Monthly Current Affairs for UPSC & PCS Exams

November 2018

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Daily Current Affairs for UPSC IAS Preparation

01.11.2018

1. India jumps to 77 ranks: Ease of Doing Business index

- India climbed another 23 points in the World Bank's ease of doing business index to 77th place in the assessment of business regulation across 190 economies.
- India now becomes the top-ranked country in South Asia for the first time and third among the BRICS.
- The biggest gain was in construction permit where India climbed 129 ranks to 52nd place on the back of targeted government effort to remove hurdles
- India now ranks in the top 25 in the world on three indicators- getting electricity, getting credit and protecting minority investors, department of industrial policy and promotion.
- The doing business report ranks countries on the basis of the distance to frontier (DTF), a score that shows the gap of an economy to the global best practice.
- India's DTF scores improved to 67.23 from 60.76 last year.

Related Information
Reforms have taken by India

- The six reforms recognised in this year's report are starting a business, getting electricity, dealing with construction permits, getting credit, paying taxes and trading across borders.
- In dealing with construction permits, India has implemented an online single window system, introduced deemed approvals and reduced the cost for obtaining these permits.
- In the electricity sector, the time taken for obtaining a new connection has reduced from 105 to 55 days.
- For resolving insolvency, India has put in place a new Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and time-bound reorganization procedure for corporate debtors.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Important Indices
Source- The Hindu

2. World's first bio-brick can help reduce CO2 emissions

- University of Cape Town (UCT) has developed the world's first bio-brick from human urine that can have huge consequences for recycling waste.
- It has been created through a natural process called microbial carbonate precipitation in which loose sand is colonised with bacteria and the enzyme produced, urease, breaks down the urea in urine while producing calcium carbonate.
- The bio-bricks are good for the environment and global warming because unlike regular bricks fired at 1,400 degrees, bio-bricks are made at room temperature and hence won't emit as much carbon dioxide.
- The bio-brick process produces nitrogen and potassium as by-products, important components of commercial fertilizers.
- The brick can be moulded into any shape.

Related Information

- Brick kilns are one the most significant sources of pollution in South Asia.
- India is the second largest producer of bricks in the world and produces 200 billion bricks per year.
- Apart from polluting the air, brick kilns also affect the fertility of the topmost soil, shows a study. Around 65 per cent of bricks in India are produced in the Indo-Gangetic plains.
- In 2017, the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority for the National Capital Region had ordered all kilns in the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR) to shift to the zigzag technology.
- In the zigzag technology of the brick kilns cuts down 70 per cent less particulate matter than conventional brick kilns.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment
Source- Down to Earth

3. **States of poverty: an exploration of the Multidimensional Poverty Index**
- The Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) is calculated by Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and UNDP.
- The MPI has been calculated for 105 developing economies.
- In this index the overall poverty in India has come down in 2016 compared to 2006, the progress has been uneven among States and communities.

Related Information
What is the MPI?
- MPI is a measure that takes into account the incidence of poverty and the extent of deprivation.
- The MPI takes into account several factors by going beyond just monetary measures.
- It uses 10 indicators to measure poverty in three dimensions: education, health and living standards.

Global comparison
- India's MPI is lower than the global average of 0.159 and the South Asian countries but is higher (worse) than BRICS countries (excluding Russia).
- In its 2018 update, India's MPI index in 2018 was 0.121, placing it 53rd out of 105 developing countries for which data was available.
- Poor nutrition was the largest contributor to India's multidimensional poverty while insufficient access to clean water and child mortality contributed the least.

Note: The calculation boils down to a value between 0 and 1. An MPI value of 1 indicates the highest deprivation level, while 0 indicates the lowest.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Issue relating to Poverty and hunger
Source- The Hindu

4. **Soura Jalanidhi' scheme launched in Odisha**
- Odisha government launched the Soura Jalanidhi scheme that aims to increase use of solar energy for helping farmers in irrigating their land.

- 'Soura Jalanidhi', is a dug well based solar pump irrigation system in convergence mode.
- Under the scheme, the solar pumps will be given to the beneficiary farmers at a subsidy of 90 per cent.

Related Information
- Farmers having valid farmer-id, belonging to small and marginal categories having minimum 0.5-acre cultivable land holding and a dug well will be covered under the programme.
- This scheme will lessen the cost burden of the farmers.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Government Scheme
Source- Business Standard

5. **India conducts successful night trial of Agni-1 ballistic missile**
- The launch of the **surface-to-surface missile** was undertaken as a part of periodic training activity by the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) from Dr Abdul Kalam Island.

Related Information
Agni- 1 ballistic missile
- Agni-I is a short-range ballistic missile developed by DRDO of India under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program.
- Agni-I is a single stage, solid fuel, road and rail mobile, short-range ballistic missile (SRBM).
- It is capable of carrying a conventional payload of 1,000 kg (2,200 lb) or a nuclear warhead.
- The Agni I has a range of 700-900 km.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Defence
Source- Indian express

6. **19th Meeting of the Financial Stability & Development Council**
- The 19th Meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs was held recently.

Related Information
Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)
- It is an apex-level body constituted by the government of India.
- It is not a statutory body.

- The recent global economic meltdown has put pressure on governments and institutions across the globe to regulate their economic assets. This council is seen as India's initiative to be better conditioned to prevent such incidents in future.
- The new body envisages strengthening and institutionalising the mechanism of maintaining financial stability, financial sector development, inter-regulatory coordination along with monitoring macro-prudential regulation of the economy.

Composition of the council

Chairperson: The Union Finance Minister of India

Other Members included:

- Governor Reserve Bank of India (RBl),
- Finance Secretary and/ or Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA)
- Chairman, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI)
- Chairman, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA)
- Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS)
- Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs
- Chief Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance etc.

Topic- GS Paper 3-Economic development
Source- Indian Express

7. **Karnataka launches SC/ST entrepreneurship scheme: Samruddhi scheme**

- Karnataka Social Welfare Department launched the Samruddhi scheme to boost employment opportunities for SC/ST youth through entrepreneurship.
- The Samruddhi scheme is targeted at socially marginalised communities to provide them with skill development and alternate means of employment.
- The scheme is partnering with private enterprises to train the youth from backward communities to create 'industry owned private enterprise' to make them financially independent.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Government Scheme
Source- The Hindu

8. **Core sector growth slows to the four-month low of 4.3% in September**

- According to the index of eight core industries released by Ministry of Commerce and Industry, the Growth of eight infrastructure sectors slowed down to 4.3% in September re.
- This is the lowest in the last four months, as the production of crude oil and natural gas declined.

Related Information

- The Eight Core Industries comprise nearly 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP).
- These are Electricity, steel, refinery products, crude oil, coal, cement, natural gas and fertilisers.

Index of industrial production

- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index for India which details out the growth of various sectors in an economy such as mineral mining, electricity and manufacturing.
- It is compiled and published monthly by the central statistical organisation (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme
- The level of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an abstract number.
- The base year was at one time fixed at 1993–94 so that year was assigned an index level of 100.
- The current base year is 2011-2012.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Industries
Source-Live Mint

02.11.2018

1. **Ministry of Railways rolls out: UTSONMOBILE' app**

- Ministry of Railways has introduced All-India Unreserved Mobile Ticketing facility (UTS on Mobile).
- The facility of booking unreserved tickets, including season tickets and also platform tickets is available through the 'UTSONMOBILE' app.

Related Information
UTSONMOBILE App
- The application 'in-house' developed by Indian Railway- CRIS.
- The Mobile Ticketing shall promote 3C's- Cashless transactions (Digital payment), Contactless ticketing (no need to physically visit the point of sale) and Customer convenience and experience.
- It provides seamless booking of unreserved tickets all over Indian Railways.
- It will obviate the need for passengers to wait in queues for purchasing the tickets and enhance the experience for booking unreserved tickets – journey, season tickets, platform tickets.
- The application is also Environment-friendly.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source-PIB

2. **Union Ministry Launches: India's first ease of Mobility Index**
- Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways has released India's first Ease of Mobility Index 2018.
- The report has been prepared by Ola Mobility Institute - Ola's research and social innovation arm.
- The Index offers a source of information to aid transit agencies and urban planners to make informed decisions and align solutions with the preference of commuters.
- The Ease of Moving Index, 2018 has found that overall, 80 per cent of citizens believe that the transport ecosystem has improved over the last five years.
- The index also reveals that 60 per cent of respondents reports using public modes of commute, signalling that integrating modes of first and last mile connectivity with mass transport could lead to improved usage.
- The index finds that 75 per cent of respondents believe that electric vehicles could replace conventional vehicles by 2030.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Important Indices
Source-PIB

3. **Just 5 countries have 70% of the world's remaining wilderness: study**
- The recently published study comes ahead of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Egypt.
- The study identified Australia, the US, Brazil, Russia and Canada as the five countries that hold the vast majority of the world's remaining wilderness.
- It is about 70 per cent of the world's remaining untouched wilderness.

Related Information
- In 2016, scientists charted the planet's remaining terrestrial wilderness and in 2018 examined which parts of the world's oceans remained free from the damaging impacts of human activity.

What is wilderness?
- The study defines wilderness as the only places that contain mixes of species at near-natural levels of abundance.
- They are also the only areas supporting the ecological processes that sustain biodiversity over evolutionary timescales.
- In the seas, wilderness areas are the last regions that still contain viable populations of top predators, such as tuna, marlins and sharks.
- They also provide increasingly important refuges for species declining in human-dominated landscapes.

Concern
- Many wilderness areas are critical sinks for atmospheric carbon dioxide.
- If these sites are degraded, like the seagrass meadows in oceans, they can switch from being carbon sinks to major carbon sources.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment
Source- Down to Earth

4. **PM launched major Support and Outreach Initiative for MSME sector**
- The Prime Minister launched the Union Government's Support and Outreach Initiative for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi.

- The programmed has simultaneously launched at 100 locations across the country.

Related Information
- MSME sector provide employment of about 70 million population of India
- It contributes about 45% to manufacturing output and about 40% of exports, directly and indirectly.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors
Source: PIB

5. **First-ever India-US Dialogue on Intellectual Property begins**
- The first ever India-US Dialogue on Intellectual Property was launched to deepen bilateral strategic cooperation on IP policy.
- The dialogue was launched by US Chamber of Commerce's Global Innovation Policy Center (GIPC) and Ficci in partnership with the US-India Business Council.
- It will be convened annually, alternating between New Delhi and Washington, DC.

Related Information
Intellectual property (IP)
- It refers to creations of the mind, such as inventions; literary and artistic works; designs; and symbols, names and images used in commerce.
- IP is protected in law by, for example, patents, copyright and trademarks, which enable people to earn recognition or financial benefit from what they invent or create.

Terms used in IP
Patents
- A patent is a form of the right granted by the government to an inventor or their successor-in-title, giving the owner the right to exclude others from making, using, selling, offering to sell, and importing an invention for a limited period of time, in exchange for the public disclosure of the invention.

Copyright
- A copyright gives the creator of an original work exclusive right to it, usually for a limited time.
- Copyright may apply to a wide range of creative, intellectual, or artistic forms, or "works". Industrial design rights

Trademarks
- A trademark is a recognizable sign, design or expression which distinguishes products or services of a particular trader from the similar products or services of other traders.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Economics
Source- The Hindu

6. **India unveils a five-year action plan to remain a paradise of migratory birds**
- India has come out with a five-year national action plan to conserve habitats of these migratory species that cover long distances from Siberia in Russia to make the country their temporary home during winter.
- The action plan spanning 2018-23, brought out by the Union environment ministry, is meant for coordinated actions among states for securing and enhancing the population of migratory birds in India within their range across the Central Asian Flyway ((CAF).
- The move may help India protect its several wetlands and other natural habitats and keep it alive as bird watchers paradise in the country.

Related Information
Central Asian Flyway
- A flyway is a geographical region within which a single or a group of migratory species completes its annual cycle – breeding, moulting, staging and non-breeding.
- The CAF is one of the nine flyways in the world.
- The CAF encompasses overlapping migration routes over 30 countries for different water-birds linking their northernmost breeding ground in Siberia to the southernmost non-breeding grounds in the west and south Asia, the Maldives and British Indian Ocean Territory.
- India has a strategic role in the flyway as it provides critical stopover sites to over 90% of the bird species known to use this migratory route said by National Action Plan (NAP) for Conservation of Migratory Birds and their Habitats.

- According to the NAP, at least 370 species of migratory birds from three flyways (CAF, East Asian Australasian Flyway covering parts of eastern India and Asian East African Flyway covering parts of western India) are reported to visit Indian sub-continent during their annual cycle.
- Chilika Lake (Odisha), Sundarban National Park (West Bengal), Eaglenest Wildlife Sanctuary (Arunachal Pradesh), Nal Sarovar Bird Sanctuary (Gujarat), Kumarakom Bird Sanctuary (Kerala and Pulicat Lagoon (Andhra Pradesh - Tamil Nadu) are among several other favourite destinations of migratory birds in India.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Biodiversity
Source- TOI

7. **Cabinet approves Agreement between India and Morocco on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters**
- The Union Cabinet has approved the Agreement between India and Morocco on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters.

Related Information
- The Agreement will provide a broad legal framework for bilateral cooperation between India and Morocco.
- It also helps in investigation and prosecution of crime, tracing, restraint, forfeiture or confiscation or proceeds and instruments of crime.
- It aims to increase effectiveness in the investigation and prosecution of crime
- The agreement will provide the necessary peaceful ambience which is a pre-requisite for the development of society as a whole.
- It will further be instrumental in gaining better inputs and insights in the modus operandi of organized criminals and terrorists, which in turn can be used to fine-tune policy decisions in the field of Internal Security.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Defence
Source-PIB

8. **Cabinet approves the renaming of Jharsuguda Airport as "Veer Surendra Sai Airport"**
- The Union Cabinet has approved the renaming of Jharsuguda Airport of Odisha as "Veer Surendra Sai Airport".
- It will also be a befitting tribute to the contribution of the revered personality associated with the State.

Related Information
Veer Surendra Sai
- Veer Surendra Sai was an Indian freedom fighter and tribal leader who sacrificed his life fighting against the British East India Company.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source- AIR

03.11.2018

1. **India-Japan military exercise "Dharma Guardian-2018" begins in Mizoram**
- Armies of India and Japan began their first-ever joint military exercise at a jungle warfare school in Mizoram's Vairengte.
- The objective of the exercise is to build and promote Army to Army relation in addition to exchange skills and experiences of both the armies.
- Exercise 'DHARMA GUARDIAN-2018' is another step in deepening strategic ties including closer defense cooperation between the two countries.

Related Information
- JIMEX and MALABAR are the Naval exercises conducted by Indian and Japanese Navy.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Defence
Source- Indian Express

2. **SMiLE to give a fillip to Malabar tourism**
- Kerala Tourism has rolled out a high-tech digital facility that provides visitors with all details about the experiential and service packages in the Malabar region to attract tourists to north Kerala.

- The package has got its acronym **SMiLE from Small and Medium Industries Leveraging Experiential** Tourism."
- SMiLE conceived by the Bekal Resorts Development Corporation (BRDC) links tourists with their places of attraction and providers of experiential services.
- The SMiLE VTG was Malabar's pioneering comprehensive package for travellers.

Related Information

- Malabar is lying between the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea, on the northern part of Kerala.
- Modern-day Malabar covers the geographical area north of River Bharathapuzha.
- It includes parts of Thrissur district, the districts of Palakkad, Malappuram, Kozhikode, Wayanad, Kannur, and Kasaragod.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Government approach for Tourism development
Source- The Hindu

3. **Shakti: India's first microprocessor**
- India's first indigenous microprocessor **Shakti** has been developed and booted by Indian Institute of Technology Madras along with a microchip fabricated Laboratory of Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) at Chandigarh.
- It will reduce dependency on imported microchips and the risk of cyber attacks making it ideal for communication and defence sectors.
- The microprocessor fabricated in India was in a 180nm facility, while the one in the US was in a 20nm. lab.

Related Information
Microprocessor

- A microprocessor is a computer processor that incorporates the functions of a central processing unit on a single integrated circuit (IC).
- The microprocessor is a multipurpose, clock driven, register-based, digital integrated circuit that accepts binary data as input, processes it according to instructions stored in its memory, and provides results as output.

- Microprocessors operate on numbers and symbols represented in the binary number system.

Topic- GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
Source- The Hindu

4. **"Himalayan Viagra' under threat from climate change**
- A prized caterpillar fungus that is more valuable than gold and is nicknamed "Himalayan Viagra" in Asia.
- The cone-shaped fungus is only found above an elevation of 9,800 feet (3,000 meters), and forms when the parasitic fungus lodges itself in a caterpillar, slowly killing it.
- To grow it needs a specific climate with winter temperatures below freezing but where the soil is not permanently frozen.
- It is seen as a wonder drug, is becoming harder to find due to climate change.
- Although it has no scientifically proven benefits, people who boil yarchagumba in water to make tea or add it to soups and stews believe it cures everything from impotence to cancer.
- It is "one of the world's most valuable biological commodities, providing a crucial source of income for hundreds of thousands of collectors," said the report.

Related Information

- Communities throughout the Himalayan region have become very financially dependent on collecting and selling caterpillar fungus.
- The decreasing availability of this fungus will be devastating to local economies and that these communities need other viable livelihood options.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Biodiversity
Source- Down to Earth

5. **NASA's historic Dawn mission to asteroid belt comes to the end**
- NASA's pioneering Dawn spacecraft which orbited the two largest objects in the asteroid belt has run out of fuel.
- The Dawn mission, launched in 2007 to study the protoplanet Vesta and the dwarf planet Ceres on a journey that put about 6.9 billion kilometres on its odometer.

Related Information
- In 2011, when Dawn arrived at Vesta, the second largest world in the main asteroid belt, the spacecraft became the first to orbit a body in the region between Mars and Jupiter.
- In 2015, when Dawn went into orbit around Ceres, a dwarf planet that is also the largest world in the asteroid belt,
- This mission became the first to visit a dwarf planet and go into orbit around two destinations beyond Earth.
- The spacecraft launched 11 years ago to visit the two largest objects in the main asteroid belt.
- Currently, Dawn, it is in orbit around the dwarf planet Ceres, where it will remain for decades.

Note

NASA also announced that its exoplanet-hunting Kepler Space Telescope had run out of hydrazine fuel, and the craft would be commanded to cease operations.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

6. **Global Drug Survey set to cover Indians**
- It is the first time in the eighth year the GDS for 2019 will survey consumption trends in alcohol, cannabis and opiates in India.
- The survey will investigate drug habits across 35 countries, and its findings will be translated into 20 languages.
- A key objective of the survey is to understand how advances in technology are influencing drug use and the complexities this pose in determining the levels of harmful dosage and how those who sought to reduce drug-related harm responded.
- The survey also attempts to understand the therapeutic potential of drugs such as MDMA (3, 4-Methylenedioxymethamphetamine), better known as 'ecstasy,' and LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide).

Related Information
- Recently few studies have looked at the use of alcohol and illicit drugs and consequences faced by drug users in India.
- A 2004 survey by the Union Ministry of Social Justice on the extent and pattern and trends of drug abuse left out women.
- That study found the prevalence of alcohol use to be 21% and current use of cannabis at 3%.
- Among the alcohol and cannabis current users, 16% and 25% respectively were dependent.

About GDS 2019
- The GDS 2019 will probe social issues, including how the police treat people who use drugs, and the complex problem of sexual assault, consent and drug use.
- The GDS uses an encrypted, online platform to conduct annual anonymous surveys.
- No IP addresses are collected and the survey is independent of governments.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Healthcare Sector
Source- The Hindu

7. **Oceans Heating Faster Than Previously Thought: IPCC**
- According to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change the most recent assessment found that the world's oceans have absorbed 90 percent of the temperature rise caused by man-made carbon emissions.
- The data show that the ocean would have warmed by 6.5 degrees Celsius (11.7 degrees Fahrenheit) every decade since 1991.
- The world's oceans have absorbed 60 percent more heat than previously thought over the last quarter of a century leaving Earth more sensitive still to the effects of climate change.
- Oceans cover more than two-thirds of the planet's surface and play a vital role in sustaining life on Earth.
- It found that for each of the last 25 years, oceans had absorbed heat energy equivalent to 150 times the amount of electricity mankind produces annually.

Related Information

- The scientists mainly focused on two gases found naturally in the atmosphere: Oxygen and carbon dioxide.
- Both gases are soluble in water, but the rate at which water absorbs them decreases as it warms.
- By measuring atmospheric oxygen and CO2 for each year, scientists were able to more accurately estimate how much heat oceans had absorbed on a global scale.

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

- The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations.
- Its headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It is dedicated to providing the world with an objective, scientific view of climate change and its political and economic impacts.
- It was established in 1988 by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and later endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly.
- The 2007 Nobel Peace Prize was shared, in equal parts, between the IPCC and Al Gore.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment
Source- Down To Earth

8. **Indian and Japan sign loan agreement to Turga pumped storage hydel power project**

- India and Japan on Friday signed the loan agreement for the construction of the Turga pumped storage hydel power project at Purulia in West Bengal.
- The objective of the project is to strengthen the capability to respond to the fluctuation in supply and demand of power and to improve the stability of the power supply by constructing the pumped storage facilities.

- The project will contribute to the industrial development and living standards in the state.

Topic-GS Paper 3–International Relation
Source- Indian Express

05.11.2018

1. **Changsha Declaration: An Initiative to target 'zero hunger' in the global south**

- Changsha Declaration came at the end of a forum on international development cooperation in Changsha, China.
- In this more than 20 country committed to a new declaration on agricultural and rural development in a bid to stamp out poverty and hunger.
- The Changsha Declaration aims to ramp up the efforts towards South-South Cooperation - an initiative working to eliminate hunger and malnutrition through the mutual sharing and exchange of good practices, resources, and know-how between countries of the "global south".
- The forum coincided with the launch of a new report, jointly published by the Food and Agriculture Organization, the UN Children's Fund, World Food Programme, and the World Health Organization, alerting of severe food shortages plaguing Asia and the Pacific.

Related Information

- China has been fielding experts and technicians to share knowledge in various technical areas, including aquaculture, crop production and livestock breeding to boost the country's agriculture.
- The forums provide facility to training in agriculture innovation and promote investment in rural areas in an effort to reach the first 2030 Sustainable Development Goal (2) of zero hunger.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Issue relating to poverty and hunger
Source- Economics times

2. **AI bot 'ClaRAN' can spot radio galaxies**
- "ClaRAN" grew out of an open source version of Microsoft and Facebook's object detection software.
- AI bot "ClaRAN" was known for recognising faces on Facebook. (International Centre for Radio Astronomy Research).
- It will use Artificial Intelligence (AI) programme that helps to recognise faces on Facebook to identify galaxies in deep space.
- The AI bot named "ClaRAN" scans images taken by radio telescopes.
- Its job is to spot radio galaxies that emit powerful radio jets from supermassive black holes at their centres.

Related Information
- 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).

How does it work?
- Black holes are found at the centre of most, if not all, galaxies.
- These supermassive black holes occasionally burp out jets that can be seen with a radio telescope.
- "ClaRAN help out to find the jets which stretch a long way from their host galaxies, making it difficult for traditional computer programmes to figure out where the galaxy is.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology
Source- Hindustan Times

3. **China inaugurates: world's first import-themed International Expo**
- China's inaugurated first international import expo in Shanghai as part of its efforts to reduce the over USD 51 billion trade deficit with the neighbouring nation.
- It is the world's first import-themed national-level expo that will feature enterprise and business exhibitions, country pavilions for trade and investment.

- Twelve countries - Brazil, Canada, Egypt, Germany, Hungary, Indonesia, Mexico, Pakistan, Russia, South Africa, Vietnam and the UK will be the "Guest of Honour" at the mega business event.

Related Information
- The expo is being held amid China's trade war with the US, which slapped additional tariffs on Chinese goods worth about USD 250 billion, demanding Beijing to bring down the trade deficit amounting to USD 375 billion.
- India has built a pavilion at the expo highlighting its focus areas of agricultural products, pharmaceuticals, information technology and tourism.

Topic-GS Paper 3–International Relation
Source- Business Standard

4. **Greater flamingoes at Hope Island**
- After a long a gap, a flock of five greater flamingoes has been spotted on the Coast of Hope Island, a part of the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh.
- The sanctuary is an abode for about 35 species of mangrove plants and another 120 species of rare birds.

Related Information
Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary
- Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary is a wildlife sanctuary and estuary situated in Andhra Pradesh, India.
- It is the second largest stretch of mangrove forests in India.
- The sanctuary is a part of the Godavari estuary and has extensive mangrove and dry deciduous tropical forest
- It is home to the critically endangered white-backed vulture and the long-billed vulture.

Greater Flamingo
- The greater flamingo (Phoenicopterus roseus) is the most widespread and largest species of the flamingo family.
- It is found in Africa, on the Indian subcontinent, in the Middle East, and in southern Europe.
- Conservation status: Least Concern (by IUCN)

Topic-GS Paper3–Environment & Biodiversity
Source- The Hindu

5. 18th Indian Ocean Rim Association Council of Ministers Meeting

- The Republic of South Africa, as the current IORA Chair, will host the 18th IORA Council of (Foreign) Ministers Meetings (COM) in Durban.
- The theme of "IORA is – Uniting the Peoples of Africa, Asia, Australasia and the Middle East through Enhanced Co-operation for Peace, Stability and Sustainable Development.
- IORA Nelson Mandela 'Be the Legacy' internship programme was also launched which help in contribution to empowering and capacitating the youth of the Indian Ocean region.

Related Information
Indian-Ocean Rim Association

- The Indian Ocean Rim Association is an international organisation consisting of coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean.
- The IORA is a regional forum, tripartite in nature, bringing together representatives of Government, Business and Academia, for promoting co-operation and closer interaction among them.
- It is based on the principles of Open Regionalism for strengthening Economic Cooperation particularly on Trade Facilitation and Investment, Promotion as well as Social Development of the region.
- The Coordinating Secretariat of IORA is located at Ebene, Mauritius.

Topic-GS Paper 2–International Relation
Source- Economics Times

6. **Offshore patrol vessel ICGS Varaha launched**
- ICGS Varaha the fourth in the series of 98 M offshore patrol vessels (OPVs) of Indian Coast Guard was launched at L&T Kattupalli.
- The 98 M OPV has been designed and built indigenously by Larsen & Toubro.
- The first and second ships of this project have already been delivered to ICG and are presently based in the Western Coast and Eastern Coast of India and the third OPV will be delivered in early 2019.

