1999

Nadia Murad

- ★ Murad is a Yazidi woman from the northern Iraqi town of Sinjar, who was held as a sex slave by ISIS
- ★ In 2016, at age 23, she was made a UN goodwill ambassador for the dignity of survivors of human trafficking
- ★ Murad becomes the 17th woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize and is its second-youngest recipient after Malala Yousafzai (Age 17)
- ★ In 2017, Murad published a memoir of her ordeal, *The Last Girl*

Nobel Peace Prize

- ★ There were 331 candidates for the Nobel Peace Prize for 2018 -- the second-highest number ever
- ★ Of those, 216 were individuals and 115 were organizations, according to Nobel organizers
- ★ The Nobel Peace Prize 2017 was awarded to International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) "for its work to draw attention to the catastrophic humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons and for its ground-breaking efforts to achieve a treaty-based prohibition of such weapons."
- ★ The Peace Prize is the fourth Nobel award announced this week
- ★ The prize will be presented in Oslo on December 10, the anniversary of the death of Swedish industrialist Alfred Nobel, who founded the awards in his 1895 will.

◆ Mother Teresa Memorial Award -2018'

- ★ Nobel Peace Award 2018 winners and anti-rape campaigners, **Nadia Murad and Dr Denis Mukwege - nominated for the Prestigious 'Mother Teresa Memorial Award 2018'** by the Mumbai-based 'Harmony Foundation'

- ★ Recognised officially by the Missionaries of Charity, the award includes a unique silhouette image of 'St. Mother Teresa' designed in sparkling crystal and a citation for the winners
- ★ The past nominees of the award includes Malala Yousafzai, the Dalai Lama, Office of United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Medecins Sans Frontieres International, Malaysia's Dr. Mahathir Mohamad, UAE's Abdullah bin Zayed al Nahyan, UK's Baroness Caroline Cox and India's Priyanka Chopra
- ★ The Harmony Foundation was launched in 2005 to foster communal and social harmony through the 'Mother Teresa Memorial Awards'

◆ Nobel Prize in Economics 2018

- ★ **American Economists, William D. Nordhaus from Yale University & Paul M. Romer from New York University** - wins the '2018 Nobel memorial Prize' in Economic Sciences
- ★ Professor William D Nordhaus (77 years)
- ★ Graduation - Yale University in 1963
- ★ Doctoral degree in Economics - MIT in 1967
- ★ Occupation - Economics faculty in Yale from 1967
- ★ Nordhaus is best known for his four decade-work on climate economics, trying to persuade governments to address climate change, preferably by imposing a tax on carbon emissions
- ★ To assess the costs of climate change, including crop failures and flooding, Professor Nordhaus developed an economic model he called the 'Dynamic Integrated Climate-Economy model' or 'DICE'
- ★ Professor Paul M Romer (62 years)
- ★ Graduation and Doctoral degree - University of Chicago
- ★ Occupation - Economics faculty in New York University
- ★ Romer of NYU's Stern School of Business, has demonstrated that government policy plays a critical role in improving technological innovation
- ★ He was honored with the Award for his work on the determinants of economic development
- ★ In 2016, Professor Romer was named as the 'Chief economist' of the World Bank

The Nobel prize in Economics is also known as 'The Sveriges Riksbank Prize' and was established in 1968

- ◆ **Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) - was awarded ISSA (International Social Security Association) Good Practice Award for Asia and Pacific Region, 2018**
- ◆ **Veena Sendre (Chhattisgarh) - was selected as India's first 'Miss Trans Queen' - in Mumbai**
 - ★ She defeated Namita Ammu of Tamil Nadu and won the title at the national-level beauty contest
 - ★ Veena Sendre is a former Miss Chhattisgarh
 - ★ She had dropped out of school when she was in 5th standard
- ◆ **Anna Burns (Ireland) - wins Man Booker Prize 2018 - for her novel 'Milkman'**
 - ★ She is the first writer from Northern Ireland to win the Booker Prize
- ◆ **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - awarded the prestigious '2018 Seoul Peace Prize' - for his contribution to International peace through his economic vision titled 'Modinomics'**
 - ★ He is the fourteenth recipient of this award.
- ◆ **Miss Deaf Asia 2018, Prague**
 - ★ **Nishtha Dudeja (India) - wins the Miss Deaf Asia 2018 Pageant**
 - ★ She is the **first Indian** to have won any title at the **Miss Deaf World Pageant**
 - ★ Prior to this title, **Nishtha** had also won the **Miss Deaf India** title on **February 26, 2018** in Jaipur
 - ★ **First world Agriculture prize - awarded to Prof M S Swaminathan**
 - ★ The annual prize was instituted by the Indian council of Food and agriculture
 - ★ Prof. Swaminathan is known as Father of Green Revolution in India
 - ★ The United Nations Environment Programme has celebrated him as '**The Father of Economic Ecology**'

- ◆ **The winners of United Nations Human Rights Award - 2018 were announced at the 73rd session of UN General Assembly**

The awardees

- **Asma Jahangir** - Pakistan's late human rights activist
 - **Rebeca Gyumi** - A Tanzanian human rights activist
 - **Joenia Wapichana** - Brazil's first indigenous lawyer
 - **Front Line Defenders** - A human rights organisation of Ireland
- ★ These awards were instituted in 1966 and first conferred in 1968
 - ★ They were given once in every 5 years
 - ★ So far, only one Indian personality, Baba Amte, has been awarded United Nations Human Rights Prize in the year 1988
 - ★ The award ceremony will take place on December 10 on World Human Rights Day in New York.

Asma Jahangir

- ★ Asma was the 4th Pakistani winner of the prestigious award after Begum Ra'ana Liaquat Ali Khan (1978), Benazir Bhutto (2008) and Malala Yousufzai (2013)
- ★ She passed away on February 11, 2018

APPOINMENT

- ◆ **Justice Ranjan Gogoi** - sworn-in as 46th Chief Justice of India on Oct 3, 2018 at a ceremony in Rashtrapathi Bhavan
- ★ **President Ram Nath Kovind** administered the oath to the 63-year old Justice Gogoi
- ★ He succeeds Justice Dipak Misra, who retired on Oct 2, 2018
- ★ Justice Gogoi is the first person from the Northeast to reach the top position of judiciary He will have a tenure of a little over 13 months before retiring on November 17, 2019 Justice Gogoi hails from Dibrugarh in Assam and was born on November 18, 1954
- ★ Son of former Assam chief minister Keshab Chandra Gogoi, he enrolled as an advocate in 1978 in the Gauhati High Court

- ★ He was appointed as a permanent judge of the Gauhati High Court on February 28, 2001.
- ★ Then, he was appointed as the chief justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court on February 12, 2011 and as a judge of the Supreme Court on April 23, 2012



NOVEMBER, 2018

TAMIL NADU

- ◆ **Tamil Nadu – has received the award in the ‘Best practices summit’ organized by Ministry of health and family welfare**
 - ★ The award has been conferred for highest annual decline of Neo-natal mortality rate 2016
 - ★ The average reduction for the entire country stood at -4% while Tamil Nadu registered -14.3%

- ◆ **IIT Madras – creates ‘Shakti’, India’s first indigenous Microprocessor**
 - ★ It was developed with a Microchip fabricated in the Semiconductor lab of ISRO at Chandigarh
 - ★ The team was led by Prof Kamakoti Veezhinathan at IIT-M’s RISE laboratory
 - ★ The team has also developed ‘Parashakti’, an advanced microprocessor for super computers

- ◆ **Offshore Patrol Vessel ICGS Varaha launched at Tamil Nadu**
 - ★ **ICGS Varaha**, the **fourth** in the series of **98 M offshore patrol vessels (OPVs)** of Indian Coast Guard, was launched at **L&T Kattupalli, Chennai, Tamil Nadu.**
 - ★ The 98 M OPV has been designed and built indigenously by Larsen & Toubro as part of the ICG shipbuilding contract for construction of seven OPVs awarded to L&T.
 - ★ This ship will be fitted with advanced technology navigation and communication equipment, sensor and machinery.

- ◆ **India’s first Open air Library – to come in Puthur Officers colony in Trichy**
 - ★ It will house about 2000 books and an outlay of Rs 20 lakhs has been allocated for the library by city’s corporation

- ◆ **Russia’s Volgodonsk city – names one of its streets as ‘Kudankulam Alley’**
 - ★ The lane is located next to the Atommash Plant, which manufactures equipment for the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant

- ★ Kudankulam nuclear power plant is jointly constructed by Rosatom State Atomic Energy Corporation of Russia and the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd (NPCIL), in Tamil Nadu
 - ★ It is a subsidiary of Atomenergomash, a machine-building division of Rosatom State Atomic State Atomic Energy Corporation
 - ★ Kudankulam project was first agreed in 1988 with the Soviet leadership.
 - ★ The construction began in 2002 and the Plant was launched in 2013
- ◆ Tamil Nadu's first Sensory Park for Special children – to come up in Santhome, Chennai from November 14
- ✓ It will provide a sensory experience to the Blind, complete with 3D art
- ◆ **India's 1st Police booth with Bio-toilet - inaugurated at the Coimbatore Medical college Traffic signal on Avinashi Road**
- ★ Coimbatore based Park Group, in collaboration with Pathfinder Business Analysis Private Limited, is setting up the facility at a cost of Rs 4 lakhs
 - ★ The firm is also planning to set up 2 more such units at Singanallur traffic signal and SITRA on Avinashi Road.
- ◆ Chennai corporation – launches a new App 'Verify your Tax' to explain revised property tax
- GCC website has added a tab "Verify Your Tax"
 - Using the tab, assesses can verify their property tax and calculation sheet by entering their registered mobile number. This provides information about what is the actual tax, what was paid and what should be paid. It will also explain the entire tax revision
 - A tab for making appeal has also been provided under the "Verify Your Tax" tab
- ◆ Chennai corporation – introduces 'Gambusia affinis', a mosquito fish – in open wells and clean water bodies across its 15 zones – to contain mosquito breeding
- ✓ As per the body, around 4.5 lakh fishes will be introduced in a phased manner to eradicate the dengue-causing 'Aedes aegypti' mosquitoes
 - ✓ The biological control measure to tackle mosquito larvae includes introducing 2 types of exotic fish namely, Mosquito fish and Guppy fish

- ◆ Tamil Nadu Government – launch 24x7 ‘Centralised’ toll-free helpline ‘181’ for women in distress
 - ✓ It will be initially commenced in Coimbatore, Chennai, Kancheepuram, Salem and Pudukottai
- ◆ Agnikul Cosmos, incubated in IIT, Madras - selected by Airbus, global aerospace giant, for the fourth batch of its accelerator programme
 - ✓ It was co-founded by Srinath Ravichandran (CEO) and Moin SPM (COO) in 2017
 - ✓ It is housed in IIT-M’s National Center for Combustion Research and Development (NCCRD)
 - ✓ The Bengaluru-based startup is one among the 24 global enterprises selected by Airbus, which includes five other Indian entrants
 - ✓ Agnikul designs and builds launch vehicles that are capable of carrying around 100 kilograms of weight to lower earth orbits
 - ✓ AgniKul is in the process of developing its Agnibaan orbital launch vehicle
 - ✓ Agnikul’s launch vehicles provide smaller satellite operators with a more flexible option rather than relying on space giants such as ISRO and SpaceX
 - ✓ It was selected out of 495 applications from 64 countries
 - ✓ Airbus runs its BizLab programme out of Madrid (Spain), Toulouse (France), Hamburg (Germany) and Bengaluru (India)
 - ✓ Agnikul will be a part of the accelerator program from the Bengaluru campus
 - ✓ The only other Indian launch vehicle startup, Bangalore-based Bellatrix Aerospace, is working on its launch vehicle Chetak
- ◆ A first-of-its-kind ‘Cyber War Room’ - is being set up at Bannari Amman Institute of Technology in Erode district
 - ✓ The aim of the ‘War room’ is to guide students to combat increasing cyber crime
 - ✓ India is currently ranked third in the number of cyber-attacks globally
- ◆ Samudra Pehredar, Indian Coast Guard’s dedicated Pollution control vessel – arrives at the Kamarajar Port in Ennore
 - ✓ It has arrived to help in the Clean-up operations after the spillage of nearly 2 tonnes of oil into the sea while being transferred from a merchant ship ‘MT Coral Stars’
- ◆ **Stanley Medical College and Hospital – to start a ‘Stem cell’ Lab by Early 2019**
 - ✓ The lab will facilitate research in organ failures and therapy of blood disorders

- ✓ The project, which was approved in 2008, will offer free-of-cost treatment to patients with diseases such as Leukemia, Multiple Myeloma, Lymphoma and Thalassemia apart from treating end-stage liver diseases
 - ✓ The stem cells are found in Embryos, Placenta and cord blood and have the capability to develop into any kind of tissue
- ◆ **IIT Madras – develops a simulator called ‘MADRaS (Multi-Agent DRiving simulator) – to test algorithms of driverless or autonomous cars with multiple traffic conditions**
- ✓ It was developed by Artificial Intelligence researchers Abhishek Naik from IIT, Madras and Anirban Santara from IIT, Kharagpur
 - ✓ MADRaS is a fully controllable multi agent extension of ‘Torcs’, a simulator popularly used for autonomous driving research
 - ✓ It is also the only open source multi-agent simulator available at present in the country
 - ✓ Torcs – can control the behavior of only one car at a time, while the other vehicles follow pre-specified behavior
 - ✓ Other open source autonomous driving simulators like Carla, Deep drive and AirSim also support only single agent behavior
- ◆ **Tamil Nadu – to cover all Convicted Prisoners under 2 Central Insurance schemes, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) and Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana (PMJJBY) – within the next 20 days**
- ✓ The first-of-its-kind initiative taken by the state’s Prison department would provide death benefit, accident cover and disability coverage to around 3,600 convicts in 13 central prisons in the state
 - ✓ The department had also brought all the Prison staff under the cover
- ◆ **Tamil Nadu Chief Minister – releases the book titled ‘Tamil Nadu Police Gallant Heroes’**
- ✓ The book appreciates the lives all those police personnel who had sacrificed their lives in the line of duty
 - ✓ During the event, he gave appointment orders to 6,119 personnel selected under Tamilnadu Uniformed Services Recruitment Board (TNUSRB)
 - ✓ It includes the appointment of Erode-based Subhashri, fifth Transgender in Tamil Nadu Police service
 - ✓ The Police department already has 4 Transgenders in Service, One as Sub-inspector and three as Police Personnel
 - ✓ Last year, K Prithika Yashini from Salem became the first transgender woman to become a police officer in India, taking charge as the sub-inspector

- ◆ **Tamil Nadu - received the Union ministry of health and family welfare's 'Best performance award' for its successful organ donation programme – for the fourth year in a row**

 - ✓ Tamil Nadu has one of the country's largest transplant programmes, having retrieved organs from more than 1,000 patients
 - ✓ The state brought in rules for organ donation and transplant in 2008
 - ✓ Now, the Transplant Authority Government of Tamil Nadu (Transtan) functions as Regional Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (ROTO) and State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO)
 - ✓ As many as 6,886 organs have been harvested from 1,198 donors so far in the state
 - ✓ The state government sanctions up to Rs 35 lakh for transplantation, which is the highest in the country

- ◆ **N J Shirabthinath, 26 years, Resident of Palanganatham in Madurai – becomes the 1st person in the state with Monocular vision – vision in one eye – to get the Driving license**

 - ✓ The licence was issued to him by the Madurai South RTO - in line with the Centre's order permitting the same for people with monocular vision

- ◆ **T S Sridhar committee for Government employees pension reforms – has submitted its recommendations and report to the Hon'ble CM of the State**

- ◆ **3rd edition of World Thirukural Conference – to be held in Chanakyapuri, Delhi during September 23-24, 2019**

 - ✓ The inaugural edition of the conference took place in Nagarkoil in 2017 and in Hope university, England in 2018

- ◆ **Tamil Nadu Government – sets up 'TN Animal Welfare Board' with Hon'ble Chief minister, Edappadi K Palaniswami as the Chairman**

 - ✓ The Animal husbandry minister is the vice-chairman of the 14-member board, which will have the chief secretary and heads of various departments as ex-officio members
 - ✓ There will be honorary members representing 'Society for prevention of cruelty to animals' (SPCA), which is to be established by the board
 - ✓ The board is supposed to ensure the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960 implemented in both letter and spirit

◆ **Tamil Nadu government – seeks to increase 100 days of MGNREGA – to 150 days**

- ✓ It had requested the Union ministry of rural development for the same
- ✓ Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), the livelihood security programme - offers 100 days of guaranteed wage employment for every household
- ✓ The notified wage rate in respect of Tamil Nadu for the current fiscal is Rs 224 per person per day
- ✓ The state has made this request for 11 Gaja affected districts, including Thanjavur, Pudukkottai, Tiruvarur, Ramanathapuram, Theni, blocks of Dindigul and Karur, Sivaganga, Trichy, Cuddalore and Nagapattinam

◆ **The Labour department of Tamil Nadu Government - has developed 'Tamil Nadu Legal Metrology Complaint Tracking System' (TNLMCTS), a mobile app**

- ✓ It will facilitate consumers to lodge complaints against traders and commercial establishments for issues of excess MRP and short weight
- ✓ The consumers can also file the complaints through the app against petrol bunks and ration shops in case of any malpractices

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STATE

◆ Delhi Government, Indian Railways sign MoU for Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana

- ★ It stated the MoU was inked by officials of the Delhi government and the railways in the presence of **Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia** at the Delhi Secretariat in New Delhi.
- ★ A tourism department official said as per the agreement, Railways will provide separate coaches to pilgrims who are selected under the Yojana.
- ★ According to the government, the scheme will enable 1,100 senior citizens from each of the 70 assembly constituencies of Delhi every year to undertake free pilgrimage.

