

1. National Supercomputing Mission

Why in the news?

- Recently, the **Department of Science and Technology (DST), Ministry of Science and Technology, New Delhi** officially declared that **14 new supercomputers** will be deployed this year. This initiative will undertake **Rs. 4500 Crore-National Computing Mission (NSM)**.
- The National Supercomputing Mission (NSM) has gathered momentum and is moving fast to create a computer infrastructure and capacity building for India.

Objective:

With a transformative approach in supercomputing, it is aimed to develop the next generation of supercomputer expertise. It is a first of its kind of mission which attempt to boost the country's computing power.



About the National Supercomputing Mission

It is the joint initiative of the institutions:

- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), New Delhi
- Department of Science and Technology (DST), New
- Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC), Pune
- Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru.
- CDAC and IISc are the mission implementing agencies

How will it impact?

- The mission was set up to provide the country with supercomputing infrastructure to meet the increasing computational demands of academia, researchers, MSMEs, and startups by creating the capability design, manufacturing, of supercomputers indigenously in India.
- The target of the mission was set to establish a network of supercomputers ranging from a few Tera Flops (TF) to Hundreds of Tera Flops (TF).
- The three systems with greater than or equal to 3 Peta Flops (PF) in academic and research institutions of National importance across the country by 2022.

Places where these supercomputers assembled indigenously:

- a. Param Shivay, IIT (BHU)
 - b. Param Shakti , IIT-Kharagpur and
 - c. Param Brahma, IISER, Pune.
- These are equipped with applications from domains like Weather and Climate, Computational Fluid Dynamics, Bioinformatics, and Material science.

- Three more supercomputers are planned to be installed by April 2020, one each at IIT Kanpur, JN Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Bengaluru and IIT Hyderabad. Doing so will enhance the supercomputing facility to 6 Peta Flops (PF).

Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

Source- PIB

2. Long-tailed macaques

Why in the news?

- According to a study from IISER Mohali, the Long-tailed macaques have shown rich tool-use behaviour to simplify their efforts. The research was carried out in Great Nicobar Island.

Research findings

It was observed that males were more frequently involved in tool use than females. The crucial difference lies between the tool and object usage. A tool helps the user for better outcomes.

Significance of research

Though the long-tailed macaques are farther from human in relatedness than chimpanzees or apes. Yet, the study could offer a perspective on evolutionary origins of tool use behavior.

About the Long-tailed macaques

- The lion-tailed macaque (*Macaca silenus*) are endemic to the Western Ghats of India.
- It is a diurnal animal meaning it is active exclusively in daylight hours.



Conservation status:

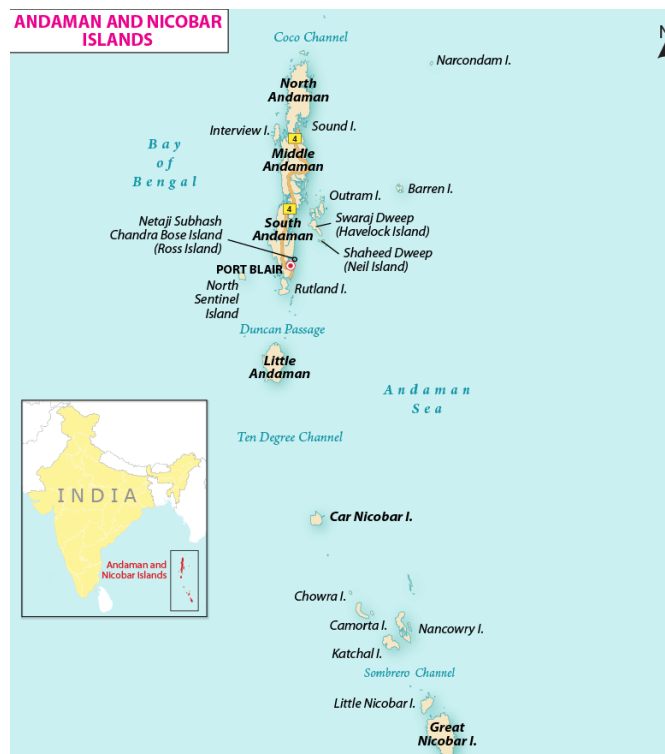
- It is listed as Endangered by IUCN.
- Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972
- It is also protected under the Appendix I of CITES

About Great Nicobar

- **Great Nicobar** is the southernmost and largest of the Nicobar Islands of India. It is located in the north of **Sumatra** (one of the Sunda Islands of western Indonesia).
- The island was severely affected by the Indian Ocean Tsunami in the year 2004.
- The island is inhabited by **Shompen tribe, the indigenous people** of the Great Nicobar Island.