Related Information
About the Patrol Vessel

- This ship will be fitted with advanced technology navigation and communication equipment, sensor and machinery.
- The ship will also be equipped with an Integrated Bridge System (IBS), Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS), Automated Power Management System (APMS) and High Power External Fire Fighting (EFF) system.
- ICGS Varaha will carry one twin-engine helicopter and four high-speed boats, including two inflatable boats, for boarding operation, search and rescue, law enforcement and maritime patrol.
- Induction of these vessels would provide a needful impetus to the deterrence role of ICG in security or safety of maritime interests.
- It will also be capable of carrying pollution response equipment to contain the oil spill at sea.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Defence
Source-PIB

7. **MoU signed between OMCs and CSC SPV for collaboration in LPG Services**
- A MoU for collaboration in LPG services was signed between Oil Marketing Companies (IOCL, HPCL & BPCL) and CSC e-Governance Services India Limited.
- This MoU will help in filling the gaps in reaching the rural and far-flung areas, by appropriate use of the technology and harnessing the enterprising spirit of the people of India.

Related Information

- Common Services Centre will help beneficiaries to provide the above OMCs service near to their home, accessing through Digital Seva Portal.

About Common Service Centre

- Common Services Centers (CSCs) are astrategic corner stone of the Digital India programme.
- CSCs are envisaged as assisted front end ICT (Information and Communication Technology) enabled centres for delivery of various G2C (Government to Citizen) and other B2C (Business to Citizen) services to the citizens.

- CSC Centre is operated by an operator named as Village Level Entrepreneur (VLE).
- VLE has a basic level of computing infrastructure at his/her CSC centre and is capable of delivering various services to citizens.
- They focus on digital development, catalyzing rural entrepreneurs & social inclusion.

Topic-GS Paper 2–Government Initiatives
Source-PIB

8. **Tourist police, the app launched in Arunachal to help visitors**
- The Arunachal Pradesh Police launched the Arunachal Pradesh Tourist Police and the Arunachal Suraksha App to help the citizens during emergencies.
- It is an effort under Prime Minister's Digital India initiative to make the state police more efficient.
- The app will drastically decrease the crime rate in the state and the tourists visiting the state will feel secure with the tourist police around.

Related Information
- Arunachal Pradesh borders the states of Assam and Nagaland to the south and shares international borders with Bhutan in the west, Myanmar in the east and is separated from China in the north by the McMahon Line.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source- The Hindu

9. **Delhi's Signature Bridge inaugurated**
- Delhi Chief Minister has inaugurated the iconic 'Signature Bridge' over river 'Yamuna'.
- The iconic bridge is '675 metres' long and it will reduce the travel time between north and northeast Delhi and share the burden of the Wazirabad Bridge.
- The Signature Bridge is a cantilever spar cable-stayed bridge, spans Yamuna river at Wazirabad section, connecting Wazirabad to East Delhi.
- It is the country's first asymmetrical cable-stayed bridge.

Topic- Important for PCS
Source- AIR

06.11.2018

1. **NGT nod for long-awaited: India neutrino project**
- The Principal Bench of the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has upheld the environmental clearance earlier granted to India based Neutrino Observatory (INO) project by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
- The INO is proposed to be housed in an underground lab below a rocky mountain in Tamil Nadu.
- The proposed site is about 4.9 km from Mathikettan Shola bird sanctuary bordering Kerala.
- Any major activity within five km from any wildlife sanctuary requires a specific approval by the National Board for Wild Life.

Related Information
India-based Neutrino Observatory project
- The Cabinet Committee on Security cleared the India-based Neutrino Observatory project in 2017.
- It is the latest in a series of neutrino detectors, neutrino factories and experiments being set up worldwide to promote research in particle physics.

What does it entail?
- It is an underground project and will comprise a complex of caverns.
- The main cavern, which will house the huge neutrino detector [50-kilo tonne magnetised iron calorimeter], will be 130 m long, 26 m wide, and 30 m high.
- Two smaller caverns will be used for setting up experiments for neutrino double detector and dark matter. Approach to this complex will be by a 2-km-long tunnel.

What is a neutrino?
- Neutrinos are the smallest particles that form the universe.

Who is in-charge of the project?
- The Tata Institute of Fundamental Research is the nodal institution. The observatory is to be built jointly with the Department of Atomic Energy and the Department of Science and Technology.

What's special about locating the INO in the South?

- A project report says most of the neutrino detectors are at latitude over 35 deg.
- It is possible to push such a detector down to almost 8 deg latitude in South India, within proximity to the Equator.
- This permits neutrino astronomy searches covering the whole celestial sky and study of solar neutrinos passing through the Earth's core.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
Source- The Hindu

2. RBI kicks: to set up a digital Public Credit Registry to curb bad loans

- The Reserve Bank has initiated steps to set up a wide-based digital Public Credit Registry (PCR) to capture details of all borrowers, including willful defaulters and also the pending legal suits in order to check financial delinquencies.
- The PCR will also include data from entities like market regulator Sebi, the corporate affairs ministry, Goods and Service Tax Network and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India.
- It helps to enable the banks and financial institutions to get a 360-degree profile of existing and prospective borrowers on a real-time basis.

Related Information
Public Credit Registry (PCR)

- A public credit registry is an information repository that collates all loan information of individuals and corporate borrowers.
- A credit repository helps banks distinguish between a bad and a good borrower and accordingly offer attractive interest rates to good borrowers and higher interest rates to bad borrowers.
- The move is based on the recommendations of a committee, headed by Y.M. Deosthalee.
- PCR will address issues such as information asymmetry, improve access to credit and strengthen the credit culture among consumers.

- It can also address the bad loan problem staring at banks, as corporate debtors will not be able to borrow across banks without disclosing existing debt.
- A PCR may also help raise India's rank in the global ease of doing business index.

Why PCR is necessary

- Credit information is now available across multiple systems in bits and pieces and not in one window.
- Data on borrowings from banks, non-banking financial companies, corporate bonds or debentures from the market, external commercial borrowings (ECBs), foreign currency convertible bonds (FCCBs), masala bonds, and inter-corporate borrowings are not available in one data repository.
- PCR will help capture all relevant information about a borrower, across different borrowing products in one place.

Topic-GS Paper3–Economics & Development
Source- The Hindu

3. **Ganga Grams: The role model for village cleanliness**

- Ganga Gram is a concept to transform the villages on the bank of river Ganga into ideal villages with emphasis on Open Defecation Free, Solid and Liquid Waste Management, Water Conservation, Ground Water Recharge, modern crematorium, tree plantation, organic and medicinal plants.
- Ganga Gram' project had been launched by the Union government as part of its clean Ganga mission, named Namami Gange, for holistic sanitation development in villages on the banks of the Ganges.
- In August the Centre declared all 4,470 villages on the banks of the Ganges, located in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, open defecation-free (ODF)
- Of these villages, the Centre and the state governments have identified 24 villages to be taken up under a pilot project to transform them into 'Ganga Grams'.

- These will be converted into Ganga Grams by 31st December 2018.
- The villages selected will set the benchmark for cleanliness and integrated efforts of development and will be converted into 'Ganga Grams'.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source-PIB

4. **Purchasing Manager Index (PMI)**
- Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) data shows that employment picked up in both in the manufacturing and services sectors.
- India October services PMI jumps to 52.2 on stronger order.

Related Information
Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)
- The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an indicator of economic health for the manufacturing and service sectors.
- The purpose of the PMI is to provide information about current business conditions to company decision makers, analysts and purchasing managers.
- The PMI is compiled and released monthly by the Institute for Supply Management (ISM).
- The PMI is based on five major survey areas: new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier deliveries and employment.
- The surveys include questions about business conditions and any changes, whether it is improving, no changes or deteriorating.
- The headline PMI is a number from 0 to 100.
- A PMI above 50 represents an expansion when compared with the previous month.
- A PMI reading under 50 represents a contraction, and a reading at 50 indicates no change.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Economics
Source-Live mint

5. **AYUSH-Health Management Information System (A-HMIS)**
- The AYUSH-Health Management Information System (A-HMIS), a dedicated software application for Electronic Health Record (EHR) for the AYUSH systems of Healthcare.

- A-HIMS is expected to revolutionise the way Ayurveda, Yoga, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy are practised in the country, by inducting modern IT-solutions into these systems.
- This software is launched on the occasion of Ayurveda Day which is celebrated throughout the Country on 5th November.

Related Information
Ministry of AYUSH
- The Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy, abbreviated as AYUSH.
- It is a governmental body in India purposed with developing, education and research in Ayurveda (Indian traditional medicine), Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Homoeopathy, Sowa Rigpa (Traditional Tibetan medicine) and other Indigenous medicine systems.
- It was created in March 1995 as the Department of Indian Systems of Medicine and Homoeopathy (ISM&H).
- It is now operated under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- Ministry of AYUSH observes Ayurveda Day every year on Dhanawantari Jayanti (Dhanteras).

Topic- GS Paper 2– Health and policies
Source-PIB

6. **First lady of South Korean: Kim Jung-sook**
- Kim has been invited to attend the groundbreaking ceremony of a park in Ayodhya dedicated to Indian-born Korean Queen Heo Hwang-ok.
- The link with Ayodhya is considered important in South Korea as more than 10% of its population belongs to the influential Kim-Heo clan that Queen Heo and King Kim founded, and many Koreans come as tourists to India each year to visit the park.

Related Information
- According to the legend, Princess Suriratna, also known as Heo Hwang-ok, went to the Korean city of Gimhae from Ayodhya in AD 42 as a 16-year-old.

- She started the Karak dynasty by marrying a local king.
- Some Chinese-language texts claim that the then King of Ayodhya had a dream where God ordered him to send his 16-year-old daughter to South Korea to marry King Kim Suro.

Topic-GS Paper 3–International Relation
Source- The Hindu

7. **NCBS: Loss of small RNA molecule is key to rice domestication**
- This is the first report revealing the role of non-coding RNA regulators in domestication.
- The domestication of rice can be tracked to the loss of a small RNA molecule (miR397), according to a study carried out at the National Centre of Biological Sciences (NCBS), Bengaluru.
- This finding can be used to improve crops for the future

Related Information
- Thousands of years ago humans domesticated wild plant varieties that yielded flowers, fruit, grains and medicines.
- Indica rice, a subspecies of Oryza sativa, was domesticated from two wild species Oryza nivara and Oryza rufipogon.
- Both the wild species have weak stems and lie prostrate near edges of water bodies.
- The process of domestication selected useful traits from these: stronger stems, absence of seed shattering, more grains per plant, aroma, colour etc.
- After studying the two wild species, the domesticated high-yielding varieties and several rice lines in between (land races).
- They screened 12 and sequenced 7 — the team identified a small RNA controlling laccases and named them miR397.
- Laccases are enzymes involved in the polymerisation of monomers of lignin, which contribute to stem woodiness. If the plant produces more laccases then more lignin gets accumulated in the plant.

- Small RNA dictates whether a gene may express itself and make a protein; they control the way genes express themselves in the phenotype.

Topic-GS Paper3–Biodiversity & environment
Source- The Hindu

8. **Nuclear submarine: INS Arihant**
- Nuclear submarine INS Arihant country's first indigenous nuclear submarine successfully completed its "first deterrence patrol.
- It will signify the underwater predator has undertaken its maiden long-range mission with "live" nuclear-tipped missiles.
- It is India's long-awaited nuclear triad, or the capability to fire nuclear weapons from land, air and sea.
- INS Arihant (which means annihilator of enemies), armed with the 750-km range K-15 missiles, incidentally, comes at a time when a Chinese submarine is once again prowling around in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- The success of INS Arihant gives a fitting response to those who indulge in nuclear blackmail.

Related Information
INS Arihant
- The Arihant-class submarines are nuclear powered ballistic missile submarines built under the Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) project.
- This will be the first nuclear submarines designed and built by India.
- The submarines are powered by a pressurised water reactor with highly enriched uranium fuel.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Defence
Source- AIR

08.11.2018

1. **India re-elected as the member of ITU council**
- India has been elected as a member of the International Telecommunications Union Council (ITU) from 2019 to 2022.
- India ranked third among the 13 countries elected to the council from the Asia-Australasia region, and eighth among the 48 countries elected to the council globally.

- The elections to the council were held during the ongoing ITU Plenipotentiary Conference 2018 at Dubai, UAE.

Related Information
International Telecommunication Union
- The International Telecommunication Union is a specialized agency of the United Nations (UN).
- It was founded on the principle of international cooperation between governments (Member States) and the private sector (Sector Members, Associates and Academia)
- ITU has been an intergovernmental public-private partnership organization since its inception.
- It is responsible for issues that concern information and communication technologies.
- The ITU allocates global radio spectrum and satellite orbits, develop the technical standards that ensure networks and technologies seamlessly interconnect, and strive to improve access to ICTs to underserved communities worldwide.
- ITU currently has a membership of 193 countries and almost 800 private-sector entities and academic institutions.
- ITU is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland

Topic-GS Paper 3–Important Institution
Source- Economics Times
2. **UN postal agency issues special Diwali stamp**
- The United Nations Postal Administration issued a special event sheet to commemorate the festival of Diwali.
- The sheet of the stamps featuring festive lights and the symbolic lamps known as diyas.

Related Information
- The United States Postal Service (USPS) had in October 2016 launched a commemorative stamp in honour of the festival of Diwali.
- Diwali, also known as Deepawali is the joyous and popular festival of lights, which is celebrated in India and by followers of many faiths across the world.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Important Institution
Source- Indian Express
3. **Gujarat govt keen on renaming Ahmedabad as Karnavati**
- The Gujarat government keen on rechristening Ahmedabad as Karnavati.

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

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source- Indian express
4. **U.S. exempts Chabahar port work from sanctions**
- The Chabahar port in Iran will be exempt from U.S. sanctions which following the 180-day cool-off period after the U.S. withdrew from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (Iran Deal).
- This waiver will bring some measure of relief to India which had been discussing a sanctions exemption for Chabahar, having signed an agreement with Iran and Afghanistan in May 2016 for the port's development.
- India has also committed to building a railway line from Chabahar to Hajigaj in Afghanistan.

Related Information
- Iran has provided for an exception from the imposition of certain sanctions under the Iran Freedom and Counter-Proliferation Act of 2012 (IFCA) with respect to the development of Chabahar port and the construction of an associated railway and for the shipment of non-sanctionable goods through the port for Afghanistan.

- The IFCA was one of the laws under which sanctions on Iran were imposed by former U.S. President Barack Obama.
- The IFCA with implications for non-U.S. companies working with Iran in various sectors, including shipping, shipbuilding, energy and insurance.

Advantage for India

- Chabahar will provide India the much-denied connectivity to enhance trade with landlocked Afghanistan and Central Asian nations.
- India's participation in the development of Chabahar Port will provide India with an alternative and reliable access route into Afghanistan.
- Chabahar Port has the potential to become a regional transit hub for Afghanistan and eastern Central Asian Countries.
- It will improve bilateral trade with Iran and provide an opportunity for Indians to avail low-cost energy for various industries in the free trade zone in Chabahar.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –International Relation
Source- Economics Times

5. **Goverment issues guidelines for OPERATION GREENS**

- Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI) has approved the operationalisation strategy for Operation Greens.

The strategy will comprise of a series of measures as decided by the Ministry which includes:

(I) Short-term Price Stabilisation Measures

- NAFED will be the Nodal Agency to implement price stabilisation measures.
- MoFPI will provide 50% of the subsidy on the following two components:
- Transportation of Tomato Onion Potato (TOP) Crops from production to storage.
- Hiring of appropriate storage facilities for TOP Crops;

(II) Long-Term Integrated value chain development projects

- Capacity Building of FPOs & their consortium

- Quality production
- Post-harvest processing facilities
- Agri-Logistics
- Marketing / Consumption Points

Background of Operation Greens

- Operation Greens was announced in the Budget speech of 2018-19 to stabilize the supply of Tomato, Onion and Potato (TOP) crops and to ensure availability of TOP crops throughout the country round the year without price volatility.

Objectives of "Operation Greens

- Enhancing value realisation of TOP farmers by targeted interventions to strengthen TOP production clusters and their FPOs, and linking/connecting them with the market.
- Price stabilisation for producers and consumers by proper production planning in the TOP clusters and introduction of dual-use varieties.
- Reduction in post-harvest losses by the creation of farm gate infrastructure, development of suitable agro-logistics, and creation of appropriate storage capacity linking consumption centres.
- Increase in food processing capacities and value addition in the TOP value chain with firm linkages with production clusters.
- Setting up of a market intelligence network to collect and collate real-time data on demand and supply and price of TOP crops.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Agricultural Policies
Source-PIB

6. **Ozone: The Earth's protective shield is repairing**

- The ozone layer which is a part of the stratosphere has recovered at a rate of 1-3 percent per decade since 2000 said by U.N. Environment and the World Meteorological Organization.
- Northern Hemisphere and mid-latitude ozone is scheduled to heal completely by the 2030s followed by the Southern Hemisphere in the 2050s and Polar Regions by 2060.

Related Information
- An ozone layer is a colourless form of a specific type of oxygen molecule that protects Earth from ultraviolet rays that can cause skin cancer, eye problems and crop damage.
- The chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) effectively began eating away at the ozone.
- CFCs were found in things like spray cans, fridges, foam insulation and air conditioners.
- As a result, in 1985 a gaping hole in the ozone over the South Pole was discovered.

How bad did it get?
- At its worst in the late 1990s, about 10% of the upper ozone layer was depleted.
- But since 2000, it has begun to increase again by about 3% per decade, according to the UN report.

Agreement to Protect the Ozone
- An international agreement called the Montreal Protocol which banned or phased out ozone-depleting chemicals, including chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs).
- 180 countries signed up to it.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment
Source- The Hindu
7. **WFP and Alibaba join forces to fight hunger**
- The UN World Food Programme and Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group have formed a strategic partnership to support efforts eliminate hunger globally by 2030.
- Under the accord, Alibaba will lend its cutting-edge technology and resources to support the digital transformation of WFP's operations.
- The cloud computing arm of Alibaba, will work with WFP to develop a digital "World Hunger Map".
- The map will monitor global hunger and operations to end the scourge by 2030.
- Zero hunger is one of the UN's key Sustainable Development Goals (SDG- 2).

Related Information
World Food Programme

- The World Food Programme is the food assistance branch of the United Nations and the world's largest humanitarian organization addressing hunger and promoting food security.
- The WFP was formally established in 1963 by the FAO and the United Nations General Assembly.
- WFP Headquarters is in Rome.

Objectives of WFP
- Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies.
- Support food security and nutrition and (re)build livelihoods in fragile settings and following emergencies.
- Reduce risk and enable people, communities and countries to meet their own food and nutrition needs.
- Reduce undernutrition and break the intergenerational cycle of hunger.
- Zero Hunger in 2030.

Topic-GS Paper 2–Important Institution
Source- The Hindu
8. **World Bank inks $172 million project agreement with AP**
- The Central and Andhra Pradesh governments and the World Bank have signed the loan agreement for a $172.20 million project.
- This project will help to enhance agricultural productivity, profitability, and climate resilience of poor and marginalised farmers in Andhra Pradesh.
- The Andhra Pradesh Integrated Irrigation and Agriculture Transformation Project (APIIATP) will be implemented in rural areas largely dependent upon rain-fed agriculture.

Related Information
Problem Faced by Andhra Pradesh
- In recent years, climate variability has seriously affected agriculture in Andhra Pradesh, where farming is largely dominated by farmers with landholdings of less than two hectares.
- Farmers have low crop productivity and over 55 per cent of farms are dependent on rainfall.
- Deterioration in the quality of natural resources has affected the state's agricultural performance.

How these projects help Andhra Pradesh?

- The project will support the state's strategic shift that puts climate resilience at the core of agricultural growth and rural development in Andhra Pradesh.
- The project will take up a series of activities at the farm level to make agriculture both climate-resilient and profitable.
- By adopting climate-resilient seed varieties which have short maturity, are drought and heat resistant, and salt tolerant, the project will help reduce risks of climate-related crop failure and help enhance farmer's income.

Help to reduce GHS

- India's per capita emission of Green House Gases (GHG) is also on the rise, though current per capita levels of 2.44 tCO2 equivalent in 2012.
- The agriculture sector is the second largest contributor with around 18 percent of the country's total GHG emissions.
- Enhanced soil-water conservation and climate-resilient farm management have the potential to help India reduce its GHG emissions significantly.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source- The Hindu

09.11.2018

1. **Advanced Motor Fuels Technology Collaboration Programme**
- The Union Cabinet has been apprised of India joining as Member of Advanced Motor Fuels Technology Collaboration Programme (AMF TCP) under International Energy Agency.
- AMF TCP works under the framework of International Energy Agency to which India has "Association" status since 2017.
- The primary goal of joining AMF TCP by Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoP&NG) is to facilitate the market introduction of Advanced motor fuels/ Alternate fuels with an aim to bring down emissions and achieve higher fuel efficiency in the transport sector.
- AMF TCP also provides an opportunity for fuel analysis, identifying new/ alternate fuels for deployment in the transport sector and allied R&D activities for the reduction in emissions in fuel-intensive sectors.

Related Information

- Prime Minister at UrjaSangam, 2015 had directed to reduce the import in the energy sector by at least 10% by 2022.
- The government of India has recently notified National Policy on Biofuels-2018 which focusses on giving impetus to R&D in the field of advanced biofuels such as 2G Ethanol, Bio-CNG, biomethanol, Drop-in fuels, DME etc.
- These advanced fuels can be produced from various kind of wastes such as crop residues, Municipal solid waste, Industrial waste, waste gases, Food waste, plastic etc.

About Advanced Motor Fuels Technology Collaboration Programme

- Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Government of India has joined AMF TCP at 2018.
- The other member Countries of AMF TCP are USA, China, Japan, Canada, Chile, Israel, Germany, Austria, Sweden, Finland, Denmark, Spain, Republic of Korea, Switzerland and Thailand.
- AMF TCP is an international platform for co-operation among countries to promote cleaner and more energy efficient fuels & vehicle technologies.
- The activities of AMF TCP relate to R&D, deployment and dissemination of Advanced Motor Fuels and looks upon the transport fuel issues in a systemic way of taking into account the production, distribution and end-use related aspects.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment
Source-PIB

2. **Cabinet approves Laying down procedure and mechanism for sale of enemy shares**

- The Union Cabinet has approved the mechanism and procedure for sale of the enemy shares.
- 'In principle' approval has been accorded for sale of enemy shares under the Custody of Ministry of Home Affairs/ Custodian of Enemy Property of India (CEPI), section 8A of the Enemy Property Act, 1968.
- Department of Investment and Public Asset Management have been authorized under the provisions of subsection 7 of section 8A of the Enemy Property Act, 1968, to sell the same.
- Sale proceeds are to be deposited as disinvestment proceeds in the Government Account maintained by Ministry of Finance.
- The CEPI shall certify that the sale of the Enemy Shares is not in contravention of any judgment, decree or order of any court, tribunal or other authority or any law for the time being in force and can be disposed off by the Government.

Related Information
- The Enemy Property Act, 1968 provides for continued vesting of enemy property vested in the Custodian of Enemy Property of India (CEPI) under the Defence of India Rules, 1962 and the Defence of India Rules, 1971.
- In the Act of 1968, the definition of "enemy" was as follows: "enemy" or "enemy subject" or "enemy firm" means a person or country who or which was an enemy, an enemy subject or an enemy firm, as the case may be, under the Defence of India Act and Rules, but does not include a citizen of India.
- In the amendment of 2017, this was substituted by ".... including his legal heir or successor, whether or not the citizen of India or the citizen of a country which is not an enemy or the enemy...who has changed his nationality"?

Impact
- The decision will lead to monetization of enemy shares that had been lying dormant for decades since coming

into force and the Enemy Property Act in 1968.
- With the amendment of 2017, an enabling legislative provision was created for the disposal of enemy property.
- With the approval, now, of the procedure and mechanism for sale of enemy shares, an enabling framework has been institutionalized for their sale.
- The decision will lead to monetization of movable enemy property lying dormant for decades.
- Sale proceeds from this may be used for development and social welfare programmes.

Enemy Property amendment 2017
- According to amendment, as in subsection 7 of section 8A of the Enemy Property Act, 1968.
- Central Government may direct that disposal of enemy property shall be made by any other authority or Ministry or Department instead of Custodian.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics
Source-PIB
3. **Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities, 2018**
- "Global IT Challenge for Youth with Disabilities, 2018" is being organised by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD) under Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- India is hosting the event in collaboration with the Government of Korea and Rehabilitation International (RI).
- The Global IT Challenge for disability is a capacity building project that helps youth with disabilities to overcome their limitations and challenges for a better future through access to ICT.
- It will alleviate the digital divide and expand the participation of youth with disabilities in the society.
- It propagates implementation of the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) - Article 21 relates to access to information.

Related Information
- There are about 1 billion i.e. about 15% of the world population persons with disabilities.
- Majority of this population live in developing countries with low ICT development indexes.
- The Global IT Challenge was initially designed to enhance the information utilisation skill of youths with disabilities (in the category of visual disability, hearing disability, locomotor disability and developmental disorder) and to encourage their social participation.
- The event started in the year 1992 in Korea and since 2011 it has become a global event.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Events and Policies for the Vulnerable section of Society
Source- Indian Express

4. **Cabinet approves filling of Padur Strategic Petroleum Reserves**
- The Union Cabinet has approved the filling of Padur Strategic Petroleum Reserves (SPR) at Padur, Karnataka by overseas National Oil Companies (NOCs).
- The SPR facility at Padur is an underground rock cavern with a total capacity of 2.5 million metric tonnes (MMT) having four compartments of 0.625 MMT each.
- The filling of the SPR under PPP model is being undertaken to reduce budgetary support of the Government of India.

Related Information
Strategic Petroleum Reserve (India)
- The Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd. (ISPRL) has constructed and commissioned underground rock caverns for storage of total 5.33 MMT of crude oil at three locations namely Vishakhapatnam Mangalore & Padur.
- The total 5.33 MMT capacity under Phase-I of the SPR programme is currently estimated to supply approximately 95 days of India's crude requirement according to the consumption data for FY 2017-18.
- All these are located on the east and west coasts of India which is readily accessible to the refineries.

- These strategic storages are in addition to the existing storages of crude oil and petroleum products with the oil companies and serve in response to external supply disruptions.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Government Policies
Source-PIB

5. **The Earth has not one, but three moons.**
- A group of Hungarian scientists have confirmed a long-standing astronomical speculation; the Earth has three natural satellites or moons and not one.
- The research published in the Monthly Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society.
- It says that the new moons are entirely made up of extremely tiny dust particles of less than one-millimetre size and reflect light rather faintly.
- This is the reason why they were difficult to observe and study in the first place even when they are located at around the same distance as the Moon from the Earth—400,000 kilometres.

Related Information
- In 1961, Kazimierz Kordylewski, a Polish scientist had observed these moons for the first time and they were later named after him as Kordylewski Dust Clouds (KDCs).
- Kordylewski had discovered the dust clouds close to a special point in space known as L5 which is a Lagrange point of the Earth-Moon gravitational system.
- Lagrange points are places of equilibrium in space where gravitational forces of two large and solid astronomical objects like the Earth and the Moon cancel out the centrifugal forces.
- Many other small celestial objects are often found around Lagrange points.
- For example, there are minor planets close to the Lagrange points of the Sun-Earth gravitational system and the Sun-Jupiter system.