◆ Uttar Pradesh – CM, Yogi Adityanath announced that Faizabad district will be renamed ‘Ayodhya district’

- ★ Recently, the State had changed the name of Allahabad to Prayagraj

◆ West Bengal – to celebrate November 14 as ‘Rosogulla Day’

◆ Chhattisgarh – Election commission to set up ‘Sangwari’ polling booths in the state

- ✓ The move is aimed to encourage women voters to vote in the Assembly elections
- ✓ ‘Sangwari’ means friend, in Chhattisgarhi dialect
- ✓ These women friendly booths will have all-female staff like presiding officers, supervisors and security personnel
- ✓ Totally 5 Sangwari Polling Centres will be set up for women in every assembly segments

◆ Delhi Police – launches ‘NIPUN’, an e-learning portal – to impart training and to provide updated information to its Police officers

- ✓ The initiative was done under the project ‘CLAP’ (The Collaborative Learning and Partnership) to enable the police officers upgrade their skills and learning

◆ Manipur – North East’s first-ever floating ‘Water handloom hut’ inaugurated at Loktak lake in Imphal, Manipur

- ✓ It is part of the 5 water handloom huts built on floating biomass at Loktak Lake in **Bishnupur** district

- ◆ **Meghalaya - 3rd India International Cherry Blossom Festival celebrated at Shillong, Meghalaya**
- ◆ **Andhra Pradesh Government – unveiled its new ‘State emblem’ for Official use**
 - ✓ It consists of “**Dhamma Chakka**” – “the Wheel of Law” embellished with a ring of **Tirratnas** alternating with **pinnate leaves** and precious stones
 - ✓ The three circles of decorative beads are in ascending order of numbers - **48** in the inner, **118** in the middle and **148** in the outer circle
 - ✓ It has a “**Puna Ghataka**” or “The vase of Plenty” at the hub of the **Dhamma Chakka**, which is decorated with a four-banded garland on the main body with medallions
- ◆ **Uttar Pradesh – Country’s 1st state-of-the-art hospital for Elephants – inaugurated in Farah block of Mathura, UP**
 - ✓ The two partially blind elephants, Phoolkali (55) and Maya (35) were the first patients to get treated in the hospital
- ◆ **Kerala – launches new Online Open Learning Training Programme titled ‘KOOL’**
 - ✓ It was developed by the **Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE)**
 - ✓ It will enable training to teachers, students and the general public under **MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) model**
 - ✓ This will help Kerala to become **India’s first complete digital state in Education**
 - ✓ KOOL has been developed as an expansion of ‘**Samagra**’, the resource portal of the education department
 - ✓ Teachers upon completion of the complete course would be awarded certificates
- ◆ **Punjab – to have the country’s first ‘National Institute of Inter-Faith studies’**
 - ✓ The Union Government made the announcement during the inauguration of yearlong activities to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru and founder of the Sikh religion
 - ✓ The institute will be set up on the lines of teachings of Guru Nanak
 - ✓ The Government will set up a committee to finalize the concept of the proposed institute
 - ✓ The verses of Guru Nanak were collected in **Adi Granth**, which were written in **Gurmukhi script**

- ◆ **Himachal Pradesh government – has approved the implementation of ‘Sashakt Mahila Yojna’**
 - ✓ The scheme aims to empower rural women by providing them livelihood opportunities and improving their skill by imparting training
 - ✓ It also decided to implement the **Himachal Healthcare Scheme (HIMCARE)** in the state
 - ✓ It provides cashless treatment coverage of Rs 5 lakh per year per family
- ◆ **Uttar Pradesh Government – launches month-long ‘Women Empowerment Resolution Campaign’ (Nari Sashaktikaran Sankalp Abhiyan) in Lucknow**
 - ✓ The campaign aims to empower Women to develop leadership skills
 - ✓ Issues like education, self-employment, health, sanitation and nutrition will be included under the campaign
 - ✓ For the Campaign, a 11-member team will be formed at each district and block level of states
 - ✓ To create an awareness about the campaign, door-to-door visit will be undertaken by the women officers and female staff of the state government
- ◆ **Madhya Pradesh Government – to allow pregnant women to vote without standing in queue in the assembly elections**
 - ✓ The Pregnant women will have to register themselves in the ‘**Sugamya**’ portal designed by state election commission
 - ✓ After registration, they will be given a special pass to vote without standing in line
 - ✓ The election commission is also establishing 500 pink booths in the state for the assembly election
 - ✓ These polling booths will be run by women officers and workers
- ◆ **Andhra Pradesh Government – launches ‘Bhuseva’ and ‘Bhudaar’ web portal**
 - ✓ People can record their land record online through these portals using Aadhaar card
 - ✓ Bhudaar – is a 11 digit unique identification code for every agricultural land holding and urban/rural property
 - ✓ It provides a single source of information related to all transactions of a particular land or property
 - ✓ It will also provide history of transactions initially for the past 12 years

- ◆ **West Bengal – to be the home of ‘The India Autism Centre’ soon**
 - ✓ The world-class Autism township, planned to be built near Kolkata, will accommodate children and adults suffering from the developmental disorder for the treatment and training
- ◆ **Uttarakhand – to rename the Dehradun airport after Atal Bihari Vajpayee, former prime minister**
 - ✓ The state Government has approved the renaming of ‘Jolly Grant’ Airport in Dehradun at a meeting chaired by its CM, Trivendra Singh Rawat
- ◆ **Jammu & Kashmir – celebrates the annual week-long ‘Jhiri Mela’ festival**
 - ✓ It was inaugurated by the Governor of J&K, Satya Pal Malik in Jammu
 - ✓ The festival is celebrated as a commemoration to a martyred farmer named, ‘**Baba Jitto**’
 - ✓ ‘Baba Jitto’ was a farmer who died about 500 years ago in protest against the oppressive demands of a land lord
- ◆ **West Bengal – celebrates the annual three-day long ‘Jangalmahal’ festival**
 - ✓ The festival aims to revive and popularise the culture and heritage of Jangal Mahal
- ◆ **Odisha – celebrates the 10-day long historic ‘Bali Yatra’ festival**
 - ✓ It was inaugurated in Cuttack, Odisha on the occasion of Kartik Purnima on November 23, 2018
 - ✓ The festival is the largest trade fair in Odisha showcasing various ethnic items
 - ✓ It is held on the banks of Mahanadi river in Cuttack
 - ✓ The festival marks the day when the ancient mariners would set sail to distant lands of Bali, for trade and cultural expansion
- ◆ **Himachal Pradesh - becomes the first state in the country to implement Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) with a Single Emergency (ERSS) Number ‘112’ for the entire state**
 - ✓ The single Emergency Number 112 integrates all other emergency numbers like 100 for police, 101 for fire and 102 for ambulance
 - ✓ The Emergency number was launched by Union Home Minister, Rajnath Singh
 - ✓ This is similar to the Single Emergency number of ‘911’ in practice in United States
 - ✓ Gradually this emergency number will be started in other states of the country

- ✓ The ERSS project also includes a '112 India' mobile app integrated with the panic button of smartphones
- ✓ The app has a 'SHOUT' feature, exclusively for women, to ensure their safety
- ✓ The ERSS Project – was started based on the recommendations of the Justice Verma Committee following the Nirbhaya incident in December 2012
- ✓ The project, earlier referred as Nationwide Emergency Response System, was allotted a budget of Rs.321.69 crore under the Nirbhaya Fund

◆ **Maharashtra – approves the 16% reservation quota for Marathas in government jobs and education**

- ✓ This takes the total percentage of quotas in the state from 52% to 68%, making it the second highest in India after Tamil Nadu's 69%
- ✓ Haryana has the third highest with 57% reservation currently
- ✓ The Supreme Court had in 1992 capped total reservation in a state at 50%

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SPORTS

- ◆ **Simona Biles (US - 21 years) - becomes the first-ever gymnast to win 13 World championship 'Gold' medals - at the World gymnastics championships in Doha, Qatar**

- ◆ **Rohit Sharma - becomes the first cricketer in history to score 4 T20I hundreds - during the 2nd T20I against West Indies in Lucknow**
 - ★ He now has **2,196** runs in the format
 - ★ He also became the first captain to score two T20I hundreds

- ◆ **Hima Das (Assam), Sprinter - was appointed as the first ever Youth Ambassador of United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) India**
 - ✓ She is nicknamed 'Dhing Express' after the name of her village in Assam.
 - ✓ In September 2018, she was appointed as Sports Ambassador of Assam

- ◆ **Tamil Nadu's Karthikeyan Pandiyan - becomes the country's 57th Grandmaster - by finishing Joint first in Novi Sad, Serbia**

- ◆ **Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), leading environment think-tank - awarded Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for the year 2018**
 - ✓ The award recognizes its pioneering work in the field of environmental education and protection

- ◆ **Dr Manmohan Singh - was conferred Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, disarmament and Development for the year 2017**
 - ✓ He received the prize from former Chief Justice of India TS Thakur
 - ✓ The Indira Gandhi peace prize is awarded by the Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust annually - to organisations and individuals in recognition of creative efforts towards promoting peace and development
 - ✓ It was established in 1986

- ◆ **Chennai's Moghul Mohammed Muneer, a renowned International Umpire - has been appointed as a Technical Officer for the Hockey World Cup starting in Bhubaneswar from November 28, 2018**
- ✓ He is the only Indian in the panel of officials for the tournament
- ✓ Muneer is also the vice-president of the Chennai Hockey Association
- ◆ **Wasim Jaffer - became the 1st batsman to score 11000 runs in Ranji Trophy**
- ✓ Jaffer, the former Mumbai player who plays for Vidharbha currently, achieved the feat in the Ranji match against Baroda

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- ◆ **NASA's Kepler telescope - retires after serving a nine and half year mission**
- ★ It had discovered 2,689 exoplanets and 5,30,506 stars, before running out of fuel
- ★ Kepler, the unmanned space telescope was launched in **March 6, 2009** from Colorado as part of NASA's first planet-hunting mission
- ★ The mission costed \$600 million and travelled 150 million km
- ★ It had discovered 'KEPLER-22B' in 2011 about 600 light years away, which was 2.4 times bigger than Earth and in the habitable zone with traces of water and water vapour

AI bot 'ClaRAN' can spot radio galaxies

- ◆ Researchers have taught an Artificial Intelligence (AI) bot named "ClaRAN" to **identify galaxies in deep space.**
- ★ The AI bot named "ClaRAN" used to recognize faces on Facebook. It has been trained to scan images taken by radio telescopes.
- ★ It can spot radio galaxies - galaxies that emit powerful radio jets from supermassive black holes at their centres.
- ★ ClaRAN is the brainchild of big data specialist Dr Chen Wu and astronomer Dr Ivy Wong from The University of Western Australia node of the International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research (ICRAR).

- ★ ClaRAN was developed from an open source version of Microsoft and Facebook's object detection software.
- ★ ClaRAN is open source software and is publicly available on Microsoft-owned GitHub.

◆ **World's longest DNA sequence decoded**

- ★ A team of United Kingdom scientists led by Matt Loose at Nottingham University have created a new record for **decoding the world's longest DNA sequence**.
- ★ The scientists have produced a DNA read that is **nearly 10,000 times longer than normal**. Also, it is two times larger than the previous record from Australia.
- ★ Also, Matt Loose's team recently produced the most complete human genome sequence using a palm-sized "**nanopore**" sequencing machine.
- ★ These methods could be used to study cancer genomes, where the DNA gets rearranged

◆ **World's first Artificial Intelligence (AI) News anchor - unveiled in China**

- ✓ It can read news in Chinese and English and launched by Xinhua, China's state-run Press agency
- ✓ 2 separate AI anchors were released, one for Chinese and one for English separately
- ✓ They have been developed by Xinhua and Chinese search engine, Sogou
- ✓ They were launched at the World Internet Conference in Wuzhen, China
- ✓ They combine the images and voices of human anchors with AI technology
- ✓ They have minimal facial expressions and lip movements

◆ **IIT, Roorkee - developed 'Fluorescent Carbon nanobots' - for simultaneous detection and destruction of Cancer cells**

- ✓ They are extracted from the leaves of the rosy periwinkle plant
- ✓ The research team is led by P Gopinath

- ✓ The research is supported by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB) and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Union Ministry of Science and Technology
- ◆ **ISRO - to launch a communication satellite on November 14 - exclusively for Jammu and Kashmir and north eastern regions**
 - ✓ The Gsat-29 will be launched off GSLV-Mk III rocket from Sriharikota
 - ✓ It is an advanced high-throughput communication satellite which will have two Ku and Ka operational payloads
 - ✓ The satellite will be launched under the 'Digital India' initiative of the Government
- ◆ **Spiking Neural Network Architecture (SpiNNaker) machine , the World's largest Super computer that mimics Human brain - was switched on for the first time**
 - ✓ It was designed and built at University of Manchester in UK
 - ✓ It is capable of completing more than 200 million million actions per second
- ◆ **IIT, Madras - develops a Portable, Solar powered 'Cold Storage Device'**
 - ✓ The 500 kg capacity device can be used for storing vegetables and fruits, among other items.
 - ✓ The device will help farmers to store their produce without perishing, until it gets sold out
The first unit of device was deployed at farm in Madurantakam in Kancheepuram district in Tamil Nadu
 - ✓ Each unit costs between Rs 5.5 to Rs 6 lakhs
- ◆ **Barnard's Star B, a 'Super-earth' planet- was discovered orbiting the closest single star to Sun**
 - ✓ The red dwarf, small and cooling planet was identified at 6 light years away from Earth
 - ✓ It was weighing 3.2 times heavier than Earth
 - ✓ The planet is the second nearest to Earth outside the solar system and orbits its host star once every 233 days

- ✓ It has a surface temperature of -170 degrees Celsius (-274 Fahrenheit) – far too cold to support life
- ✓ Despite being close to Sun, it receives only about 2% of energy than what Earth gets from the Sun

- ◆ **The GROWTH-India telescope - has made its first observation of a nova explosion**
- ✓ The 0.7m telescope is located at Indian Astronomical Observatory in Hanle, Ladakh
- ✓ It is the country's first fully robotic telescope
- ✓ It is part of a multi-country collaborative initiative known as '**Global Relay of Observatories Watching Transients Happen**' (GROWTH) to observe transient events in the Universe

- ◆ **NASA's 'Insight' - becomes the first American spacecraft to land in Mars since the Curiosity rover in 2012**
- ✓ It also becomes the first dedicated spacecraft to explore underground of Mars
- ✓ Insight is a 3-legged, 6-foot one-armed machine that will dig deep and listen for quakes
- ✓ It will remove the two main science experiments from the lander's deck and place them directly on the Martian surface, something which was never been attempted before

- ◆ **'Explorer' - World's 1st medical imaging total body scanner - has started producing its first scan images**
- ✓ The scanner can capture 3D picture of the whole human body within 20-30 seconds
- ✓ It was developed by scientists from the University of California - Davis in the US in partnership with Shanghai-based **United Imaging Healthcare (UIH)**
- ✓ It is a combination of positron emission tomography (PET) and X-ray computed tomography (CT) scanner

✓ The first images of the scanner will be displayed at the Radiological Society of North America meeting commencing on November 24, 2018 in Chicago, US

◆ **ISRO - to launch HySIS (Hyperspectral Imaging Satellite) - an earth observation satellite - along with 30 foreign commercial satellites on November 29, 2018**

✓ The satellites will be launched through Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C43) from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh

✓ HySIS is the primary satellite of the PSLV-C43 mission

✓ PSLV-C43 is the Core Alone version of PSLV which is the lightest version of PSLV

✓ The primary goal of HySIS is to study the earth's surface in visible, near infrared and shortwave infrared regions of the electromagnetic spectrum

✓ The foreign satellites to be launched along with HySIS include 1 Micro and 29 Nano satellites from 8 different countries

✓ Out of the 30 commercial satellites, 23 are from the United States, whose launch are contracted through Antrix Corporation Limited, the commercial arm of ISRO

✓ Being an earth observation satellite, it can be used by the military for surveillance purpose apart from wide applications in agriculture, forestry and coastal zone assessment

◆ **NASA's 'Insight' Mars Explorer - lands safely in Mars on November 26, 2018 on the flat Elysium Planitia region**

✓ This is the eighth time in human history and the first in six years that NASA has successfully landed on the Red planet

✓ The explorer, built jointly by United States, France and Germany, will now study the Deep interior (crust, mantle, and core) of the planet till November 24, 2020

✓ Two small, first-of-its-kind, experimental 'Mars Cube One' (MarCO) CubeSats were also launched on the same rocket as InSight

✓ InSight also has a seismometer to detect Martian tremors

✓ InSight

- ✓ Expansion - Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport
 - ✓ Launch - Vandenberg Air Force Base in California on May 5, 2018
 - ✓ Makers of Insight - Lockheed Martin Space Systems
 - ✓ Makers of MarCO CubeSats - Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL)
 - ✓ InSight will be the first mission to use a robotic arm to place instruments on the surface of Mars
 - ✓ Indian Connection in Insight
 - ✓ It has to be mentioned that Ravi Prakash, an Indian systems engineer working with Nasa's Jet Propulsion Laboratory - was closely monitoring the post-landing operations
 - ✓ In a first of its kind, Insight carried a tiny silicon wafer microchip on the top hull of the lander, which contained the etched names of people who had responded to a call from Nasa to participate in the flight
 - ✓ They were provided online boarding passes by the space agency
 - ✓ As per NASA, 24,29,807 names were received - 6,76,773 Americans, 2,62,752 Chinese and 1,38,899 Indians were the Top three countries registered their names 'Online' to reach Mars
- ◆ **ISRO - launches the PSLV-C43/HysIS mission from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh - on November 29, 2018**
- ✓ The 6th mission of the year puts HysIS, earth observation satellite, into orbit
 - ✓ The mission carried 30 other satellites of 8 different nations, including 23 from United States (1 micro and 22 nano), Australia (1), Canada (1), Colombia (1), Finland (1), Malaysia (1), Netherlands (1) and Spain (1)
 - ✓ With this mission, ISRO is carrying the satellites of Australia, Colombia, Malaysia and Spain for the very first time
This launch marks the 13th successful flight of this PSLV model
 - ✓ PSLV-C43, the 45th flight of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), is the 'Core Alone' and the Lightest version of the launch vehicle. PSLV-C43 mission's payload consists of the HysIS satellite, one micro-satellite and 29 nano satellites

- ✓ HysIS satellite will be launched at an altitude of 636.6km, while all other satellites will be launched at an altitude of 504.5km from the Earth's surface
 - ✓ PSLV is a four stage launch vehicle with alternating solid and liquid stages
 - ✓ Each stage is built to power the rocket through a different phase in the launching process
 - ✓ All these satellites have been commercially contracted for launch through ISRO's commercial arm, Antrix Corporation Limited
 - ✓ It has to be recalled that ISRO had recently launched its latest communication satellite GSAT-29 on board GSLV MkIII-D2 on November 14, 2018
 - ✓ HysIS
 - ✓ It was built around ISRO's Mini Satellite 2 (IMS-2) bus
 - ✓ At the heart of the satellite is the detector array chip designed by Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad and produced by Semi-Conductor Laboratory, Chandigarh.
- ◆ **CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology (CSIR-IMTECH) - to establish a High-End Skill Development Centre in its campus in Chandigarh**
- ✓ **The country's premier** National Research Laboratory will collaborate with Merck, a leading German science and Technology Company to establish the centre
 - ✓ The centre will develop skills by conducting workshops, trainings and seminar series on the life science processes, tools and techniques
- ◆ **The International Space Station (ISS) - turns 20 years on November 20, 2018**
- ✓ The project was initiated by Roscosmos, Russian space agency on November 20, 1998 with the launch of US funded, Russian-built 'Zarya' module from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan
 - ✓ ISS was a habitable artificial satellite, which currently serves as a giant orbiting observatory and laboratory, 250 miles above Earth

- ✓ ISS's first crew included Astronaut Bill Shepherd and cosmonauts Yuri Gidzenko and Sergei Krikalev, who reached the station on November 2, 2000
- ✓ According to NASA, 230 individuals from 18 countries have visited the station so far
- ✓ It is a serving example of collaboration between US and Russia even after so many diplomatic upheavals
- ✓ NASA has already committed funds to ISS until 2024
- ✓ ISS - Facts
 - ✓ ISS is the largest manned object in space at 375 ft length
 - ✓ It can accommodate 6 spacecrafts at a time
 - ✓ It is the single most expensive object ever built at £93.4 billion
 - ✓ It is the third brightest object in the Earth's night sky after the moon and Venus
 - ✓ It weighs 419,725 kg including the weight of spacecrafts
 - ✓ It orbits the earth approximately once every 90 minutes
 - ✓ The astronauts float while doing their daily activities due to Zero gravity
 - ✓ Nasa's Peggy Whitson set the record of being the longest-serving human in space on September 2, 2017
 - ✓ The station has 6 sleeping quarters, a gym and a 360-degree bay window with only two bathrooms
 - ✓ It has been continuously occupied since November 2000
 - ✓ It is the 9th space station to be inhabited by crews, following the Soviet and later Russian Salyut, Almaz, and Mir stations and Skylab from the US.