- **Great Nicobar Biosphere Reserve** is also located in the Indira Point, the southernmost point of India.



- The southernmost air station of the Indian Armed Forces is also established here. It is named as 'INS Baaz' naval air station. It is located near Campbell Bay under the joint services of Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) of the the Indian Armed Forces.

Topic- GS Paper 3–Environment
Source- Business Standard

3. Section 188 IPC

Why in news?

Nation-wide, the Janata Curfew was observed on 22nd March 2020 on Central govt's advice to enforce a full lockdown in districts to contain the spread of COVID-19. The orders issued have been framed under the Epidemic Disease Act, 1897.

- The Act lays down punishment as per **Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code, 1860**, for flouting such orders –leading to **imprisonment of up to 6 months or fine up to Rs 1000 or both**.
- In this regard, Maharashtra and many other state govts have announced Section 188 IPC a curfew-like measures across the state for people to keep indoors.

Purpose

The orders are issued to curb the spread of the coronavirus and to enforce a full lockdown to avert the spread of COVID-19.

What is Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code?

- Section 3 of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, provides penalties for disobeying any regulation or order made under the Act.
- These are according to Section 188 of the Indian Penal Code (Disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant).

Under Section 188, there two offences:

- a. **Disobedience** to an order lawfully promulgated by a public servant, If such disobedience causes obstruction, annoyance or injury to persons lawfully employed
 - b. **Punishment:** Simple Imprisonment for 1 month or fine of Rs 200 or both
- If such disobedience causes danger to human life, health or safety, etc the punishment would be simple Imprisonment for 6 months or fine of Rs 1000 or both
 - According to the **First Schedule of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), 1973**, both **offences are cognizable, bailable, and can be tried by any magistrate.**

Why have governments in the country imposed these curbs?

- The novel coronavirus, which is known to spread mainly person-to-person (first emerged in China’s Wuhan late last year) and has since spread to at least 177 countries and territories, infecting thousands.
- The virus has shown community transmission in many areas of the world.
- To counter its outbreak, several states in India enforced measures aimed at reducing public gatherings– called “social distancing”
- Offices, schools, concerts, conferences, sports events, weddings, and the like were ordered shut or cancelled around the world, including in many Indian states.

Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

Source- PIB

3. Finance Bill

Why in the news?

- The Lok Sabha passed the **Finance Bill** by **voice vote without discussion** due to the Coronavirus outbreak.