- Such points are also ideal for parking satellites and other space vehicles as the fuel consumption is considerably lower here.
- They will be essential for space exploration projects as transfer stations where space shuttles and stations can stop over on long journeys to other planets and even the Sun.
- There are five such points of stability identified in any such two-body system including the Earth-Moon system.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology
Source- Down to Earth

6. **Multi-Modal Terminal in Varanasi**
- Prime Minister will inaugurate a Multi-Modal Terminal on River Ganga in Varanasi.
- The Multi-Modal Terminal in Varanasi is the first of three Multi-Modal Terminals being constructed on River Ganga.
- A total of three Multi-Modal Terminals and two Inter-modal Terminals are being constructed on the river as part of the central government's Jal Marg Vikas project.
- The project aims to promote inland waterways for cheaper and environment-friendly conveyance, especially for the transportation of cargos.

Related Information
- The project entails construction of three Multi-Modal Terminals at Varanasi, Sahibganj and Haldia,
- Being implemented by Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI), the Jal Marg Vikas project is technically supported by World Bank.
- The total estimated project cost is being equally shared between the World Bank and the Government of India.
- The operation, management and further development of the MMTs are proposed to be consigned to an operator on Public-private partnership (PPP) model.

- India has about 14,500 km of navigable waterways which include rivers, canals, backwaters, creeks among others.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source- Indian Express

7. **RBI relaxes ECB norms for infrastructure companies**
- The Reserve Bank has liberalised the norms governing foreign borrowings for infrastructure creation "in consultation with the Government".
- The minimum average maturity requirement for ECBs (external commercial borrowings) in the infrastructure space raised by eligible borrowers has been reduced to three years from earlier five years.
- Also, the average maturity requirement for mandatory hedging has been reduced to five years from earlier ten years.
- The provisions have been reviewed and decisions are taken "in consultation with the Government of India.

Related Information
- The move comes amid concerns surrounding the availability of funds following a liquidity squeeze and the difficulties being faced by non-bank lenders, especially those facing asset liability issues due to heavy reliance on short-term funding for long-term assets.
- This, along with defaults by infra lender IL&FS, has hurt the credit markets.
- The Government has been unequivocal in suggesting remedial measures which will address the needs of the economy.
- The relaxations in the ECB norms follow other moves by the RBI, including last week's permission to banks to use credit enhancement to help NBFCs raise medium to long-term funds.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics
Source- Business Standard

8. **The UK India Business Council Launches New Report - 'Beyond the Top 200'**

- The UK India Business Council report, 'Beyond the Top 200'.
- It sets out how India's new higher education policy could accelerate India's rise to superpower status by enabling young Indians to receive the world's best higher education in India through greater availability of the top courses provided globally.
- The report launched in the margins of the FICCI Higher Education Summit, advocates for effective international collaboration in Indian Higher Education.
- On the path to becoming a 21st global superpower, India will need is rightly placing excellence, equal access, and employability at the heart of expanding its Higher Education system.

Related Information
- The report, therefore, recommends that all institutions, whether Indian or foreign, public or private, and irrespective of ranking, be permitted to forge international partnerships should it demonstrate, to both parties, real added value.
- It will create an international collaboration to meet the demand of India's students, institutions, and employers.
- The Indian Higher education environment and are encouraged by initiatives such as SPARC and GIAN, which will strengthen UK India Higher Education Relations.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Education Institution
Source- Business Standard

10.11.2018

1. **SIMBEX 18 - Bilateral Exercise between Indian & Republic of Singapore Navies**
- The 25th edition of annual naval exercise SIMBEX (Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercise) begins at Andaman Sea and Bay of Bengal.
- The 2018 edition marks the Silver Jubilee of SIMBEX.
- It will help in complementing India's 'Act-East' policy, there have been a number of agreements and high-level visits in the recent past between the two countries.

Related Information
- In the Shangrila Dialogue PM of India and Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong of Singapore inked many agreements including those under the 'Defence and Strategic Partnership Sectors'.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Defence
Source-PIB

2. **Global Cooling Innovation Summit inaugurated in New Delhi**
- Global Cooling Innovation Summit inaugurated by Union Science & Technology Minister in New Delhi.
- The Summit is a first-of-its-kind solutions-focused event that will bring together leaders from around the world to explore concrete means and pathways to address the climate threat that comes from the growing demand from room air conditioners.
- The event is jointly organized by the Department of Science and Technology, Government of India, along with Rocky Mountain Institute, Alliance for An Energy-Efficient Economy (AEEE), Conservation X Labs and CEPT University.
- The summit also saw the launching of Global Cooling Prize— Mission Innovation challenge that aims to spur development of a residential cooling solution that has at least five times (5x) less climate impact than today's standard.
- Global Cooling Prize is a competition with global reach and participation to achieve dramatic breakthroughs in cooling technologies.
- The objective of this competition would be to develop a cooling technology that requires radically less energy to operate, utilizes refrigerants with no ozone depletion potential.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment
Source- The Hindu

3. **Cabinet approves privatization of six airports under PPP model**
- The Union cabinet has given its approval for privatization of the management of six airports of AAI (Airports Authority of India).

- These airports are Ahmedabad, Jaipur, Lucknow, Guwahati, Thiruvananthapuram and Mangaluru for operation, management and development under public-private partnership (PPP) through (the) Public Private Partnership Appraisal Committee.

Related Information

- PPP in airport management has helped the government raise sizeable revenue and utilize the model for better air connectivity elsewhere in the country.
- It hopes the move will bring more foreign investment into airport infrastructure.
- The government also set up an empowered committee of secretaries to oversee the process.
- Other airports which are already working on PPP model are Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru, Kochi & Hyderabad.

Other PPP model Project

- The cabinet also approved the filling of Padur strategic petroleum reserves in Karnataka through the PPP route.
- The cabinet gave in-principle approval for strategic disinvestment of all government shares in the Dredging Corp. of India Ltd to a consortium of four ports that includes Visakhapatnam Port Trust, Paradip Port Trust, Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust and Kandla Port Trust.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source-Live mint

4. **NASA probe set to visit Jupiter's Trojan asteroids**
- NASA's Ralph – a space instrument that has travelled as far as Pluto – is set to explore Jupiter's Trojan asteroids, which are remnants from the early days of the solar system.
- Ralph was first launched aboard the New Horizons spacecraft in 2006m and obtained stunning flyby images of Jupiter and its moons.
- This was followed by a visit to Pluto where Ralph took the first high-definition pictures of the iconic minor planet.
- In 2021, Ralph is set to journey with the Lucy mission to Jupiter's Trojan asteroids.

- The Lucy spacecraft carries a near-twin of Ralph, called L'Ralph, which will investigate Jupiter's Trojan asteroids.
- The L'Ralph instrument suite will study this diverse group of bodies.
- Lucy will fly by six Trojans and one Main Belt asteroid – more than any other previous asteroid mission.
- L'Ralph will detect the Trojan asteroids' chemical fingerprints.

Related Information

- L'Ralph allows scientists to interpret data provided by the Sun's reflected light that are the fingerprints of different elements and compounds.
- These data could provide clues about how organic molecules form in primitive bodies, a process that might also have led to the emergence of life on Earth.

Topic-GS Paper-3–Science & Technology
Source- The Hindu

5. **China debuts artificial intelligence (AI) news anchors**
- Xinhua news agency launched the world first two virtual news anchors amid a state-directed embrace of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI).
- AI Synthetic Anchors based on the appearances of two flesh-and-blood Chinese news presenters.
- The computerised avatars read out text that is fed into their system, their mouths moving in tandem with the reports.
- "AI Synthetic Anchors", one for Chinese and one for English news, were developed along with Sogou Inc, a Beijing-based creator of search engines and voice-recognition technology.

Related Information

- The digital anchors offer certain advantages over humans such as being able to work 24 hours a day and to quickly disseminate breaking news.
- "The AI Synthetic Anchor has officially become part of the Xinhua reporting team.
- He will work together with other anchors to bring you authoritative, timely and accurate news and information in Chinese and English.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
Source- The Hindu

6. **Cabinet approves extradition agreement with Morocco**

- Union Cabinet approved signing and ratifying the extradition agreement between India and Morocco.
- The agreement will provide a strong legal base for the extradition of fugitive offenders who are accused of economic offences, terrorism and other serious offences in one contracting state and found in another contracting state.
- This Treaty will also strengthen bilateral relations to deal with criminal elements acting against the national interest of both India and Morocco.

Related Information

- The union cabinet also approved the agreement between India and Morocco on mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters.
- India and Morocco both nations are part of the Non-Aligned Movement.
- The Extradition Arrangements with Italy and Croatia confine to Crimes related to Illicit Traffic in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.
- India, Italy and Croatia are parties to the 1988 UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

About Morocco

- It is a North African country bordering the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea.
- The capital of Morocco is Rabat.

Topic-GS Paper-2–International Relation
Source-PIB

7. **Novel 'bionic mushrooms' can produce electricity**

- Scientists, including those of Indian origin, have created a bionic device that generates green power by 3D-printing clusters of cyanobacteria on an ordinary white button mushroom.
- The researchers took an ordinary white button mushroom from a grocery store and made it bionic, supercharging it with clusters of cyanobacteria that create electricity and swirls of graphene nanoribbons that can collect the current.

- It can be created by integrating cyanobacteria that can produce electricity, with nanoscale materials capable of collecting the current.

Related Information

Cyanobacteria

- These are the group of only photosynthetic prokaryotes bacteria able to produce oxygen.
- They live in a wide variety of moist soils and water either freely or in a symbiotic relationship with plants or lichen-forming fungi.
- Cyanobacteria are also called "blue-green algae.

Topic-GS Paper-3–Science & Technology

Source- The Hindu

8. **No double jeopardy bar if there was no trial: SC**

- The Supreme Court held that the bar of double jeopardy does not arise if an accused was discharged of a criminal offence, even before the commencement of trial, on the basis of an invalid sanction for prosecution.
- A Bench of two Judges held in an October 30 judgment that if an "accused has not been tried at all and convicted or acquitted, the principles of double jeopardy cannot be invoked at all.
- If an earlier order of sanction was found to be invalid, there is no bar for the competent authority to issue a proper order of sanction for prosecution, Justice Banumathi, who wrote the verdict for the Bench in a case under the Prevention of Corruption Act.
- The courts are not to quash or stay the proceedings under the Act merely on the ground of an error, omission or irregularity in the sanction granted by the authority unless it is satisfied that such error, omission or irregularity has resulted in the failure of justice.

Related Information

- The judgment is based on the State of Mizoram Vs. Dr. C. Sangnghina,

- In this case, an appeal filed by the State of Mizoram against an order passed by the Gauhati High Court in August 2015, upholding a Special Court decision to decline to entertain a second charge sheet filed in a corruption case against the accused, Dr. C. Sangnghina, on the ground of double jeopardy.

About Double Jeopardy
- Double jeopardy is a procedural defence that prevents an accused person from being tried again on the same (or similar) charges and on the same facts, following a valid acquittal or conviction.
- Article 20 (2) of the Constitution mandates that a person cannot be prosecuted or punished twice for the same offence.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Judiciary
Source- The Hindu

12.11.2018

1. **ISRO's communication satellite GSAT-29 will soon launch from GSLV Mk III**
- GSAT-29 is a high-throughput communication satellite developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- The satellite is through the second developmental flight of GSLV Mk III.
- The flight name is GSLV Mk III D2.
- The mission aims at providing high-speed bandwidth to Village Resource Centres (VRC) in rural areas.
- The two Ku and Ka operational payloads will provide communication services to Jammu and Kashmir and northeastern regions under Digital India programme.

Related Information
- ISRO had launched another communication satellite, GSAT-6A, on March 2018 but lost it in space a day later.
- The GSAT-29 satellite itself is one of the planned Indian HTS quartets.
- The HTSs or high throughput satellites are being sent out to provide a vastly improved and faster Internet connectivity.

- GSAT-19, the first of the series, was sent up in June 2017 from Sriharikota.
- ISRO is also preparing for a PSLV mission to launch HySIS, a new variant of Earth observation satellites, along with 20-30 small commercial satellites.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
Source- The Hindu

2. **Odisha CM has requested the Central govt to conduct an inquiry regarding the replacement of artistic stone carvings at Konark Sun Temple with plain stones**

Related Information
Konark Sun Temple
- Konark Sun Temple is a 13th-century CE sun temple at Konark on the coastline of Odisha.
- The temple is attributed to king Narasingha Deva I of the Eastern Ganga Dynasty about 1250 CE.
- The Temple is dedicated to the Hindu god "Surya".
- This temple was called the "Black Pagoda" in European sailor accounts as early as 1676 because its great tower appeared black.
- The temple represents a chariot of the Sun God and is one of the World Heritage sites declared by UNESCO.
- Konark Sun Temple was given Adarsh Monument tag by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI).

Other
- The other three monuments of eastern India were given Adarsh Monument tag are
  - Hazarduari Palace in Murshidabad district of West Bengal.
  - Vaishali-Kolhua in Bihar.
  - Rang Ghar in Sibsagar (Sivasagar) district of Assam.
- The Jagannath Temple in Puri was called the "White Pagoda".

Topic- GS Paper 1 – Art and Culture
Source- The Hindu

3. **World's largest brain-like supercomputer switched on for the first time**
- The world's largest supercomputer designed to work in the same way as the human brain has been switched on for the first time.

- The newly formed million-processor-core **Spiking Neural Network Architecture (SpiNNaker)** machine is capable of completing more than 200 million actions per second.
- The SpiNNaker machine, designed and built in The University of Manchester in the UK.
- It can model more biological neurons in real time than any other machine on the planet.

Related Information

- SpiNNaker is unique because, unlike traditional computers, it does not communicate by sending large amounts of information from point A to B via a standard network.
- SpiNNaker has been used to simulate high-level real-time processing in a range of isolated brain networks.
- This includes an 80,000 neuron model of a segment of the cortex, the outer layer of the brain that receives and processes information from the senses.
- It also has simulated a region of the brain called the Basal Ganglia – an area affected in Parkinson's disease, meaning it has massive potential for neurological breakthroughs in science such as pharmaceutical testing.
- The power of SpiNNaker has even recently been harnessed to control a robot, the SpOmnibot.
- This robot uses the SpiNNaker system to interpret real-time visual information and navigate certain objects while ignoring others.
- Neuroscientists can now use SpiNNaker to help unlock some of the secrets of how the human brain works by running unprecedentedly large-scale simulations.
- It also works as a real-time neural simulator that allows roboticists to design large-scale neural networks into mobile robots so they can walk, talk and move with flexibility and low power.
- Biological neurons are basic brain cells present in the nervous system that communicate primarily by emitting 'spikes' of pure electro-chemical energy.

- Neuromorphic computing uses large-scale computer systems containing electronic circuits to mimic these spikes in a machine.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology
Source- The Hindu

4. **Indian war memorial unveiled in France**

- To highlight the contribution of the Indian soldiers to the freedom of France in the Great War (First World War) an Indian War Memorial was unveiled at Villers Guislain in Paris.
- It is first of its kind national memorial for the Indian soldiers who died in France during the First World War and features the Ashoka emblem.
- The memorial, constructed by the Government of India through the USI, is distinct from the Indian memorial at Neuve Chapple, which was built by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Related Information

- The First World War came to an end with the signing of the armistice on November 11, 1918.
- India contributed more than 1.5 million troops, of which 1.3 million fought overseas across all theatres and, approximately, 72,000 were killed.
- India Gate in Delhi, which pays homage to the "unknown soldier", has names of soldiers inscribed on it.

Colour of remembrance

- Marigold the common flower seen across India is set to join the poppy as a uniquely Indian symbol of remembrance.
- Since the end of the First World War, the poppy was adopted as the symbol of remembrance in Europe.
- Poppy used as a symbol of remembrance because it widely grew in the Flanders fields in Europe where some of the major battles were fought.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – International Relation
Source-PIB

5. **Ladakh restoration project wins UNESCO award**

- Restoration of an aristocratic house from a state of partial ruin in Ladakh has won a UNESCO Asia-Pacific award for conservation.
- The Ladakh project won in the category of Award of Distinction under UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation.
- The LAMO Center in Jammu and Kashmir's Ladakh region was chosen for its systematic restoration project that used salvaged and local building materials, and indigenous construction techniques while adroitly introducing modern amenities to assure its ongoing use.
- The recovery of the aristocratic house from a state of partial ruin establishes an important precedent for conserving the non-monumental urban fabric of Leh Old Town.
- Strategically located at the foot of the Leh Palace, the restored structure contributes significantly to the continuity of the historic townscape dating back to the 17th century.
- In Mumbai, the restoration projects of the iconic Rajabai Clock Tower of Mumbai University and Ruttonsee Muljee Jetha Fountain, both belonging to the colonial-era have received Honourable Mention.

Related Information

UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Awards

- UNESCO Asia Pacific Heritage Awards (since 2000) are given with as the strategic purpose of UNESCO within the region Asia Pacific.
- The objective is to motivate the protection of Cultural Heritage sites, which are initiated by any individual organization under private sector or institutional organization.

The Awards consist of five categories.

- Award of Excellence
- Award of Distinction
- Award of Merit
- Honourable Mention
- Award for New Design in Heritage Contexts

Topic- GS Paper 1 – Art and Culture
Source- Indian Express

6. **Pneumonia and Diarrhea Progress Report 2018**

- The annual report is released by the **IVAC (International Vaccine Access Center)** at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.
- It describes efforts to fight pneumonia and diarrhoea in 15 countries with the greatest number of deaths from these illnesses.
- Besides India, the other countries are Nigeria, Pakistan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Chad, Angola, Somalia, Indonesia, Tanzania, China, Niger, Bangladesh, Uganda, and Côte d'Ivoire.
- It found that despite improvements in full immunisation coverage across India, girls under the age of five in rural and poorer urban localities continue to lose out on vaccinations.
- In India, the under-five child mortality for girls is 40 deaths per 1,000 live births, while for boys it is 39 deaths per 1,000 live births.
- The IVAC report also analyses how effectively countries are delivering or ensuring the use of 10 key interventions, including exclusive breastfeeding, vaccination, access to care and use of antibiotics, oral rehydration solution and zinc supplementation, to prevent and treat pneumonia and diarrhoea.
- The measures are known to help protect children from death due to these illnesses and could help achieve the UN's Sustainable Development Goal target of reducing under-five mortality to 25 per 1,000 live births by 2030.

Topic- GS-2-Health Issues
Source- Indian Express

7. **Is Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary safe for migratory birds?**

- Recently, Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) examined that the water quality at the Point Calimere Wildlife Sanctuary might be unsafe for avifauna to feed and breed.

- The pH and salinity of the waters exceeded permissible limits for ecologically sensitive zones.
- This will create a threat to the Migratory birds.
- Though it is a protected area and a Ramsar site, chemical companies and small-scale shrimp farms around the wetland have started to pose a threat to the biodiversity and ecosystem of the sanctuary.

Related Information
Point Calimere Wildlife and Bird Sanctuary

- The wildlife sanctuary located in Nagapattinam district of Tamil Nadu.
- It comprises of sandy coastal, saline swamps and thorn scrub forests around the backwater.
- The sanctuary was created in 1967 for the conservation of the near threatened blackbuck antelope, an endemic mammal species of India.
- It is famous for large congregations of water birds, especially greater flamingos.
- This is IUCN category IV (habitat/species management area) and also a Ramsar Wetland.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment and Biodiversity
Source- The Hindu

8. **ADB grants EESL $13 million to promote efficient energy usage in the country**

- The Asian Development Bank and the Energy Efficiency Services signed an agreement for a Global Environment Facility to grant of USD 13 million for establishing an Energy Efficiency Revolving Fund.
- EERF aims to expand and sustain investments in the energy efficiency market in India, build market diversification, and scale up existing technologies.
- The ADB funding is helping EESL finance energy service utilities for installing established energy-efficient technologies such as light-emitting diode (LED) street-lights with municipalities while exploring newer technologies and their self-sustaining business models.

- This will support the overall objective of the project that is aligned with the goals of the government's National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency.
- It also aims to expand the market for energy-efficient technologies and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Related Information
About EESL

- Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), under the administration of Ministry of Power, Government of India
- It is working towards mainstreaming energy efficiency and is implementing the world's largest energy efficiency portfolio in the country.
- EESL has begun its operations in UK, South Asia and South-East Asia.

Global Environment Facility

- The Global Environment Facility (GEF) was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems.
- The GEF unites 183 countries in partnership with international institutions, civil society organizations (CSOs), and the private sector to address global environmental issues while supporting national sustainable development initiatives.

The GEF also serves as a financial mechanism for the following conventions:

- CBD Convention on Biological Diversity.
- United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- UN Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)
- Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs)
- Minamata Convention on Mercury

Topic-GS Paper 3–Important Institution
Source- PIB

13.11.2018

1. **Samudra Shakti – 2018**

- Samudra Shakti is a bilateral Navy exercise between India and Indonesia.

- The aim of the exercise is to strengthen bilateral relations, expand maritime co-operation, enhance interoperability and exchange best practices.
- The 2018 edition is scheduled at the port of Surabaya in Indonesia.

Related Information

- The strategic partnership between the two nations was elevated to 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' during the visit of Prime Minister of India on May 18 and Defence co-operation has been a significant pillar in this partnership.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Defence
Source-PIB

2. **10th anniversary of IONS**

- 10th-anniversary commemorative activities of the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) was held at Kochi.
- The theme for the 10th-anniversary seminar of IONS is **"SAGAR" (Security and Growth for All in the Region)**

Related Information
Indian Ocean Naval Symposium

- The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, commonly known as IONS, is a series of biennial meetings among the littoral states of the Indian Ocean region launched by India in 2008.
- It provides a forum to increase maritime security cooperation, providing a forum for discussion of regional maritime issues and promote friendly relationships among the member nations.

Role

- IONS is a security construct for the Indian Ocean region which is similar to the Western Pacific Naval Symposium.
- It is a voluntary initiative among the navies and maritime security agencies of the member nations.

Topic-GS Paper 2–International Relation
Source-PIB

3. **National body set up to study a rare form of diabetes**

- A National Monogenic Diabetes Study Group has been formed to identify cases of monogenic diabetes across the country.

- It is supported by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), the Madras Diabetes Research Foundation (MDRF) and Dr. Mohan's Diabetes Specialities Centre (DMDSC) will be the national coordinating centre for the study group.
- National Monogenic Diabetes Study Group has been formed with MDRF as the nodal centre.

Related Information

- Monogenic diabetes is a group of disorders where mutation of a single gene causes diabetes.
- The three commonest forms being - Maturity Onset Diabetes of the Young (MODY), Neonatal Diabetes Mellitus (NDM) and Congenital Hypoglycaemia.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Health Issues
Source-Indian Express

4. **Indian Army inducts three major artillery gun systems**

- This is the first major induction since Swedish-made Bofors Howitzers were inducted by the Indian Army.
- Indian army has received three major artillery gun systems, including the M777 A2 ultra-light howitzers, K-9 Vajra self-propelled gun and a "Composite Gun Towing Vehicle".

Related Information

- The 155mm, 39 calibre ultra-light Howitzers have been procured from the US under Government to Government Foreign Military Sales and will be assembled in India by BAE Systems in partnership with Mahindra Defence.
- The M777 guns will be able to strike targets anywhere between 24-40 km.
- There is a huge importance of artillery in border warfare, especially in the mountainous kind that we share with both Pakistan and China.
- The first ten K9 Vajra 155mm/52 calibre guns have been imported from Hanwha Techwin of South Korea in semi-knocked down state and have been assembled by L&T in India.
- The remaining 90 guns will be largely manufactured in India with some major assemblies coming from South Korea.

- The 6×6 Field Artillery Tractor has been indigenously developed by Ashok Leyland and will provide the much-awaited replacement for the ageing fleet of artillery gun towing vehicles.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Defence
Source-Indian Express

5. **Bannerghatta National Park: New Draft Policy reduces Eco Sensitive Zone**

- The draft re-notification of the Eco Sensitive Zone (ESZ) of Bannerghatta National Park (BNP) by the Centre reduces the ESZ area from the earlier 268.96 sq km to 168.84 sq km.
- The new draft states that only 77 villages will fall under the ESZ against the earlier 147 villages.

Related Information

- Bannerghatta National Park is situated near Bangalore, Karnataka.
- The Bannerghatta Biological Park, popularly known as BBP, has been an integral part of Bannerghatta National Park and emerged out as an independent establishment during the year 2002.

Eco-Sensitive Zone

- Eco-Sensitive Zones or Ecologically Fragile Areas are areas notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change Government of India around Protected Areas, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- The purpose of declaring ESZs is to create some kind of "shock absorbers" to the protected areas by regulating and managing the activities around such areas.
- They also act as a transition zone from areas of high protection to areas involving lesser protection.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment
Source-The Hindu

6. **Palau becomes the first country to ban sunscreen to save coral reefs**

- The Western Pacific nation of Palau has become the first country to ban many kinds of sunscreen, in a move to protect its coral reefs from chemicals which causes significant damage.
- The chemicals from sunscreen, which washes off swimmers or enters the ocean through the sewer system and also causes grave harm to these coral reefs.
- The step was taken by Palau government after a report on 2017 that found sunscreen products to be "widespread" in Jellyfish Lake, one of the country's UNESCO World Heritage sites.

Related Information

- Researchers found that even a low concentration of sunscreen in the water can hinder the development of young coral.
- Studies have also shown that chemicals in sunscreen can cause localized coral bleaching and can disrupt the reproduction of fish by interfering with their hormonal systems.
- A 2015 study found that oxybenzone in sunscreen stunts coral growth and is toxic for the algae that live within reefs.

Coral reef

- A coral reef is an underwater ecosystem characterized by reef-building corals.
- Reefs are formed of colonies of coral polyps held together by calcium carbonate.
- Most coral reefs are built from stony corals, whose polyps cluster in groups.
- Often called "rainforests of the sea", shallow coral reefs form some of Earth's most diverse ecosystems.
- They occupy less than 0.1% of the world's ocean area, about half the area of France, yet they provide a home for at least 25% of all marine species.
- They are most commonly found at shallow depths in tropical waters, but deep water and cold water coral reefs exist on smaller scales in other areas.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Biodiversity
Source- The Hindu

7. **India slips in global RTI ratings.**
- This global RTI rating founded by the Centre for Law and Democracy (CLD), a Canada-based non-governmental organisation, along with Access Info Europe.
- India has slipped from its second position (2011) to fourth, fifth and sixth in 2016, 2017 and 2018 respectively.
- According to the rating agencies, India scored 128 out of a possible total of 150 points.
- Out of the 61 indicators, there are nine indicator categories under which India's points have been downgraded.
- India ranks lower than smaller nations like Afghanistan which adopted the RTI later than India.
- According to CLD, the global RTI rating is a system for assessing the strength of the legal framework for guaranteeing the right to information in a given country.
- It is, however, limited to measuring the legal framework only and does not gauge the quality of implementation.