SCHEMES

◆ **Odisha - launches 'Soura Jalanidhi' scheme**

- ★ The scheme aims to increase the use of solar energy for irrigation purposes to the farmers
- ★ Under this scheme, **5000 solar pumps** will be provided to farmers at a subsidy of 90% to irrigate 2,500 acres of land

◆ **Karnataka - launches 'Samruddhi' scheme**

- ★ It aims to boost employment opportunities for SC/ST youth through entrepreneurship
- ★ For the scheme, the state government has signed MoU with 30 retail companies

◆ **Ministry of Agriculture - launches 'Yuva Sahakar-Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation Scheme' of the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)**

- ✓ It aims to attract youth to cooperative business ventures
- ✓ The scheme will be linked to Rs 1000 crore 'Cooperative Start-up and Innovation Fund (CSIF)' created by the NCDC
- ✓ NCDC had earlier initiated Sahakar 22, a Mission for Doubling Farmers' Income by 2022

◆ **Kerala Government - launches 'Gau Samridhi Plus Scheme' for Dairy farmers**

- ✓ The government subsidized scheme provides insurance coverage to dairy farmers in the state at low premium rates
- ✓ Also, the State Government in association with the Centre, decided to establish a 'Regional Autism and Research Centre' at the 'National Institute of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation' (NIPMR) in Thrissur

◆ **Mission 'Raksha Gyan Shakti' (Power of Defence Knowledge) - launched by Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Defence in New Delhi**

- ✓ It is an initiative that encourages scientists and technicians in Defence Public sector undertakings and Ordnance factories to register their intellectual property and create more patents
- ✓ Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA) - will coordinate and implement the programme
- ✓ Defence Ministry has established 'IP Facilitation Cell' in April 2018 to achieve ambitious targets of training 10,000 personnel to file atleast 1,000 new patent applications

- ✓ India is expected to achieve 100% household electrification in the country by December 31, 2018, going by the current rate
- ✓ The Government is committed to ensure 24x7 access to electricity for all by 31st March 2019.
- ✓ Saubhagya - 'Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana' was launched in September 26, 2017 by the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi to mark the birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya
- ✓ Its main objective is to provide access to electricity to all the households in the country
- ✓ Total outlay - Rs 16,320 crore

PERSONALITIES

- ◆ **Satyarup Siddhanta, Mountaineer - becomes the first Indian to scale 'Mt Giluwe' in Papua New Guinea**
 - ✓ He summited an elevation of **4,367 metres** which will be followed by Mt Wilhelm - the highest mountain of Papua New Guinea
 - ✓ Satya scaled 5 of the 7 volcanic summits, so far
 - ✓ He aimed to complete his 6th Volcano in Mexico Mt Pico de Orizaba and then to Antarctica to climb Mt Sidley in December 2018

- ◆ **T S Kanaka (Chennai), Asia's first and World's Third woman Neurosurgeon (86 years)**
 - ✓ She has the distinction of becoming the first neurosurgeon in India to perform chronic electrode implants in the brain

NATIONAL

- ◆ **Facebook - launches 'Digital Literacy Library' in 6 Indian languages - Bengali, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam**
 - ★ This launch is a part of Facebook's efforts to train 3,00,000 people in India on digital literacy by the end of 2018
 - ★ The campaign provides digital safety tips for women and youth

- ◆ **Operation Greens - to be launched by Ministry of Food Processing Industries - to ensure the supply of Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP) crops throughout the country**
 - ★ The total budget allocated for the project is Rs 500 crores
 - ★ New Delhi based 'National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd' (NAFED) - will be the Nodal Agency to implement price stabilisation measures

- **Women and Child Development Ministry - had launched “Mahila-E-Haat”, an online marketing portal - for promoting the Organic products of women farmers and entrepreneurs**
- ✓ It was launched during **the 5th edition of “Women of India National Organic Festival, 2018” held in New Delhi**

- **Union Cabinet - approves the setting up of ‘Central Tribal University’ in Andhra Pradesh**

- ◆ **Supreme Court - approves a separate High court for Andhra Pradesh**
- ✓ It will start functioning from January 1, 2019
- ✓ It will be the country’s 25th High court
- ✓ Initially it will function in a makeshift building and later moved to the permanent judicial complex in Capital, Amaravati
- ✓ At present, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have a common High Court at Hyderabad
- ✓ It will be called the Telangana High Court from 2019

- ◆ **Prime Minister Narendra Modi - inaugurates country’s 1st Multi modal terminal on Inland waterways in Varanasi**
- ✓ The PM also received the country's first container cargo transported on inland waterways from Kolkata
- ✓ It was carrying 16 containers with food and beverages and returning with fertilizer consignments from Phulphur
- ✓ Vessel - MV Rabindranath Tagore
- ✓ Duration of the journey - 13 days
- ✓ Route - Haldia to Prayagraj
- ✓ It was the first of the four multi-modal terminals being constructed on the National Waterway-1 (river Ganga) as part of the World Bank-aided Jal Marg Vikas project of the Inland Waterways Authority of India

- ◆ **ISRO - launches GSAT-29 communication satellite aboard GSLV Mark-III rocket from Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota**
- ✓ The mission life of the GSAT-29 satellite is over ten years

- ✓ GSAT-29 carries Ka/Ku-band high throughput communication transponders
- ✓ This is the second test flight of GSLV Mark-III, which will be used for the upcoming Chandrayaan-II mission in January 2019
- ✓ The GSLV Mark-III rocket weighs around 640 ton and has a height of 43.4 metres

◆ **Ministry of HRD - launches 'Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching' (ARPIT)**, a unique initiative of Online professional development of 15 lakh higher education faculty in the country
It will be available using the massive open online courses platform 'SWAYAM'

The Ministry also launched 'LEAP' (Leadership for Academicians Programme)

The 3 week training programme, LEAP will be implemented through 15 top institutions like IITs, NITs, TISS, DU, JNU etc.,

It includes a week's training in the foreign campus of various universities like Harvard University, Oxford University, Purdue University and NTU, Singapore

◆ **Twitter India - launched #PowerOf18 campaign**

- ✓ It was aimed at encouraging youth to participate in various debates and to ensure their engagement for the 2019 general elections.
- ✓ The initiative was launched by Twitter CEO, Jack Dorsey and Maya Hari, Vice-President and Managing Director, Asia Pacific, Twitter at IIT, Delhi

◆ **Sri Ramayana Express - flagged off by the Indian Railways - from Safdarjung Railway Station, New Delhi**

- ✓ The 800-seat tourist train will run on Ramayana circuit covering major places related to the Hindu epic
- ✓ It will start from Ayodhya and reach Rameswaram within 16 days
- ✓ The fare of the train is fixed at Rs 15,120 per person
- ✓ The tour will have 2 components, one in India and another in Sri Lanka

- ✓ The Passengers opting for Sri Lanka leg of the tour will be flown to Colombo from Chennai with separate charges
- ◆ **Prime Minister, Narendra Modi - launches 'Ease of Doing Business Grand Challenge'**
 - ✓ The challenge is to provide innovative ideas to reform Government processes using cutting-edge technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Internet of Things, Blockchain etc.,
 - ✓ The platform for the grand challenge will be the Start-up India portal
 - ✓ The top 3 teams for each problem statement would be awarded cash prizes worth Rs 1 lakh, Rs 2 lakh and Rs 3 lakh respectively
 - ✓ In the World Bank's Doing Business Report, released on October 31, 2018, India is at 77th position in 2018 among 190 countries (from 100th position in 2017)
 - ✓ India also recorded the highest improvement in 2 years by any large country since 2011 by improving its rank by 53 positions
- ◆ **Union Government - launches the upgraded version of 'AirSewa 2.0' web portal and a Mobile App**
 - ✓ It was released by Suresh Prabhu, Civil Aviation Minister and Jayant Sinha, Minister of State for Civil Aviation
 - ✓ The new web portal allow flyers to register their complaints through social media using the hashtag 'AirSewa'
 - ✓ It also provides all relevant information regarding the real-time flight status, flight schedules, assistance available to the disabled apart from the option to provide feedback by the air travelers
 - ✓ During the occasion, the Minister presented 'AirSewa Champion Award' to 'Chennai airport' for 100% grievance redressal in the past year
 - ✓ The Ministry of Civil Aviation launched AirSewa web portal and mobile app in November 2016
- ◆ **Ministry of HRD - launches 'Institution's Innovation Council' (IIC) programme under the 'Innovation Cell' of the Ministry**

- ✓ The 'Innovation Cell' of the Ministry was established at AICTE to encourage the culture of '**Innovation**' in all higher education institutions in the country
- ✓ The main purpose of the newly-launched '**IIC's is to encourage 'innovation**' among young students by exposing them to new ideas and processes
- ✓ Through this initiative, India hopes to improve with a good rank in global innovation ranking in the next few years

◆ **Ministry of Women and Child Development - has linked 'She-Box' with all the Central & State ministries and Departments across all the 653 districts in 33 states/UTs of the country**

- ✓ 'She-Box' is the sexual harassment complaints portal - created by the WCD Ministry to report complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace.
- ✓ The progress of the cases on the portal can be monitored by the complainants as well as the WCD Ministry
- ✓ The portal provides a speedy remedy to women facing sexual harassment at workplace
- ✓ 'She-Box' portal was launched by WCD Minister, Maneka Sanjay Gandhi on November 7, 2017
- ✓ It is the first ever online portal launched by any country to receive sexual harassment complaints
- ✓ It was launched to ensure the effective implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (SH Act), 2013
- ✓ The portal can be accessed at the following link - <http://shebox.nic.in/>

◆ **Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs - approves "Atmosphere & Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems & Services (ACROSS)" - for the period of 2017-2020**

- ✓ The scheme is intended to improve weather forecasting through sustained observations and research and development

- ✓ It has nine sub schemes under the main umbrella scheme 'ACROSS' of the Ministry of Earth Sciences
- ◆ **Indian Railways - launches a new mobile App 'GRP Help App' for Railway passengers to seek help from the Government Railway Police (GRP) in Coimbatore**
 - ✓ The railway commuters can share the image of any suspicious object through the App
 - ✓ They can also lodge complaints on harassment of women, children or theft through the App
 - ✓ The complaints will be immediately attended by GRP or RPF
- ◆ **All India Radio - to air 50th Golden jubilee episode of the Prime Minister's 'Mann ki Baat' on November 25, 2018**
 - ✓ The 'Mann Ki Baat' series started on October 3, 2014 and aired subsequently on every last Sunday of the month
 - ✓ The Prime minister appealed to the people to buy atleast one Khadi product, in the inaugural episode, which has boosted the sale of khadi products by 120% in the country
 - ✓ The programme will also be streamed on the YouTube channels of the Prime Minister's Office, Information and Broadcasting Ministry, AIR and DD News
- ◆ **Vice President, Venkaiah Naidu - lays the foundation stone for the construction of Dera Baba Nanak - Kartarpur Sahib Road Corridor - on the Indian side at Mann village in Gurdaspur district of Punjab**
 - ✓ Indian Sikh pilgrims can now visit the holy site of Gurudwara Darbar Sahib at Kartarpur in Pakistan through this corridor
 - ✓ The decision to build the corridor was announced by the Indian and Pakistan Governments on November 15, 2018
 - ✓ India had first proposed the Kartarpur Sahib corridor in 1999 during the historic bus ride to Lahore by the then PM, A B Vajpayee
 - ✓ The corridor will be developed by National Highways Authority of India and funded by the Central Government

- ✓ The Gurudwara Darbar Sahib, Kartarpur is the final resting place of Guru Nanak until his death in 1539
- ✓ It is located on the bank of river Ravi in Pakistan and is about 4 km from the Indo-Pak border in Pakistan
- ◆ **Easyfone, the feature phone maker - launches 'Easyfone Star', India's first mobile phone for Kids**
 - ✓ It has various first-of-its-kind security features like restricting calls to only pre-configured numbers, GPS which allows parents to track their child and SOS key which allows children to get quick help in emergency
- ◆ **Government - launches 'PAiSA' portal - under 'Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana - National Urban Livelihoods Mission' (DAY-NULM)**
 - ✓ PAiSA - Portal for Affordable Credit and Interest Subvention Access
 - ✓ The portal is a centralized electronic platform for quicker processing of loans under the DAY-NULM scheme
 - ✓ It has been designed and developed by Allahabad Bank, the nodal bank under the scheme
 - ✓ DAY-NULM
 - ✓ Implemented by - Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs
 - ✓ Launch of NULM - June 2011 by the then PM, Manmohan Singh
 - ✓ Launch of DAY - September 25, 2014
 - ✓ Budget - Rs 500 Crore
 - ✓ Objectives -
 - ✓ The scheme identifies urban poor (slum dwellers, vendors, rag pickers etc), unemployed, differently abled and provide Skill Training and Placement through City Livelihood Centers
 - ✓ It promotes the formation of Self-Help Groups (SHG) for training others by providing Rs 10,000 as an initial support
 - ✓ It provides an interest subsidy of 5% to 7% for setting up individual micro-enterprises with loan of up to 2 lakhs and for group enterprises with loan limit of up to Rs.10 lakhs
 - ✓ It fully funds cost of construction of shelters for urban homeless

◆ **Government - launches 'Bhasha Sangam', a unique initiative to introduce school students to 22 Indian languages**

- ✓ It was launched under Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat on November 22 and will continue till December 21, 2018
- ✓ It is a programme for educational institutions to provide multilingual exposure to students in Indian languages

INTERNATIONAL

◆ **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) 'Be The Legacy' internship programme was announced at the end of the 18th IORA meeting in Durban, South Africa.**

- ★ The internship programme will be launched on July 18, 2019, the 101st birth anniversary of Nelson Mandela.
- ★ The programme has been established by IORA members, including India, to honour former South African president Nelson Mandela.
- ★ The programme aims to empower people under the age of 30 from IORA member states with work experience in their interested fields of study.
- ★ IORA was established in March 1997 through the vision of Nelson Mandela.
- ★ **Currently, the IORA has 21 member states** – Australia, Bangladesh, Comoros, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kenya, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritius, Mozambique, Oman, Seychelles, Singapore, Somalia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Thailand, United Arab Emirates and Yemen.

DEFENCE

◆ **Dharma Guardian 2018 - the first ever Joint military exercise between India and Japan**

◆ **SIMBEX - The naval exercise between India and Singapore starts in India off Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal**

◆ **Samudra Shakti - The inaugural edition of bilateral naval exercise between India and Indonesia held at the port of Surabaya, Indonesia**

- ◆ **Indra 2018 - The joint military exercise between India and Russia under the aegis of United Nations - begins in Babina Military Range, Uttar Pradesh**
 - ✓ The first-ever tri-services joint exercise was held between the Indian and Russian Armed Forces in the Eastern Military District of Russia during October 2017

- ◆ **Vajra Prahar - Joint Military exercise between India and United States - commences in Bikaner in Rajasthan**
 - ✓ The 12-day long exercise involves the Joint special forces of both the countries to exchange techniques for counter-terrorism operations

- ◆ **Konkan 18 - The naval exercise between India and United Kingdom - started off Goa between November 28 to December 6, 2018**
 - ✓ The exercise involves both the harbor phase and sea phase
 - ✓ Indian Navy will be represented by INS Kolkata and Dornier, maritime patrol aircraft
 - ✓ Bilateral KONKAN exercise was first conducted in 2004

- ◆ **Cope India 2019 - The bilateral air exercise between Indian Air Force (IAF) and US Air Force - scheduled to be held in West Bengal between December 3 and 14, 2019**
 - ✓ It will be held in Air Force Station, Kalaikunda and Air Force Station, Arjan Singh at Panagarh
 - ✓ The first exercise was conducted at IAF air force station in Gwalior in February 2004
 - ✓ It was repeated in 2005, 2006, 2009 and was last held in 2010

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- ◆ **1st Global Cooling Innovation Summit - held in New Delhi**
 - ✓ Organised by - Department of Science and Technology along with Alliance for An Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE), Rocky Mountain Institute, Conservation X Labs and CEPT University
 - ✓ Inaugurated by - Dr Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Environment
 - ✓ During the first-of-its-kind event, \$3 million dollar prize to be awarded once in every 2 years, Global Cooling Prize was launched

- ◆ **2nd edition of INSPIRE 2018 - launched in New Delhi**
 - ✓ INSPIRE - International Symposium to Promote Innovation & Research in Energy Efficiency
 - ✓ Organised by - Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) and World Bank
 - ✓ As a run-up to the event, a first-of-its-kind Energy innovation challenge '#InnovateToINSPIRE' was conducted earlier and 4 winners of the challenge were awarded in the event

- ◆ **Government - launches the logo and brochure of Logix India 2019**
 - ✓ Logix India 2019 will take place in New Delhi from January 31 to February 2, 2019
 - ✓ It is organized by Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO)
 - ✓ The 3-day event seeks to improve cost effectiveness and operational efficiency of the Logistics sector
 - ✓ Over 20 countries are expected to participate in this event
 - ✓ India was ranked 44 in World Bank Logistics Performance Index 2018
 - ✓ As per Economic Survey 2017-18, India's logistics industry, currently worth around \$160 billion, is likely to grow at 10.5% over the next 5 years

- ◆ **HAUSLA 2018 - organised in New Delhi between November 26-29, 2018**
 - ✓ Hausla 2018, the National Festival for Children of Child Care Institutions (CCIs) - was organized by The Ministry of Women and Child Development

- ✓ Theme - Child Safety
- ✓ The festival saw the participation of more than 600 children from 18 states in various events
- ✓ The team from Orissa walked away with the Rolling Trophy with the Chhattisgarh team finishing close second

COMMITTEES

- ◆ **Union Cabinet - extends the tenure of Committee under Justice (Retd) G Rohini - to examine the issue of sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in Central list**

AWARDS

- ◆ **Mylswamy Annadurai - conferred the award of 'Mars Man' during the Engineer's Day celebrations in Kuwait by the chapter of Indian Engineer's Institute**
- ✓ The award recognizes his contribution to ISRO's Mangalyaan project as the Director of Mars Orbiter Mission

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER CURRENT AFFAIRS ADDITIONAL NOTES

MAJOR SCHEMES

Sovereign Gold Bonds

On October 8, 2018, the Government launched 'Sovereign Gold Bond 2018-19' scheme in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India

They will be issued every month from October 2018 to February 2019 through banks, Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL), designated post offices, and recognised stock exchanges such as the National Stock Exchange and Bombay Stock Exchange.