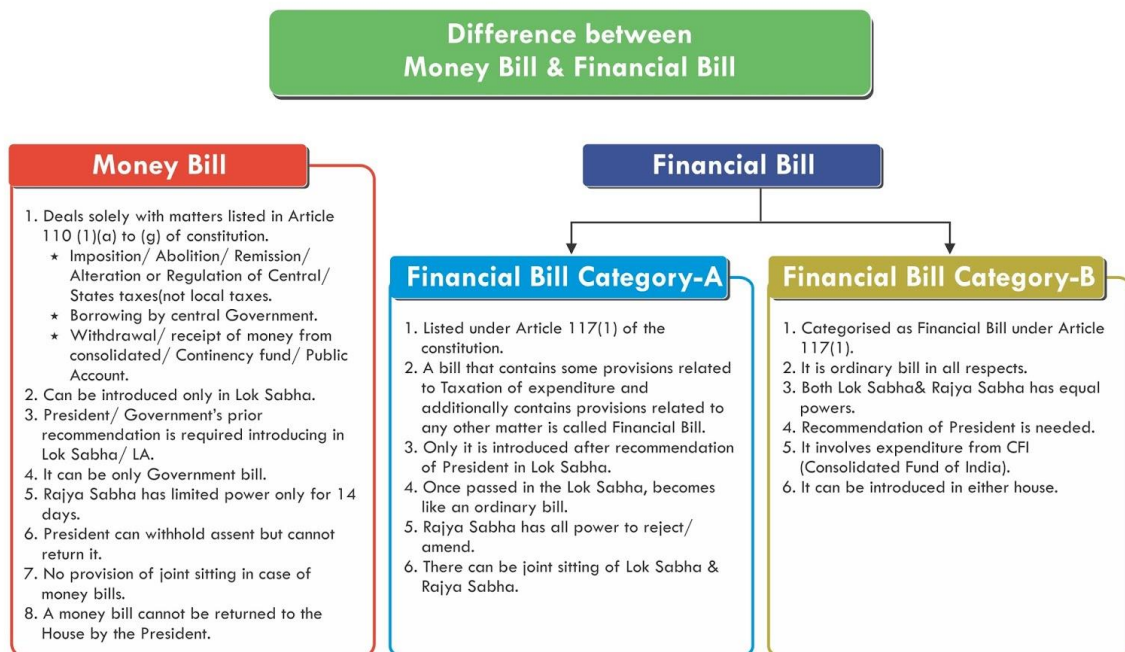
What is a Finance Bill?

- Finance Bill is part of the budget every year. It is introduced to pave the way for financial proposals of the country for the financial year.

Key highlights

- The **Finance Minister** tables the **bill in the Parliament** immediately **after the Union Budget**.

- The government uses the **bill to amend the Finance Act** and **notify changes** in direct and indirect taxes, including proposals for
 - levy of new taxes
 - of existing tax structures to the Parliament
- The govt in power seeks parliamentary approval for a set of proposals.
- **Rajya Sabha cannot amend the Money Bill directly; it can only recommend amendments to the bill**
- **Rajya Sabha must return the Money Bill to Lok Sabha within fourteen days** from its receipt. Lok Sabha may either accept or reject all or any of the **recommendations made by the Rajya Sabha.**
- The bill must be passed by Parliament **within 75 days** after its introduction.



- Finance Bill is accompanied by a Memorandum that contains the explanations of the provisions that are included in the bill.
- The bill is classified into three categories:
 - (a) The Money Bill – **Article 110**
 - (b) Finance Bill (I) – **Article 117 (1)**
 - (c) Finance Bill (II)- **Article 117 (3)**
- The Finance Bill I and II contains provisions relating to taxation and expenditure.
- Money Bill contains provisions related to borrowings, withdrawal of money from Contingency Fund and amendments to tax laws at the centre or state level. Also, appropriation of money out of Consolidated Fund of India.

CRITERIA FOR BEING A MONEY BILL

Article 110 of the Constitution defines the Money Bill	
Money Bills are those Bills which contain "only" provisions dealing with all or any of the matters specified in Article 110 sub-clauses :	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Imposition, abolition, remission, alteration, regulation of any tax 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appropriation of moneys out of Consolidated Fund of India
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Regulation of borrowing of money or the giving of any guarantee by govt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Declaring of any expense to be expenditure charged on the Consolidated Fund of India or the increasing of the amount of any such expenditure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Custody of the Consolidated Fund or the Contingency Fund of India, the payment of moneys into or the withdrawal of moneys from any such fund 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Receipt of money on account of Consolidated Fund of India or Public Account of India or the custody or issue of such money or the audit of the accounts of the Union or of a State

A Bill which has any provision other than money provision (as mentioned in sub-clauses) is not a Money Bill

Constitution gives power to the Lok Sabha Speaker to take a final call if any question arises whether a Bill is a Money Bill or not

Speaker's decision is final and cannot be challenged in any court of law

RS has limited powers with respect to Money Bills

Lok Sabha has supreme power in terms of Money Bills

Therefore, it is clear from the classification that money bills are simply a part of the financial bill. Hence, all money bills are financial bills, but all financial bills are not money bills.