Related Information
Right to Information Act, 2005
- Right to Information (RTI) is an act of the Parliament of India to provide for setting out the practical regime of the right to information for citizens and replaces the erstwhile Freedom of information Act, 2002.
- Under the provisions of the Act, any citizen of India may request information from a "public authority" (a body of Government or "instrumentality of State") which is required to reply expeditiously or within thirty days.
- The Act also requires every public authority to computerise their records for wide dissemination and to proactively certain categories of information so that the citizens need minimum recourse to request for information formally.
- Information disclosure in India is restricted by the Official Secrets Act 1923 and various other special laws, which the new RTI Act relaxes.

- Right to Information codifies a fundamental right of the citizens of India.
- RTI has proven to be very useful but is counteracted by the Whistleblowers Act.
- It will be extended to the whole of India except Jammu and Kashmir.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source-Indian Express
8. **Endangered Horseshoe crabs saved in Odisha**
- Department of Biotechnology has been releasing these endangered horseshoe crabs from extinction, them in the sea for the past two years.
- This is being done under Sea Ranching of Horseshoe Project launched in January 2017 in Fakir Mohan University, which is situated in Odisha's Balasore.
- In this project, new aquaculture technology for restocking, stock enhancement and sea ranching have been undertaken to restore the depleting population of the horseshoe crab along the Odisha coast.

Related Information
- The horseshoe crabs were found in large numbers across the coast, the species' presence is now limited to pockets like Balaramgadi, Chandipur beach, Khandia estuary of Balasore district, Eakakula, Madali and Hukitola beach in Kendrapara district.
- The Several-government and non-government agencies and countries like Malaysia, Thailand and Saudi Arabia are helping Odisha conserve the species owing to their medicinal value in pharmaceutical, clinical and food industries.

Reason for Diminishing Population
- The indiscriminate exploitation of horseshoe crabs for various commercial purposes has resulted in the significant global decline of this creature in the past decades.
- "Environmental degradation and destruction of breeding grounds are also reasons behind their diminishing population.

- The unregulated fishing activities along the coast and unawareness among local fishermen about the crab's economic importance are also leading to their declining population.

About Horseshoe Crab

- The horseshoe crab is a 'living fossil' forms almost identical to this species were present during the Triassic period 230 million years ago.
- It has a unique and intriguing feature of this ancient species is that it has blue copper-based blood.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Biodiversity
Source- Down to Earth

14.11.2018

1. **HRD Ministry Launches LEAP and ARPIT for higher education faculty**
- Ministry of Human Resource Development launched two new initiatives; Leadership for Academicians Programme (LEAP) and Annual Refresher Programme In Teaching (ARPIT) at New Delhi.
- These initiatives help to transform the quality of teaching and improve leaders, thereby enhancing the quality of higher education institutions

Related Information
Leadership for Academicians Programme (LEAP)

- Leadership for Academicians Programme (LEAP) is a three weeks Flagship leadership development training programme for second level academic functionaries in publicly funded higher education institutions.
- The main objective is to prepare the second tier academic heads that are potentially likely to assume leadership roles in the future.
- The programme would provide senior faculty, with high academic credentials, the required leadership and managerial skills including skills of problem-solving.
- The implementation of LEAP Programme will be through 15 NIRF top-ranked Indian Institutions.

ARPIT (Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching)

- Annual Refresher Programme in Teaching (ARPIT), a major and unique initiative of online professional development of 15 lakh higher education faculty using the MOOCs platform SWAYAM.
- National Resource Centres (NRCs) is the implementing institution of ARPIT having tasked to prepare online training material with the focus on latest developments in the discipline, new & emerging trends, pedagogical improvements and methodologies for transacting revised curriculum.
- The training materials will be uploaded and made available through SWAYAM.

Swayam learning portal

- SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active–Learning for Young Aspiring Minds) is a platform indigenously developed by Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) and All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) with the help of Microsoft.
- The objective of this effort is to take the best teaching-learning resources to all, including the most disadvantaged.
- SWAYAM seeks to bridge the digital divide for students who have hitherto remained untouched by the digital revolution and have not been able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Educational
Source-PIB

2. **INDRA - 2018**
- INDRA is the joint military exercise between Indian and Russia.
- It is combating insurgency under the aegis of United Nations (UN) is being conducted at Babina.
- The aim of the exercise is to practice joint planning and conduct to enhance the interoperability of the two Armies in the peacekeeping/ enforcement environment under the aegis of the UN.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Defence
Source-PIB

3. **NASA to send organs-on-chips to space**

- NASA is planning to send small devices containing human cells in a 3D matrix — known as tissue chips or organs-on-chips — to the International Space Station (ISS).
- The US space agency is planning the investigations in collaboration with CASIS and the National Center for Advancing Translational Sciences (NCATS) at the National Institutes for Health (NIH).
- This will help to test how they respond to stress, drugs and genetic changes.
- Chips are made of flexible plastic and having ports and channels to provide nutrients and oxygen to the cells inside them.
- The "Tissue Chips in Space" initiative seeks to better understand the role of microgravity on human health and disease and to translate that understanding to improved human health on Earth.

Related Information
- This first phase of Tissue Chips in Space includes five investigations.
- An investigation of immune system ageing is planned for launch on the SpaceX CRS-16 flight.
- The other four, scheduled to launch on SpaceX CRS-17 or subsequent flights, include lung host defence, the blood-brain barrier, musculoskeletal disease and kidney function.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology
Source- Indian Express
4. **Twitter India's launches #PowerOf18**
- Twitter is launching a social initiative called #PowerOf18.
- The campaign launch is marked by an emoji activated by the #PowerOf18 hashtag.
- It aimed at encouraging the youth of India to contribute to public debate and participate in civic engagement in the upcoming election season 2019.

Related Information
Twitter
- Twitter is an American online news and social networking service on which users post and interacts with messages known as "tweets".

- Twitter was created in March 2006 by Jack Dorsey, Noah Glass, Biz Stone, and Evan Williams.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source- Economics Times
5. **ISRO invites foreign experiments for 2023 Venus mission**
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has taken its first step towards its mid-2023-planned mission to Venus by issuing an announcement of opportunity (AO).
- The AO has issued to the international space community to propose their scientific payloads to be carried on the mission.
- This AO for space-based experiments to study Venus is open to international scientists from various space agencies, research laboratories, academic institutions and universities.
- The specific objective of AO is to identify important science experiments that strengthen/complements overall science from the suite of pre-selected proposals from India on ISRO's Venus mission."

Related Information
Shukrayaan-1
- Shukrayaan-1 (Venus craft) is a proposed orbiter to Venus by the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) to study the surface and atmosphere of Venus.
- The payload capacity of the proposed satellite to be launched by ISRO is likely to be about 100 kg with 500W of power.
- In the year 2016-17 ISRO collaborated with JAXA to study Venusian atmosphere using signals from Venus orbiter mission Akatsuki in a radio occultation experiment.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Space Program
Source- The Hindu
6. **3rd annual meeting of WEF Global Future Councils begins in Dubai**
- 3rd annual meeting of World Economic Forum's (WEF) Global Future Councils concluded in Dubai, UAE.

- The Annual Meeting theme is **Globalization 4.0: Shaping a Global Architecture in the Age of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.**
- It aims to address preparations for the huge wave of technological disruption that will come with the Fourth Industrial Revolution.

Related Information
Global Future Councils

- Global Future Councils is a network of 38 distinct councils each focused on a specific future issue, such as cybersecurity, quantum computing, governance, innovation, biotechnology, energy and water, space, healthcare, education, commerce and investment.
- The outcome of the meeting will shape the agenda for the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2019 in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland, as well as the Forum's ongoing global initiatives.

World Economic Forum

- The World Economic Forum (WEF), based in Cologny-Geneva, Switzerland, was founded in 1971 as a not-for-profit organization.
- Its Motto is: Committed to improving the state of the world.
- The president is: Børge Brende.

Reports Published by the World Economic Forum

1. Global Competitiveness Report (GCR)
2. Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Report
3. Global Information Technology Report
4. Enabling Trade Report
5. Global Environment Performance Index
6. Human Capital Index
7. Global Gender Gap Index

Topic-GS Paper 2–International Organization
Source- AIR

7. **Purple bacteria 'batteries' turn sewage into clean energy**
- Researchers found in their study that purple phototrophic bacteria which can store energy from light when supplied with an electric current can recover near to 100% of the carbon from any type of organic waste while generating hydrogen gas for electricity production.
- The bacteria can use organic molecules and nitrogen gas -- instead of CO_2 and H_2O -- to provide carbon, electrons and nitrogen for photosynthesis.
- This means that they grow faster than alternative phototrophic bacteria and algae, and can generate hydrogen gas, proteins or a type of biodegradable polyester as byproducts of metabolism.

Related Information
Maximum biofuel, minimum carbon footprint

- In their latest study, the group analyzed the optimum conditions for maximizing hydrogen production by a mixture of purple phototrophic bacteria species.
- They also tested the effect of a negative current -- that is, electrons supplied by metal electrodes in the growth medium -- on the metabolic behaviour of the bacteria.
- Their first key finding was that the nutrient blend that fed the highest rate of hydrogen production also minimized the production of CO_2.
- "This demonstrates that purple bacteria can be used to recover valuable biofuel from organics typically found in wastewater -- malic acid and sodium glutamate -- with a low carbon footprint.
- Purple bacteria are capable of using electrons from a negative electrode or "cathode" to capture CO_2 via photosynthesis.
- Capturing excess CO_2 produced by purple bacteria could be useful not only for reducing carbon emissions but also for refining biogas from organic waste for use as fuel.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment
Source- Science Daily

8. **UP cabinet approved the renaming of Faizabad as Ayodhya**
- Uttar Pradesh government approved the renaming of Faizabad and Allahabad divisions as Ayodhya and Prayagraj respectively.

- Earlier, the government renamed the Mughalsarai Railway station, another historic spot, as Deen Dayal Upadhyaya junction.

Related Information
- The government justified changing the name on the basis of "facts" that Ayodhya had been the capital of the legendary "Ishvaku dynasty" and the birthplace of Lord Ram.
- Ayodhya has been the capital of many states and dynasties across time.
- In faraway lands as well, this land has been identified as Ayodhya

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source- The Hindu

9. **Amnesty Strips Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi of Highest Honour**
- Amnesty International stripped Aung San Suu Kyi of its highest honour over the de facto Myanmar leader's "indifference" to the atrocities committed by the military against Rohingya Muslims.
- The award, presented to Suu Kyi in 2009 in recognition of her "peaceful and non-violent struggle for democracy and human rights.
- Suu Kyi was hailed as a freedom fighter for her efforts to stand up against Myanmar's military junta.
- She was put under house arrest for more than 15 years.
- She was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Awards and Honour
Source- Indian Express

10. **Cyclonic storm 'GAJA'**
- Gaja originated from the Bay of Bengal and is likely to move west-southwestwards and intensify further into a severe cyclonic storm.
- The storm will bring heavy rainfall with a wind speed of up to 100 kmph.
- The weather forecaster in its warning said that the storm could cause major damage in several districts in Tamil Nadu and Karaikal district in Puducherry.

Topic-GS-1- Indian Geography
Source- Indian Express

15.11.2018

1. **PM launches platform 'APIX' to include 2 billion unbanked people into the Fintech Wave**
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched global fintech platform APIX— Application Programming Interface Exchange.
- The platform aims to connect companies to financial institutions globally and become a banking solution for two billion people without bank accounts worldwide.
- The ASEAN Financial Innovation Network (AFIN) announced the launch of API Exchange (APIX) in September 2018.
- A global consortium led by IT consulting firm Virtusa including digital banking solutions provider Fidor and Percipient, has been selected to develop and operate APIX.
- APIX is touted as an online global fintech marketplace and sandbox platform for financial institutions (FIs).
- It is said to be the world's first cross-border, open-architecture platform which will enable:
  o FIs and fintech companies to connect to one another through a globally curated marketplace.
  o Collaborative experiments in a sandbox among financial industry participants.
  o Adoption of APIs to drive digital transformation and financial inclusion across Asia-Pacific

Related Information
AFIN (ASEAN Financial Innovation Network)
- AFIN is an initiative of IFC, a member of the World Bank Group, the ASEAN Bankers Association (ABA) and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS).
- Its objective is to support experimentation and collaboration between regulated financial institutions and financial technology service providers.

- "AFIN's priority is to support financial services innovation and inclusion in emerging markets within the Asia Pacific region and to provide a platform for collaboration and innovation for financial institutions and FinTech firms.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Financial Inclusion
Source- NDTV

2. **Agriculture Ministry launches NCDC's new scheme**
- "Yuva Sahakar-Cooperative Enterprise Support and Innovation" Scheme launched by the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC).
- It is a youth-friendly scheme to cater to the needs and aspirations of the youth for attracting them to cooperative business ventures.
- The scheme will be linked to Rs 1000 crore 'Cooperative Start-up and Innovation Fund (CSIF)' created by the NCDC.
- The funding for the project will be up to 80% of the project cost for the North Eastern region, Aspirational Districts and cooperatives with women or SC or ST or PwD members.
- For the general category, the funding will be upto the 70 % of the project cost.
- All types of cooperatives in operation for at least one year are eligible.

Related Information
National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC)
- NCDC is a statutory Corporation set up under an Act of Parliament on 13th March 1963.
- The objectives of NCDC are planning and promoting programmes for production, processing, marketing, storage, export and import of agricultural produce, foodstuffs, industrial goods, livestock and certain other notified commodities and services on cooperative principles and for matters concerned therewith or incidental thereto.
- NCDC, being the most preferred financial institution in the world of cooperatives, has embarked on Sahakar 22, a Mission for Doubling Farmers' Income by 2022.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Government Scheme
Source-PIB

3. **NITI Aayog, UNICEF launches UNICEF-Atal Tinkering Lab Hackathon**
- NITI Aayog, UNICEF organized 72-hour Tinkering Hackathon for School Children.
- NITI's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and UNICEF, have come together to provide an open platform to young children of India, to contribute towards sustainable development.
- The UNICEF - Atal Tinkering Labs Young Champions Awards were presented to the winners of the nationwide Atal Tinkering Marathon challenge launched last year on October 2.

Related Information
- AIM's - Atal Tinkering Labs (ATL) had launched a six month long nationwide challenge called the Atal Tinkering Marathon, across six different thematic areas, namely, clean energy, water resources, waste management, healthcare, smart mobility and agri-technology.
- The objective was to encourage students to observe community problems and develop innovative solutions.

Atal Innovation Mission
- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) including Self-Employment and Talent Utilization (SETU) is Government of India's endeavour to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship.
- Its objective is to serve as a platform for the promotion of world-class Innovation Hubs, Grand Challenges, Start-up businesses and other self-employment activities, particularly in technology driven areas.

The Atal Innovation Mission shall have two core functions:
- **Entrepreneurship promotion** - through Self-Employment and Talent Utilization, wherein innovators would be supported and mentored to become successful entrepreneurs.

- **Innovation promotion**: to provide a platform where innovative ideas are generated

Topic-GS Paper-3–Science & Technology
Source- Indian Express

4. **DIPP hosts Global Digital Content Market conference**
- The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion is hosting a conference on Global Digital Content Market 2018 in New Delhi.
- The conference will feature sessions on music, film, broadcasting and publishing, as well as collective management, emerging models and the implications for the market and policymakers.
- India has been chosen as a host nation for the conference by the World Intellectual Property Organization due to the strong creative industry in the country in films, music and media.
- The GDCM 2018 will see the participation of professionals from various creative fields, the digital industry around the world and delegates of the diplomatic community from Missions to the United Nations.
- The focus for this year's conference is the Asia Pacific region.

Related Information
Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion
- Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion is working under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India.
- This department is responsible for formulation and implementation of promotional and developmental measures for growth of the industrial sector, keeping in view the national priorities &socio-economic objectives.
- It is also responsible for facilitating and increasing the FDI flows to the country.
- DIPP is also responsible for intellectual property rights relating to patents, designs, trademarks, and the Geographical indication of goods and oversees the initiative relating to their promotion and protection.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Economics
Source- Indian Express

5. **India to top US as 2nd-largest carbon spewer from power: IEA**
- India will overtake the US to become the world's second-biggest emitter of carbon dioxide from the power sector before 2030.
- Carbon dioxide emissions from India's power sector are expected to rise to nearly 80 percent by 2040 as power use almost triples, driven in part by air conditioning, the Paris-based IEA said in the report.
- China will remain the biggest emitter.
- Two-thirds of India's households are projected to own an air conditioning unit over that period, a 15-fold increase from today, according to the IEA.
- India's electricity demand for cooling is set to increase by as much as 700 percent over the period, assuming no major improvements in the country's air conditioning efficiency.
- Even with the jump in power demand and emissions, India's per-capita electricity consumption will remain one of the worlds lowest, according to the report.

Related Information
- India and Southeast Asia combined are the growth centres for coal-fired power, with demand more than doubling over the period to 2040.

International Energy Agency
- The International Energy Agency is a Paris-based autonomous intergovernmental organization established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.
- The IEA was initially dedicated to responding to physical disruptions in the supply of oil, as well as serving as an information source on statistics about the international oil market and other energy sectors.
- The Agency's mandate has broadened to focus on the "3Es" of effectual energy policy: energy security, economic development, and environmental protection.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Energy Sector
Source-Livemint

6. **Govt to issue Rs 75 coin to mark the 75th anniversary of Tricolour hoisting by Netaji**
- The government announced to release a Rs 75 commemorative coin on the occasion of 75th anniversary of the hoisting of Tricolour for the first time by Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose at Port Blair.
- This coin will bear the portrait of 'Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose' saluting the flag on the background of cellular jail.
- There will be an inscription in both Devanagari script and English saying 'First Flag Hoisting Day'.

Related Information
- In the year 1943, Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose hoisted the National Flag for the first time at the Gymkhana Ground (present Netaji Stadium) in Port Blair.
- He also announced the Islands, the first Indian Territory freed from the British rule.
- The island at the time was liberated from British rule by Japan which captured it during the World War -II.
- Bose named Andaman Island as Shaheed and Nicobar Island as Swaraj.
- He appointed INA General AD Loganathan as the governor of the Islands.
- Azad Hind Government was not merely a Government in Exile anymore but had its own land, own currency, civil code and stamps.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source- The Hindu

7. **UN Security Council Lifts Sanctions Against Eritrea**
- The U.N. Security Council voted unanimously to lift sanctions against Eritrea after nine years.
- The targeted sanctions, in effect since December 2009.
- Allegations that Eritrea was providing material support to Somalia-based Islamist insurgent group al-Shabab, along with a separate border dispute with Djibouti, prompted the sanctions.
- Somalia and Djibouti were both vocal supporters of the 2009 resolution.

Related Information
Eritrea
- Eritrea- officially the State of Eritrea is a country in the Horn of Africa, with its capital at Asmara.
- It is bordered by Sudan in the west, Ethiopia in the south, and Djibouti in the southeast.
- The northeastern and eastern parts of Eritrea have an extensive coastline along the Red Sea.

UNSC (United Nations Security Council)
- UNSC is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, charged with the maintenance of international peace and security.
- It has 15 Members, and each Member has one vote. These 15 members include 5 permanent members and 10 non-permanent members.
- Five permanent members have veto powers.
- 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve **two-year terms**.
- It is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.
- The Security Council also recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and the admission of new Members to the United Nations.
- And, together with the General Assembly, it elects the judges of the International Court of Justice.

Principal Organs of the United Nations
- United Nations Secretariat
- United Nations General Assembly
- International Court of Justice
- United Nations Security Council
- United Nations Economic and Social Council
- United Nations Trusteeship Council

Topic- GS Paper 2 – International Relation
Source- BBC news

8. **Definition of kilogram set to change**
- The International General Conference on Weights and Measures will meet in Versailles, France, to vote on whether to redefine the kilogram.

40

- Since 1879, the kilogram has been defined as the weight of "Le Grand K", a cylinder of platinum and iridium weighing a little over 2 pounds and kept in a locked vault in Paris.
- Different countries have their own "prototype kilograms" that serve as national standards and are calibrated to the Le Grand K, founded by 17 nations in 1875.
- Now though, scientists say, the system needs to change since over time, the prototype has lost atoms and therefore mass because it is "susceptible to damage and environmental factors".
- Scientists are proposing to calculate the kilogram based on the Planck's constant, which is measured by an instrument called the Kibble Balance, first developed at London's National Physical Laboratory by British scientist Bryan Kibble.
- The change will have applications in computing, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, climate change studies and other disciplines which require very precise measurements.

Related Information
- Scientists say that the redefinition of the kilogram using a constant will ensure it remains reliable, and enable far more accurate mass measurements in the future.
- The value of the kilogram will not change.
- The kilogram is the last unit from 1875 which has not yet changed.
- The standard for other basic units like the metre for length, the second for time, the ampere for electric current, the Kelvin for temperature, the mole for the amount of a substance and the candela for luminous intensity have all been improved upon.
- For instance, the metre is defined as the length that light travels in a vacuum in 1/299,792,458th of a second rather than a metal bar.

General Conference on Weights & Measures
- The General Conference on Weights and Measures is the supreme authority of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures.

- The International Bureau of Weights and Measures is an organization that is based in Sèvres near Paris in France.
- It is an inter-governmental organization established in 1875 under the terms of the Metre Convention through which Member States act together on matters related to measurement science and measurement standards.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
Source- Down to Earth

16.11.2018

1. **NITI Aayog Constitutes Himalayan State Regional Council**
- NITI Aayog has constituted the 'Himalayan State Regional Council' to ensure sustainable development of the Indian Himalayan region.
- Recognizing the uniqueness of the Himalayas and the challenges for sustainable development, Five Working Groups were constituted by NITI Aayog in 2017.
- The Council has been constituted to review and implement identified action points based on the Reports of five Working Groups, which were established along thematic areas to prepare a roadmap for action.

The five thematic areas are:
- Inventory and Revival of Springs in the Himalayas for Water Security.
- Sustainable Tourism in Indian Himalayan Region
- Shifting Cultivation: Towards Transformation Approach
- Strengthening Skill & Entrepreneurship (E&S) Landscape in the Himalayas.
- Data/Information for Informed Decision Making.

Related Information
- The Himalayan State Regional Council will be chaired by the Dr VK Saraswat, Member, NITI Aayog and will consist of the Chief Secretaries of the Himalayan States as well as the Secretaries of key Central Ministries, senior officers of NITI Aayog as well as special invitees.

- The Himalayan States Regional Council will be the nodal agency for the Sustainable development in the Himalayan Region.
- It consists of the twelve States namely Jammu & Kashmir, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, two districts of Assam namely Dima Hasao and Karbi Anglong and Darjeeling and Kalimpong in West Bengal.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source-PIB

2. **Delhi Police launches e-learning portal: 'NIPUN'**
- Delhi Police launched an e-learning portal 'NIPUN' to impart in-service training to its personnel.
- The e-learning portal aims at imparting online training and information through specialized courses designed by experts.
- It will benefit the police officers investigating various cases by providing online resource and information on the law, standing orders, investigation checklists, forms for case files, latest High Court and Supreme Court rulings.

Related Information
- Under the project Collaborative Learning and Partnership (CLAP) many of the courses have been developed in-house while others have been made in collaboration with the University Grant Commission (UGC), FICCI, NHRC, NCPCR, and Janaki Devi Memorial College, Delhi University.
- The website of the Training Department is aimed at facilitating information sharing between the faculty and the trainees at the Police Training Institutes of the Delhi Police.
- The website provides the training syllabus, study material, sample question papers, manuals, law and so on.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source- Business Standard

3. **India Post launches the e-commerce portal**
- The Department of Posts also known as India Post has launched its e-commerce site to expand parcel business network.
- The DoP plans to increase its revenue through online commerce.

Related Information
- India's postal service has also formulated an independent banking service called India Post Payments Bank this year.

India Post
- The Department of Posts (DoP), trading as India Post, is a government-operated postal system in India under the Department of Posts.
- It is a part of the Ministry of Communications of the Government of India.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important Institution
Source-PIB

4. **'Super-Earth' found orbiting Sun's nearest single star**
- Astronomers have discovered a frozen planet with a mass over three times that of the Earth, orbiting the closest solitary star to the Sun.
- The potentially rocky planet, known as Barnard's star b, is a 'super-Earth' and orbits around its host star once every 233 days.
- The planet lies in a distant region from the star known as the 'snow line'.
- This is well beyond the habitable zone in which liquid water, and possibly life, could exist.
- The planet's surface temperature is estimated to be around -170°C.

Related Information
- Barnard's star is an infamous object among astronomers and exoplanet scientists, as it was one of the first stars where planets were initially claimed but later proven to be incorrect.
- Barnard's star b is the second closest known exoplanet to our Sun after "Proxima Centauri b".

- Barnard's star is the next closest star to the Sun after the Alpha Centauri triple system.
- It is a type of faint, low-mass star called a red dwarf.
- Red dwarfs are considered to be the best places to look for exoplanet candidates, which are planets outside our solar system.
- The researchers used the radial velocity method during the observations that led to the discovery of Barnard's star b.
- This technique detects wobbles in a star which are likely to be caused by the gravitational pull of an orbiting planet.
- These wobbles affect the light coming from the star.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
Source-The Hindu
5. **Aadi Mahotsav**
- "Aadi Mahotsav" a National Tribal Festival was organized in New Delhi by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED.
- It is celebrated to cherish and promote the spirit of tribal craft, culture, cuisine and commerce.
- The theme of the festival was: **"A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Craft, Cuisine & Commerce".**
- The Mahotsav will comprise of display and sale of items of tribal art and craft, tribal medicine & healers, tribal cuisine and display of tribal folk performance.

Related Information
(TRIFED)- Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited
- It is a national-level apex organization functioning under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- It was established by the Ministry of Welfare under Multi State Cooperative Societies Act 1984 (which has now been replaced by Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002).
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- Its core objective is to institutionalize trade of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) and Surplus Agriculture Produce (SAP) collected or cultivated by tribals

as they are heavily dependent on these natural products for their livelihood.
- TRIFED also works as an agency to the FCI for procurement of Wheat and Rice.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Welfare Scheme for Vulnerable Section
Source-PIB
6. **India votes against UNGA draft resolution on the use of the death penalty**
- India has voted against a UN General Assembly draft resolution on the use of death penalty, saying it goes against the statutory law of the country where an execution is carried out in the "rarest of rare" cases.
- The draft resolution, taken up in the Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian, Cultural) of the General Assembly.
- India was among the countries that voted against the resolution, which would have the Assembly call on all States to respect international standards on the rights of those facing death penalty and ensure that it is not applied on the basis of discriminatory laws or as a result of the discriminatory or arbitrary application of the law.

Related Information
- "In India, the death penalty is exercised in 'rarest of rare' cases, where the crime committed is so heinous that it shocks the conscience of the society.
- Indian law provides for all requisite procedural safeguards, including the right to a fair trial by an independent Court, the presumption of innocence, the minimum guarantees for defence, and the right to review by a higher court.

UN General Assembly
- The United Nations General Assembly is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations.
- It is the only one in which all member nations have equal representation, and the main deliberative, policy-making and representative organ of the UN.