The Bonds will be denominated in multiples of gram(s) of gold with a basic unit of 1 gram

The tenure of the Bond will be for a period of 8 years with exit option in 5th, 6th year and 7th year to be exercised on the interest payment dates

The maximum limit of investment shall be 4 kg for individual, 4 Kg for HUF and 20 Kg for trusts and similar entities in a year (April-March)

The Gold Bonds will be issued as Government of India Stock under GS Act, 2006

The investors will be compensated at a fixed rate of 2.50% per annum, payable semi-annually on the nominal value

Bonds can be also used as collateral or security for loans

National policy of electronics

The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) released the draft of the National Policy on Electronics 2018, on October 10, 2018, for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) Sector of India

It aims to promote domestic manufacturing in entire value-chain of ESDM sector for contributing to the economic development in the country.

It aims to double the target of mobile phone production from 500 million units in 2019 to 1 billion by 2025 to meet the objective

It intends to create \$400 billion electronics manufacturing industry by 2025, with mobile phone devices segment accounting for three-fourths of production.

It also includes targeted production of 1 billion mobile handsets by 2025, valued at \$190 billion (approximately Rs. 13 lakh crore) and also 600 million mobile handsets valued at \$110 billion (approximately Rs. 7 lakh crore) for export

It replaces existing incentive schemes like Modified Special Incentive Package Scheme (M-SIPS), with schemes that are easier to implement such as interest subsidy and credit default guarantee etc

It also proposes to set up 20 greenfield and three brownfield electronic manufacturing cluster projects have been sanctioned with project outlay of Rs 3,898 crore, including Rs 1,577 crore from Central Government.

It also proposes to push development of core competencies in all sub-sectors of electronics including electronic components and semiconductors, automotive electronics, defence electronics, industrial electronics, strategic electronics etc

It proposes suitable direct tax benefits under Income Tax (IT) Act for electronics manufacturing sector for setting up of new manufacturing unit or expansion of an existing unit

The first National Policy on Electronics (NPE) was rolled out in 2012

India for Humanity Initiative

The initiative 'India for humanity' was launched by the Ministry of External Affairs. It was formally launched by Sushma Swaraj, External Affairs Minister, in New Delhi on 9 October 2018.

As part of 150th Birth Anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi being held over the next one year, the Ministry of External Affairs has launched the initiative in honour of his service to humanity.

The initiative focuses on Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of compassion, caring and service to humanity.

It features a year-long series of artificial limb fitment camps in a number of countries spanning the globe.

For the initiative, the Ministry is collaborating with the renowned charitable organization "Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti" (BMVSS).

BMVSS was founded by Dr Mehta in 1975.

It was better known by its trademark limb "Jaipur Foot".

BMVSS is among the world's largest organisations for the fitment of artificial limbs, calipers etc, providing them with artificial limbs, crutches, calipers, ambulatory aids like wheel chairs, and other aids and appliances totally free-of-cost.

It had served over 1.73 million amputees.

The limb fitment camps aim to provide for the physical, economic and social rehabilitation of the differently-abled around the world.

It helps them to regain their mobility and dignity to become self-respecting and productive members of the society.

The initiative will be fully sponsored by Ministry of External Affairs.

IMPRESS AND SPARC SCHEME

The Centre announced two schemes to promote higher education research in India on October 26, 2018 -

IMPRESS, dealing with social science research projects and

SPARC, involving foreign collaboration mainly in science research

IMPRESS (Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences) Scheme

It was launched by HRD Ministry to promote Research in Social Sciences

The government support would include a total funding of Rs.414 crore on 1500 projects for 11 policy themes in the social sciences at the cost of Rs. 20-25 Lakh per project.

THEME PROJECTS

- State and Democracy
- Urban transformation
- Media, Culture and Society
- Employment Skills and Rural transformation
- Governance Innovation and Public Policy
- Growth Macro-trade and Economic Policy
- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Health and Environment
- Science and Education
- Social Media and Technology
- Politics, Law and Economics.

NODAL AGENCY

The Indian Council of Social Science and Research (ICSSR) will be the project implementing agency for IMPRESS

Focus on social science

SPARC (Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration) SCHEME

the Union Ministry of HRD has launched Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) scheme, which aims to improve the research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in the world.

FEATURES OF THE SCHEME

Under the scheme 600, joint research proposals (between Indian institute and foreign university) will be awarded for 2 years.

The topic will be related to science and humanity.

THRUST AREAS

The scheme will improve the research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in the world to jointly solve problems of national and international relevance.

Five thrust (fundamental) areas identified are as follows:

1. Fundamental Research
2. Emergent Areas of Impact (nanotechnology / biotechnology)
3. Convergence
4. Action-Oriented Research
5. Innovation-Driven

NODAL AGENCY

IIT-Kharagpur is the national Coordinating Institute to implement the SPARC programme.

NIRBHAYA FUND

Nirbhaya fund was a dedicated fund set up in 2013 with the focus on implementing the initiatives aimed at improving the security and safety of women in India

The fund was called “Nirbhaya Fund”, Nirbhaya meaning fearless, the pseudonym given to the 2012 gang-rape victim to conceal her identity

The government’s contribution towards the non-lapsable corpus fund was Rs. 1000 crores.

The Fund is administered by [Department of Economic Affairs](#) of the finance ministry.

The ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal ministry involved in appraising, reviewing, and monitoring the progress of those schemes sanctioned under the Nirbhaya Fund

An Empowered Committee of Officers under the Secretary of Women and Child Development Ministry was setup in 2016 to monitor the fund

3 schemes have been implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development under the fund

- ‘One Stop Centre’
- ‘Universalisation of Women Helpline’
- ‘Mahila Police Volunteer’

Schemes being implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs are as follows:

- Emergency Response Support System
- Central Victim Compensation Fund

Other major schemes

- Introduction of SoS buttons in Phones
- Setting up an SoS Alert system in trains in western and central zones
- Installation of CCTV cameras and GPS in public transport
- Setting up Nirbhaya centres near government hospitals in every district as first-point access for victims of sexual assault and domestic violence
- Victim compensation fund for the rehabilitation of acid attacks victim
- Programme named ‘Shubh’ for mapping vulnerabilities and identifying areas of women needing special protection such as widowed woman etc.,

Recent activities

Nov 17, 2018 - The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development has decided to use Nirbhaya Fund to set up 1,023 fast track courts to dispose off pending cases of rape of children and women.

The project has a total financial implication of Rs. 767.25 crore. In the first phase, 777 FTSCs may be set up in nine states, and in the second phase, 246 FTSCs will be set up

March 18, 2018 - The Centre approved projects worth over Rs 2,919.55 crore under the Nirbhaya fund for eight major cities of the country (Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad and Lucknow) in a bid to make them safer for women

Background

Justice Verma committee - set up after the nirbhaya incident - recommended setting up of cctv cameras and gps in public transport and a public emergency response system (single toll-free number for the entire country)

Justice Usha Mehra committee - to look into nirbhaya incident - recommended to set up a crisis centre for victims of gender based violence for easy legal access

TAMIL NADU URBAN FLAGSHIP INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

The program will develop priority water supply, sewerage, and drainage infrastructure in at least 10 cities located within strategic industrial corridors of Tamil Nadu

It will support innovative pilots, including India's first solar-powered sewage treatment plant (STP) to offset greenhouse gas emissions and enhance operational efficiency

It also intends to strengthen urban governance and build capacity of state and local institutions to enhance urban service delivery, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience

It will benefit around 4 million people from piped water and sewerage connections and improved drainage

It is funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB)

The first tranche of ABD loan will target cities of Chennai, Coimbatore, Rajapalayam, Tiruchirappalli, Tirunelveli, and Vellore

Moreover, \$2 million grant from Asian Clean Energy Fund, established by Government of Japan will fund solar energy pilot project

Besides, ADB technical assistance grant of \$1 million will accompany program to support capacity building

Recently, the Central Government has signed \$169 Million Loan agreement with Asian Development Bank (ADB) for Tamil Nadu Urban Flagship Investment Program

It is first tranche of \$500 million multi-tranche financing to provide water and sanitation services in Tamil Nadu

Outcomes

- i. Universal access to basic water and sanitation services achieved (Tamil Nadu Vision 2023)
- ii. "World-class" cities and industrial corridors across the state developed (Tamil Nadu Vision 2023);
- iii. Water security, reduced vulnerability to climate change in urban areas, and enhanced share of renewable energy achieved (Tamil Nadu Sustainable Water Security Mission, State Action Plan on CI)

MSME'S SUPPORT AND OUTREACH SCHEME

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, launched the 'support and outreach programme' for the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector on November 2, 2018 in New Delhi

As part of this programme, the Prime Minister unveiled 12 key initiatives under 5 key aspects - which will help the growth, expansion and facilitation of MSMEs across the country

Aspects	12 Initiatives
Access to Credit	59 minute loan portal to enable easy access to credit for MSMEs. Loans upto Rs. 1 crore can be granted in-principle approval in just 59 minutes through GST Portal.
	2% interest subvention for all GST registered

	<p>MSMEs on fresh or incremental loans . Increase in interest rebate from 3% to 5% for exporters who receive loans in the pre-shipment and post-shipment period.</p>
	<p>All companies with a turnover more than Rs 500 crore will now compulsorily be brought on the Trade Receivables e-Discounting System (TReDS). It will enable entrepreneurs to access credit from banks. This will resolve the problems of cash cycle.</p>
Access to Markets	<p>Public sector companies will now need to compulsorily procure 25%, instead of 20% of their total purchases from MSMEs.</p>
	<p>Out of the 25% procurement mandated from MSMEs, 3% will now be reserved for women entrepreneurs.</p>
	<p>All public sector undertakings of the Union Government must now compulsorily be a part of GeM.</p>
Technology Upgradation	<p>20 hubs will be formed across the country and 100 spokes in the form of tool rooms will be established.</p>
Ease of Doing Business	<p>Clusters will be formed of pharma MSMEs. 70% cost of establishing these clusters will be borne by the Union Government.</p>
	<p>The return under 8 labour laws and 10 Union regulations will now need to be filed only once a year.</p>
	<p>Establishments to be visited by an Inspector will be decided through a computerised random allotment.</p>
	<p>Air pollution and water pollution laws have now been merged as a single consent. The return will be accepted through self-certification.</p>
	<p>Ordinance has been brought under which, for minor violations under the Companies Act, the entrepreneur will no longer have to approach the Courts, but can correct them through simple procedures.</p>
Social Security for MSME	<p>A mission will be launched to ensure that they</p>

Sector Employees	have Jan Dhan Accounts, provident fund and insurance.
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MSME Outreach programme announced the Prime Minister

MSME Outreach Programme will run for 100 days covering 100 Districts throughout the country.

Various Central Ministers will visit these districts in order to apprise the entrepreneurs about various facilities being extended to MSME Sector by the Government and financial institutions

The Indian MSME sector

The sector generates around 100 million jobs through over 46 million units

It plays a key role in India's economy with 38% contribution to the nation's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and 40% and 45% share of the overall exports and manufacturing output respectively

MAJOR CONFERENCE AND SUMMITS

STOPCOR 2018

The International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (**STAPCOR - 2018**) was inaugurated by the **Union Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change**, Dr. Harsh Vardhan on 22nd October at Bangaram coral Island of Union Territory of Lakshadweep

Theme - "Reef for Life"

The three-day conference highlighted the importance of coral reefs and the need for its protection

The Department of Environment and Forest, Union Territory of Lakshadweep Administration organised this mega conference with the technical support of

Zoological Survey of India and in association with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, IUCN and ENVIS

International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI) has declared 2018 as the third decadal International Year of the Reef (IYOR) to promote coral reef conservation

IYOR was first declared in 1997 and then 2008 as the second International Year of the Reef

Lakshadweep will establish an International Atoll Research Centre, with world class infrastructures for scientific research on corals

Corals

Corals are made up of genetically identical organisms called **polyps** held together by **calcium carbonate**, and have microscopic algae called zooxanthellae living within their tissues.

A coral reef is an **underwater ecosystem** characterized by **reef-building corals**

They **occupy less than 0.1% of the world's ocean area**

The **corals and algae have a mutualistic relationship.**

They are also called the "rainforests of the seas"

There are 2 types of corals-

- Hard, shallow-water corals – the kind that builds reefs.
- Soft corals and deep water corals that live in dark cold waters.

Benefit of corals

Habitat for fish species

Income - including tourism and food

Coastal protection

Medicine

Threat to Corals

Overfishing

Destructive fishing methods

Recreational activities

Coastal development

Pollution

Climate change

Illegal wildlife trade

The International Coral Reef Initiative (ICRI)

The Initiative was founded in 1994 by eight governments: Australia, France, Japan, Jamaica, the Philippines, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America.

ICRI now have more than 60 members including India



SUSTAINABLE BLUE ECONOMIC CONFERENCE 2018

The first Sustainable Blue Economy Conference was held in Nairobi, capital of Kenya.

It was organized by Kenya and co-hosted by Japan and Canada

The theme of this conference was 'The Blue Economy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.'

Over 17,000 plus participants from some 184 countries had participated in the conference

It builds on the momentum of the **UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development**, the 2015 Climate Change Conference in Paris and the UN Ocean Conference 2017 "**Call to Action**"

Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Shipping, Road Transport & Highways, Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation addressed the Sustainable Blue Economy Conference

Blue Economy - Introduction

- Blue Economy - It is the economic benefit and value that is realized from Earth's coastal and marine environment
- Sustainable Blue Economy - It is marine-based economy that provides social and economic benefits for current and future generations, restores, protects and maintains diversity, productivity and resilience of marine ecosystems

India and Blue Economy

Blue Economy is a critical aspect of India's economic development agenda with more than 95% of our trade is being carried on by sea.

India endorses the growth of the Blue Economy in a sustainable, inclusive and people centered manner through the framework of the **Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA)**

Our National Vision in this regard is articulated in the term "SAGAR" - Security and Growth for All in the Region - coined by Prime Minister, Narendra Modi

Prime Minister says that the Blue Chakra of India's national flag represents the potential of the Blue Economy

Major Blue Economy schemes in India:

Sagarmala Programme

- It has identified 600 plus projects entailing a huge investment of \$120 billion (nearly Rs. 8 lakh crore) by 2020.
- It saves India \$6 billion per annum in logistics costs besides creating 10 million new jobs and boosting port capacity by 800 Million Metric Tonne per Annum (MMTPA) to an overall 3500 MMTPA.

Coastal Economic Zones (CEZs)

- It is developed with a proposed investment of \$150 Million per location.
- It will become a microcosm of the blue economy, with the growth of industries and townships that depend on the sea and contribute to global trade through sea connectivity.
- It also focuses on the development of coastal communities and people through skill gap analysis, skill development centers to train coastal communities in the sustainable use of ocean resources, modern fishing techniques and coastal tourism.
- Several green initiatives were taken in the coastal regions like 31 MW of captive solar power generation at various ports, installation of oil spill response facilities
- Study to identify ways to re-use waste water at ports.

ASIAN EUROPEAN SUMMIT

12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) was held in Brussels, Belgium on October 18-19

Theme: 'Europe and Asia: Global Partners for Global Challenges'

Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu led the Indian delegation at the summit.

European Council President Donald TUSK chaired the summit

The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is an informal process of dialogue and cooperation bringing together the 28 European Union member states, 2 other European countries with 21 Asian countries and the ASEAN Secretariat, Jakarta

It was officially established on 1 March 1996 at the first summit in Bangkok, Thailand.

It is held once in every two years

The main components of the ASEM process rest on the following 3 pillars -

1. Political & Security Pillar.
2. Economic & Financial Pillar.
3. Social, Cultural & Educational Pillar.

Previous ASEM SUMMITS

- ASEM 13: 2020, Phnom Penh, Cambodia.
- SEM 12: 18-19 October 2018, Brussels, Belgium.
- SEM 11: 15-16 July 2016, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.

India has never hosted ASEM summit.

1ST INDIA-ASIAN INNO TECH SUMMIT, DELHI

1st [ASEAN-India InnoTech Summit](#) was hosted by India in New Delhi during 29-30 November 2018

The main objective of the InnoTech Summit was to exhibit and build networks between Indian and ASEAN researchers, scientists, Innovators, Technocrats, private companies and Start-ups etc

It was organized by Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) in association with Department of Science & Technology (DST) and Ministry of External Affairs

As part of India's Act East policy, it aims to facilitate building an ASEAN-India Innovation and Technology Databank for sharing among India and ASEAN country stakeholders

Participating ASEAN Member Countries: Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam

Objectives:

- Explore avenues of cross country partnerships with Indian R&D-based enterprises
- Capture global trends in technology management and strategy
- Connect local and global research & development community for collaborative engagement

- Create avenues for industry-academia-government partnerships
- Promote best practices in financing, strategy, and leadership
- Advance progressive ideas for policy reforms and regulatory environment
- Build capacities for market assessment and rapid commercialization of research

BASIC MINISTERIAL SUMMIT, DELHI

The 27th BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change was held in New Delhi, India on 19-20 Nov 2018

The meeting was chaired by H.E. Dr Harsh Vardhan, Minister of Environment, Forest and Climate Change of India.

In this BASIC meet Edson Durte, minister of the environment from Brazil, xie zhenhua, special representative of climate change Affairs of China were among the main participants

A joint statement was issued after this meeting

According to the statement, the BASIC Ministers emphasized their deep concern for climate change and reaffirmed their commitment to the successful implementation of the United Nation Framework convention on climate change (UNFCCC), its Kyoto protocol and its Paris Agreement

They also urged developed countries to take urgent actions to close pre-2020 implementation gaps by 2023 which they said can be useful input for first Global Stocktake (GST)

They also resolved to promote global green concept and low carbon transition with a view to build a community with shared future of the mankind

The meeting comes ahead of UN Conference of Parties (COP) scheduled to be held in December 2018 in Katowice, Poland

The BASIC countries (also Basic countries or BASIC) are a bloc of four large newly industrialized countries - Brazil, South Africa, India and China - formed as per the agreement on 28 November 2009.

Brazil will host the 28th BASIC Ministerial Meeting in the first half of 2019

What is GST?