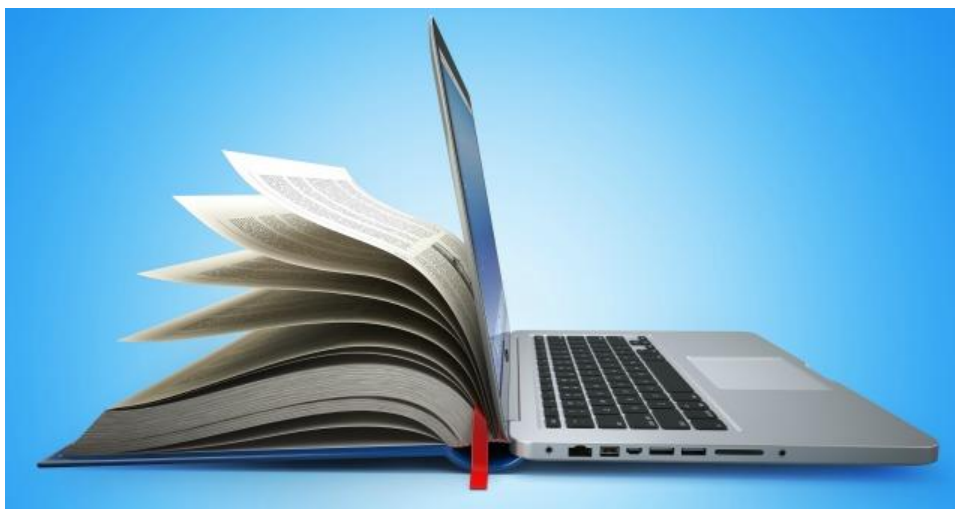
Note: Only those financial bills are money bills which contain exclusively those matters which are mentioned in Article 110.

Topic- GS Paper 2–Polity
Source-Economics Times

4. Digital e-Learning platforms

Why in news?

Union Human Resource Development Minister has asked students to continue their learning through 'Digital e-Learning platforms' amid the COVID-19 outbreak.



Some of the digital initiatives/platforms of Ministry of HRD

1. DIKSHA

- It offers teachers, students and parents engaging learning material relevant to the prescribed school curriculum.
- Diksha has more than 80000 e-Books for class 12th created by CBSE, NCERT and States/UTs which are available in multiple languages.

2. e-PATHSHALA

- It is a joint initiative of Ministry of HRD and NCERT to showcase and disseminate all educational e-resources including textbooks, audio, video, periodicals and a variety of other digital resources.
- In this web portal NCERT has deployed 1886 audios, 2000 videos, 696 e- e-books (e-Pubs) and 504 Flip Books for classes 1st to 12th in different languages.

3. SWAYAM

- Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds (SWAYAM) is an integrated platform for offering online courses, covering school (9th to 12th) to Postgraduate Level.

4. SWAYAM Prabha

- It is an initiative to provide 32 High Quality Educational Channels through DTH (Direct to Home) across the length and breadth of the country on a 24X7 basis.

5. National Digital Library of India

- It is a project to develop a framework of virtual repository of learning resources with a single-window search facility.

Topic- GS Paper 2–Governance

Source- PIB

6. World Water Day 2020

Why in news?

Every year the **World Water Day** is observed on **March 22 by the United Nations**. This year the theme was '**Water and Climate Change**' and how the two are inextricably linked.

Campaign highlights

- The campaign shows how our use of water will help reduce floods, droughts, scarcity and pollution, and will help fight climate change itself.
- By adapting to the water effects of climate change, we will protect health and save lives. And, by using water more efficiently, we will reduce greenhouse gases.



Key messages by the UN:

- The UN suggested to keep water at the core of climate policy makers and incorporated it in the action plans.
- Water can help fight climate change. There are **sustainable, affordable and scalable water** and **sanitation** solutions.
- Everyone has a role to play. In our daily lives, there are surprisingly easy steps we can all take to address climate change.



Background

- In 1992, the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development took place in Rio de Janeiro.
- That same year, the **UN General Assembly** adopted a resolution by which **March 22 of each year** was declared **World Day for Water**, to be observed **starting 1993**.

Topic- GS Paper 3–Environment

Source- Down to Earth