- Its powers are to oversee the budget of the UN, appoint the non-permanent members to the Security Council, appoint the Secretary-General of the United Nations, receive reports from other parts of the UN and make recommendations in the form of General Assembly Resolutions.
- The headquarters of the United Nations in New York City.
- Its composition, functions, powers, voting, and procedures are set out in **Chapter IV of the United Nations Charter.**

Topic-GS Paper 2–Important Institution
Source- Indian Express

7. **Himachal flags off 'startup van' for youth**

- Himachal Pradesh flags off 'startup van' for youth which aims to turn job seekers to job providers and in order to support to the startups and innovation projects the state government will provide all possible assistance to the youth to develop entrepreneurship.
- The basic objective of this scheme was to create self-employment and employment, upgrading the skills of entrepreneurs and to provide them support to set up their units under professional guidance.
- The scheme also aims at helping entrepreneurs to select viable projects in the potential areas in the manufacturing and service sectors and training them to set up startups and running them professionally.
- The key focus areas of the scheme would be technology-driven innovation sector, rural infrastructure and facilities, crafts, arts, water and sanitation, renewal energy, healthcare, clean tech, agriculture, horticulture and related areas, food processing, retail, tourism and hospitality, mobile, IT and biotechnology.

Related Information

- The scheme had provisions for the creation of incubation centres in many institutions in the state in order to build capacities, develop networking, establishing necessary infrastructure and generating awareness.
- Mandi IIT, Hamirpur NIT, Palampur Agriculture University, Science, Technology and Environment Council, Nauni horticulture university, Bir Technology Park, HP University, Palampur CSIR and JPUIT Vaknaghat have been selected for incubation centres.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important Scheme
Source- TOI

8. **NITI Aayog organizes South Asian Regional Conference on Urban Infrastructure**

- The South Asian Regional Conference on "Urban Infrastructure: New Approaches to Public and Private Partnerships and Municipal Finance Innovations" has begun in New Delhi.
- The conference is being organised by NITI Aayog in partnership with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific and the Asian Development Bank.
- The main objective of the conference is to discuss the key issues, perspectives and the way forward in the Urban Infrastructure.
- It aims to review overall issues and assess the sustainability of PPPs and urban finance in South Asia, specifically India while broadening the knowledge base and engaging on international best practices.

Related Information

South Asian Regional Conference on Urban Infrastructure

- The South Asian regional conference is a first of its kind, with participation from across the South Asian region including leaders from the government, industry, research organizations, academia, think tanks and civil society.
- The Conference aims to review overall issues and assess the sustainability of PPPs and urban finance in South Asia, specifically India, while broadening the knowledge base and engaging on international best practices.

- Public-private partnerships (PPPs) have been one such option that enables governments to optimally share the risks associated with a project's lifecycle.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source-PIB

9. **Mountain Gorillas back from the brink**

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) issued a statement, moving the species from the "Critically Endangered" threat level to "Endangered".
- The 2008 Mountain Gorilla population was estimated to be around 680 individuals, but 2018 estimates show that it has increased to over 1,000 individuals, the highest figure ever recorded for the subspecies.
- The population growth has been confirmed through coordinated and improved survey method.

Related Information
Gorillas

- The gorillas are found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Uganda lie in a very insecure zone of Africa.
- The governments of the three countries where the gorillas are found have stepped up enforcement of national park boundaries, where hunting, logging and paved roads are illegal.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Wildlife and Biodiversity
Source- Down to earth

17.11.2018

1. **SHILLONG: Nongkrem dance festival**

- Nongkrem dance festival, an annual event during which prayers are offered for good harvest, peace, and prosperity of the community was celebrated with great zeal and enthusiasm by the inhabitants of the Khasi Hills.
- The unique dance is performed by the members of Hima Khyrim, a sub-tribe of the indigenous Khasi tribe.

- The silver or gold crowns worn by the tribes on their heads signify the glory and dignity of the Khasi society.
- The dance performed by the men is known as "Ka Shad Mastieh".

Related Information

- Recently in Meghalaya, India International Cherry Blossom Festival was organized.
- The festival was organised by the Forest and Environment Department, Govt of Meghalaya, Institute of Bio-resources and Sustainable Development in collaboration with the Indian Council for Cultural.
- It celebrates the unique autumn flowering of the Himalayan Cherry Blossoms with several cultural events.
- The festival is elevated to international status with the participation of the Government of Japan through its delegates.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture
Source- NDTV

2. **Traffic Separation Scheme for the south-west coast**

- The Directorate General of Shipping has proposed the establishment of a Traffic Separation Scheme (TSS).
- This proposal has been drawn taking into consideration past collision incidents off the Indian coast, traffic patterns of merchant's vessels for past years, and optimum sea routes, in consonance with the current traffic flow, including simplification of traffic in converging areas off the coast of Kerala.
- The proposal has also considered aspects pertaining to the safety of navigation, maritime security and the separation of opposing streams of traffic to reduce incidents of collision in Indian waters.

Related Information

- The proposed TSS lanes are currently under consideration and will be located at a distance of about 90 nautical miles west of Mangalore in Karnataka.
- It lanes leading in a south-easterly direction to the southernmost tip of India and ending about 40 nautical miles off south of Kanyakumari in Tamil Nadu.

- The average distance from the coast is about 50 nautical miles.
- This scheme will provide in more sea room for fishing vessels to operate safely and will, therefore, be beneficial to the fishing industry.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Government Scheme
Source-PIB

3. **Andhra govt reveals Amaravati art-inspired state emblem**
- Andhra Pradesh government has finalised its new emblem for official use.
- The state emblem, inspired by the Amaravati School of Art, consists of "Dhamma Chakka" - "the Wheel of Law" embellished with a ring of Triratnas alternating with pinnate leaves and precious stones.
- The vase of Plenty" is at the hub of the Dhamma Chakka.
- The National Emblem is placed at the bottom of the emblem, which should never be reduced to a size of less than 24 mm in height.

Related Information
- Andhra Pradesh was bifurcated in 2014 into Telangana and the residuary Andhra Pradesh state as per provisions of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, popularly known as the Telangana Act.
- The Act defined the boundaries of the two states and laid out the status of Hyderabad as the permanent capital of new Telangana state and temporary capital of Andhra Pradesh

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source- AIR

4. **Two NE Circuits under Swadesh Darshan Scheme inaugurated in Arunachal Pradesh**
- Two important projects under Swadesh Darshan Scheme of Ministry of Tourism, Government of India were inaugurated at PTSO Lake in Tawang of Arunachal Pradesh.
- These projects are Development of North East Circuits: Bhalukpong-Bomdila – Tawang Project and Nafra-Seppa- Pappu, Pasa, Pakke Valleys-Sangdupota- New Sagalee- Ziro-Yomcha Project.

Related Information
Swadesh Darshan Scheme
- It was launched in 2014 -15 by the Ministry of tourism.
- The objective of the scheme to develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country.
- Tourist circuits will be developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner
- Under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, thirteen thematic circuits have been identified, for development namely: North-East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit and Heritage Circuit.
- The scheme is **100% centrally funded** for the project components undertaken for public funding
- It also leverages Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and corporate sector

PRASAD V/S Swadesh Darshan scheme
- Under the Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual Augmentation Drive (PRASAD) scheme, the focus is on the development and beautification of the identified pilgrimage destinations.
- Whereas, in the 'Spiritual Circuit' identified under the Swadesh Darshan scheme, the thrust is on the development of particular thematic circuit consisting of various religious/spiritual destination in a State and Union Territory.
- Under the PRASAD scheme, thirteen sites have been identified for development, namely: Amritsar, Ajmer, Dwaraka, Mathura, Varanasi, Gaya, Puri, Amaravati, Kanchipuram, Vellankanni, Kedarnath, Kamakhya and Patna.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Government Scheme
Source-PIB

5. **World Customs Organisation's regional meet takes off in Jaipur**
- The regional meeting of the World Customs Organisation regional takes off in Jaipur Rajasthan.
- The meeting is being jointly chaired by WCO Deputy Secretary and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs Chairman.
- The meeting is slated to deliberate upon various issues including the steps required for the capacity building and reforms in customs.
- The participants would also discuss and deliberate upon the amended Kyoto protocol, digital customs, e-commerce among other issues.

Related Information

World Customs Organization
- The World Customs Organization is an intergovernmental organization headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.
- It was established in 1952 as Customs Co-operation Council.
- It is the only international organization with competence in Customs matters and is considered as the voice of the international Customs community.
- WCO members are responsible for customs controls in 182 countries representing more than 98 per cent of all international trade.
- The WCO's primary objective is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of member customs administrations, thereby assisting them to contribute successfully to national development goals, particularly revenue collection, national security, trade facilitation, community protection, and collection of trade statistics.
- It is responsive to the needs of its members and its strategic environment, and its instruments and best-practice approaches are recognized as the basis for sound customs administration throughout the world.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Organization

Source- Business Standard

6. **Kerala Govt launches Gau Samridhi scheme for dairy farmers**
- Kerala govt launched the "Gau Samridhi Scheme" for dairy farmers.
- The government subsidized scheme will give insurance coverage to dairy farmers at low premium rates.
- The farmers belonging to the general category will be getting 50% subsidy on premiums while those belonging to Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) category would get 70% subsidy on the premium.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Scheme for Vulnerable Society

Source- Business standard

7. **13th East Asia Summit**
- 13th East Asia Summit was inaugurated in Singapore, during which the leaders of the grouping discussed global and regional issues, including maritime cooperation.
- India has been participating in the East Asia Summit since its inception in 2005.

Related Information

East Asia Summit
- The East Asia Summit is a unique Leaders-led forum of 18 countries of the Asia-Pacific region.
- The East Asia Summit was formed to further the objectives of regional peace, security and prosperity.
- Established in 2005, EAS allows the principal players in the Asia-Pacific region to discuss issues of common interest and concern, in an open and transparent manner, at the highest level.
- The membership of EAS consists of ten ASEAN Member States (i.e. Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Vietnam), Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation and the USA.

- EAS is an initiative of ASEAN and is based on the premise of the centrality of ASEAN.
- The concept of an East Asia Grouping was first promoted in 1991 by the then Malaysian Prime Minister, Mahathir bin Mohamad.
- There are six priority areas of regional cooperation within the framework of the EAS.
- These are – Environment and Energy, Education, Finance, Global Health Issues and Pandemic Diseases, Natural Disaster Management, and ASEAN Connectivity.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important summit
Source-The Hindu

8. **GoI and ADB Sign agreement to Provide Water and Sanitation Services in Tamil Nadu**

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the GOI signed $169 million loans as the First Tranche of a $500 million multi-tranche financing to develop climate-resilient water supply, sewerage, and drainage infrastructure in at least 10 cities in the State of Tamil Nadu.
- The ADB program forms part of its support to the state's Vision Tamil Nadu 2023 to provide universal access to water and sanitation and to develop world-class cities in high-performing industrial corridors.
- ADB's support will help address complex urban challenges through innovative and climate-resilient investment and deeper institutional support.
- India's first solar-powered sewage treatment plant also installed in this project.
- Introduction of smart water management systems will help reduce non-revenue water and strengthen operational efficiency.

Related Information

- Tamil Nadu is the most urbanized of India's large States, urban service levels remain low, with less than half of households served by piped water.
- It has, only 42% of households are covered by a sewerage network, with 43% of sewage disposed directly into waterways untreated.

- The program will boost institutional capacity, public awareness, and urban governance as part of a comprehensive approach for developing livable cities.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source-PIB

19.11.2018

1. **Bhuvan Ganga Geoportal and Mobile Application.**

- National Mission for Clean Ganga organized a brainstorming session on World GIS Day 2018 in New Delhi.
- The theme of GIS Day is: **'G-Governance of Namami Gange programme through Geospatial Technology'.**
- NMCG has signed a MoU with National Remote Sensing Centre in the use of geospatial technology in June 2015.
- They have developed Bhuvan Ganga Geoportal & Bhuvan Ganga Mobile Application.

Bhuvan Ganga Portal

- Bhuvan Ganga Geoportal is available for water quality monitoring, hydrological monitoring, geomorphological monitoring, bio-resources monitoring, and comprehensive geospatial database.
- Bhuvan Ganga mobile application is a user-friendly application to enable user/public to collect and report information on various pollution sources that affect the water quality of River Ganga.
- The mobile application has a provision to collect information regarding urban sewage, semi-urban/rural sewage, natural drains/nallas, industrial wastewater, solid waste disposal or any other pollution source.

Related Information

- GIS mapping becomes extremely important at NMCG to achieve its objective of effective abatement of pollution in river Ganga because of its limitless potential.
- NMCG has also collaborated with Survey of India to facilitate the Ganga rejuvenation task by using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology for mapping the Ganga basin in high resolution generating Digital Elevation Models.

- This technology enables identification of the entire topography of an area making it easy for policymakers to analyse the available data and improve the decision-making process.
- Critical pollution hotspots are also easily identified through this technology.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Important Portal
Source-PIB

2. **Kerala introduces a new open online learning programme 'KOOL'**

- The Kerala Infrastructure and Technology for Education (KITE) rolls out its Online Open Learning training platform 'KOOL'.
- The platform can be used to train teachers, students and the general public.
- KOOL has been designed in a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) model, which is becoming popular worldwide.

Related Information
KOOL

- It is a major step by the State of Kerala to become India's first complete digital state in Education.
- It has been developed as an expansion of 'Samagra', the resource portal of the education department.
- It has an array of features for learners in the form of animated learning assistants, video tutorials and checklists for practising the activities.
- It would be the largest online training programme in the state.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Governance
Source- Indian Express

3. **Fitch affirms India's rating at 'BBB-'; outlook stable**

- Credit rating agency Fitch affirmed that India's 'Long-Term Foreign-Currency Issuer Default Rating' (IDR) at 'BBB-' with a stable outlook.
- Fitch Ratings is one of the big three credit agencies of the world. Other two are Moody's and Standard & Poor's.
- Fitch had last upgraded India's Sovereign rating from 'BB+' to 'BBB-' with the stable outlook in 2006.
- Fitch says that Indian Economy is vulnerable to shifts in global market sentiments due to global trade tensions and U.S. Monetary tightening.

Related Information

- India's credit rating outlook was downgraded in April citing poor public finances and rising fiscal burden, and the failure of the present government to push through crucial reforms.
- Ratings for the investment grade range between AAA (superior) to B- or B3 (very poor).

What is an investment grade credit rating?

- Investment grade investments are financial instruments that have ratings ranging from AAA+ to BBB- under the terminology followed by S&P.
- It defines BBB- as the lowest investment grade as considered by market participants.
- Any grade below BBB becomes speculative grade investments and below it is the last category of bonds in default.
- Bonds that are not rated as investment-grade bonds are known as high yield bonds or as junk bonds.

Why is investment grade rating necessary?

- Financial theory suggests the following diversification to mitigate risks and extract the maximum possible return.
- Following this strategy, many big financial institutions have investments in equities and bonds throughout the world.
- Within these FIs there are some such as pension funds, trusts and endowments that have a mandate to invest in only investment grade instruments.
- Hence the bonds of any country which loses its investment-grade rating will be sold in the market.

What are its implications?

- If a country loses its investment grade rating it would face much higher costs for its future borrowing as its credibility will not be considered as high and it will face a lesser number of lenders in the markets.

- The loss of confidence would also result in an outflow of funds from the equity markets as confidence in the economy would go down.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Indian Economy
Source- Economics Times

4. Section 7 of RBI Act

- Section 7 of the RBI Act has come into the spotlight amid the war between the Central government and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- The provision in the RBI Act empowers the government to issue directions to the RBI.
- The government has invoked Section 7 which has never been used before.
- Exercising powers under this section, the government has sent several letters to the RBI governor in recent weeks on issues ranging from liquidity for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), the capital requirement for weak banks and lending to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

Related Information
What is Section 7?

- The RBI is an entity independent of the government as it takes its own decisions. However, in certain instances, it has to listen to the government.
- This provision in the RBI Act is contained in its Section 7 which says:
(1) The Central Government may from time to time give such directions to the Bank as it may, after consultation with the Governor of the Bank, consider necessary in the public interest.
(2) Subject to any such directions, the general superintendence and direction of the affairs and business of the Bank shall be entrusted to a Central Board of Directors which may exercise all powers and do all acts and things which may be exercised or done by the Bank.
(3) Save as otherwise provided in regulations made by the Central Board, the Governor and in his absence the Deputy Governor nominated by him in this behalf, shall also have powers of general superintendence and direction of the affairs and the business of the Bank, and may exercise all powers and do all acts and things which may be exercised or done by the Bank.

Note: The section empowers the government to issue directions in public interest to the central bank, which otherwise does not take orders from the government.

Why has the government invoked Section 7?

- The government believed that easing of lending rules **for the banks under the prompt corrective action (PCA) framework** could help reduce pressure on MSMEs.
- However, the regulator stood its ground arguing that such a move would put the clock back and undoes clean-up efforts.
- With the credit markets tightening after the IL&FS default in September, non-banking finance companies lobbied the government for more liquidity.
- But RBI maintained its position since the banking system did not witness any spike in borrowing costs and the market was just repricing risk in an evolving situation.

Topic-GS-3-India Economy
Source- Economic Times

5. India's first microsatellite "ExseedSAT 1" by students launched from Hyderabad

- India's first private satellite "ExseedSAT 1" developed under the aegis by Hyderabad-based startup Exseed Space.
- ExseedSAT 1 was launched on Nov 19 from SpaceX launchpad at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California.

Related Information
Exseed

- Exseed makes advanced small satellites and scientific spacecraft for commercial, government and academic customers.
- Exseed SAT 1 operates on very high frequency (VHF) and ultra-high frequency (UHF) signals, and will take UHF signals up and transmit VHF signals back down, thus enabling easy communication for private radio operators

- Exseed SAT 1, which is expected to provide a major boost to private radio operators after HAMSAT ceased operations about four years ago, was built with the contributions of several Ham operators.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Economics
Source- ET

6. **Tiger translocation may continue: NTCA**
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has hinted at a continuation of the first-ever inter-State tiger translocation project in Odisha's Satkosia Tiger Reserve despite huge setbacks.
- Odisha had planned to bring three pairs of the tiger from Madhya Pradesh to increase their population in Satkosia.

Related Information
National Tiger Conservation Authority
- It is a statutory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change constituted under enabling provisions of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- The National Tiger Conservation Authority is set up under the Chairmanship of the Minister for Environment and Forests.
- The Authority will have eight experts or professionals having qualifications and experience in wildlife conservation and welfare of people including tribals, apart from three Members of Parliament of whom two will be elected by the House of the People and one by the Council of States.
- The Inspector General of Forests, in charge of project Tiger, will be ex-officio Member Secretary.

Main Objective of the NTCA
- Providing statutory authority to Project Tiger so that compliance of its directives becomes legal.
- Fostering accountability of Center-State in the management of Tiger Reserves, by providing a basis for MoU with States within our federal structure.

Power and Functions of the NTCA

- To approve the tiger conservation plan prepared by the State Government under sub-section (3) of section 38V of this Act.
- It evaluates and assesses various aspects of sustainable ecology and disallows any ecologically unsustainable land use such as mining, industry and other projects within the tiger reserves.
- It ensures critical support including scientific, information technology and legal support for the better implementation of the tiger conservation plan.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Wildlife and Biodiversity
Source- The Hindu

7. **India's first elephant hospital opens in Mathura**
- India's first specialized hospital for elephants in Mathura, UP.
- The unique medical centre offers wireless digital X-ray, laser treatment, dental X-ray, thermal imaging, ultrasonography, hydrotherapy and quarantine facilities.
- Located close to the elephant conservation and care centre (Wildlife SOS) the hospital is designed to treat injured, sick or geriatric elephants and is equipped with a medical hoist for lifting elephants.

Related Information
Wildlife SOS
- Wildlife SOS (WSOS) is a conservation non-profit organization in India with the motive of protecting and preserving India's natural heritage, forests and wildlife.
- The primary objective WSOS are of rescuing and rehabilitating wildlife in distress in the country and preserving India's natural heritage.
- It is currently one of the largest Wildlife Organisations in South Asia.
- WSOS is also known for their efforts at rescue and rehabilitation of sloth bears and more recently elephants.
- Wildlife SOS also runs active projects focused on mitigation of human-wildlife conflict with regard to species like Leopards, Macaques, Elephants, Moon bears, Snakes etc. across several states in India.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Environment and Wildlife
Source- The Hindu

8. **China's build 'Artificial Sun'**
- China's "artificial sun" has reached a temperature of 180 million ºF with a heating power of 10 megawatts.
- This temperature makes it six times hotter than the core of the burning star, which peaks at around 27 million F (15 million C).
- The device the **Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak (EAST)** is built to harness the energy of nuclear fusion, the same process that powers stars.
- The experiment is conducted by Institute of Plasma Physics.

Related Information
Nuclear fission and Fusion
- Nuclear fission takes place when a large, somewhat unstable isotope (atoms with the same number of protons but a different number of neutrons) is bombarded by high-speed particles, usually neutrons.
- These neutrons are accelerated and then slammed into the unstable isotope, causing it to fission, or break into smaller particles.
- During the process, a neutron is accelerated and strikes the target nucleus, which in the majority of nuclear power reactors today is Uranium-235.
- This splits the target nucleus and breaks it down into two smaller isotopes (the fission products), three high-speed neutrons, and a large amount of energy.
- This resulting energy is then used to heat water in nuclear reactors and ultimately produces electricity.
- The high-speed neutrons that are ejected become projectiles that initiate other fission reactions, or chain reactions.

Nuclear Fusion
- Nuclear fusion refers to the "union of atomic nuclei to form heavier nuclei resulting in the release of enormous amounts of energy.

- For a fusion reaction to occur, two atomic nuclei merge under extremely high pressures and temperatures topping 270 million ºF.
- Fusion takes place when two low-mass isotopes, typically isotope of hydrogen, unite under conditions of extreme pressure and temperature.
- Fusion is what powers the sun.
- Atoms of Tritium and Deuterium (isotopes of hydrogen, Hydrogen-3 and Hydrogen-2, respectively) unite under extreme pressure and temperature to produce a neutron and a helium isotope.
- Along with this, an enormous amount of energy is released, which is several times the amount produced from fission.

Topic- GS Paper 3 – Science and Technology
Source- The Hindu

20.11.2018

1. **NSE goBID: Mobile app by NSE**
- National Stock Exchange of India has announced the launch of its new mobile app and web-based platform 'NSE goBID' for retail investors to buy 'Government Securities'
- The 'NSE goBID' app will be available to all the registered investors with NSE's trading members and will also facilitate trading members in acquiring new retail investors.
- It will allow retail investors to make payment directly from their bank accounts using the 'Unified Payments Interface (UPI)' and internet banking.
- The 'NSE goBID' platform will handle order collection, payment and refund that is currently required to be managed by trading members.
- Through this app, retail investors can invest in treasury bills (T-Bills) of 91 days, 182 days and 364 days and various government bonds from one-year to almost 40 years.

Related Information
National Stock Exchange of India

- The National Stock Exchange of India Limited is the leading stock exchange of India, located in Mumbai.
- The NSE was established in 1992 as the first demutualized electronic exchange in the country.
- NSE was the first exchange in the country to provide a modern, fully automated screen-based electronic trading system which offered the easy trading facility to the investors spread across the length and breadth of the country.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important portal
Source- The Hindu

2. **GROWTH-India telescope's first science observation**
- The GROWTH-India telescope at the Indian Astronomical Observatory located in Hanle, Ladakh.
- It has made its first science observation which is a follow-up study of a nova explosion.
- The GROWTH-India telescope is part of the Global Relay of Observatories Watching Transients Happen.
- Its goals are threefold:
(a) Search for explosions in the optical regime whenever LIGO group detects a Binary Neutron Star merger
(b) Study nearby young supernova explosions.
(c) Study nearby asteroids.

Related Information
Nova
- Nova is explosive events involving violent eruptions on the surface of white dwarf stars, leading to a temporary increase in brightness of the star.
- This recurrent nova, named M31N-2008, has been observed to erupt several times.

Nova v/s Supernova
- Nova and supernova are two features of the universe.
- A nova is defined as "A star that suddenly becomes much brighter and then gradually returns to its original brightness over a period of weeks to years
- Supernova is "a rare celestial phenomenon involving the explosion of most of the material in a star,

resulting in an extremely bright, short-lived object that emits vast amounts of energy"
- The major difference between a nova and a supernova is that in a supernova a lot of the object's mass is ejected with the explosion.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and Technology
Source-PIB

3. **Sri Lankan Frogmouth: A Rare bird sighted in Kerala's Chinnar sanctuary**
- Recently a rare bird species 'Sri Lankan Frogmouth' was seen in the Chinnar Wildlife Sanctuary, Kerala.
- It has sparked much interest among ornithologists since its presence was noticed on the eastern side of the Western Ghats for the first time.

Sri Lankan Frogmouth
- It is usually found on the western side of the Western Ghats.
- It is a relative of Nightjar, a crepuscular and nocturnal bird breeding in Europe and temperate Asia.
- Its preferred habitat is a dry and open area with some small trees or bushes.
- The main feature of this species is that it lays only one egg a year after the mating season in April-May.
- The male bird destroys the nest and flies away with the newborn bird.
- It has a unique habitat in Sri Lanka and is also believed to be present in the in Karnataka, Goa, and Maharashtra.
- **IUCN Status- Least Concern**

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Wildlife and Biodiversity
Source- The Hindu

4. **State of the Indian Startup Ecosystem 2018 Report**
- The Union Minister of Commerce & Industry released the country's first State of Indian Startup Ecosystem 2018 report.
- It is prepared by 'Inc 42' which is an Indian information platform known for its coverage of the Indian startup ecosystem.

- The report is an analysis to help drive strategic decision-making in governance, investments, growth, and other core aspects of the ecosystem.
- As per the report, India currently has more than 49,000+ startups, 1500+ investors, 250+ incubators, and 26 unicorns.
- The country is among the three largest startup ecosystems in the world in terms of its size, reach, and impact.

Related Information
Inc42

- Inc42 is a leading Indian media and information platform, known for its end-to-end coverage of the Indian startup ecosystem.
- Inc42 work with the mission to empower, connect & grow the Indian Startup Ecosystem by providing a deep understanding of the startup economy through data-backed news and analysis.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Important Reports
Source- Economics Times

5. **2018 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Summit**
- The 2018 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit was held recently in Papua New Guinea.

Related Information
Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation

- APEC is an inter-governmental forum for 21 Pacific Rim member economies that promote free trade throughout the Asia-Pacific region.
- It aims to create greater prosperity for the people of the region by promoting balanced, inclusive, sustainable, innovative and secure growth and by accelerating regional economic integration.

Functions

- It works to help all residents of the Asia-Pacific participate in the growing economy.
- APEC members also implement initiatives to increase energy efficiency and promote sustainable management of forest and marine resources.

- 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.