GST refers to proposed five-yearly-review of the impact of climate change action undertaken by countries

Under the Paris Agreement, each country has to present a climate action plan every five years

Under the Paris Agreement, the first global stocktake will happen in 2023

India is demanded for 10-year period for GST, arguing 5 year is too short a time to assess the desired impacts

G20 SUMMIT

The 2018 G20 Buenos Aires summit, was the [thirteenth meeting](#) of [Group of Twenty](#) (G20), which was held on 30 November and 1 December 2018 in the city of [Buenos Aires, Argentina](#)

It was the first G20 summit to be hosted in South America

President Mauricio Macri of Argentina assumed the presidency of G20 on November 30, 2017 for a period of one year

The theme of the summit was '*Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development*'

In a joint declaration, the leaders of G20 nations, except for US President Donald Trump, reaffirmed their commitment to fight climate change by upholding the Paris Agreement

They took note of UN scientists' call for a more ambitious target of reducing the warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels

Prime Minister Narendra Modi represented India at the Summit

PM Modi presented a 9-point agenda to G20 Member Nations, calling for strong and active cooperation to deal with fugitive economic offenders

1. Strong and active cooperation across G20 countries to deal comprehensively and efficiently with the menace fugitive economic offenders

2. Cooperation in legal processes such as affective freezing of the proceeds of crime, early return of the offenders and efficient repatriation of the proceeds of crime should be enhanced and streamlined
3. Joint effort by G20 countries to form a mechanism that denies entry and safe havens to all fugitive economic offenders
4. Principles of United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC), United Nations Convention Against Transnational organized Crime (UNOTC), especially related to International Co-operation should be fully and effectively implemented
5. FATF should be called upon to assign priority and focus to establishing international cooperation that leads to timely and comprehensive exchange of information between the competent authorities and FIUs
6. G20 Forum should consider initiating work on locating properties of economic offenders who have a tax debt in the country of their residence for its recovery
7. Common platform should be set up for sharing experiences and best practices including successful cases of extradition gaps in existing systems of extradition and legal assistance etc
8. FATF should also develop a set of commonly agreed and standardized procedures related to identification extradition and judicial proceedings for dealing with fugitive economic offenders to provide guidance and assistance to G20 countries subject to their domestic law
9. FATF should be tasked to formulate a standard definition of fugitive economic offenders

He highlighted the flagship programmes like the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojna, MUDRA and Start-up India undertaken by his government to modernise the economy and promote inclusive growth.

He also announced that India will host the G20 Summit in 2022, when the country celebrates its 75th year of Independence.

Japan is scheduled to host the G20 Summit in 2019, followed by Saudi Arabia in 2020 and Italy in 2021

Why does this agenda matter?

This agenda arrives just months after embattled liquor baron Vijay Mallya, currently stationed in the UK, refused to turn himself in if the prison facilities in India weren't

up to the mark. Rumours about Mallya tipping off senior BJP lawmakers before escaping had also emerged, ruffling feathers at the Centre earlier this year and inviting criticism from the opposition.

India's strengthening of the agenda around economic fugitives on a global forum also comes just days after Mehul Choksi, a culpable accomplice to Nirav Modi in the PNB scam, refused to return expressing fears of being lynched. Accused of offering leeway and leniency for the longest time, the government may also be looking to tighten their policies and plan of action with respect to fugitive economic offenders in the run-up to the general elections in 2019.

G20 summit at a glance

- The G20 is an international forum of the governments and central bank governors from 20 major economies.
- It was formed in 1999
- Collectively, the G20 economies account for around 85% of the Gross World Product (GWP) and 80% of world trade

APEC

The 2018 Apec summit was held recently held in Papua New Guinea from November 17-18

It was the first time Papua New Guinea is hosting the APEC meetings

Theme - 'Harnessing Inclusive Opportunities, Embracing the digital future'

Key Areas of Joint cooperation

- Harnessing Growth in the Resource Sectors
- Promote Food Security in the region
- Gender Inclusion and Women's Economic Empowerment

Outcome

- It ended with no joint statement from the leaders - a first in Apec history - and with the fight for dominance in the Pacific region between Australia, the US and Japan on one side and China on the other, coming out into the open

APEC

The Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is a regional economic forum established to support sustainable economic growth and prosperity in the Asia-Pacific region

Established – 1989 in Canberra, Australia

It was formally established in 1993 with 12 members

Member Countries - 21

APEC Members account for approximately 40% of the world's population, approximately 54% of the world's gross domestic product and about 44% of world trade.

For several years, India has aspired to become a member of the Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation Organisation (APEC).

However, India's request for becoming a formal member of the group, first made in 1993 and then in 2007 is yet to be accepted.

OTHER ISSUES

#MeToo movement

Purpose

It is a movement against sexual harassment and sexual assault

The original purpose of "Me Too" was to empower women through empathy, especially young and vulnerable women

Evolution

It first spread virally in October 2017 as a hashtag on social media with a major series of sexual abuse allegations made against Harvey Weinstein, an American film producer

The phrase 'Me Too' was first used by Tarana Burke, an American social activist and community organizer, as early as 2006

It was later popularized by American actress Alyssa Milano, on Twitter in 2017

The hashtag has trended in at least 85 countries, including India, Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

#MeToo in India

In India, the sexual harassment is commonly referred to by the word 'eve-teasing', a term described as misleading, tame, and diluting the seriousness of the crime

Following the #MeToo campaign, many countries including India have contemplated on changing their cultural norms in order to eradicate the sexual harassment in the workplace

On September 27, 2018, former Bollywood actress Tanushree Dutta accused Nana Patekar of sexual harassment, which was the catalyst of the "Me Too" movement in India

It was followed by the allegations against the Minister of state for External Affairs, MJ Akbar, who eventually resigned on 17 October, having decided to fight in a personal capacity the allegations made against him

Several film personalities including music director Anu Malik, lyricist Vairamuthu etc., were accused of allegations of sexual harassment made through the movement

Even though the campaign highlights the instances of sexual abuse, there were allegations that it was being used to settle scores against high-profile personalities, when the claims were not backed by solid evidence

LIST OF UNESCO'S INTANGIBLE CULTURAL HERITAGE SITES (INDIAN SITES 13)

A total of 13 Intangible cultural heritage (ICH) elements from India have been inscribed till date on the UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

The Ministry of Culture has appointed the Sangeet Natak Akademi, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Culture, as nodal office for matters relating to the intangible cultural heritage including for preparation of the nomination dossiers for the Representative List of UNESCO

Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity

<u>S.No.</u>	<u>ICH Element</u>	<u>Year of Inscription</u>
	Tradition of Vedic chanting	2008
	Ramlila, the traditional performance of the Ramayana	2008

	Kutiyattam, Sanskrit theatre	2008
	Ramman, religious festival and ritual theatre of the Garhwal Himalayas, India	2009
	Mudiyettu, ritual theatre and dance drama of Kerala	2010
	Kalbelia folk songs and dances of Rajasthan	2010
	Chhau dance	2010
	Buddhist chanting of Ladakh: recitation of sacred Buddhist texts in the trans-Himalayan Ladakh region, Jammu and Kashmir, India	2012
	Sankirtana, ritual singing, drumming and dancing of Manipur	2013
	Traditional brass and copper craft of utensil making among the Thatheras of Jandiala Guru, Punjab, India	2014
	Yoga	2016
	Nawrouz, Novruz, Nowrouz, Nowrouz, Nawrouz, Nauryz, Nooruz, Nowruz, Navruz, Nevruz, Nowruz, Navruz	2016
	Kumbh Mela	2017

PSLV C43

ISRO launched its latest earth observation satellite HysIS, the data from which can be used in wide-ranging areas including agriculture, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre here onboard ISRO's trusted workhorse Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV).

The rocket, PSLV-C43, successfully injected state of the art HysIS and 30 other co-passenger satellites from eight countries into their designated orbits.

HysIS, the latest earth observation satellite developed by [ISRO](#), has several uses.

The satellite's data will be useful in many fields including agriculture, forestry, soil survey, geology, coastal zone studies, inland water studies, environmental monitoring and pollution detection from industries.

The mission was one of the longest for ISRO.

The primary mission of the HysIS, whose mission life is five years, is to study the earth's surface in visible, near infrared and shortwave infrared regions of the electromagnetic spectrum.

The mass of the spacecraft is about 380 kilograms, ISRO

The co-passenger satellites have been contracted for launch through ISRO's commercial arm Antrix Corporation Limited.

PSLV-C43 is the 'Core Alone' version of PSLV. It is the lightest version of the launch vehicle.



CONTENT FOR DECEMBER 2018 CURRENT AFFAIRS

DECEMBER, 2018

TAMIL NADU

- ◆ **S Ramakrishnan, 52 years old Tamil writer - honoured with 'Sahitya Akademi' Award for his novel 'Sancharam', which deals with the lives of Nadhaswaram artistes**
 - ✓ He has been writing several short stories, novels, plays, children's literature and translations for the last 27 years
 - ✓ He has authored and published 5 novels, 4 books for children, 10 collections of short stories, 24 collections of articles and 9 plays so far
 - ✓ He had won Tagore Literary Award, Sangeetha Nataka Academy, Iyal Award and award for best novel from Tamilnadu Government.
- ◆ **India's first Underwater Museum - is planned 7 km off the coast of Puducherry**
- ◆ **Seeni Viswanathan, noted Bharati scholar - to receive the 1st 'Mahakavi Bharathiyar Award' from the Tamil Nadu Governor, Banwarilal Purohit in Ettayapuram**
- ◆ **'Tribal Eco Cultural Village', a museum representing the culture and lifestyle of the tribals in Tamil Nadu - is being set up at the Sathyamangalam Tiger Reserve (STR) at a cost of Rs 7 crore**
- ◆ **Tamil Nadu's 1st Mind Museum - to come up in Chennai soon**
 - ✓ The first-of-its-kind museum will record the history of mental health treatment in the country
 - ✓ It will be set up on the lines of a mental health museum in Istanbul, Turkey

◆ **Tamil Nadu CM, Edapaadi K Palaniswami - launches a 24-hour, toll-free helpline '181' - for women facing domestic violence and sexual harassment**

- ✓ The initiative has been developed at a cost of Rs 62.70 lakh
- ✓ The affected women can contact the helpline to get emergency assistance such as police help, legal aid or medical services including an ambulance
- ✓ 'Gold for Mangalsutra' scheme
- ✓ The scheme was launched by the former CM, J Jayalalithaa by giving 4 grams of Gold to poor women for their marriage assistance in June 2011
- ✓ It was later revised to 8 grams during September 2016 by the former CM, J Jayalalithaa

◆ **Government Girls Higher Secondary School, Ashok Nagar - becomes the first School in the country to launch 'Photographic Attendance' System for Students from December 10, 2018**

- ✓ The system functions through an Android app developed by Bengaluru-based company, I.C.E.T
- ✓ This facility is currently in practice in military and some other departments in China
- ✓ The Photos of all the students were first captured and stored in the server of the Android App
- ✓ Once, the teacher captures the photo of the entire students in the class through the App downloaded in the mobile phone, it compares with the photos in the server and identifies the 'absentees'
- ✓ This Artificial Intelligence (AI) based system, aimed to prevent wrong entry of Attendance, will be implemented on a pilot basis for Class VIII students of the school


◆ **P Hanifa Zaara, a seven year old girl - was named as the brand ambassador for the Swachh Bharat scheme for Ambur Municipality**

◆ **Tamil Isai Sangam - to confer '63rd Isai Peraringnar award' to Mrudanga vidwan Padmavibhushan 'Umayalpuram K Sivaraman' and '10th Pann Isai Peraringnar award' to 'Palani K Venkatesan'**

- ◆ Tamil Nadu CM, Edappadi K Palaniswami - unveils 'Food processing policy' on December 12, 2018

The state of food processing industry in TN

- On an average, **120 lakh** tonnes of food grains, **140 lakh** tonnes of vegetables and fruits, **4.41 lakh** tonnes of broilers, **1,741 crore** eggs, **7.12 lakh** tonnes of fish produced every year
- Processing of agricultural commodities is below **2%**
- A total of **24,000** registered food processing firms are there in the SME sector, and



- about **1,100** medium and large units
- Tamil Nadu's contribution in the country's food processing output is about **7%**

- ✓ The policy aims at increasing farmers' income, reducing wastage of food products and value addition to farm products
 - ✓ It also encourages setting up of food processing industries by agro-entrepreneurs, availing financial assistance from the Union government and interest grants provided by the State Government (3% per annum for term loans availed for fixed capital investment and 5% per annum for Women/SC/ST entrepreneurs)
 - ✓ The state has planned to increase the percentage of processed food, especially that of fruits and vegetables to 10%
 - ✓ A single clearance desk at Directorate of industries and commerce will help small scale industries, while TN Industrial Guidance and Export Promotion Bureau will be the facilitator for large industries.
- ◆ Tamil Nadu CM, Edappadi K Palaniswami - unveils a new web portal 'www.ckicp.tnhighways.gov.in' - to monitor the progress of 'Chennai-Kanyakumari Industrial Corridor project'
 - ✓ The project is developed with the financial assistance of Asian Development Bank (ADB)

- ◆ **A new Government-backed Tamil Education channel - to be inaugurated from Pongal festival in the state - in Arasu Cable TV**
- ✓ Kerala already has a similar channel for the state's school and education department
- ◆ **Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami - launched the distribution of 'Satellite phones' to 80 fishermen groups involved in deep sea fishing**
- ✓ Thus, the state becomes the first in the country to provide satellite phones to its fishermen for assisting them in their navigation while sailing high seas
- ✓ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has designed the 'NavIC'-powered receivers, which will produce a 'beep' sound on receiving the alerts
- NavIC - An Introduction
- ✓ NavIC is an independent regional navigation satellite system developed by India
- ✓ It is the Indian version of American GPS (Global positioning system)
- ✓ It is designed to provide accurate position information service to users in India as well as the region extending up to 1,500 km from the shore
- ✓ It will provide two types of services, namely, Standard Positioning Service (SPS) which is provided to all the users and Restricted Service (RS), which is an encrypted service provided only to the authorised users
- ◆ **IIT, Madras - to collaborate with Thales, a France-based digital firm - for taking up Joint research programs in areas such as Defence, aerospace and transportation**
- ◆ **A new App called 'Cardiomyopathy India' - launched in Chennai at a conference**
- ✓ It will provide medical guidance regarding genetic cardiac diseases, on the uploading of the Echo/ECG scan reports in the App

◆ **Integral coach factory, Chennai - rolls out the country's first ever 'Self-propelled Inspection Car' (SPIC)**

- ✓ Usually a separate locomotive is employed for carrying out inspection works, which is expensive and time-consuming
- ✓ SPIC is self-propelled - which means that it is powered by diesel-electric power pack, placed in the under-slung of the car - effectively eliminating a separate locomotive coach for inspection
- ✓ The SPIC prototype has been manufactured at an approximate cost of Rs 4.5 crore

Features of SPIC

- Stainless steel body coach with aerodynamically designed driving cars in the end.
- Coaches are fully air-conditioned including the driving cars
- Has a seating capacity for 32 persons
- CCTV cameras and LED display on the driver's car
- Onboard Wi-fi
- Vacuum-assisted bio-toilet
- LED lightings
- GPS based passenger information system
- 340 HP underslung diesel-electric power pack for propulsion
- 40 KVA underslung DA set for air conditioning and for powering the light and fans

◆ **Train 18 - the country's first Engineless Train - to be flagged off by the Prime Minister on December 29 between Delhi-Varanasi route**

- ✓ It was manufactured by ICF Chennai at a cost of Rs 100 crore within a record 18 months
- ✓ It recently became India's fastest train by hitting speeds of over 180 kmph during the trials on Delhi-Rajdhani route
- ✓ It will replace Shatabdi trains, which were introduced in 1988
- ✓ Train 18 will be operated at a maximum speed of 160 kmph - the only other train to run at such speed being the Gatimaan Express
- ✓ This is the second high-profile, made-in-India, super-fast train after Mahamana Express, which was flagged off in January 2016 between Delhi and Varanasi.
- ✓ Train 18 has been codenamed after the year it has been manufactured

✓ ICF can manufacture 2 more Train 18 sets in the current financial year and has the capability to making 8 more in 2019-20.

◆ **Indian Oil Corporation - launches its 'Fuel at doorstep' service in the city on December 20**

✓ The customers can place order through an Android app (REPOSE APP)

✓ The minimum order would be 200 litres

✓ The scheme was introduced first in Pune in May 2018

◆ **India and Japan - signs MoU for loan agreement to Chennai Metro Project (Phase 2)**

✓ The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) - had sanctioned Japanese Yen (JPY) 75.519 billion (Rs 4760 crores) for the 107.55 km Phase 2 of the project

◆ **N Thenmukilan, a 12-year old student from Palani in Dindigul district - became the only student from the state whose drawing featured in the NASA Calendar for the year 2019**

◆ **Tamil Nadu Government - to make 1,656 km of roads in various cities across the state as 'Smart Roads'**

FEATURES OF A SMART ROAD

Underground utilities

Roads developed into vibrant public space

Concrete footpaths with street furniture, bollards, streetlights

Underground Ducting

Stormwater Drain

WHERE WILL THEY BE SET UP?

Chennai | Coimbatore | Vellore | Madurai
| Trichy | Salem | Erode | Tirupur |
Tirunelveli | Thoothukudi | Tanjavur

- ✓ The initiative will be funded by Asian Development Bank (ADB) at an estimated cost of Rs 20,000 crore
- ✓ It will be executed under a project titled 'Smart Complete Street Project'
- ✓ The project, once funded, will start in 2020 and complete in 2023

- ◆ **Baduga tribal Community in Nilgiris district - celebrates their annual 'Heddaiyamman' festival**

- ◆ **Aadi Sai Vijaykaran, a 13 years old- class VIII student from KC High School in Chennai - became the first Indian to win the Junior Debate Championship - at the World Scholar's Cup held at Yale University, USA**

- ◆ **M V Le Laperouse, an ultra-modern cruise vessel - becomes the first luxury ship to berth in the newly built 'modernized cruise terminal' at the Chennai port**

- ◆ **Tamil Nadu Government - names its 'Lokayukta' Search Committee**
 - ✓ The search panel will select the Chairperson and four other members of the Lokayukta body in the state
 - ✓ The committee will be headed by retired Madras high court judge, Justice K Venkataraman
 - ✓ Former advocate general R Krishnamoorthy and former IPS officer A Pari will be the other members of the Lokayukta search committee
 - ✓ The state government had earlier introduced the Lokayukta Bill (Tamil Nadu Lokayukta Act, 2018 (Tamil Nadu Act 33 of 2018)) in July 2018

STATE

- ◆ **Nagaland - 19th Hornbill festival is celebrated in the state with the inauguration at Naga Heritage village in Kisama, off Kohima, Nagaland**
 - ✓ The festival is named after Hornbill, one of the venerated bird species in the state

- ◆ **Nagaland CM, Neiphiu Rio - launches the state's 'Tourist Police' in Kohima**
 - ✓ Thus, it becomes the 2nd north eastern state after Arunachal Pradesh to have a separate Tourist police
- ◆ **Nagaland - becomes the first North Eastern state to launch 'Single Emergency Number' 112 - under the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS)**
- ◆ **Delhi Government - launches 'Mukhyamantri Tirth Yatra Yojana'**
 - ✓ The newly launched scheme offers free travel packages for senior citizens above 60 years from Delhi to five religious circuits.
- ◆ **Odisha Government - launches 'PEETHA' programme - to raise awareness and promote transparency on the implementation of various Government schemes**
 - ✓ PEETHA - Peoples Empowerment Enabling Transparency and Accountability
 - ✓ It is part of the government's flagship scheme, Ama Gaon Ama Bikas Yojana
 - ✓ As per the programme, camps will be organised at the gram panchayat level from the 15th to the 20th of each month, starting this month
 - ✓ In these camps, benefits like LED bulb, Old Age pension, etc will be distributed to the beneficiaries
 - ✓ Every month, the best Panchayat in each Block will be given an incentive of Rs. 5 lakh for organising PEETHA
- ◆ **Nagaland CM - Neiphiu Rio launched the first ever 'Swadesh Darshan' project in the state**
 - ✓ It is named as 'Development of Tribal Circuit: Peren-Kohima-Wokha Project'
- ◆ **Maharashtra CM - Devendra Fadnavis launched a unique 'SMART' initiative in the state**

- ✓ **SMART - State of Maharashtra's Agribusiness and Rural Transformation**
- ✓ **The project is assisted by World Bank**
- ✓ **It aims to achieve sustainable farming by improving farm productivity and returns - with direct tie-up of the end buyers**
- ✓ **The scheme is in line with the Centre's vision to double farmer's income by 2022**
- ✓ **It was proposed at a budget of \$300 million with World bank contributing \$210 million**
- ✓ **CII (Confederation of Indian Industry) has been roped in as the industry partner of the initiative**

- ◆ **Kerala - becomes the first and only state in the country to get its 4th International airport in Kannur**
- ✓ **Kochi, Kozhikode and Thiruvananthapuram are the other three cities with an international airport**

- ◆ **Jammu & Kashmir - to have the country's first 'Institute of High-Altitude Medicinal Plants'**

- ◆ **Maharashtra's Pune district court - becomes the first court in India to allow e-payments of court fee, judicial deposits, fines and penalties**

- ◆ **Haryana Government - launches 'Shiksha Setu' mobile App - to bring transparency in the higher education department and college administration**

- ◆ **Maharashtra Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis - launched the 'Bharat Ratna Atal Bihar Vajpayee International Schools' in Mumbai**

- ◆ **Rajasthan Government - abolishes the minimum educational qualification condition - to contest in the Local body elections**

- ◆ **Madhya Pradesh Government - to create a new Adhyatmik Vibhag (spiritual department) - by merging other existing departments**

- ✓ Madhya Pradesh had earlier become the first state in the country to create Happiness Department and announced setting up a Happiness Institute

SPORTS

- ◆ **Abhinav Mukund - becomes the highest run-scorer for Tamil Nadu in Ranji Trophy**
- Lewis Hamilton - awarded 'Drivers' Driver of the Year' - after winning his 5th World Driver's championship

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

- ◆ **India's heaviest Satellite 'Gsat-11' weighing 5,854 kg - to be launched on December 5, 2018 - from French Guiana by Europe's Ariane-5 rocket**
- ✓ Gsat-11 is a communication satellite which will boost the Internet speed in the country
- ✓ Its launch was earlier postponed suspecting technical issues by the ISRO, which has taken an unusual step of recalling the satellite in April 2018 as a precautionary measure
- ✓ It has to be recalled that Gsat-6A failed in its mission around the same time as the satellite went out of control and signal was lost soon after its launch on March 29, 2018
- ✓ Gsat-11 is a high-throughput satellite that carries 40 transponders in the Ku-band and Ka-band frequencies
- ✓ It is capable of providing high bandwidth connectivity with upto 14 gigabit per second (GBPS) data transfer speed
- ◆ **US space agency SpaceX - launched India's first privately built satellite 'ExseedSAT 1' along with 63 other satellites on December 4, 2018 from California**
- ✓ This launch mission of 64 satellites in one go by SpaceX is a new US record
- ✓ After 43 minutes of the launch, SpaceX's Falcon 9 rocket placed ExseedSat-1 into the polar orbit

- ✓ The mini communication satellite, weighing just a kilogram with double the size of a Rubik's cube (10 cm x 10 cm x 10 cm), is made up of aluminium alloy
- ✓ It is the brainchild of a Mumbai-based, 2017-founded startup, Exseed Space, and is aimed to serve the amateur radio community
- ✓ It was built at a cost of Rs 2 crore within a span of just 18 months
- ✓ It will have a lifespan of 5 years and will allow people to receive signals on 145.9 Mhz frequency with the help of a TV tuner
- ✓ During the launch, Falcon 9 carried 15 micro-satellites and 49 CubeSats belonging to 34 different clients from 17 countries
- ✓ The microsattellites weigh a few dozen kilograms and the CubeSats even lesser
- ◆ **European space agency, Arianespace - launched Gsat-11, India's heaviest satellite weighing 5,854 kg from Kourou, French Guiana on December 5, 2018**
- ✓ The launch vehicle, Ariane 5 VA-246, carried India's Gsat-11 and South Korea's GEO-KOMPSAT-2A satellites
- ✓ Ariane 5 is one of three launch vehicles operated by Arianespace along with Soyuz and Vega
- ✓ The payload of Gsat-11 includes 32 Ku-band transmitters and 8 Ka-band transmitters (used for the first time)
- ✓ It will be useful to provide high data rate connectivity up to 14 gigabit per second (Gbps) data transfer speed to Indian urban and rural population
- ✓ Satellite is configured around ISRO's I-6K Bus and has a designed lifetime of more than 15 years.
- ◆ **World's first 3D printed, fully-functional, e-motorbike 'NERA' - was developed in Germany by two firms, BigRep and NOWlab**
- ✓ It was developed within a short span of 12 weeks with just 15 parts excluding the electrical components
- ◆ **ISRO - to launch a dedicated Communication satellite 'Gsat-7A' for the IAF, Indian Air Force during the 3rd week of December, 2018**

- ✓ It will enable IAF to interlink different ground radar stations, airbases and AWACS aircraft apart from boosting the airforce's network-centric warfare capabilities
- ✓ It has a lifetime of 9 years and costs around Rs 500-800 crore
- ✓ It will have Ku-band transponders and 2 deployable solar arrays
- ✓ The satellite, weighing 2.2 tonnes, will be launched by GSLV Mk II
- ✓ It will be the second satellite dedicated to the military
- ✓ Earlier, ISRO had launched Gsat-7 or Rukmini on September 29, 2013 exclusively for Navy
- ✓ Rukmini helped the Navy to monitor upto 2000 nautical miles of the Indian ocean region apart from providing inputs to Indian warships, maritime aircrafts and submarines

◆ **India - successfully test-fires Agni 5, nuclear capable ballistic missile**

- ✓ The ballistic missile, with a strike range of 5,000 km, was launched from Dr Abdul Kalam Island off Odisha coast in the Bay of Bengal
- ✓ This is the seventh successful trial of the surface-to-surface missile after April 2012, September 2013, January 2015, December 2016, January 2018 and June 2018
- ✓ Agni-5 is a three stage missile capable of carrying 1.5 tonne of nuclear warheads
- ✓ It was indigenously developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO)
- ✓ It is also a fire and forget missile, which once fired cannot be stopped, except by interceptor missile which only US, Russia and Israel have at present
- ✓ India currently has Agni-1 with 700 km range, Agni-2 with a 2,000-km range, Agni-3 and Agni-4 with 2,500 km to more than 3,500-km range
- ✓ Once Agni 5 is inducted into the military, India will join an exclusive club of countries like the US, Russia, China, France and Britain which have intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) capabilities

◆ **Akademik Lomonosov - the world's first "floating" nuclear power plant - installed in Russia by Rosatom, country's atomic energy corporation**

- ✓ It has 2 reactors with a combined capacity of **70MW**
- ✓ Once the tests are completed by March 2019, it will be transported to its final destination to the port of **Pevek** in Russia's extreme north-eastern region of **Chukotka**
- ✓ It will be useful to provide continuous power in remote areas of Russian Arctic regions
- ✓ It has to be recalled that Rosatom are also the equipment suppliers and consultants for the **Kudankulam Nuclear Power Project** in Tamil Nadu.

◆ **ISRO - to launch GSAT-7A communication satellite - aboard GSLV-F11 on December 19, 2018 from Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh**

- ✓ The GSLV Mk II rocket will inject the GSAT-7A into a geosynchronous transfer orbit
- ✓ The mission, designated F11, will be the rocket's 13th flight (F11 - F stands for Operational Flight, whereas D indicates Developmental flight)
- ✓ It is India's 35th communications satellite to be built by ISRO
- ✓ It is configured on ISRO's standard I-2000 kg or the I-2K, bus
- ✓ The satellite has a mission life of eight years
- ✓ It will provide communications capability to Ku-band users over the Indian region
- ✓ GSLV Mk II is ISRO's fourth generation launch vehicle and has three stages
- ✓ The satellite will be a dedicated communication satellite to be used for the Indian Air Force (IAF)
- ✓ It has to be recalled that India's heaviest communication satellite weighing 5854 kg, GSAT-11, was launched recently on December 5, 2018 from French Guiana by Ariane-5 VA-246 rocket

◆ **ISRO - to make the 'Dead rocket' come 'Alive' in space - for the first time in history**

- ✓ It is currently working on a new technology where it will use the last stage of the PSLV rocket for Space experiments
- ✓ For the demonstration, it is planning to send PSLV C44 rocket in January 2019, which will carry a Microsat as the Primary satellite

- ✓ This microsat will have inbuilt batteries and solar panel, which will keep the last stage of the rocket 'active' for a period of 6 months for more experiments in space
- ◆ **Farout (or 2018 VG18) - becomes the most-distant Solar system object ever discovered**
 - ✓ It was detected by the 3 scientists - Sheppard from Carnegie Institution for Science, David Tholen from University of Hawaii, and Chad Trujillo from Northern Arizona University in the US
 - ✓ It was observed at a distance of more than 100 AU (Astronomical units) which almost 120AU or 11 billion miles from the sun
 - ✓ They had also discovered another extremely distant object known as "**The Goblin**" at a distance of **80 AU** from the sun.
 - ✓ The second most distant observed solar system object is **Eris** at a distance of about **96 AU** from the sun
 - ✓ Pluto, a dwarf planet is currently at about 34 AU
- ◆ **India - to launch the Indian Data Relay Satellite System (IDRSS) - as part of its proposed manned space mission**
 - ✓ The two-satellite IDRSS will improve data relay and communication links with its remote sensing earth observation satellites
 - ✓ It will also communicate with Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle - Mark III (GSLV Mk- III) that would carry **three Indian astronauts to space in 2022**
 - ✓ The **first one is expected to be launched in 2019**
 - ✓ IDRSS will be like a hub as it can **receive the commands from the ground stations** and in turn relay the same to other satellites
 - ✓ It can also **monitor a rocket from the time it lifts off from the launch pad.**
- ◆ **India - test fires nuclear capable 'Agni IV' ballistic missile on December 23**
 - ✓ The Agni-IV surface-to-surface missile was tested from the Integrated Test Range of Dr Abdul Kalam Island, off Odisha coast
 - ✓ The two-stage missile, having a strike range of 4000 km, was developed by DRDO

- ✓ This was the 7th trial of Agni-IV missile, with the last trial conducted from the same base on January 2, 2018
- ✓ It has to be recalled that the three-stage, 5000-km strike range 'Intercontinental ballistic missile' (ICBM) Agni V had recently underwent its second pre-induction trial on December 10
- ✓ The first pre-induction trial of Agni V took place in January 2018, following four developmental trials since April 2012
- ✓ Wheeler Island has been renamed as Dr Abdul Kalam Island since September 4, 2015
- ✓ The strategic forces command (SFC) comprising the tri-service already has Prithvi-II (350 km), Agni-I (700 km), Agni-II (2,000 km) and Agni-III (3,000 km) missiles

SCHEMES

- ◆ **Odisha - announces a new scheme 'KALIA'**
 - ✓ **KALIA - Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation**
 - ✓ **The Rs 10,000 crore new scheme aims to empower small, marginal & landless farmers as well as landless labourers**
- ◆ **Jharkhand - announces a new scheme 'Mukhya Mantri Krishi Yojana'**
 - ✓ Under the scheme, the state government will give Rs 5000 for 1 acre or less (up to a maximum of 5 acre) to the farmers
- ◆ **Uttarakhand - launches 'Atal Ayushman Uttarakhand Yojana'**
 - ✓ Under the scheme, every household in the state will be able to avail medical treatment of up to Rs 5 lakh annually

PERSONALITIES

- ◆ **Pune-based Tuhin Satarkar - became the first Indian to climb three routes in the Sahayadri mountain range**
 - ✓ He climbed Dhodap, Jivdhan and Naneghat, three famous peaks which were climbed by **Chatrapati Shivaji**

- ◆ **Kamal Nath - to be sworn in as 18th Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh on December 17, 2018**
- ◆ **Ashok Gehlot - sworn in as the 15th Chief Minister of Rajasthan for the third time on December 17, 2017**
 - ✓ The Indian National Congress won 99 seats out of 199 seats and formed the government
- ◆ **Bhupesh Baghel - was sworn in as the third Chief Minister of Chhattisgarh on December 17**
 - ✓ He replaces BJP's Raman Singh, the longest-serving Chief Minister of any state who served the state for 15 years (2003-2018)
 - ✓ The Indian National Congress won 68 seats out of 90 seats winning the majority to form the government
- ◆ **Kamal Nath - sworn in as the 18th Chief minister of Madhya Pradesh on December 17**
 - ✓ He has been elected for 9 times from Chhindwara Lok Sabha constituency of Madhya Pradesh
 - ✓ He has served as Union Minister in various capacities under Manmohan Singh Government
 - ✓ He replaces Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who was the longest serving Chief Minister of the state with 13 years in office (2005 to 2018)
- ◆ **Vedangi Kulkarni (20 year old from Pune) - became the fastest Asian woman to cycle around the globe on December 23**
- ◆ **'Nel' Jayaraman, renowned agriculturist (54 years)**
 - ✓ He was instrumental in the protection and propagation of indigenous paddy varieties in Tamil Nadu
 - ✓ His notable achievement is bringing back 174 varieties of Paddy and successfully farming them
 - ✓ He also served as the coordinator of 'Save Our Rice' Campaign of Tamil Nadu, which was launched in 2004

- ✓ He is the Training Director of a consumer based organization called CREATE (Consumer Research, Education, Action, Training and Empowerment) in Tamilnadu, which is a major partner in the 'Save our Rice' Campaign
- ✓ Earlier, he worked in the Federation of Consumer Organisations, Tamil Nadu and Pondicherry (FEDCOT) as Director of agriculture.
- ✓ He worked tirelessly to preserve native paddy seeds, following the footsteps of his Guru Dr G Nammalvar
- ✓ He is the main organizer of the annual Paddy seed festival, which is held in his native village Adhirengam, Tiruvarur district, since 2005
- ✓ During the festival, he distributes traditional varieties of Paddy seeds to thousands of farmers on the condition that they should return it two-fold next year
- ✓ The 17th edition of the festival was held successfully in June 2017
- ✓ In 2011, he received the State Award for best organic farmer for his contribution to organic farming
- ✓ In the year 2015, he received the National Award for best Genome Savior
- ✓ Last year, he received the State Award for best organic farmer for his contribution to organic farming
- ✓ He was invited by the Philippines Government to give a talk at the International Rice Research Institute on his work and mission.

◆ **A Sivalingam (94 years), Inventor of Tamil telegraphy - passed away in Trichy**

- ✓ He had earlier developed Tamil telegraphy in 1955 and was helpful in putting it to public use in 1956
- ✓ Born in 1924, he joined the postal department as telegraph clerk in 1944
- ✓ He was also called Tamil Thanthi Sivalinganar

◆ **Prapanchan, path-breaking Tamil novelist (73 years)**

- ✓ Prapanchan is the pseudonym of S Vaidyalingam, who was born in Puducherry in 1945
- ✓ Prapanchan had written 'Vaanam Vasapadum' in the tamil magazine 'Dinamani Kadhir' in 1993

- ✓ He introduced Modern historic fiction to Tamil with his novel 'Vaanam Vasapadum' that won him a Sahitya Akademi Award in 1995
- ✓ The historic novel was set in the times of Ananda Ranga Pillai (1709-1761), a dubash who served the French East India company
- ✓ The novel was based on the private diaries maintained by Pillai from 1736 to 1761 which gave an insight about enormous source of history of 18th Century India
- ✓ His first short story, "Enna Ulagamada" was published in 'Barani', a Tamil magazine in 1961
- ✓ Prapanchan, author of 46 books, was influenced by the self-respect movement
- ✓ His play 'Muttai' features in the syllabus of Delhi University
- ✓ His short story collection 'Netru Manidhargal' is a subject in many colleges

பெற்ற விருதுகள்

1982:	தமிழக அரசு விருது (ஒரு ஊரில் இரண்டு மனிதர்கள்)
1983:	இலக்கியச் சிந்தனை விருது (பிரம்மம்-சிறந்த சிறுகதை விருது)
1986:	தமிழக அரசு விருது (நேற்று மனிதர்கள்)
1987:	புதுவை அரசு விருது (ஆண்களும், பெண்களும்)
1991:	இலக்கியச் சிந்தனை விருது (மானுடம் வெல்லும்)
1995:	சாகித்ய அகாடெமி விருது (வானம் வசப்படும்)
1996:	பாரதிய பாஷா பரிஷத் விருது (வானம் வசப்படும்)
1998:	தினத்தந்தி ஆதித்தனார் விருது
1998:	புதுவை அரசின் கலைமாமணி விருது
2006:	புதுவை அரசின் தமிழ்மாமணி விருது
2007:	சிறந்த எழுத்தாளர் விருது (தென்னிந்திய புத்தகப் பதிப்பாளர்கள் மற்றும் தமிழக அரசு)
2014:	க.நா.சு. வாழ்நாள் சாதனையாளர் விருது
2016:	வாழ்நாள் சாதனையாளர் விருது (தமிழ்நாடு முற்போக்கு கலை இலக்கிய மேடை, தேனி)

- ✓ Some of his acclaimed novels include Vaanam vasappadum, Mahanadhi, Manudam vellum, Sandhya, Kagidha Manidhargal, Kaneeral Kappom, Penmai velga, Padhavi and Erodu Thamizhar uyirodu

- ✓ His short story collections include Netru Manidhargal, Vittu Viduthalayagi, Iruttin Vaasal and Oru ooril irandu manidhargal
- ✓ He has also written several Plays which include Muttai and Akalya

NATIONAL

◆ **Integral Coach Factory, Chennai - hands over the first set of 23 new Tejas express coaches to Southern Railways**

- ✓ Southern Railways will operate the Second Tejas Express between Chennai and Madurai
- ✓ The first Tejas train is being operated between Mumbai and Goa since last year
- ✓ Out of 23 coaches, 18 are air-conditioned chair cars, two are air-conditioned executive chair cars and three are power cars
- ✓ The new coaches have normal sized seats with audio-visual display units well fitted behind every seat apart from several other sophisticated features
- ✓ The date of launch and the schedule will be announced later by the Southern Railways

◆ **Indian Railways - launched 'eDrishti' software - for the Railway Minister to keep track of punctuality of trains apart from Passenger and freight earnings**

◆ **India - to host G20 Summit in the year 2022**

- ✓ This was announced by the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi on the sidelines of G20 Summit in Argentina
- ✓ Earlier, Italy was scheduled to host the summit, but it later withdrawn the same in favour of India
- ✓ It has to be noted that the year 2022 will celebrate the 75th anniversary of India's independence