Note:

- India has requested membership in APEC and received initial support from the United States, Japan, Australia and Papua New Guinea.
- Officials have decided not to allow India to join for various reasons, considering that India does not border the Pacific Ocean, which all current members do.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –International Organisation
Source- Business Standard

6. **World Toilet Day**
- World Toilet Day is observed all over the world on 19th November 2018.
- 2018 Theme: "When Nature Calls"

Related Information

- World Toilet Day (WTD) is an official United Nations international observance day on 19 November to inspire action to tackle the global sanitation crisis.
- World Toilet Day was established by the World Toilet Organization in 2001.
- Sustainable Development Goal 6 aims to achieve sanitation for all and end open defecation.
- World Toilet Day exists to inform, engage and inspire people to take action toward achieving this goal.

World Toilet Day events in India

- The Government released the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Cleaning of Sewers and Septic Tanks for use by field staffs who respond to sanitary sewer overflows or spills, to ensure their safety and prevent critical accidents.
- AToilet Monitoring Tool Dashboard launched by the Ministry that would serve as a governance and monitoring tool for Urban Local Bodies (ULBs).
- This tool will provide a true picture of the condition of public toilets in their area & help them take corrective action.

- The book of case studies named 'Transforming Urban Landscapes of India: Success Stories on Sanitation' was released on National Workshop on Urban Sanitation.
- Documents named 'Cleaning Urban India' and 'Advisory on Public and Community Toilets' and a coffee table book highlighting activities done in urban areas during the Swachhata hi Seva campaign was released.
- World Toilet Summit -2018 was organized by the World Toilet Organisation and Ecosan Services Foundation in Mumbai.
- Swachh Bharat World Toilet Day Contest was organized by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.
- "Toilet Parliament" was organized in Vajidpur village in Firozabad district of Uttar Pradesh.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source-PIB

7. **Government to aid cancer care in Karnataka**
- The mobile unit, named Asha Kirana, was flagged off from C-DAC to be delivered to Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology, Bengaluru.
- This is a full-fledged, self-sufficient mobile medical unit for cancer screening, including all basic diagnostics and ultrasound scan, fully designed and equipped by the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC).
- C-DAC has developed its own software with SNOMED CT-Dicom compatibility so that the digital medical images and electronic medical records of patients can be transmitted using 4G connectivity.

Related Information
Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC)
- The Centre for Development of Advanced Computing is an Autonomous Scientific Society of Department of Electronics and Information Technology, Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source- Business Standard

8. **Project maps butterfly migration in south India**
- It is the first such initiative in the country in which The Ferns Naturalists' Society (FNS), Wayanad, Travancore Natural History Society (TNHS), and the Malabar Natural History Society (MNHS) have joined hands to launch a citizen science project to map the migratory path of butterflies in south India
- Usually, butterfly migration starts during October-November with the onset of the northeast monsoon, from the plains to the ghats, and during April-May, just before the advent of the southwest monsoon, from the ghats to the plains.

Related Information
- Recently, Parambikulam Tiger Reserve (Kerala) one of India's protected forest areas spotted with different types of butterflies.
- A recent survey held in the reserve spotted 221 varieties of butterflies, 11 of which were endemic to the area

Dominant species
- A recent study revealed that four species of milkweed butterflies are mainly involved in the migration — the Dakhan Dark Blue Tiger, Oriental Blue Tiger, Double-branded Black Crow and Indian Common Crow.
- The migration takes place across the plains of South India to the southern part of the Western Ghats.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Wildlife and Biodiversity
Source-The Hindu

9. **9th CGD Bidding Round**
- Prime Minister would lay the Foundation Stones of City Gas Distribution (CGD) Projects in 65 Geographical Areas (GAs) under the 9th CGD Bidding Round.
- It would herald the availability of convenient, environment-friendly and cheaper natural gas for almost half of the country's population spread across 26 States and Union Territories upto 9th round.

Related Information
CGD Network

- CGD networks have been focused to increase the availability of cleaner cooking fuel (i.e. PNG) and transportation fuel (i.e. CNG) to the citizens of the country.
- The expansion of CGD network will also benefit to industrial and commercial units by ensuring the uninterrupted supply of natural gas.

Why Natural Gas?
- Natural gas is a superior fuel as compared with coal and other liquid fuels being an environmentally friendly, safer and cheaper fuel.
- Natural Gas (as CNG) is cheaper by 60% as compared with petrol and 45 % w.r.t. Diesel.
- Similarly, Natural Gas (as PNG) is cheaper by 40 % as compared with market price LPG.

Others
- India made a commitment in the COP21 Paris Convention in December 2015 that, by 2030 it would reduce carbon emission by 33% of 2005 levels.
- Natural gas, as domestic kitchen fuel, as fuel the for transport sector as well as a fuel for industries and commercial units, can play a significant role in reducing carbon emission.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source-PIB

10. **Fuego volcano erupted for the 5th time this year**
Fuego Volcano
- It is an active stratovolcano in Guatemala, on the borders of Chimaltenango, Escuintla and Sacatepéquez departments.
- It has erupted most recently in June 2018.

Topic-GS-1- Physical Geography
Source- BBC

21.11.2018

1. **Andhra Pradesh launches 'Bhudaar' portal**
- Andhra Pradesh launched a web portal which makes land records available to people with unique identification numbers just like Aadhar number.

- The "Bhudaar" is an 11-digit unique identification code assigned to each agriculture land holding and rural and urban properties in the state.
- There are two types of Bhudaar cards are available including e-Bhudaar an M-Bhudaar.
- The Bhudaar unique identification code to be assigned to each agriculture land holding and rural and urban properties in the state.
- The temporary Bhudhaar is assigned based on valid textual data of an agriculture landholding or rural or urban property starting with 99 which indicates it is temporary Bhudaar.
- Temporary Bhudaar numbers are issued to lands under dispute or litigation or in the process of re-registration.

Related Information
- It is geo-referenced facility would be introduced soon to enable the people to view the details of their land through satellite mapping.
- Bhuseva portal will provide information related to all transactions of a particular land or property in a single source.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important portal
Source- The Hindu

2. **Vajra Prahar: India-USA joint military exercise**
- India, US Joint Special Forces Exercise 2018 named Vajra Prahar commenced Bikaner in Rajasthan.
- The exercise was called between Special Forces of both countries to deal with operations for counter-terrorism and is being done at the unit as well as sub-unit levels.

Related Information
- The contingents of both countries in this exercise will train on aspects such as hostage rescue, building intervention, desert survival, medical aid and combat ring. At the end of training, they will undertake a three-day outdoor exercise to validate their best practices

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence
Source- The Hindu

3. **Igla-S missile system**
- Indian Army has picked Russia's Igla-S missile system as a choice for its multibillion-dollar contract for man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS).
- It is the latest model of Russian MANPADS (Man-portable air-defense system) technology.
- It offers superior performance over earlier supplied SA-18 missiles to India.
- It is designed for use against visible aerial targets at short range such as tactical aircraft, helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicle (UAVs), cruise missile, head-on or receding, in presence of natural (background) clutter and countermeasures.
- The missile is developed by Rosoboronexport Corporation of Russia.

Related Information
Man-portable Air-Defense System
- Man-portable air-defence systems are shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles.
- They have typically guided weapons and are a threat to low-flying aircraft, especially helicopters.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence
Source- Indian Express

4. **Kambala (A traditional slush-track buffalo race)**
- The coastal districts of Dakshina Kannada and Udupi (Karnataka) are all set for the Kambala (a traditional slush-track buffalo race) would be held under the auspices of the District Kambala Committee.
- Kambala is traditionally a simple sport which entertains rural people of the area.
- The Kambala racetrack is a slushy paddy field.
- It is also considered a thanksgiving to the Gods for protecting the animals from diseases.

Related Information
- Karnataka government had promulgated Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Ordinance, 2017.

- The President gave his assent to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Bill making Kambala a legal rural sport in Karnataka.
- The Bill seeks to exempt Kambala and bullock-cart racing from the ambit of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act, 1960.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture
Source- The Hindu

5. **Government launches an upgraded version of AirSewa 2.0**
- Civil Aviation Ministry launched the upgraded version of AirSewa 2.0 web portal and mobile app in New Delhi.
- The major improvements in an upgraded version of web portal include features such as secure sign-up and log-in with social media, chatbot for travellers support, improved grievance management including social media grievances.
- It will offer passengers convenient and hassle-free air travel experience.
- It will allow years to register their complaints through social media using the hashtag (#) AirSewa.
- It will provide all required information about flights operating from various airports across the country including real-time fight status and details of flight schedule.
- It will provide all facilities and services including assistance to the disabled or unaccompanied minor that is available at airports across India.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source-PIB

6. **Eco-sensitive zones: for Elephant corridors**
- The National Green Tribunal has asked the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change to consider declaring all elephant corridors in the country as eco-sensitive zones.
- The step is taken for legal protection to elephant corridors and elephant reserves that have led to a large number of deaths in areas beyond the protected areas.

Related Information
Eco-Sensitive Zone
- Eco-Sensitive Zones are areas notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, Government of India around Protected Areas, National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries.
- The purpose of declaring ESZs is to create some kind of "shock absorbers" to the protected areas by regulating and managing the activities around such areas.
- They also act as a transition zone from areas of high protection to areas involving lesser protection.

Criteria for declaring ESAs
- The MoEF has approved a comprehensive set of guidelines laying down parameters and criteria for declaring ESAs.
- A committee constituted by MoEF put this together.
- The guidelines lay out the criteria based on which areas can be declared as ESAs. These include Species Based (Endemism, Rarity etc), Ecosystem-Based (sacred groves, frontier forests etc) and Geomorphologic feature based (uninhabited islands, origins of rivers etc).

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environmental Issue
Source- The Hindu
7. **Global Education Monitoring Report**
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) have released the 'Global Education Monitoring Report 2019'.
- The Report highlights countries achievements and shortcomings in ensuring the right of migrant and refugee children to benefit from quality education.
- The report shows that the number of migrant and refugee school-age children around the world today has grown by 26% since 2000 and could fill half a million classrooms.
- It observes that the literacy levels in rural households of India dip with seasonal migration.

- It says that 80% of seasonal migrant children lack the access to education and 40% likely to end up in work.
- The report says that the construction sector absorbs the majority of short-term migrants.
- However, the report acknowledges the steps taken by India to address the issues associated with children who engaged in seasonal migration.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Social Justice
Source- The Hindu
8. **PM unveils Ease of Doing Business grand challenge**
- Prime Minister unveiled the Ease of Doing Business grand challenge.
- The objective of this challenge is to tap the potential of young Indians, startups and other private enterprises to provide solutions to complex problems using current technology.
- It is in pursuance of Government's resolve to make India one of the easiest places to conduct business in the world.
- This challenge is aimed at attracting innovative ideas on artificial intelligence (AI), Internet of Things, big data analytics, blockchain and other cutting-edge technology to reform government processes.
- The platform for this grand challenge will be on Start Up India portal.

Related Information
- Recently, India has recorded jump of 23 positions against its rank of 100 in 2017 to be placed at 77th rank among 190 countries in World Bank's Doing Business Report 2019.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics
Source- Economics times
9. **Three more invasive alien plants found in Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary**
- Kerala Forest Research Institute reveals that more plants have started to show its invasive nature in the forest areas of the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve, including Wayanad Wildlife Sanctuary.
- These are the major habitat of Asiatic elephants and tigers in the country.
- The invasive species include-

(a) Lemon basil or Tea bush (Ocimum gratissimum)
- The Lemon basil is an aromatic perennial herb.
- It is native to Africa and Madagascar.

(b) Red-flower rag leaf (Crassocephalum crepidioides)
- Red- flower rag leaf, a succulent herb.
- It is classified as one of the most aggressive weeds occurring in tropical and subtropical regions.

(c) Blue snakeweed or cayenne snakeweed (Stachytarpheta cayennensis)
- "Cayenne snakeweed is a perennial evergreen herb.
- It is native to South and Central America and Caribbean.

Related Information
Invasive Species
- An invasive species is a species that is not native to a specific location (an introduced species), and that has a tendency to spread to a degree believed to cause damage to the environment, human economy or human health.

Characteristics
- Invasive species generally have a high sexual reproductive capacity.
- Ability to reproduce asexually
- A great dispersal and colonization efficiency
- a high tolerance to environmental heterogeneity and disturbances
- A high adaptation to environmental stress (phenotypic plasticity) and a greater competitive capacity than native species,

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Biodiversity
Source- The Hindu
10. **India slips two places to 53rd position on global talent ranking**
- India has slipped two places to rank 53rd on a global annual talent ranking released by IMD Business School Switzerland.
- Switzerland has topped the global ranking for the fifth year in a row, it is followed by Denmark, Norway, Austria and the Netherlands in the top-five.
- Within Asia, Singapore has topped the charts with a global 13th place on the list that ranks 63 countries in

developing, attracting and retaining talent.
- China is ranked lower at 39th "because of its difficulties in attracting foreign skilled workers paired with a level of public expenditure on education that is below the average of other advanced economies.
- The rankings are based on three factors: Investment and Development, Appeal, and Readiness.
- These factors include indicators that capture the resources invested in developing local talent, the extent to which a country attracts and retains talent, and the quality of skills available in the talent pool.

With Respect to India
- Its position has declined from 55th in 2017 to 53rd this year.
- The country performs above the average in terms of the quality of its talent pool (Readiness factor, 30th position).
- On the other, the quality of its educational system and the lack of investments in public education heavily penalise the talent potential of the country (Investment and Development factor, 63rd).

Topic-GS-3 Economic Development
Source- Times of India

22.11.2018

1. **Sentinelese tribe**
- The American national allegedly killed by people belonging to the protected Sentinelese tribe in the North Sentinel Island of Andaman and Nicobar.

Related Information
Who are the Sentinelese?
- The Sentinelese, a Negrito tribe who live on the North Sentinel Island of the Andamans, has not faced incursions and remains hostile to outsiders.
- The inhabitants are connected to the Jarawa on the basis of physical, as well as linguistic similarities.
- Based on carbon dating of kitchen middens by the Anthropological Survey of India, Sentinelese presence was confirmed in the islands to 2,000 years ago.

How are they protected?
- The Govt. of India issued the Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation, 1956 to declare the traditional areas occupied by the tribes as reserves, and prohibited entry of all persons except those with authorisation.
- Photographing or filming the tribe members is also an offence.

Population
- From 1901 to 1921 they were estimated to be 117 people.
- In 1931, the number dropped to 50, a figure used for the 1961 Census too.
- In 1991 their headcount was put at 23.
- Census 2001 counted 39 inhabitants.

Note:-Other Indian Tribes are Onges, Jarawas and Great Andamanese.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture
Source- The Hindu

2. **Himachal govt approves Sashakt Mahila Yojna**
- The Himachal Pradesh government gave the approval to implement Sashakt Mahila Yojna in the state.
- Sashakt Mahila Yojna has the vision to empower rural women by providing them with an interface for organisation and socio-economic development.
- The scheme would link rural women with sustainable livelihood opportunities and improving their skill by imparting training.

Related Information
Other Scheme related to Women Empowerment by Himachal Pradesh
Self Employment Assistance for women
- In this scheme, women are granted rupees 2500 for establishing any project or venture who have an annual income not more than 35,000 per annum

Mahila Vikas Nigam
- The objective of Mahila Vikas Nigam is to provide self-employment to the women by providing loan on subsidised interest rates.

Himachal Pradesh Mahila Vikas Protsahan Yojana

- Under the scheme, a state-level award for the persons/organisation working for the development and empowerment of women in the field of health, education, sports, social services and art and culture, is granted.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Scheme for Women Empowerment
Source- The Hindu

3. **Air Quality Life Index (AQLI)**
- Recently, AQLI has been produced by the Energy Policy Institute at the University Of Chicago (EPIC).
- The new index adds 'L' – that stands for 'Life' – to the standard Air Quality Index (AQI), naming the new index as the Air Quality Life Index (AQLI).
- The index is based on the study that quantifies the causal relationship between long-term human exposure to particulate pollution and life expectancy.
- This index has found that fossil fuel-driven particulate air pollution reduces global average life expectancy by 1.8 years.
- The index shows that particulate pollution's effect on life expectancy exceeds that of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS, behavioural killers like cigarette smoking, and even war.

Related Information
- The studies on which AQLI is quantified the causal relationship between long-term human exposure to particulate pollution and life expectancy.
- The results obtained from these studies are combined with hyper-localised, global particulate matter measurements to reach the final results.

Topic- GS Paper 3–Environment
Source- Economics times

4. **BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change**
- Recently, Ministerial meet of BASIC group countries was hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in New Delhi.

- This comes ahead of UN Conference of Parties (COP) scheduled to be held in December 2018 in Katowice, Poland.
- The BASIC group has urged advanced countries to enhance their support for developing nations in effectively implementing the Paris Agreement to combat climate change.

Related Information
BASIC

- BASIC countries are bloc (geopolitical alliance) of four large newly industrialized countries – Brazil, South Africa, India and China.
- It was formed by agreement in November 2009.
- They were committed to acting jointly at Copenhagen climate summit 2009, including possible united walk-out if their common minimum position was not met by developed nations during climate talks.
- They also gave the commitment to implement UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCC) its Kyoto Protocol and Paris Agreement.
- The countries also urged the developed countries to realize their climate finance commitment of mobilizing USD 100 billion per year by 2020.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment
Source- Indian Express

5. **Indira Gandhi Peace Prize 2018**

- Centre for Science and Environment has won 2018 Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development.
- The Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development is the prestigious award accorded annually by Indira Gandhi Memorial Trust.
- The awards are given to individuals or organisations in recognition of creative efforts toward promoting international peace, development and a new international economic order, ensuring that scientific discoveries are used for the larger good of humanity, and enlarging the scope of freedom.

Related Information
Centre for Science and Environment

- Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) is a not-for-profit public interest research and advocacy organisation based in New Delhi, India.
- CSE works as a think tank on environment-development issues in India, poor planning, climate shifts devastating India's Sundarbans.
- It also advocates for policy changes and better implementation of the already existing policies.
- CSE uses knowledge-based activism to create awareness about problems and propose sustainable solutions.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important award
Source- The Hindu

6. **A virtual climate summit to cut carbon footprint**

- World leaders will participate in an innovative climate change summit that will begin in the Marshalls' capital Majuro.
- This summit will take place entirely online so it is carbon neutral.
- The eco-friendly event stands in stark contrast to many other international political summits, which involve thousands of delegates jetting across the world to a venue where they stay in air-conditioned comfort.
- The Virtual Climate Summit is the brainchild of Marshall Islands President Hilda Heine.
- The virtual summit's main aim is to encourage the international community to keep global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.
- A UN report warned last month that threshold could be reached as early as 2030 unless there was unprecedented global action to rein in emissions.

Related information
Aims of Paris Climate Accord 2016

- Global temperature rises this century well **below 2 degrees Celsius** above the pre-industrial level.
- Pursue efforts to limit the temperature upsurge even further to **5 degrees Celsius.**

- Strengthen the ability of countries to **deal with the impacts of climate change**.

Percent CO2 emissions by country

- China > United States > European Union> India

Global Emissions by Gas

- CO2> CH4> N2O > Fluorinated Gases

Carbon Tax

- A carbon tax is a fee for making users of fossil fuels pay for climate damage their fuel use imposes by releasing carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, and for motivating switches to clean energy.

Carbon Footprint

- Total emission of Greenhouse emissions over a period of time by any individual, group, organization etc.

Carbon Offsetting

- Reduction of emission of GHGs to compensate for the emission of GHGs made elsewhere or, offset the emission of GHGs.

Carbon Credit

- It is basically a carbon market.
- The countries are given permission to emit certain tonnes of GHGs.
- They, in turn, distribute this quota within their own units.
- Those units who hasn't utilized the emission quota can trade it with other players, privately or in the international market.

Note:

- The Marshall Islands, an atoll nation vulnerable to sea level rise from climate change, is the first country to submit two new pledges in the UN to reduce emissions by at least 32 per cent by 2025 below 2010 levels and by at least 45 per cent by 2030.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Summit
Source- The Hindu

7. **WHO World Malaria Report 2018**

- India is no longer among the top three countries with the highest malaria burden.
- According to the report, India has turned out as the only country among the 11 highest-burden countries to mark progress in reducing its disease burden.
- The country registered a 24 Percent decrease in 2017 compared to 2016.
- WHO certified Paraguay as malaria-free, the first country in the Americas to receive this status in 45 years.
- Three other countries Algeria, Argentina and Uzbekistan have requested official malaria-free certification from WHO.

Related Information
Malaria

- Malaria is a life-threatening disease caused by parasites belonging to the Plasmodium genus, which are transmitted to people through the bites of infected female Anopheles mosquitoes.
- The mosquito-borne blood disease is preventable and curable.

Matibabu Device

- It is a non-invasive test kit used to detect malaria.
- It is a low cost and reusable device that could be used to test for malaria instantly.
- It was developed in Uganda.
- Unlike current testing methods that require blood to be drawn for testing, 'Matibabu' is "bloodless".
- 'Matibabu' can provide an easy diagnosis of malaria in low-income areas such as Uganda.
- The device and application won the first prize at 'Africa Prize for Engineering Innovation' 2018 — an award dedicated to engineering innovation on the continent.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important Report
Source- The Hindu

8. **HRD Ministry establishes innovation cell at AICTE**

- The HRD Ministry established an innovation cell at the All India Council of Technical Education (AICTE).
- Its aim is to brainstorm new ideas about promoting innovation in all higher education institutions (HEIs) across the country.

- It will encourage the creative energy of our student population to work on new ideas and innovation and promote them to create start-ups and entrepreneurial ventures.
- MHRD's Innovation Cell (MIC) will focus on creating the complete ecosystem which will foster the culture of Innovation across all educational institutions from ideas generation to pre-incubation, incubation and graduating from the incubator as successful start-ups.
- MIC will also work on designing the ranking system to identify institutions in the forefront of innovation.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Education Policies
Source- Indian Express

23.11.2018

1. **UP govt launches Nari Sashaktikaran Sankalp Abhiyan**
- Nari Sashaktikaran Sankalp Abhiyan or Women Empowerment campaign launched by Uttar Pradesh government.
- The campaign is aimed to empower women in the state through various programmes.
- It includes many issues like education, self-employment, health, cleanliness, nutrition.
- During the campaign, women officers and female staff of the state government will go door-to-door in villages of their respective blocks in every district and inform and educate women about the schemes being run by central and state governments for their welfare and security.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Women Empowerment
Source- AIR

2. **The Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018**
- The Union Cabinet has approved the Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018 for regulation and standardisation of education and services by allied and healthcare professionals.

- The Bill provides for setting up of an Allied and Healthcare Council of India and corresponding State Allied and Healthcare Councils which will play the role of a standard-setter and facilitator for professions of Allied and Healthcare.

Related Information
Major Impact of the Bill
- Bring all existing allied and healthcare professionals on board during the first few of years from the date of establishment of the Council.
- It will provide Opportunity to create qualified, highly skilled and competent jobs in healthcare by enabling the professionalism of the allied and healthcare workforce.
- High quality, multi-disciplinary care in line with the vision of Ayushman Bharat, moving away from a 'doctor led' model to a 'care accessible and team-based' model.
- Opportunity to cater to the global demand (shortage) of health care workforce which is projected to be about 15 million by the year 2030, as per the WHO Global Workforce, 2030 report.

Beneficiaries
- It is estimated that the Allied and Healthcare Professions Bill, 2018 will directly benefit around 8-9 Lakh existing Allied and Healthcare related professionals in the country.
- Bill is directed to strengthen the healthcare delivery system at large, it may be said that the entire population of the country and the health sector as a whole will be benefited by this Bill.

Requirement of this Bill?
- Allied and Healthcare Professionals constitute an important element of the health human resource network.
- The skilled and efficient Allied and Healthcare Professionals can reduce the cost of care and dramatically improve the accessibility to quality driven healthcare services.
- In the current state of the healthcare system, there exist many allied and healthcare professionals, who remain unidentified, unregulated and underutilised.

- The bill is highly focused on efforts towards strengthening limited categories of professionals such as doctors, nurses and frontline workers (like Accredited Social Health Activist or ASHAs, Auxiliary Nurse Midwife or ANMs).
- The Bill thus seeks to establish a robust regulatory framework which will play the role of a standard-setter and regulator for Allied and Healthcare professions.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Health Issues
Source-PIB

3. **India and Uzbekistan: Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Science, Technology & Innovation**
- The Union Cabinet has been apprised of an Agreement on Cooperation in the field of Science, Technology and Innovation between India and Uzbekistan.
- The objective of the Agreement is to promote cooperation in the fields of science, technology and Innovation between the two countries.

Benefits:
- The signing of the Agreement will open a new chapter in bilateral relations, as both sides will now leverage complementary strengths spurred by a significant convergence of mutual interests in science and technology.
- The stakeholders will include researchers from scientific organizations, academia, R&D laboratories and industries from India and Uzbekistan.

Topic-GS Paper 3–International Relation
Source-PIB

4. **Ortolan Bunting in India**
- 'Ortolan bunting is a small bird which breeds from Mongolia to Europe and migrates to Africa via the Middle East.

Distribution and habitat
- These birds are native to most European countries and western Asia.
- It reaches as far north as Scandinavia and beyond the Arctic Circle, frequenting cornfields and their neighbourhoods.
- International Union for Conservation of Nature's red list of threatened species has placed Ortolan bunting in 2018 at the "Least Concern" category.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Biodiversity and Environment
Source- The Hindu

5. **India and Pakistan commit to Kartarpur corridor**
- The Union Cabinet approved the building and development of the Kartarpur corridor from Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur district to the international border.
- This corridor helps 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.
- The 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.

Related Information
Guru Nanak
- Guru Nanak was the founder of Sikhism and the first of the ten Sikh Gurus.
- His birth is celebrated worldwide as Guru Nanak Gurpurab on Kartik Pooranmashi.
- Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur, Pakistan was his resting place for 18 years.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture
Source- The Hindu

6. **Cabinet approves: Implementation of the umbrella scheme 'ACROSS'**
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the continuation of the nine sub-schemes of the umbrella scheme "Atmosphere & Climate Research-Modelling Observing Systems & Services (ACROSS)" during 2017-2020.
- It will be implemented by the Ministry of Earth Sciences through its institutes namely India Meteorological Department (IMD), Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF), and Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Service(INCOIS).

- The CCEA also approved the establishment of National Facility for Airborne Research (NFAR) during 2020-21 and beyond.

Related Information
ACROSS Scheme
- ACROSS scheme pertains to the atmospheric science programs of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- It will address different aspects of weather and climate services, which includes warnings for the cyclone, storm surges, heat waves, thunderstorms etc.
- The objective of the ACROSS scheme is to provide a reliable weather and climate forecast for the betterment of society.
- Thereby ensuring transfer of commensurate benefits to the various services like Public weather service, disaster management, Agro-meteorological Services, Aviation services, Environmental monitoring services, Hydro-meteorological services, climate services etc.

Topic- GS Paper 2–Important Scheme
Source-PIB

7. **India gets UN Environment award**
- United Nation Environment has awarded Wildlife Crime Control Bureau under MoEF Government of India with Asia Environment Enforcement Awards 2018.
- This award has given for excellent work done by the Bureau in combating transboundary environmental crime.
- WCCB has adopted innovative enforcement techniques that have dramatically increased enforcement of transboundary environmental crimes in India.
- Notably, it has developed an online Wildlife Crime Database Management System to get real-time data in order to help analyze trends in crime and devise effective measures to prevent and detect wildlife crimes across India.
- This system has been successfully used to analyse trends, helping put in preventive measures as well as for successfully carrying out operations

such as **Operation SAVE KURMA, THUNDERBIRD, WILDNET, LESKNOW,** BIRBIL**, THUNDERSTORM, LESKNOW-II** along with other enforcement agencies.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment
Source- Business Standard

8. **'SHe-Box' link to central/ state ministries & districts for speedy disposal of cases**
- The Ministry of Women and Child Development has linked SHe-Box, the online portal to report complaints of Sexual Harassment at the Workplace, to all the Central Ministries, Departments and States/Union Territories.
- For prompt disposal of complaints on SHe-Box, each case goes directly to the central/ state authority concerned having jurisdiction to take action in the matter.
- Cases on She-Box can be monitored by the complainants and Ministry WCD, reducing the time taken in case disposal.

Related Information
SHe-Box
- SHe-Box, which was launched by WCD Minister offers the facility of making online complaints of sexual harassment at the workplace to all women employees in the country including government and private employees.
- Those who have already filed a written complaint with the concerned Internal Complaint Committee or Local Complaint Committee constituted under the Sexual Harassment Act are also eligible to file their complaint through this portal.

Topic-GS Paper 2–Women Empowerment
Source-PIB

24.11.2018

1. **The Greenhouse Gas Bulletin Report: WMO**
- World Meteorological Organization has released its annual flagship report the 'Greenhouse Gas Bulletin' which is published annually.

- The reports find that the levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have hit a new record high.
- The report says that there is no sign of a reversal in the trend of rising levels of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Related Information
- These report help along with the IPCC 1.5^0C report which warned that the world needed to be essentially carbon neutral by 2050.
- The WMO bulletin comes out just a week or so before climate negotiators begin at the COP24 meeting in Katowice, Poland, where countries will discuss putting the Paris climate agreement into practice and increasing their ambitions when it comes to cutting warming gases.
- In addition to CO2, the WMO also highlighted rising levels of greenhouse gases like methane, nitrous oxide and another powerful ozone-depleting gas known as CFC-11.

CFC–11 gas
- There have been a number of reports about CFC-11, a gas that's used in home insulation.
- This CFC-11 also plays a major role in damaging the ozone layer while also contributing to global warming.
- Under the 1987 Montreal Protocol, the global agreement to protect the ozone layer, CFC-11 was supposed to be phased out of production.

Methane
- Methane is the second most important greenhouse gas, and about 60% of it in the atmosphere comes from human activities like cattle farming, rice cultivation and fossil fuel extraction.

Nitrous oxide
- Nitrous oxide comes from natural and human sources including fertiliser use and industry.
- It's now about 122% of pre-industrial levels.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Environment issue
Source- BBC News
2. **CCEA approves the extension of norms for mandatory packaging in Jute Materials**

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved to expand the scope of mandatory packaging norms under Jute Packaging Material (JPM) Act, 1987.
- It has approved that 100% of the food grains and 20% of sugar shall be mandatorily packed in diverse jute bags.
- Initially, 10% of indents of jute bags for packing food grains will be placed through the reverse auction on GEM portal.
- It will help to increase the quality and productivity of raw jute, diversification of jute sector and also boosting and sustaining demand for jute product.
- India is the largest producer or cultivator of jute in the world (around 60%) followed by Bangladesh and China.
- Top jute producing states are West Bengal, Bihar, Assam and Odisha.

Other Measures by the Government
- In order to improve the productivity and quality of raw jute through a carefully designed intervention, called the Jute ICARE.
- To support the diversification of jute sector, the National Jute Board has collaborated with National Institute of Design and a Jute Design Cell has been opened at Gandhinagar.
- With a view to promoting transparency in the jute sector, Jute SMART, an e-govt initiative was launched in December 2016, providing an integrated platform for procurement of B-Twill sacking by Government agencies.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Important Industries
Source-PIB
3. **India to study marijuana-derived drugs**
- The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, the Indian Council for Medical Research and the Department of Biotechnology three major science administrators in India are getting together to promote research in herbal drugs.

- Among the first such studies likely to kick off is a joint investigation by the CSIR-Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (CSIR-IIIM) and the Tata Memorial Centre (TMC), Mumbai.
- The studies into the therapeutic potential of marijuana are part of a larger governmental thrust to making new drugs derived from herbs and plants that find mention in Ayurvedic and other traditional-medicine knowledge systems.

Related Information
Marijuana

- Marijuana is a greenish-grey mixture of dried, shredded leaves, stems, seeds and flowers of Cannabis sativa – the hemp plant.
- Most people smoke marijuana, though it can also be used in other forms such as edibles, powders and oils.
- It used for controlling pain for medical issues, like cancer, nervous system diseases, glaucoma, migraines, etc and also used to treat nausea and improve appetites for people with HIV or other chronic illnesses.
- Cannabis is banned in most countries but number countries have started decriminalising its use in recent years.

What is its historic significance in India?

- Cannabis has been used since ancient times in India, dating back to 2000 BCE.
- The cannabis plant has been mentioned as one of the five sacred plants in the Vedas.
- Bhang, an edible preparation of cannabis, which is 'consumed either in the form of a drink or smoked', is common during the Hindu festivals of Holi and Mahashivaratri.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Health
Source-PIB

4. **Sub-categorization of OBCs in the central list**
- The Union Cabinet approved the extension of the term of the commission examining the issue of sub-categorisation of other backward classes (OBCs) in the central list till May 31, 2019.

Related Information

- Union Government with the approval of President had constituted five members Commission under article 340 of Constitution in October 2017.
- It is headed by former Chief Justice of Delhi High Court Justice (Retd) G. Rohini.
- Its report is expected to recommend earmarking sub-quotas for the extremely backward classes within the OBCs.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source- The Hindu

5. **Sangai Festival begins in Manipur**
- Sangai Festival showcasing Manipur's rich cultural heritage, adventure activities inaugurated at Hapta Kangjeibung which is the historic palace compound in Imphal.
- It is the grandest festival of state named after state animal, Sangai.
- The festival aims to promote Manipur as a world-class tourism destination.
- The focus areas of the festival are Manipur's rich cultural heritage and love for the art of various tribes inhabiting the state.
- It also showcases 'Ras Leela', state's classical dance form along with various other folkdance performances like Bamboo dance, Maibi dance, Kabui Naga dance, Lai Haraoba dance, Khamba Thoibi dance etc.

Related Information
Sangai Deer

- Sangai Deer (*Rucervus eldii*) also called the Dancing Deer.
- It is the state animal of Manipur.
- It is endemically to Manipur once it was found across Manipur Valley in abundant now only its remaining natural habitat is found in Keibul Lamjao National Park (KLNP), only floating national park in the world.
- It is listed as endangered species by International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).
- Keibul Lamjao National Park is a floating biomass in Manipur's Loktak Lake.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture
Source- The Hindu

6. **India to host 50th Union World Conference on Lung Health in 2019 in Hyderabad**

- The 50th Union World Conference on Lung Health will be held in Hyderabad which is a global organisation working in this field.
- The conference theme will be: **"Ending the Emergency: Science, Leadership, Action"**
- It would be held after the first ever United Nations (UN) High-Level Meeting on TB and the third UN High-Level Meeting on non-communicable diseases.

Related Information
Tuberculosis (TB)
- Tuberculosis (TB), a preventable and curable disease, now kills more people than HIV/AIDS and is the world's largest infectious disease.
- India has the highest TB burden in the world with one in four people ill with tuberculosis globally residing in the country.
- The meeting culminated in a political declaration signed by world leaders committed to ending tuberculosis by 2030.
- The Indian government has committed to eliminate TB in India by 2025.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important Conference related to health
Source- Indian Express
7. **Vanuatu: A tiny island nation threatens to take fossil fuel industries to court over climate change**
- The foreign minister of Vanuatu has warned that the island nation could initiate legal action against fossil fuel companies that continue to exploit the environment.
- The legal action is also taken for those countries that facilitate the industry for failing to stop environment exploitation and the subsequent impacts of climate change.

Related Information
Vanuatu
- Vanuatu is a Pacific island country located in the South Pacific Ocean, with a population of roughly 260,000.
- The nation comprises 82 volcanic islands dispersed across 1,280 km of sea.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment
Source- Down to Earth
8. **MH-60R Multi-Role Helicopters (MRH)**
- Recently India made a formal request to the United States of America (USA) for the purchase of 24 MH-60R Multi-role Helicopters (MRH) for the navy.
- The Indian navy is presently facing a critical shortage of helicopters.
- This procurement will help in a partially mitigating shortage of helicopters on frontline warships and bridge the Navy's operational void in integral air Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) capability.

MH-60R
- It is an important asset of the US Navy's 'Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW)' capability.
- The MH-60R which is in service with the U.S. is a modern and proven multi-mission platform capable of carrying out anti-ship, anti-submarine, electronic warfare, net-centric over-the-horizon offensive and defensive roles required for the Navy.

Related Information
- In the last two months, India signed multi-billion dollar deals with Russia for S-400 long-range air defence systems and four stealth frigates.
- The deals also come in the backdrop of U.S. threatening sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) law.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence
Source- The Hindu

26.11.2018

1. **UN selects Noida to participate in Global Sustainable Cities 2025 initiative**
- The United Nations invited Uttar Pradesh's, Noida and Greater Noida to become a member of its initiative which aims to create 25 model cities across the world that will be fully compliant with the sustainable development goals by 2025.

- The twin-cities in Gautam Buddh Nagar district, adjoining the national capital, have been selected in the "University City" category ahead of Mumbai and Bengaluru, which were also under UN consideration for the initiative as the only invitee from India.
- Overall 25 cities across the world have been selected in five categories by the UN Global Sustainable Development Goals cities initiative
- In the "University City" category, Noida-Greater Noida will be competing with elite university cities such as Cambridge, Palo Alto and Heidelberg.
- Schatz highlighted that the SDG cities initiative will lead to an "unprecedented inflow" of global knowledge, resources and capacity building into Noida and Greater Noida via various UN agencies, partners and corporate supporters.

Related Information
Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)
- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were born at the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development in Rio de Janeiro in 2012.
- SDGs is a set of 17 "Global Goals" with 169 targets covering various sectors like health, education and climate change among others.
- The SDGs replace the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which started a global effort in 2000 to tackle the indignity of poverty.
- The objective was to produce a set of universal goals that meet the urgent environmental, political and economic challenges facing our world.
- These 17 Goals build on the successes of the Millennium Development Goals while including new areas such as climate change, economic inequality, innovation, sustainable consumption, peace and justice, among other priorities.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment
Source- Indian Express

2. **Andaman & Nicobar Islands: home to a tenth of India's fauna species**
- The islands, comprising only 0.25% of the country's geographical area are home to more than 10% of the country's fauna species, according to a publication by the Zoological Survey of India.
- The total area of the A&N Islands, which comprises of 572 islands, islets and rocky outcrops, is about 8,249 sq. km.
- The population of the islands, which includes six particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) — Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompens.
- Of the ten species of marine fauna found on the islands, the dugong/sea cow, and the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, are both classified as Vulnerable under the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List of Threatened Species.
- Among the 46 terrestrial mammalian species found, three species, Andaman shrew (Crocidura andamanensis), Jenkin's shrew (C. jenkinsi) and Nicobar shrew (C. nicobarica) have been categorised as Critically Endangered.
- The species of scleractinian corals (hard or stony corals) are found in the island ecosystem, all which are placed under Schedule I of the WPA.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Biodiversity
Source- The Hindu

3. **Statute in Braille to mark Constitution Day**
- The Constitution of India will be made available in Braille for the first time ahead of the Constitution Day on November 26.
- This is a joint project undertaken by The Buddhist Association for the blind along with Saavi Foundation and Swagat Thorat.
- A book in Braille script cannot cross more than 150 pages due to its limitations.

- The Constitution will be made available in five parts in Braille for the benefit of visually challenged individuals.

Related Information
- Swagat Thorat has been running India's first Braille newspaper 'Sparshdnyan' since 2008.
- This will helpful for UPSC aspirants and lawyers from the blind community.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source- Indian Express
4. **Open Transit Data portal**
- Delhi Government launched a dedicated Open Transit Data portal named- otd.delhi.gov.in.
- It will help to spot locations of cluster buses at intervals of 10 seconds.
- Delhi became the first city in the country to open up transit data of city buses.

Related Information
- This portal was designed by and developed by IIIT-Delhi.
- It will also enable the government to install real-time Passenger Information Systems (PIS) or display boards at bus stops and terminals also providing the Estimated Time of Arrival (ETA) at any bus stop.
- In future, the portal will incorporate multi-modal transport data feed including those of Metro trains and last mile connectivity vehicles.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance: Important Portal
Source-Live mint
5. **'Jhiri Mela' festival at village Jhiri in Jammu district**
- The Jhiri Mela is celebrated annually as a commemoration to the memory of a martyred farmer named, 'Baba Jittoo'.
- Baba Jittoo', a farmer gave up his life about 500 years ago in protest against the oppressive demands of a landlord.

Related Information
Other Festivals
Jangalmahal Festival
- 'Jangalmahal' festival began in the adjoining forested areas of West

Midnapore, Bankura and Purulia districts of West Bengal.
- Initiated and organized by the 'Jangal Mahal Udyog', the festival aims to revive and popularise the culture and heritage of Jangal Mahal.

Baliyatra festival
- The historic Bali Yatra festival was inaugurated in Cuttack, Odisha on the occasion of Kartik Purnima.
- It is held on the banks of Mahanadi river in Cuttack, to mark the day when ancient Sadhabas (ancient mariners) would set sail to distant lands of Bali, for trade and cultural expansion.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture
Source- Indian Express
6. **IMD develops new technology to assess the rise of water level**
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has developed a new technology to assess the rise of water level in rivers and reservoirs by rain.
- The technology, called '**Impact Based Forecasting Approach**', which shows pre-event scenario, can help state governments to minutely monitor the impact of rain and take real-time decisions.
- Impact-based forecasting Approach and warning services aim to improve the synergy between stakeholders and citizens that play a role in an (e.g. flood) crisis.
- It will help by bridging the gaps between the four components for an effective early warning system:
  - Risk knowledge,
  - Monitoring and warning service
  - Dissemination & communication and
  - Response capability

Related Information
India Meteorological Department
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is an agency of the Ministry of Earth Sciences of the Government of India.
- It is the principal agency responsible for meteorological observations, weather forecasting and seismology.
- IMD is headquartered in Delhi.

- IMD is also one of the six Regional Specialised Meteorological Centres of the World Meteorological Organization.
- It has the responsibility for forecasting, naming and distribution of warnings for tropical cyclones in the Northern Indian Ocean region, including the Malacca Straits, the Bay of -Bengal, the Arabian Sea and the Persian Gulf.

Topic-GS Paper 3 –Disaster Management
Source- AIR

7. **Human microbiome**
- Pune hosted an international conference on microbiome research, a field of study that is still in its infancy in India.
- In this conference, they would study and map the human microbiome across the country.

Related Information
- The human body carries diverse communities of microorganisms, which are mainly bacterial are referred to as "human microbiome".
- These organisms play a key role in many aspects of host physiology, ranging from metabolism of otherwise complex indigestible carbohydrates and fats to producing essential vitamins, maintaining immune systems and acting as the first line of defence against pathogens.
- Research on the human microbiome has thrown light on various aspects like
  (a) How different parts of the human body are occupied by characteristic microbial communities, and how various factors contribute to shaping the composition of the microbiome.
  (b) It also includes the study of genetics, dietary habits, age, geographic location and ethnicity.
- The project will include the collection of saliva, stool and skin swabs of 20,000 Indians across various ethnic groups from different geographical regions.
- India provides for a wide range of research with more than 4,500 ethnic groups and presence of two global biodiversity hotspots (Himalayan range and the Western Ghats).

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Science and technology
Source- Indian Express

8. **A smart 'Vaccine for Goat plague**
- Researchers from the UK and India, including a team from the Tamil Nadu Veterinary and Animal Sciences University, have jointly developed a 'smart' vaccine which has the potential to help eradicate goat plague.
- The major contribution from British scientists were providing a template for developing a smart vaccine, which is also called **DIVA vaccine**.
- It is one of the first smart Peste des petits ruminants (PPR) vaccines that help distinguish between animals which are vaccinated and infected, which is impossible with conventional live or killed virus vaccines.
- These vaccines induce the immune response which is different from that induced by natural infection.

Related Information
- Goat plague or Peste des petits ruminants (PPR), is a highly contagious viral disease that afflicts goats and sheep in many parts of the country.
- The disease kills small ruminants in large numbers unless they are vaccinated.
- Apart from India, goat plague is prevalent in many African countries, West Asia, China and Mongolia.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
Source- The Hindu Business line

9. **India Skills Report 2019**
- It is a joint initiative of Wheebox, a Global Talent Assessment Company, PeopleStrong, a leading HR Tech Company and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), and supported and backed by renowned partners like United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and Association of Indian Universities (AIU).
- Andhra Pradesh has topped the list of states with the highest employability in India.

- India skills report also stated that Andhra Pradesh is one of the preferred hiring destination and one of the most preferred state of work by both Male and female workforces.

Topic- GS-3- Economic Development
Source- Business Standard

27.11.2018

1. **E-pashuhaat portal is playing a crucial role in connecting farmers & breeders to trade in disease-free germplasm**

Related Information
E-pashuhaat portal

- The Agriculture Ministry launched e-pashuhaat portal for dairy farmers in November 2016.
- The portal is playing a crucial role in connecting farmers, breeders and other agencies to trade in disease-free germplasm, namely live animals, frozen semen and embryos.
- A mobile application e-pashuhat (GPMS Transportal) has also been created recently and integrated with UMANG (Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance) application.
- They can now know the availability of disease-free germplasm services within a 100KM radius of their location.

Related Information
Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG)

- UMANG provides a single platform for all Indian Citizens to access pan India e-Gov services ranging from Central to Local Government bodies and other citizen-centric services.
- It provides a unified approach where citizens can install one application to avail multiple government services.
- UMANG is a Digital India initiative of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).

Other schemes for the Upliftment of Dairy Farmers
Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM)

- It is a project under the National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development, under the 12th Five Year Plan which helps in the development, preservation and conservation of indigenous breeds.

Pashu Sanjivni

- Under the Pashu Sanjivni component of the scheme, milch animals are being identified using UID (Unique Identification Device).

Dairy Processing & Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF)

- It aims to benefit 95 lakh milk producers in 50,000 villages and provide both direct and indirect employment to many skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled workers.
- Under the Dairy Entrepreneurship Development Scheme, there is a provision to provide financial assistance for providing self-employment opportunities in various activities from milk production to marketing.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important Scheme
Source-PIB

2. **Health Ministry launches new health information platform "IHIP"**

- Health Ministry did soft-launch of the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) segment of the Integrated Health Information Platform (IHIP) in seven states.
- The first one-of-its-kind initiative by the Government of India.
- IHIP uses the latest technologies and digital health initiatives.
- This initiative will provide near-real-time data to policymakers for detecting outbreaks, reducing the morbidity and mortality and lessening disease burden in the populations and better health systems.

Topic-GS Paper 2–Issue Related to health
Source-PIB

3. **UNESCO accepts joints bid by North and South Korea for Wrestling**

- UNESCO accepted a joint bid for Korean wrestling to be recognised as one of the world's most treasured cultural practices.
- The two Koreas had originally filed separate applications for their traditional form of wrestling to be recognised on the UN agency's Intangible Cultural Heritage list.

Related Information
Ssireum
- Ssireum or Korean wrestling is a folk wrestling style and the traditional national sport of Korea since the fourth century.
- In the modern form, each contestant wears a belt (satba) that wraps around the waist and the thigh.
- The sport has some similarities to Japanese sumo.
- In South Korea, wrestlers are topless and only wear tight shorts, while in the North they don sleeveless jackets.
- Southern matches are held on the sand while the North uses a round mattress.
- There has only been one inter-Korean wrestling competition, on the South's Jeju Island, in 2003.

Topic- GS Paper 1 –Art and Culture
Source- The Hindu
4. **PAiSA Portal**
- PAiSA (Portal for Affordable Credit and Interest Subvention Access") is a centralized electronic platform for processing interest subvention on bank loans to beneficiaries under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Urban Livelihoods Mission
- The web platform has been designed and developed by Allahabad Bank which is the Nodal bank.
- It helps the government to connect directly with the beneficiaries, ensuring that there is greater transparency and efficiency in the delivery of services.
- All 35 states / UTs & all scheduled commercial banks, RRBs and Cooperative Banks are expected to be on board the PAiSA portal the year-end.
- Direct Bank Transfer of subvention on monthly basis under DAY-NULM will give the necessary financial support to small entrepreneurs in a timely manner".

Related Information
Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission
- To reduce poverty and vulnerability of the urban poor households by enabling them to access gainful self-employment and skilled wage employment opportunities.
- The mission would aim at providing shelters equipped with essential services to the urban homeless in a phased manner.
- The mission would also address livelihood concerns of urban street vendors by facilitating access to suitable spaces, institutional credit, social security and skills to urban street vendors for accessing emerging market opportunities.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics
Source-PIB
5. **RIMES terms Titli cyclone 'rarest of rare'**
- The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for Africa and Asia has termed 'Titli', the severe cyclonic storm that devastated Odisha in October as 'rarest cyclone'.
- More than 200 years of cyclone track history in the Odisha coast reveals that the Titli cyclone is the rarest of rare in terms of its characteristics such as
  o Recurvature after landfall.
  o Retaining its destructive potential after landfall
  o Recurvature away from the coastal areas for more than two days.

Related Information
Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES)
- RIMES is an international and intergovernmental institution, owned and managed by its Member States, for the generation and application of early warning information.
- It was established after the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami on 30 April 2009 and was registered with the United Nations.
- RIMES operate from its regional early warning centre located at the campus of the Asian Institute of Technology in Pathumthani, Thailand.
- Currently, the Government of India serves as the RIMES Council Chair.

Topic-GS Paper 3 –Disaster Management
Source- The Hindu

6. 'HAUSLA-2018'
- The National Festival for Children of Child Care Institutions (CCIs)- "Hausla 2018" of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) inaugurated in New Delhi.
- It provides a national platform for the children from CCIs across India to showcase their talent, to make them realise the hidden talent they possess and to help take it forward in their life.
- The theme for the event is **"Child Safety".**
- CIF (Childline India Foundation) and NIPCCD will be assisting the Ministry in organizing the events.

Related Information
National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development
- The National Institute of Public Cooperation and Child Development (NIPCCD) is an Indian government agency in New Delhi under the Ministry of Women and Children Development.
- NIPCCD tasked with the promotion of voluntary action research, training and documentation in the overall domain of women empowerment and child development in India.
- Established in 1966, the Institute has four Regional Centres, Guwahati, Bangalore, Lucknow, and Indore.
- In April 1985, the Institute received the Maurice Pate Memorial Award from UNICEF in honour of "its work in developing services for children, training, research and advocacy".

CHILDLINE India Foundation (CIF)
- It is the nodal agency of the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development acting as the parent organisation for setting up, managing and monitoring the CHILDLINE 1098 service all over the country.

Topic-GS Paper-2–Women Empowerment
Source-PIB

7. India and China sign protocol to amend DTAA
- The Governments of India and China amended the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) for the avoidance of double taxation, and the prevention of fiscal evasion with respect to taxes on income.
- The Protocol also updates the existing provisions for exchange of information to the latest international standards.
- Further, the Protocol incorporates changes required to implement treaty related minimum standards under the Action reports of Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) Project, in which India had participated on an equal footing.

Related Information
Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement
- A DTAA is a tax treaty signed between two or more countries.
- Its key objective is that tax-payers in these countries **can avoid being taxed twice** for the same income.
- A DTAA applies in cases where a taxpayer resides in one country and earns income in another.
- DTAAs can either be comprehensive to cover all sources of income or be limited to certain areas such as taxing of income from shipping, air transport, inheritance, etc.
- At present, India has double tax avoidance treaties with more than 80 countries around the world.

Why is it important?
- DTAAs are intended to make a country an attractive investment destination by providing relief on dual taxation.
- Such relief is provided by exempting income earned abroad from tax in the resident country or providing credit to the extent taxes have already been paid abroad.
- DTAAs also provide for concessional rates of tax in some cases.

Problems with the DTAAs
- DTAAs can become an incentive for even legitimate investors to route investments through low-tax regimes to sidestep taxation.
- This leads to a loss of tax revenue for the country.

General Anti Avoidance Rule (GAAR)
- General anti-avoidance rule (GAAR) is an anti-tax avoidance Rule of India.

- It is framed by the Department of Revenue under the Ministry of Finance.
- It is made to prevent intentional tax avoidance by manipulating tax laws.
- It empowers the Income Tax dept. to investigate any deal or joint ventures which involves huge capital.
- It prevents tax evaders, from routing investments through tax havens like Mauritius, Luxemburg, Switzerland.

Tax Havens countries

- Tax havens are countries or regions which have zero or low tax regimes which provide individuals and business opportunities for tax avoidance or tax evasion.

Tax Evasion

- It is the **illegal practice** of not paying taxes, by not reporting income, reporting expenses etc.

Tax avoidance

- It is the legitimate minimizing of taxes, using methods included in the tax code.

Topic-GS Paper 2–International Relation
Source- The Hindu

8. **Odisha launches a public bicycle sharing system**

- The Odisha government launched a Public Bicycle Sharing system to reduce traffic congestion, enhance space efficiency, and improve air quality in Bhubaneswar.
- Capital Region Urban Transport and Bhubaneswar Smart City Limited have come together for the PBS, which has been christened as 'Mo Cycle' system.
- The rider can locate the nearest Mo Cycle station and unlock the cycle through Quick Response Code scan.
- Technology interventions such as GPS and smart locks are an integral part of the system.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source-PIB

9. **Bihar govt unveils 70 ft tall Lord Buddha's statue in Rajgir**

- Bihar chief minister unveiled a 70-feet tall statue of Lord Buddha at Rajgir in Nalanda district.
- It is the second tallest statue of Buddha in the country.

- The statue has been installed above a 16-metre radius pedestal in the middle of the lake Ghora Katora and has been made from 45,000 cubic foot pink sandstone.

Topic- GS-1 Indian Geography
Source- AIR

28.11.2018

1. **'Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti'**

- The Department of Defence Production has instituted a new framework titled 'Mission Raksha Gyan Shakti' which aims to provide a boost to the IPR culture in the indigenous defence industry.
- This will help in the successful filing of Intellectual Property Right (IPR) applications.

Related Information

Intellectual property rights

- Intellectual property rights are the rights given to persons over the creations of their minds.
- They usually give the creator an exclusive right over the use of his/her creation for a certain period of time.