◆ **Government - launches 'Digital Sky Platform' for the Registration of Drones**

- ✓ The Director General of Civil Aviation's (DGCA) new drone policy has come into effect from December 1, 2018
- ✓ The government will give 30 days' time to register and the operation is expected to start from January 1, 2019
- ✓ 5 Categories of Drones
- ✓ **Nano** - Less than or equal to 250 grams
- ✓ **Micro** - From 250 grams to 2 kg
- ✓ **Small** - From 2kg to 25 kg
- ✓ **Medium** - From 25 kg to 150 kg
- ✓ **Large** - Greater than 150 kg
- ✓ As per the new policy, Nano drones will not need to be registered
- ✓ 3 Zones of Airspace
 - ✓ **Green Zone (Automatic permission)** - Needs intimation of the time and location of the flights through the Digital sky portal or app
 - ✓ **Yellow Zone (Controlled airspace)** - Needs Permission for flying in this zone
 - ✓ **Red Zone (Flying not permitted)** - No drones will be allowed to operate in this zone.
- ◆ **Dibang valley of Arunachal Pradesh at the height of 3,630 metres - could be the highest tiger habitat in the country**
- ◆ **Train 18 - becomes the country's fastest train by clocking 180 kmph during the test run in Kota-Sawai Madhopur section**
- ◆ **Central Mental Health Authority (CMHA) - has been constituted by the Union Government - to monitor and regulate all mental health institutions in the country**
- ✓ The Centre had earlier passed the new Mental Health Care Act in 2017
- ◆ **Indian Railways - creates world record by converting a diesel locomotive into electric for the very first time - in just 69 days**
- ✓ The feat was achieved by the Diesel Locomotive Works (DLW) in Varanasi

- ◆ **Union Cabinet - approves the launching of 'National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems' (NM-ICPS)**
 - ✓ It will be launched by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) at an expected budget of Rs 3660 crore for a period of five years
 - ✓ The objective of the mission is to address technology development, application development, human resource development and skill enhancement, entrepreneurship and start-up development in Cyber physical technology
 - ✓ As part of the mission, 15 Technology Innovation Hubs, 6 Application Innovation Hubs and 4 Technology Translation Research Parks will be established
 - ✓ The cyber physical technology includes artificial intelligence, internet of things, big data analytics, robotics, quantum computing, communication and encryption, data science and predictive analytics along with cyber security

- ◆ **NITI Aayog - launches 'AI 4 All Global Hackathon', a hackathon on Artificial Intelligence**
 - ✓ It is organized in partnership with Perlin, a Singapore-based AI start up
 - ✓ NITI Aayog had earlier announced the hackathon at the AI Conference held in Mumbai in November 2018
 - ✓ Recently, NITI Aayog had organized its first Hackathon 'MoveHack' in August 2018 on the sidelines of the 'Global Mobility Summit 2018'

- ◆ **Indian Railways - launches new 'Buddhist Circuit Tourist Train'**
 - ✓ Earlier, Indian Railways launched another tourist circuit train called the **Shri Ramayana Express on November 14, 2018**

- ◆ **Ministry of Home - launches a new twitter account '@CyberDost' - to create awareness about cybercrimes and the precautions to be undertaken by the General public**
 - ✓ The move is aimed to reduce the disruption of normal business activities or losses due to cybercrimes

◆ **Ministry of Agriculture - launched 'ENSURE', an online portal that connects with the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) activities related to Poultry, small rudiments and pigs**

- ✓ The Portal, ENSURE- National Livestock Mission- EDEG, was developed by NABARD and operated under the Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying & Fisheries
- ✓ Under EDEG (Entrepreneurship Development and Employment Generation) of NLM, the related subsidies are paid directly to the beneficiaries bank accounts
- ✓ The new online portal 'Ensure' will make the process simpler, better, real-time and transparent

◆ **Ministry of Commerce - releases the first ever 'Agriculture Export Policy 2018'**

✓ Vision

- ✓ To harness the export potential of Indian agriculture through suitable policy instruments and to make India a global power in agriculture and raise farmers' income

✓ Highlights

- ✓ The policy aims to strengthen India's march to become a \$5 trillion economy before 2025
- ✓ It plans to boost services sector contribution to \$3 trillion, manufacturing to \$1 trillion and Agriculture to \$1 trillion - to make the country a \$5 trillion economy
- ✓ The Ministry has created a corpus of \$1 billion to boost 12 champion sectors in services - which includes Information Technology & Information Technology enabled Services (IT and ITeS), Tourism and Hospitality Services, Medical Value Travel, Transport and Logistics Services, Accounting and Finance Services, Audio Visual Services, Legal Services, Communication Services, Construction and Related Engineering Services, Environmental Services, Financial Services and Education Services
- ✓ It aims to boost India's agricultural exports to **\$60 billion by 2022** and to achieve **Agriculture Ministry's target of \$100 billion**

✓ **The recommendations in the policy are grouped in two categories - Operational and Strategic recommendations**

- ✓ The Commerce Ministry has identified 15 strategic overseas locations where the Trade Promotion Organisations (TPOs) are proposed to be created
- ✓ These locations include Astana (Kazakhstan), Beijing (China) Cape town (South Africa), Dubai (UAE), Frankfurt (Germany), Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam), Jakarta (Indonesia) Lima (Peru), London (U.K.), Melbourne (Australia), Mexico City (Mexico), Moscow (Russia), New York (USA), Sao Paulo (Brazil) and Tokyo (Japan)
- ✓ **Earlier**, on December 6, 2018, the Union Cabinet approved the creation of country's first **Agriculture Export Policy**

◆ **Government - introduces 'Dam Safety Bill 2018' in the Lok Sabha**

- ✓ The new legislation provides a robust legal and institutional framework under Central and state governments for the safety of dams
- ✓ It was introduced by Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Arjun Ram Meghwal
- ✓ The Bill provides for the surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of specified dams - for prevention of dam failure related disasters
- ✓ The Bill also proposes the setting up of the following authorities to resolve the dam-related issues --
 - ✓ National Committee on Dam Safety
 - ✓ State Committee on Dam Safety
 - ✓ National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)
 - ✓ State Dam Safety Authority (SDSA)
- ✓ According to bill, dam owner is responsible for dam safety and hence the owner state should prepare an Emergency action plan and emergency Flood warning system
- ✓ The Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly had earlier passed a resolution to oppose the Dam Safety Bill on 26 June, 2018
- ✓ Tamil Nadu's apprehensions relate to four dams, including Mullaperiyar, Parambikulam, Thunakadavu and Peruvaripallam, which are located in

Kerala, but owned, operated and maintained by the Tamil Nadu government

- ✓ India, with over 5254 larger dams and 447 under construction, is the third country behind USA and China to have maximum number of dams

◆ **Government - notifies revised guidelines for ground water extraction on December 12, 2018**

- ✓ The revised guideline intends to ensure a more robust ground water regulatory mechanism in the country
- ✓ They will be in effect from June 1, 2019
- ✓ Key points
- ✓ Introduction of the concept of 'Water Conservation Fee', the fee charged on extraction of ground water - which varies as per the type of industry, category of the area and quantum of ground water extraction
- ✓ Usage of Recycled and treated sewage water by industries
- ✓ Action against ground water contaminating and polluting industries
- ✓ Mandatory roof top rain water harvesting
- ✓ Mandatory water audit by industries abstracting ground water
- ✓ Mandatory fitting of digital measuring instruments based on the quantum of extraction
- ✓ Exemptions granted to agricultural users, projects for Armed Forces, Defence and Paramilitary Forces Establishments and Government water supply agencies
- ✓ The Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA), constituted under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 - is responsible for ground water development and management in the country

◆ **Samadhan, a Multi-Disciplinary Training Centre (MTDC) of Khadi and Village Industries Commission - was inaugurated by Giriraj Singh, Union Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (I/C)**

- ✓ It is an industrial training institute set up on PPP (Public-Private partnership) mode with the MSME Ministry
- ✓ It will provide industry and business related guidance and knowledge to entrepreneurs, industries and institutions

- ◆ **India's first Railway University - was dedicated to the nation in Vadodara - by Piyush Goyal, Railways Minister and Vijay Rupani, CM of Gujarat**
 - ✓ The university, named 'the National Rail and Transportation Institute' (NRTI) - is the third in the world after Russia and China

- ◆ **ECO Niwas 2018, a new Energy conservation building code for residential buildings - launched by Ministry of Power - on the occasion of National Energy Conservation Day 2018 (December 14) in New Delhi**
 - ✓ The new code promotes energy efficiency in the design and construction of homes
 - ✓ It will potentially save energy of about 125 billion units of electricity per year by 2030, which is equivalent to about 100 million ton of (Carbon dioxide) CO₂ emission
 - ✓ By 2030, the energy demand in the building sector would have risen from around 350 billion units in 2018 to approximately 1000 billion units

- ◆ **Lok Sabha - passes Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2016**
 - ✓ The new bill aims to empower the transgender community by providing them a separate identity
 - ✓ The bill, introduced in the parliament 2 years ago, has been passed with 27 amendments
 - ✓ Highlights
 - ✓ It defines a Transgender as one who is partly female or male
 - ✓ It states that the person's gender must not match the assigned gender at birth
 - ✓ Every transgender person in the country must obtain an identity certificate as 'Proof' to avail all the rights under the Bill
 - ✓ The identity certificate would be granted by the District Magistrate on the recommendation of a Screening Committee
 - ✓ It directs the central and state governments to provide welfare schemes to the Transgender community
 - ✓ The Bill also provides for the punishment of up to two years' imprisonment and a fine for any sort of abuse of the Transgender

◆ **Cyclone Phethai - crosses coast at East Godavari district in Andhra Pradesh on December 17**

- ✓ It was the 6th named cyclone to hit the southern peninsula so far in this North east monsoon season
- ✓ The previous five named cyclones are Sagar, Mekunu, Luban, Titli and Gaja
- ✓ The name 'Phethai' was given by Thailand, indicating the gem, Zircon

◆ **NITI Aayog - releases 'Strategy for New India @75', a comprehensive national Strategy for New India**

- ✓ The Strategy was released by the Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley
- ✓ The 41 chapters in the document are merged under 4 sections - Drivers, Infrastructure, Inclusion and Governance
- ✓ The strategy has spelt out clear objectives for New India 2022 and to propel India towards a \$5 trillion economy by 2030
- ✓ Key Recommendations under 'Drivers'
- ✓ Steadily accelerate the economy to achieve a GDP growth rate of about 8% on average during 2018-23. This will raise the economy's size in real terms from \$2.7 trillion in 2017-18 to nearly \$4 trillion by 2022-23
- ✓ In agriculture, shift the emphasis to converting farmers to 'agripreneurs' by further expanding e-National Agriculture Markets and replacing the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Act with the Agricultural Produce and Livestock Marketing Act
- ✓ Give a strong push to 'Zero Budget Natural Farming' techniques that reduce costs, improve land quality and increase farmers' incomes
- ✓ To ensure maximum employment creation, complete codification of labor laws; and upscale and expand apprenticeships.
- ✓ Launch a mission "Explore in India" by revamping minerals exploration and licensing policy
- ✓ Key Recommendations under 'Infrastructure'
- ✓ Expedite the establishment of the Rail Development Authority (RDA), which is already approved.

- ✓ Double the share of freight transported by coastal shipping and inland waterways
- ✓ Develop an IT-enabled platform for integrating different modes of transport and promoting multi-modal and digitised mobility.
- ✓ Deliver all government services at the state, district, and gram panchayat level digitally by 2022-23. With the completion of the Bharat Net programme in 2019, all 2.5 lakh gram panchayats will be digitally connected.
- ✓ Key Recommendations under 'Inclusion'
- ✓ Successfully implementing the Ayushman Bharat programme including the establishment of 150000 health and wellness centres across the country, and rolling out the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Abhiyaan (PM-JAY)
- ✓ Upgrade the quality of the school education system and skills, including the creation of a new innovation ecosystem at the ground level by establishing at least 10,000 Atal Tinkering Labs by 2020.
- ✓ Conceptualise an electronic national educational registry for tracking each child's learning outcomes.
- ✓ As already done in rural areas, give a huge push to affordable housing in urban areas to improve workers' living conditions
- ✓ Key Recommendations under 'Governance'
- ✓ Implement the recommendations of the Second Administrative Reforms Commission
- ✓ Set up a new autonomous body 'Arbitration Council of India' to grade and accredit arbitrators
- ✓ Address the backlog of pending cases.
- ✓ Expand the scope of Swachh Bharat Mission to cover initiatives for landfills, plastic waste and municipal waste and generating wealth from waste
- ◆ **India@75 Vision Document - key proposals of NITI Aayog**
- ✓ NITI Aayog - has proposed to reduce upper age limit to 27 years for General category candidates in a phased manner - to join the Civil services by 2022-23
- ✓ Presently, the age cap is at 30 years for the general category candidates

- ✓ It has also proposed to have one integrated exam for all civil services
 - ✓ Currently there are more than 60 separate civil services at central and state levels
 - ✓ It had also proposed setting up of an All-India Judicial Service for recruitment of judges by the UPSC and creating a cadre-based service in the subordinate judiciary - to address huge pendency of cases
 - ✓ It had also proposed a performance index for judges and a separate state-wise index for ease of getting justice, besides introducing an administrative cadre in the judicial system to streamline processes
 - ✓ It had also suggested higher taxes on tobacco, alcohol and unhealthy foods such as soda and sugar-sweetened beverages
 - ✓ The report calls for the inclusion of fuel and electricity within the ambit of goods and services tax (GST)
- ◆ **Prime Minister, Narendra Modi - to inaugurate 'Bogibeel bridge' over the river Brahmaputra on December 25**
- ✓ It is the country's longest Rail cum Road bridge at 4.94 km, connecting Dibrugarh (Assam) to Itanagar-Naharlagun (Arunachal Pradesh)
 - ✓ It is the fourth bridge across Brahmaputra
 - ✓ The railway track providing direct connectivity between both the states will reduce the travel distance by 705 km
 - ✓ The lower deck has double line broad gauge rail tracks & upper deck is a road of three lanes
 - ✓ It is the country's only bridge with fully welded steel-concrete composite girders, strong enough to withstand the movement of heavy military tanks of Indian Army
 - ✓ Built at a cost of Rs 5,900 crore, it will reduce travel time from Assam to Arunachal Pradesh to four hours
 - ✓ It will also cut down train travel between Delhi to Dibrugarh by 3 hours
 - ✓ Till now, the Vembanad rail bridge in Kerala had the distinction of being the longest rail bridge in the country at 4.62 km
 - ✓ History of the Bridge

- ✓ The Bogibeel bridge project was sanctioned in 1997-98 as a part of the 1985 Assam Accord
- ✓ The foundation stone of the project was laid by then Prime minister, HD Deve Gouda on January 22, 1997
- ✓ Commencement of work on the project was done by the former PM, Atal Bihari Vajpayee on April 21, 2002
- ✓ The initial project cost of Rs 1,767 crore escalated to Rs 5,800 crore due to various changes in bridge design and revisions
- ✓ It is hailed as the first bridge in the country in which the European welding standards are adhered

◆ **Indian Railways - to use 'USTAAD', an Artificial Intelligence-Powered Robot - to ensure safety on trains in the Central Railways Zone**

- ✓ USTAAD - Undergear Surveillance Through Artificial Intelligence Assisted Droid
- ✓ It was built by the mechanical branch of Central Railways Nagpur division
- ✓ The robot will click photos and record videos of the train, under the gears and then send the footage to engineers for maintenance and repair
- ✓ It will examine the coaches in real-time through an HD camera and then channel them over WiFi

◆ **Lok Sabha - passes the 'Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill', commonly referred to as Triple Talaq Bill on December 28 - with a majority of 245-11 votes**

- ✓ The Bill was earlier introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister of Law and Justice, Ravi Shankar Prasad on December 17, 2018
- ✓ The bill would replace the ordinance passed on September 19, 2018
- ✓ Highlights of the Bill
- ✓ All declaration of triple talaq, either in spoken or written or electronic form, to be void (i.e. not enforceable in law) and illegal
- ✓ Declaration of Triple Talaq would be a cognizable offence, attracting a jail term up to 3 years' with a fine
- ✓ Under the revised bill, only the aggrieved woman or her close relative, can file a police case against her husband

- ✓ Under the provisions of the bill, the Magistrate may grant bail to the accused only after hearing the woman against whom talaq has been pronounced
- ✓ A Muslim Women against whom the triple talaq is pronounced is entitled to seek financial allowance from her husband for herself and for her dependent children – as determined by the Magistrate
- ✓ A Muslim Women against whom the triple talaq is pronounced is entitled to seek custody of her minor children – as determined by the Magistrate
- ✓ Talaq-e-biddat (Triple Talaq)
- ✓ It refers to the practice under Muslim personal laws where the uttering of word 'talaq' thrice in one sitting by a Muslim man to his wife results in an instant and irrevocable divorce
- ✓ In a landmark 3-2 verdict on August 22, 2018, the Supreme Court headed by Chief Justice J. S. Khehar, found the practice of Triple Talaq "un-Islamic" and "arbitrary" – and declared that it was violative of Article 14 and 21 of the Indian Constitution

One District, One Product Regional Summit

- ✓ Prime Minister – inaugurated the One District, One Product Regional summit, which was held at Deendayal Hastakala Sankul (Trade Facilitation Centre & Crafts Museum) in Varanasi
- ✓ The 'One District, One Product' scheme is aimed at enhancing the skills of local people and increasing the reach of the indigenous trades, crafts and products from small towns and small districts in the state

INTERNATIONAL

- ◆ **Nawaz Sharif, former PM of Pakistan – was sentenced to seven years imprisonment and a fine of \$25 million – by an anti-corruption court in Pakistan**
- ◆ **Sheikh Hasina, Bangladesh Prime Minister – wins 3rd consecutive and 4th overall term as the Prime Minister of the country**

- ◆ Portuguese Airline 'Hi Fly' - launches the world's first plastic-free passenger flight from Lisbon to Natale, Brazil on December 26, 2018



INDIA AND NEIGHBOURS

- ◆ India and UAE - signs 2 agreements on the areas of Currency swap and development cooperation in Africa

DEFENCE

- ◆ Madad 2018, a massive naval tri-services Joint exercise - conducted off Goa and Karwar Coasts
- ◆ "Ex Cope India-2018" - A joint exercise between Indian and US Air forces - was held in West Bengal
- ◆ Vajra kayaa, a 3-day tactical exercise between the Special Forces of India and United States - completed on December 1, 2018
- ✓ It is part of their joint military drill 'Vajra Prahar 2018' in Jaipur
- ◆ Indian Navy - to conduct 'TROPEX' Exercise from January to March, 2019 - to test the robustness of entire coastal security apparatus
- ✓ TROPEX - Theatre Level Operational Readiness Exercise
- ✓ As part of TROPEX, Indian Navy will also conduct 'Exercise Sea Vigil', a large-scale coastal defence exercise with the participation of all its Ships, Submarines and Aircrafts
- ◆ 1st edition of 'SHINYUU Maitri-18' bilateral Air exercise - between India and Japan - starts at Air Force Station, Agra
- ◆ Clean Sea 2018, a regional Level Marine Oil Pollution Response Exercise - conducted by Indian Coast Guard at sea off Port Blair, Andaman & Nicobar Islands
- ◆ 7th edition of 'Hand-in-Hand 2018' exercise - was conducted by the armies of India and China - at Chengdu, China