Intellectual property rights are customarily divided into two main areas:

(i) Copyright & rights related to copyright

- The rights of authors of literary and artistic works (such as books and other writings, musical compositions, paintings, sculpture, computer programs and films) are protected by copyright, for a minimum period of 50 years after the death of the author.
- Also protected through copyright and related (sometimes referred to as "neighboring") rights are the rights of performers (e.g. actors, singers and musicians), producers of phonograms (sound recordings) and broadcasting organizations.
- The main social purpose of protection of copyright and related rights is to encourage and reward creative work.

(ii) Industrial property

- It can be characterized as the protection of distinctive signs, in particular, trademarks and geographical indications

- The protection of such distinctive signs aims to stimulate and ensure fair competition and to protect consumers, by enabling them to make informed choices between various goods and services.
- The protection may last indefinitely, provided the sign in question continues to be distinctive.
- Other types of industrial property are protected primarily to stimulate innovation, design and the creation of technology.
- This category includes inventions (protected by patents), industrial designs and trade secrets.

**Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics IPR
Source-PIB**

2. **13th G-20 Summit**
- The 13th G-20 Summit will be host by Argentina in the city of Buenos Aires from 30 November to 1 December 2018.
- The theme of the Summit is **"Building Consensus for Fair and Sustainable Development".**
- The objective of this summit is a particular significance for developing countries and emerging economies such as India, which is today the fastest growing large economy in the world.

**Related Information
G20**

- Group of Twenty (G20) is the central forum for international cooperation on financial and economic issues.
- The G20 countries account for more than four-fifths of gross world product and three-quarters of global trade and are home to almost two-thirds of the world's population.
- Its decisions are influential and help to bring about reform at national and multinational levels.
- The G20 comprises 19 countries plus the EU.
- These countries are Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Japan, Mexico, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, South Korea, Turkey, the United Kingdom (UK) and the United States of America

**Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important Summit
Source-PIB**

3. **Logix India -2019**
- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation launched the logo and brochure of Logix India 2019 in New Delhi.
- Logix India 2019 is scheduled to take place in New Delhi.
- The mega logistics event is being organized by the Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) as a major initiative to improve logistics cost effectiveness and operational efficiencies for India's global trade.
- Logix India will enable effective international trade logistics and help provide an efficient and cost-effective flow of goods on which other commercial sectors.
- FIEO will also focus on investment opportunities in infrastructure development, warehouse consolidation, technology integration and IT enablement and skilling of manpower.

Related Information

- India ranked 44 in the World Bank Logistics Performance Index 2018.
- As per the Economic Survey 2017-18, India's logistics industry which is worth around USD 160 billion is likely to touch USD 215 billion in the next two years.
- This sector provides employment to more than 22 million people and is expected to grow at the rate of 10.5 per cent over the next 5 years.

Need for integrated Logistics sector development in India

- India needs to have more robust trade relations with countries in Africa, Latin America, Central Asia, the Middle East and ASEAN.
- High logistics cost reduces the competitiveness of Indian goods both in domestic as well as export market.
- Logistics is the backbone of EXIM trade and creates business opportunities and employment. Logistics sector is expected to grow to USD 360 billion by 2032 from the current USD 115 billion.

Federation of Indian Export Organisations
- Federation of Indian Export Organisations is a trade promotion organisation in India, under the Ministry of Commerce of the Government of India and private trade and industry.
- The organisation is responsible for representing and assisting Indian entrepreneurs and exporters in foreign markets.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics
Source-PIB

4. **CSIR to establish a High-End Skill Development Centre in Chandigarh.**
- India's premier National Research Laboratory CSIR-Institute of Microbial Technology announced a new partnership with Merck, a leading German science and Technology Company, to establish a 'High-End Skill Development Centre' in CSIR-IMTECH, Chandigarh.
- This will be a first of its kind, Academia-Industry-led, 'High End Skill Development Centre' laboratory in Chandigarh that has been established to augment Government of India's initiative for skilling India in the area of Life Science.
- It will be equipped with the next generation technologies, like gene editing & single-molecule biomarker detection.
- The centre will help accelerate healthcare research and train Indian students and researchers in latest life science technologies and make them industry ready.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
Source- Indian Express

5. **Global Wage Report 2018**
- Global Wage Report 2018 brought out by the International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- India had the fastest wage growth in South Asia in 2017.
- Globally, the rate of growth in wages in 2017 fell to its lowest level since 2008, but workers in India had the highest average real wage growth in Southern Asia of 5.5% over the period 2008-17.

Others finding of the Report
- The mean gender pay gap of 34.5% for India and 34% for Pakistan on the basis of hourly wages were the worst among 73 countries for which data was available.
- Globally, women continue to be paid about 20% less than men.
- The gender gap in wages was lowest in high-income countries and highest in low and middle-income countries.
- Workers in Asia and the Pacific have enjoyed the highest real wage growth among all regions over the period 2006–17 with countries such as China, India, Thailand and Vietnam leading the way.
- Over a longer period, 1999 to 2017, real wages have almost tripled in the emerging and developing countries of the G20, while in advanced G20 countries they have increased by just 9%.
- Globally, growth in wages in real terms (that is, adjusted for price inflation) declined from 2.4% in 2016 to just 1.8% last year, far below the level of 3.4% before the global financial crisis.

Related Information
International Labour Organization
- The International Labour Organization is a United Nations agency that sets international labour standards and promotes social protection and work opportunities for all.
- The ILO has 187 member states: 186 of the 193 UN member states plus the Cook Islands are members of the ILO.
- The International Labour Office is the permanent secretariat of the International Labour Organization.
- In 1969, the organization received the Nobel Peace Prize for improving fraternity and peace among nations, pursuing decent work and justice for workers, and providing technical assistance to other developing nations.
- Its headquarter is in Geneva, Switzerland

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Important Report
Source- TOI

6. **Odisha now has a lexicon for rare tribal languages**
- Odisha government unveiled 21 tribal dictionaries and proficiency modules for rare tribal languages.
- The State Government through its Academy of Tribal Language and Culture (ATLC) has brought out the tribal bilingual dictionaries for multilingual education and tribal trilingual proficiency modules to preserve and promote tribal languages.
- Odisha is the only State in the country, to have formulated all tribal bilingual dictionaries and trilingual tribal language proficiency modules.

Related Information
Unique tribal profile
- Odisha has a unique place on the tribal map of India for having the maximum number of Scheduled Tribe communities.
- The State is home to 62 different tribal communities, including 13 particularly vulnerable tribal groups.
- These tribes speak 21 languages and 74 dialects.
- Of the 21 tribal languages, seven have their own scripts.
- However, Odia is used as the medium of communication in the dictionaries.

Topic- GS Paper 2 – Welfare Scheme for vulnerable section of society
Source- The Hindu

7. **SSB to patrol Dudhwa tiger reserve**
- Dudhwa Tiger Reserve and Sashastra Seema Bal have joined hands to provide security to Dudhwa forests and its rich wildlife.
- It was agreed that joint long route patrolling comprising SSB, central and local intelligence officers, customs and excise officials, Special Tiger Protection Force and the reserve's field staff would be at regular intervals.

Related Information
Dudhwa Tiger Reserve
- The Dudhwa Tiger Reserve is a protected area in Uttar Pradesh that stretches mainly across the Lakhimpur Kheri & Bahraich districts.

- It comprises the Dudhwa National Park, Kishanpur Wildlife Sanctuary and Katarniaghat Wildlife Sanctuary.
- It shares the north-eastern boundary with Nepal, which is defined to a large extent by the Mohana River.

Note: Dudhwa Dam is located in Dhamtari district of Chhattisgarh in India. It is built across the Mahanadi river in the village of Dudhawa.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment
Source- The Hindu

8. **Ukraine declare Martial law**
- Ukrainian president Petro Poroshenko has introduced martial law to parts of his country as tensions with Russia escalate.
- The decision was taken aftermath of a naval clash off the Crimean Peninsula on 25 November, which saw the Russian coastguard capture three Ukrainian ships and their 23 crew members on the Sea of Azov.
- Russia accused the two Ukrainian artillery boats and a tug of crossing into its waters along the Kerch Strait without permission, despite the two nations have signed a 2003 maritime treaty agreeing the passage to the Black Sea was shared territory.

Related Information
- In Ukraine, a state of martial law has been declared for the first time since 1945 in 10 strategic border regions.
- Ukraine is a large country in Eastern Europe known for its Orthodox churches, Black Sea coastline and forested mountains.
- Its capital is Kiev.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Crises
Source- The Hindu

29.11.2018

1. **Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) for Himachal Pradesh**
- The Union Home Ministry launched an Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) for Himachal Pradesh.
- Himachal Pradesh is the first state to launch pan-India single emergency number '112' under ERSS.

- To ensure the safety of women, a SHOUT feature has been introduced in '112 India' mobile app to seek immediate assistance from registered volunteers in the vicinity apart from the immediate assistance from Emergency Response Centre.
- The SHOUT feature is exclusively available to women.

Related Information
Emergency Response Support System (ERSS)

- ERSS is a national project under the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) which has been formed after the recommendations of the Justice Verma Committee in the backdrop of the unfortunate incident of Nirbhaya in December'2012.
- It is a pan-India Single Emergency Response Number '112' to address all kinds of distress calls such as police, fire and ambulance etc.

Objectives

- Providing a single emergency response number across the country.
- Providing 24x7 efficient and effective response system which can receive input from various voice and data services such as voice call, SMS, email, Internet of Things, panic buttons in public transport etc. to attend to the citizen in distress.
- Automated response system for timely dispatch of field resources (police) to the location of incidence using the system.
- Integration with existing Dial 100, Dial 108 and other emergency response systems. vii. Integrate with other relevant systems like CCTNS etc.
- Under this project, MHA is providing financial assistance to all States & Union Territories.
- This assistance in the form of computer hardware, C-DAC Contact Centre Solution Stack.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Women Security/ Empowerment
Source-PIB

2. **Sustainable Blue Economy Conference 2018**

- Africa is hosting the first ever Sustainable Blue Conference in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi.
- It is under the theme: 'The Blue Economy and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.'
- It was primarily hosted by the Government of Kenya with Canada and Japan as co-hosts and supported by UNDP through a multi-donor basket fund.
- The Sustainable Blue Economy Conference was built 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.'

Related Information
The Blue Economy and its importance

- Sustainable Blue Economy is a marine-based economy that provides social and economic benefits for current and future generations.
- It helps to restores, protects and maintains the diversity, productivity and resilience of marine ecosystems, and is based on clean technologies, renewable energy, and circular material flows.

Note:

SDGs Goal 14: Life below water related to "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment
Source- Indian Express

3. **Inclusive Wealth Report 2018**

- The Inclusive Wealth Report is a biennial effort led by the UN Environment.
- It helps to evaluate the capacities and performance of the nations around the world to measure the sustainability of the economy and the wellbeing of their people.
- The existing statistical systems in the countries are using System of Environment and Economic Accounts which are geared to measure flow-income.

- The flow would critically depend upon the health and resilience of capital assets like manufactured capital, human capital and natural capital.
- A country's inclusive wealth is the social value (not dollar price) of all its capital assets, including natural capital, human capital and produced capital.
- The IWR 2018 builds on previous versions of the report (IWR2012 and IWR 2014) and advances methods of measuring the base of the economy- the capital of all types.
- It covers the period from 1990 to 2014, which is 25 years, which provides us with a picture of the changes in capital assets over almost a generation.

Methodology of Calculation

- It has come up with alternative shadow prices of human capital (education and health), based on a non-parametric methodology called frontier analysis.

Out Comes of the Report

The results of the IWR 2018 covering 140 countries indicate that:

- The Inclusive wealth (IW) in 135 countries was higher in 2014 compared to the level in 1990 and the global growth rate of IW was 44% over the indicated period, which implies an average growth rate of 1.8% per year.
- However, during the same period, the global GDP growth per year was 3.4%, which is close to twofold of the annual growth rate of growth in IW.
- In terms of Inclusive wealth per capital and Inclusive wealth per capita adjusted, 89 and 96 of the 140 countries saw increases over the study period compared to their levels in 1990.

Note:

The Inclusive Wealth Report 2018 demonstrates that assessing and valuing natural capital and the change in per capita inclusive/comprehensive wealth over time has the potential to keep track of progress on most Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Important Reports

Source- TOI

4. **Nepal launched contribution based Social Security Scheme for formal sector workers**

- Nepal government launched a contribution based Social Security Scheme for formal sector workers in Kathmandu.
- The scheme has been introduced to address that issue of accountability of the state to its people.
- The scheme will be compulsorily applicable to formal sector workers and will be further extended to informal sector workers.
- It will come into effect on May 22, 2019, and would be a contribution based scheme where private sector employees will have to mandatorily contribute 11 Percent of their basic salary to the social security fund (SSF) while employers will have to contribute another 20 percent of the employees' basic salary.
- It will cover Health and medical facilities, safe motherhood, accident and physical incapacity security, security to dependent family members and security at old age.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance

Source- Indian Express

5. **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes**

- A team of the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) will visit the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to look into the issue of killing of a US national by a protected and reclusive tribe in the North Sentinel Island

Related Information

National Commission for Scheduled Tribes

- It is an Indian constitutional body, was established through the Constitution (89th Amendment) Act, 2003.
- The National Commission for Scheduled Tribes has been set up under Article 338A on bifurcation of erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes to oversee the implementation of various safeguards provided to Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution.

- With this amendment, the erstwhile National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes was replaced by two separate Commissions namely- (i) the National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC), and (ii) the National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST).

Composition
- The Commission comprises a Chairperson, a Vice-Chairperson and three full-time Members (including one lady Member).
- The term of all the Members of the Commission is three years from the date of assumption of charge.

Functions
- To investigate and monitor all matters relating to the safeguards provided for the Scheduled Tribes under the Constitution or under any other law for the time being in force or under any order of the Government and to evaluate the working of such safeguards.
- To inquire into specific complaints with respect to the deprivation of rights and safeguards of the Scheduled Tribes.
- To participate and advise in the planning process of socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes and to evaluate the progress of their development under the Union and any State.
- To present to the President, annually and at such other times as the Commission may deem fit, reports upon the working of those safeguards.
- To make in such reports, recommendations as to the measures that should be taken by the Union or any State for effective implementation of those safeguards and other measures for the protection, welfare and socio-economic development of the Scheduled Tribes.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Constitutional Bodies
Source- The Hindu
6. **14ᵗʰ formation day of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)**

- The Minister of State for Home Affairs inaugurated the 14th Formation Day of National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
- The theme of this year's Formation Day is **'Early Warning for Disasters'.**
- Early warning is a major element of disaster risk reduction and can minimize the loss of lives and economic impacts.
- Timely early warning is key to a structured and efficient response.

Related Information
National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)
- In 2005, the Government of India enacted the Disaster Management Act, which led to the creation of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA).
- NDMA is headed by the Prime Minister, and State Disaster Management Authorities (SDMAs) headed by respective Chief Ministers, to spearhead and implement a holistic and integrated approach to Disaster Management in India.

Topic-GS Paper 3 –Disaster Management
Source-PIB
7. **El Nino may hit already hurt Indian farmers**

- Six Indian states have already declared a drought this season and many others, like Gujarat, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, with large rainfall deficits will soon join this list.
- The IMD says moderate El Nino Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions are currently prevalent in the equatorial Pacific Ocean region and the El Nino is likely to develop in the next two months.
- If the El Nino continues into the spring and summer seasons, it might bring down the average rainfall during the 2019 monsoon and cause warmer than usual summer temperatures.
- The development of an El Nino might also have been responsible for the unusually low rainfall in September and the post-monsoon months in India.

- While the country saw a rainfall deficit of 24 percent in September 2018, in the post-monsoon months it has been as high as 49 percent (October 1-November 21).
- The situation is the worst in central India which has received 64 percent less rainfall than normal.
- The east and north-east India and the Southern Peninsula have received 58 percent and 42 percent deficient rainfall respectively.

Related Information

- In the 135 years between 1880 and 2014, around 90 per cent of all evolving El Nino years have seen below normal rainfall and 65 per cent of them experienced droughts.
- In fact, six of the worst droughts in the country since 1871 have been triggered by El Nino—the most recent being in 2009.
- All the weather models around the world had predicted a high probability of an El Nino event towards the end of this year or the beginning of the next year.
- The Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD), another ocean temperature anomaly between the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea, is also in its positive phase currently.
- But, the IMD predicts that this condition is temporary.
- A positive IOD means that the Arabian Sea is warmer than the Bay of Bengal and is usually associated with an El Nino event.

About EI Nino

- In a normal year, a surface low pressure develops in the region of northern Australia and Indonesia and a high-pressure system over the coast of Peru.
- El Nino refers to the unusual warming of the central and east-central equatorial Pacific Ocean which leads to air pressure drops over large areas of the central Pacific and along the coast of South America.
- The warmer waters of the Pacific Ocean cause the winds in various regions to reverse

- This change in wind direction leads to warmer winters and summers and a decrease in rainfall during the monsoon.
- Most of the time, it also leads to drought.

Topic- GS Paper 3- Environmental issue
Source- Down to Earth

8. **RBI launches a survey on Indian startup sector**
- The Reserve Bank of India launched a Survey on India's Startup Sector (SISS).
- Its aim is to capture profiles of these businesses and get firsthand information on their profitability, among other factors.
- The survey comes amid calls to the RBI to do more for easing access to credit for the country's small and medium enterprises.

Related Information
Government Initiatives

- The government has already launched PMMY (Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana), the MUDRA (Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency) Bank, a new institution set up for development and refinancing activities relating to micro units with a refinance Fund of ₹200 billion.
- Startup India Programme is a campaign based on the Startup Action Plan by the Government of India, aimed to promote entrepreneurship.
- The Standup India initiative is also aimed at promoting entrepreneurship, but among SCs/STs, women communities.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Economics
Source- TOI

30.11.2018

1. **KONKAN 18 - India –UK Navy exercise**
- The bilateral KONKAN exercise between the Indian Navy and the Royal Navy of the United Kingdom started off at Goa.
- This Bilateral exercise provides a platform for the two Navies to periodically exercise at sea and in a harbour, so as to build interoperability and share best practices.

- The naval cooperation is a tangible symbol of the commitment of both nations in ensuring a positive climate at sea for enhancing strategic stability and promoting economic prosperity.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Defence
Source-PIB

2. **J&K to amend laws to punish sexual harassment by public servants with jail**

- The government has decided to amend the existing provisions of the Ranbir Penal Code, Criminal Procedure Code, Evidence Act and also the Prevention of Corruption Act. (Representational).
- Under this provision, unwanted sexual activity by a public servant in Jammu and Kashmir, including sexually suggestive conduct and touching a woman in exchange of some benefit, will soon be punishable with imprisonment of not less than three years and fine.
- According to the draft amendment, any persons in a position of authority or in a fiduciary relationship, or a public servant who abuses such position or fiduciary relationship to employ physical or non-physical form of coercion to extort, request or demand sexual favours from any woman in exchange of benefits that such a person is empowered to grant or withhold shall be guilty of the offence of "sextortion"

Related Information

- Ranbir Penal Code or RPC is a criminal code applicable in Jammu and Kashmir.
- The code was introduced during the reign of Dogra dynasty with Ranbir Singh as its ruler.
- Indian Penal Code is not applicable here under Article 370 of the Indian constitution.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Women Security
Source- Indian Express

3. **India among countries worst hit by climate change, says a report**

- According to the Lancet Countdown 2018 on Health and Climate Change report globally each person was exposed to an additional 1.4 days of heat wave between 2000 and 2017 compared to the baseline period of 1986 to 2005.
- From 2014-2017, the average length of heatwaves in India ranged from 3-4 days compared to the global average of 0.8-1.8 days.
- Indians were exposed to almost 60 million heat wave exposure events in 2016, a jump of about 40 million from 2012.
- The report prepared jointly with the Public Health Foundation of India also urges a review of existing occupational health standards, labour laws and sectoral regulations for worker safety in relation to climatic conditions.
- The agriculture sector was more vulnerable compared to the industrial and service sectors because workers there were more likely to be exposed to heat.

Recommendation for India in Report

- Indian policymakers must take a series of initiatives to mitigate the increased risks to health, and the loss of labour hours due to a surge in exposure to heat wave events in the country over the 2012-2016 periods.
- It also includes identifying "heat hot-spots" through appropriate tracking of meteorological data.
- Promoting "timely development and implementation of local Heat Action Plans with strategic inter-agency coordination and a response which targets the most vulnerable groups."
- The India Meteorological Department had reported that from 1901 to 2007, there was an increase of more than 0.5°C in mean temperature, with considerable geographic variation, and climate forecasts by research groups project a 2.2-5.5°C rise in temperatures in northern, central and western India by the end of the 21st century.

Related Information
How, then, does the government classify disasters/calamities?

- The 10th Finance Commission (1995-2000) examined a proposal that a disaster be termed "a national calamity of rarest severity" if it **affects one-third of the population of a state**.
- The panel did not define a "calamity of rare severity" but stated that a calamity of rare severity would necessarily have to be adjudged on a case-to-case basis taking into account, inter-alia, the intensity and magnitude of the calamity, level of assistance needed, the capacity of the state to tackle the problem, the alternatives and flexibility available within the plans to provide succour and relief, etc.

National Calamity Contingent Duty (NCCD)
- In the case of goods specified in the Seventh Schedule, being goods manufactured or produced, there shall be levied and collected for the purposes of the Union, by the surcharge, a duty of excise, to be called the National Calamity Contingent duty (hereinafter referred to as the National Calamity duty).

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Environment
Source- The Hindu

4. **Kerch strait confrontation**
- Ukrainian ships and sailors are being held by Russia in Crimea.
- Russia scrambled jets and helicopters, and even blocked the Kerch strait with a barge, closing access to the Sea of Azov.

Related Information
Kerch Strait
- The Kerch Strait is the waterway between mainland Russia and Crimea, the peninsula Russia annexed from Ukraine in 2014.
- It serves as the gateway into the Sea of Azov, which borders Russia and Ukraine.
- A bilateral treaty gives both countries the right to patrol the waters.
- Russia has significantly built up its military presence in the region since 2014.

What is the state of Russia-Ukraine relations?

- After a revolution in Ukraine toppled the previous president, Russia annexed the peninsula of Crimea and backed a separatist revolt in south-east Ukraine.
- Ukraine has responded by cutting ties with Russia and asking for support from the west.
- More than 10,000 people have been killed in south-east Ukraine since 2014 and the conflict is ongoing.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –International Issues
Source- The Hindu

5. **Genetic study reveals the presence of rare sub-species of hog deer**
- Indian scientists have discovered in India an endangered sub-species of hog deer, earlier believed to be confined to the eastern part of central Thailand.
- Researchers at Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun reported the presence of a small population of hog deer in Keibul Lamjao National Park (KLNP), Manipur.
- Two sub-species of hog deer have been reported from its range.
  (a) The western race is distributed from Pakistan and the Terai grasslands (along with the Himalayan foothills, from Punjab to Arunachal Pradesh)
  (b) The eastern race of hog deer is found in Thailand, Indo-China, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

Related Information
Hog deer
- Hog deer are losing habitat in other countries, the genetically distinct and evolutionarily significant population found in Keibul Lamjao National Park.
- Hog deer is considered a biodiversity hotspot on the India-Myanmar border which makes significant for conservation.
- The Hog deer or Pada is an endangered species in the IUCN Red List.
- They are protected under Schedule I of the Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972.

Topic- GS Paper 3 –Biodiversity
Source- Down to Earth

6. **ISRO's PSLV-C43 successfully places HysIS, 30 foreign satellites in respective orbits.**
- ISRO's PSLV-C43 successfully placed HysIS and 30 foreign satellites soared in a trajectory crossing the path of the Sun.
- The 30 satellites are one each from Australia, Canada, Colombia, Finland, Malaysia, Netherlands and Spain, and 23 from the USA.

Related Information
Hyper Spectral Imaging Satellite (HysIS)
- HysIS Satellite or dubbed 'Sharp Eye is India's first hyperspectral imaging satellite for advanced Earth observation, it was launched with the help of PSLV-C43 launcher.
- HysIS will study the Earth's surface in visible, near-infrared and shortwave infrared regions of the electromagnetic spectrum, with a mission life of about 5 years.
- It has a hyperspectral imaging camera in space can provide well-defined images that can help to identify objects on Earth far more clearly than regular optical or remote sensing cameras.
- The technology will be an added advantage of watching over India from space for a variety of purposes such as defence, agriculture, land use, coastal zones, among others.

Topic-GS Paper 3–Science & Technology
Source- The Hindu

7. **The biggest coral reseeding project launches on Great Barrier Reef**
- Scientists have launched the largest-ever attempt to regenerate coral on the endangered Great Barrier Reef by harvesting millions of the creatures' eggs and sperm during their annual spawning.
- The researchers plan to grow coral larvae from the harvested eggs and return these two areas of the reef which have been badly damaged by climate-related coral bleaching.
- The "larval restoration project" launch was timed to coincide with the annual coral spawn on the reef, which began earlier this week and will last only about 48 to 72 hours.

- Coral along large swathes of the 2,300-kilometre (1,400-mile) reef have been killed by rising sea temperatures linked to climate change, leaving behind skeletal remains in a process known as coral bleaching.
- The northern reaches of the reef suffered an unprecedented two successive years of severe bleaching in 2016 and 2017, raising fears it may have suffered irreparable damage.

Related Information
Coral Bleaching
- Coral bleaching or whitening of coral that results from the loss of a coral's symbiotic algae (zooxanthellae) or the degradation of the algae's photosynthetic pigment.
- Bleaching is associated with the devastation of coral reefs, which are home to approximately 25 percent of all marine species.

Causes of Coral bleaching
- It may result from increases in seawater temperature, particularly when associated with elevated levels of solar irradiance (e.g., ultraviolet radiation).
- It may also be caused by changes in seawater chemistry (e.g., due to ocean acidification or pollution),
- It takes place also when increased levels of sediment in seawater, or a coral's exposure to sodium cyanide (a chemical used in the capture of coral reef fish).

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Biodiversity
Source- TOI

8. **DataCity' urban challenge opens in Bengaluru**
- The Karnataka government has launched an initiative called 'DataCity' in partnership with France-based utility company Suez and a start-up accelerator Numa.
- DataCity will be an international open innovation programme to bring city authorities, corporates and start-ups to address cities' challenges and develop solutions using data and technology.

- It is a 7-month programme that aims to bring together Bengaluru and corporates to identify relevant innovative start-ups from a pool of applications and to experiment with solutions using data.
- The areas of opportunity that could be explored during 'DataCity' are smart mobility, water and waste management, energy, smart buildings, security and pollution management.

Related Information

- Bengaluru is not alone in such initiatives.
- Coimbatore is working with German water, wastewater technologies and institutions such as Fraunhofer IGB, Institute for Social-Ecological Research to develop a concept for sustainable water management for the inhabitants in the city.
- Suez provides water treatment and waste management solutions.

Topic- GS Paper 2 –Governance
Source- The Hindu business line

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