- ◆ **Ex AVIAINDRA 2018, a bilateral exercise between Indian Air Force and Russian Federation Aerospace Force - was held at Air Force Station, Jodhpur, Rajasthan on December 10, 2018**
- ◆ **10th edition of INDRA NAVY 18 - the bilateral maritime exercise between Indian Navy and Russian Federation Navy - held at Vishakapatnam**
 - ✓ Indian Navy would be represented by INS Ranvir, a guided missile destroyer, INS Satpura, an indigenous frigate, INS Kadmatt, an indigenous anti-submarine warfare (ASW) corvette, IN Ships Kuthar and Khanjar both indigenous missile corvettes and INS Jyoti, a fleet tanker
- ◆ **CROSS BOW 18, a combined Guided Weapons firing of Surface-to-Air Missiles - was conducted by IAF at Suryalanka in Andhra Pradesh**
- ◆ **Indian Navy - inducts its first 'Deep submergence Rescue vehicle' (DSRV) - at western naval dockyard in Mumbai, Maharashtra**
 - ✓ DSRV is used to rescue crew members stranded in 'disabled' submarines
- ◆ **"India-Africa Field Training Exercise (IAFTX)" - a military drill with over a dozen African countries - is planned to be held in Pune from March 18-27, 2019**
- ◆ **Operation Oliva - launched by Indian Coast Guard (ICG) - to safeguard Olive Ridley sea turtles**
 - ✓ The annual mission will ensure the safe mid-sea journey of the breeding turtles in **Gahirmatha marine sanctuary** area, Devi river mouth, and Rushikulya beach of **Odisha**
- ◆ **Indian Navy - to set up a 'Information Fusion Centre' for the Indian Ocean region - at the 'Information Management and Analysis Centre'- in Gurugram, Haryana**
 - ✓ The proposed center will facilitate information exchange regarding 'White shipping' or Commercial shipping - within the Indian ocean region and boost maritime security

- ✓ So far, around 21 countries have signed 'White shipping' agreement with India and only these countries will be able to utilise the service of the proposed center
- ✓ India had also signed the Trans Regional Maritime Network (T-RMN) agreement, regulated by Italy, for information exchange between commercial ships in high seas
- ◆ **Indra Navy-18, a bilateral maritime exercise between Indian and Russian Navies - concludes on December 16 in the Bay of Bengal**
- ◆ **Indian Air Force (IAF) - flies country's first Military flight on Blended bio-jet fuel - on an An-32 transport aircraft in Chandigarh**
- ◆ **Sagar Tara, a new coastal research vessel (CRV) - was launched to help the scientists conduct studies in Indian Ocean Region (IOR) - at the Titagarh Wagons Ltd Shipyard near Kolkata**

CONFERENCES & SUMMITS

- ◆ **3rd edition of ASEAN-India Business summit - held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**
- ✓ Spice Garden group of restaurants owner, **Pardeep Batra** was awarded the special **ASEAN - India Achievement award for the businessman of year**
- ◆ **Indian Owl Festival 2018 - held at Pingori village in Purandar taluka of Pune, Maharashtra**
- ✓ It was organized by Ela Foundation to create awareness on owl conservation
- ✓ It was the country's first owl festival, which featured skits and short films on owls
- ◆ **Asia Pacific Summit 2018 - Kathmandu, Nepal**
- ✓ Theme - "Addressing the Critical Challenges of Our Time: Interdependence, Mutual Prosperity, and Universal Values"

✓ Former Indian Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda is representing India at the Summit

◆ **The United Nations Climate Change Conference 2018 - concludes in Katowice, Poland (December 2-14, 2018)**

✓ It is the 24th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP24)

✓ The meeting, which saw the participation of delegates from 200 nations, was presided by Polish President, Michal Kurtyka

✓ The next COP25 will take place in Chile

✓ US President Donald Trump announced to withdraw the United States from the 2015 Paris agreement on June 1, 2017

✓ Highlights of Katowice Package

✓ All the nations, including the US, agreed on the rules to implement the 2015 Paris Agreement that will come into effect in 2020

✓ The rules are regarding various measures taken by the countries to reduce the carbon-emissions

✓ The primary objective of the 2015 Paris agreement - is to limit the global average temperature to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels

◆ **International Gita Mahotsav 2018 - concluded in Kurukshetra, Haryana (December 7-23)**

✓ It is celebrated to commemorate the origin of 'Srimad Bhagwat Gita'

✓ **Mauritius - Partner country**

✓ **Gujarat - Partner state**

✓ **This year, an International Gita Seminar (Dec 13-15) was conducted as part of the Mahotsav**

✓ Next year, Mauritius would host the Gita festival in **February 2019**

AWARDS

◆ **Kanimozhi, DMK MP - wins 'Best Woman Parliamentarian - Rajya Sabha' Award**

- ◆ Ramesan Nair, Tamil Nadu born writer - wins Sahitya Akademi award for his Malayalam work 'Guru Pournami', capturing the essence of Narayana Guru's philosophy
- ◆ Divya Patidar Joshi (Madhya Pradesh) - was crowned with the 'Mrs. India 2018' title in New Delhi - at the 'Mrs. India My Identity Beauty Pageant 2018'
- ✓ With this win, she would be representing India for **Mrs. Universe** title in the year 2019



COP 24

The 24th Session of the of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 24) was held in Katowice, Poland.

Agenda of COP 24: The conference focused on three key issues

- Finalization of guidelines/ modalities/rules for the implementation of Paris Agreement.
- Conclusion of 2018 Facilitative Talanoa Dialogue (to help countries implement NDC by 2020)
- The stock take of Pre-2020 actions implementation and ambition

Key outcomes in Katowice Rulebook Specifics

- **Accounting Guidance Rules to guide the countries for their Climate pledges** (“nationally determined contributions”, NDCs), will make it easier to compare pledges and to add them up as a global aggregate.
- All countries “**shall**” use the **latest emissions accounting guidance from the IPCC**, last updated in 2006, but now in the process of being reformed next year.
- **Market mechanisms:** This provides for the trading of carbon credits i.e. overachievement of NDCs (cooperative approaches and internationally transferred mitigation outcomes (ITMOs)), as well as individual projects generating carbon credits for sale.

Following is the status on this front:

- **Accounting Rules** to prevent “double counting” of emissions reductions by the buyer and seller of offsets **could not be finalised.**
- The schemes and methodologies for the implementation of **Sustainable Development Mechanism- SDM would be discussed in COP-25.** The SDM is intended to replace the Kyoto Protocol’s “Clean Development Mechanism” (CDM) for carbon offsets.

- **Overall Mitigation in Global Emissions (OMGE):** It is a central and critical new element under the Paris Agreement, that takes carbon markets beyond the offsetting approaches of the existing markets like the CDM. The primary purpose of OMGE is to deliver on cost-effectively reducing greenhouse gas emissions, rather than creating carbon markets for their own sake.
- **Climate finance reporting: Developed country Parties shall biennially** communicate indicative quantitative and qualitative information on programmes, including projected levels, channels and instruments, as available public financial resources to be provided to developing country Parties. **Other Parties** providing resources are encouraged to communicate biennially such information on a **voluntary basis**.
 - ❖ The UNFCCC secretariat to establish a dedicated online portal for posting and recording the biennial communications.
- **Global stocktake:** Paris Agreement requires the CMA (Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement) to periodically take stock of the implementation of the Paris Agreement and to assess collective progress towards achieving the purpose of the Agreement and its long-term goals. This process is called the global stocktake. The rules set the structure for the stocktake process, which is to be divided into three stages: Information collection, technical assessment and consideration of outputs.
- **Transparency:** The purpose of the transparency framework is to **provide a clear understanding of climate change action in the light of the objective of the Paris Convention**. This includes clarity and tracking of progress towards achieving Parties' individual NDCs, and Parties' adaptation actions, including good practices and gaps, to inform the global stocktake.
- **Loss and damage:** Loss and damage caused by the unavoidable impacts of climate change was a touchstone issue for vulnerable countries, such as

small island developing states. The rulebook mentions this issue, however, in a **diluted version**.

- **Other matters:** Rules were finalised in a number of other areas, including how compliance with the Paris Agreement is to be monitored.
 - ❖ COP24 agreed to set up an **expert compliance committee** that is “facilitative in nature, non-adversarial and non-punitive”. It will not impose penalties or sanctions. The committee will be able to investigate countries that fail to submit climate pledges.
 - ❖ COP decided that the “**adaptation fund**” – a financial mechanism set up under the Kyoto Protocol – should continue under the Paris Agreement.
- **Talanoa Dialogue:** The final text simply “invited” countries to “consider” the outcomes of the Talanoa dialogue in preparing their NDCs and in efforts to enhance pre-2020 ambition.
- **Pre-2020:** With respect to the “pre-2020” commitments – first agreed by developed countries in 2010 in Cancun – the COP called for developed countries to ratify the Doha Amendment so that it can enter into force. This would extend the Kyoto Protocol on developed country emissions till 2020.
- **'Welcoming' the IPCC 1.5°C report:** Despite the majority of countries speaking in favour of the report, four countries – the US, Saudi Arabia, Russia and Kuwait – refused to “welcome” the report.

RAT-HOLE MINING

Recently, the collapse of a coal mine in Meghalaya's East Jaintia Hills in which 15 workers were trapped, has thrown the spotlight on a procedure known as "rat-hole mining".

Rat-hole mining

- It involves **digging of very small tunnels**, usually only 3-4 feet high, **without any pillars** to prevent collapse, in which workers (often children) enter and **extract coal**.
- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) **banned it in 2014** on grounds of it being **unscientific and unsafe** for workers. However, the **state government appealed the order** in the Supreme Court.
- Even after ban, it remains the **prevalent procedure for coal mining in Meghalaya** as **no other method would be economically viable in Meghalaya**, where the coal seam is extremely thin.

Negative impacts of Rat Hole Mining

- **Environmental Degradation:** It has caused the water in the Kopili river (flows through Meghalaya and Assam) to turn acidic.
- **Pollution:** Roadsides used for piling of coal leads to air, water and soil pollution.
- **Exploitation of workers:** Maximum mining in Meghalaya is from rat hole mining where workers put their lives in danger but benefits are cornered by few private individuals.
- **Risk to Lives:** Rat-holes mines without adequate safety measures pose high risk to miner's lives. According to one estimate, one miner dies in these rat-holes mines every 10 days.
- **Fueling illegal activities:** Illegal money earned from these unlawful mines also end up fueling insurgency in the state.
- **Encouraging Child Labor:** According to a Shillong based NGO, rat-hole mining employs 70,000 child laborers

WITNESS PROTECTION SCHEME

Supreme Court under Article 141/142 of the Constitution of India has provided legal sanctity to the scheme until Parliament/state legislature enacts a law on the matter.

- **Although National Investigation Agency (NIA) act** provides for witness protection, the scheme has extended it to the witnesses in all other cases as per the threat perception.
- Judgments/Committees in the matter of **Zahira sheikh vs. State of Gujarat SC** observed that witness protection is necessary for free and fair trial.
- **14th report of Law commission and subsequently in and reports** indicated about the need to protect witnesses.
- Concerns in the matter were also raised by the **4th Report of the National Police Commission (1980)**.

Need of Witness Protection Scheme

- **Rule of Law:** it is imperative to ensure that investigation, prosecution and trial of criminal offences is not prejudiced because of threats or intimidation to witnesses. **It will help in strengthening the Criminal Justice System** in the Country and improve national security scenario.
- **Rights of Witness:** While offenders have range of constitutional and legal rights, witnesses have limited rights and protection in current setup. This imbalance of rights many times compels the witnesses to turn hostile.
- **Threats to Witness:** In many high-profile cases/scams like NRHM scam in UP, Fodder scam in Bihar **key witnesses were killed** adversely affecting the investigation in these cases.
- **International Practice:** Countries like US, UK, Canada, and New Zealand have separate programme/acts for the protection of witnesses. In many countries, local police may implement **informal protection** as the need arises in specific cases.

Challenges

- **Lack of resources:** Indian police force has acute shortage of **manpower (136 personnel per lakh population) and funds** even to handle day to day policing. The witness protection duties will further increase the pressure.

- **Right of accused:** Law Commission mentioned that concealing the identity of witness for his/her protection can compromise the rights of the accused to demand a fair trial in case he/she wants to establish authenticity of witness.
- **Privacy of Witness:** Providing physical security to witnesses may not be appreciated by witness as it curtails the privacy and movement.
- **Time frame of protection:** It may be difficult to assess the time frame for protection. E.g. protection of witnesses may be required not only before, but also during and after trial and that too for years considering the delays in Criminal Justice System.
- **Issue in implementation:** Indian Penal Code, Juvenile Justice Act and Whistleblowers Protection Act etc. already have provisions for witness protection but lack of availability of appropriate structure limits the implementation.

Way forward

- **Effective witness protection legislation should be enacted** clearly defining the role of police, government and judiciary. This will create confidence among witnesses.
- In this regard, Witness Protection Bill 2015 can be enacted with suitable amendments.
- **Witness protection cell** established under scheme should arrange for the provisions of false identities, relocation, employment and follow up.
- In some cases medical facilities, social services, state compensation, counseling, treatment and other support should be provided to the witness.
- **The witness should be treated with fairness, respect and dignity** and protection from intimidation, harassment or abuse must be prevented throughout the criminal justice process.
- **Overhauling the Criminal Justice System** with faster and scientific investigation, trials and convictions will reduce the need of witness protection.

AGRICULTURE EXPORT POLICY, 2018

With an aim to double farmers' income by 2022, and to double agricultural exports by 2022, Government of India has recently come up with the Agriculture Export Policy, 2018.

The Cabinet has also approved the proposal for establishment of Monitoring Framework at Centre with Ministry of Commerce as the nodal Department .

Current Agriculture Trade Scenario

- World agricultural trade has been relatively stagnant in the last five years (2013-2017) due mainly to fall in global prices.
- India's agricultural export dropped by 5% compound annual growth rate (CAGR).
- Indian agricultural exports grew at 9% compared to China (8%), Brazil (5.4%) and USA (5.1%) between 2007 and 2016. However, India's agriculture exports are lower than countries like Thailand and Indonesia with much smaller agricultural land thus depicting a higher potential.
- While India occupies a leading position in global trade of agricultural products like rice, its total agricultural export basket accounts for little over 2% of world agriculture trade.
- Also, India has remained at the lower end of the global agricultural export value chain given that majority of its exports are low value, raw or semi-processed and marketed in bulk.
- The share of India's high value and value added agricultural produce in its agriculture export basket is less than 15% compared to 25% in US and 49% in China.

Elements of the Agriculture Export Policy Framework

Vision of the Agriculture Export Policy: "Harness export potential of Indian agriculture, through suitable policy instruments, to make India global power in agriculture and raise farmers' income."

The policy recommendations are organized in two broad categories: strategic and operational

1. Strategic:

Objectives of the Agriculture Export Policy

- To **double agricultural exports** from present \$ 30+ Billion to \$ 60+ Billion by 2022 and reach \$ 100 Billion in the next few years thereafter, with a stable trade policy regime.
- To **diversify our export basket**, destinations and boost high value and value added agricultural exports including focus on perishables.
- To **promote** novel, indigenous, organic, ethnic, traditional and non-traditional Agriculture products exports.
- To provide an **institutional mechanism** for pursuing market access, tackling barriers and deal with sanitary and phyto-sanitary issues.
- To strive to **double India's share in world agriculture exports** by integrating with global value chain at the earliest.
- Enable farmers to get **benefit of export opportunities** in overseas market.

Reforms in APMC Act and streamlining of mandi fee

- Using the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) field offices, Export Promotion Councils, Commodity Boards and Industry Associations to act as advocacy forum for reform by all the states including removal of perishables from their APMC Act.
- State Governments would also be urged to standardize/ rationalize mandi taxes for largely exported agricultural products.

ASIATIC LION CONSERVATION PROJECT

Asiatic Lion

- Asiatic Lion, **Panthera Leo Persica** is listed in **Schedule 1** of **Wildlife Protect Act, 1972** and in **Appendix-I** of **CITES**, while IUCN lists it in **endangered** category.
- The lion is one of **five** pantherine cats inhabiting India, along with the **Bengal tiger, Indian leopard, snow leopard** and **clouded leopard**.
- Their population is limited to only five protected areas in Gujarat – **Gir National Park, Gir Sanctuary, Pania Sanctuary, Mitiyala Sanctuary** and **Girnar Sanctuary**.
- This remains the only home for the lions even five years after India's top court ordered the translocation of Asiatic lions. The single habitat is akin to keeping "all eggs in one basket", which increases risks for the lion population.

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change launched the "**Asiatic Lion Conservation Project**" with an aim to protect and conserve the world's last ranging free population of Asiatic Lion and its associated ecosystem.

Background

- Asiatic lions that once ranged from Persia (Iran) to Palamau in Eastern India were almost driven to extinction by indiscriminate hunting and habitat loss.
- A single population of less than 50 lions persisted in the Gir forests of Gujarat by late 1890's. With timely and stringent protection offered by the State Government and the Center Government, Asiatic lions have increased to the current population of over 500 numbers.
- Recently 23 Lions died in short period of 20 days, due to **Canine Distemper Virus (CDV)** and **tick-bore Babesiosis**, again raising a concern for their conservation.

About the Project

- It will be funded from the Centrally Sponsored Scheme- Development of Wildlife Habitat (CSS-DWH) with the contributing ratio being 60:40 of Central and State share.
- The project activities is envisaged in a manner to cause habitat improvement, scientific interventions, disease control and veterinary care

supplemented with adequate eco development works for the fringe population in order to ensure a stable and viable Lion population in the Country.

TELE ROBOTIC SURGERY

India became the **world's first** to successfully perform a telerobotic coronary intervention.

Telerobotic coronary intervention:

- It is a **robotic method of performing heart surgery**. With the help of the **internet and a robotic tower**, a surgeon is able to treat patients from a distance.
- This technology is especially **important for high emergency situations of heart attacks and stroke**, where ideal treatment must be received within 90 minutes or 24 hours.
- This platform has the potential **to improve patient access** in rural & under-served populations and reduce treatment time, benefitting those groups, who have **geographical barriers and low socio-economic status**.
- It will also **reduce the variability in operator skills** and **improve clinical outcomes**.

BHASHA SANGAM PROGRAM

The Department of School Education & Literacy under MHRD has initiated Bhasha Sangam Program – As part of ‘**Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat**’.

About the Program

- Its objectives are: o To **enhance linguistic tolerance** and respect, and promote national integration.
- To **introduce school students to all the 22 Indian Languages** of Schedule VIII of the Constitution of India.
- This will be **run by the State/UT Department of School Education**.
- This initiative is not mandatory and there would be no formal testing of any kind.

