



PIB COMPILATION

OCTOBER - 2018

VETRII'S UPSC PIB COMPILATION October - 2018

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INDIAN POLITY

Competition Law Review Committee

GS 2: Indian Polity | Statutory, regulatory & various quasi-judicial bodies.

Prelims level: Competition Commission of India (CCI)

Mains level: Mandates and Functioning of various quasi-judicial bodies and their functioning

Why in News?

- Union Finance Ministry has constituted nine-member Competition Law Review Committee to ensure that legislation is in tune with changing business environment.
- The committee was constituted in pursuance of Government's objective of ensuring that legislation is in sync with needs of strong economic fundamentals.

Need for Review:

- To ensure that Legislation is in sync with the needs of strong economic fundamentals, the Government has constituted a Committee to review the Competition Act.
- During the past nine years the size of the Indian Economy has grown immensely and India is today amongst the top five Economies in the World and poised to forge ahead further.
- In this context, it is essential that Competition Law is strengthened, and re-calibrated to promote best practices which result in the citizens of this country achieving their aspirations and value for money.

Competition Commission of India:

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- The Competition Act was passed in the year 2002 and the Competition Commission of India was set up in pursuance of the same.
- A need was felt to promote competition and private enterprise especially in the light of 1991 Indian economic liberalisation.
- The Commission started functioning in right earnest from 2009 and has contributed immensely towards the development of competition and fair play practices in the Indian market.
- The Act prohibits anti-competitive agreements, abuse of dominant position by enterprises and regulates combinations (acquisition, acquiring of control and Merger and acquisition).

Tasks assigned to the Committee:

- To review the Competition Act/ Rules/ Regulations, in view of changing business environment and bring necessary changes, if required
- To look into international best practices in the competition fields, especially anti-trust laws, merger guidelines and handling cross border competition issues.
- To study other regulatory regimes/ institutional mechanisms/ government policies which overlap with the Competition Act.
- Any other matters related to competition issue and considered necessary by the Committee.

Section 151A of the Representation of the People Act 1951

GS 2: Indian Polity | Salient features of the Representation of People's Act

Prelims level: Representation of People Act, 1951

Mains level: Process of Bye-Elections in India

Why in News?

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- It is understood that some newspapers have reported that the ECI on the one hand announced the bye elections to fill the three casual vacancies in Lok Sabha from Karnataka.
- While the bye elections to fill five vacancies in Lok Sabha from Andhra Pradesh has not been announced by ECI.

Logic behind ECs move:

- As the vacancies from Karnataka have occurred more than one year before the expiration of the term of House, bye elections are required to be held.
- In the case of vacancies from Andhra Pradesh, there is no need to hold bye elections as the remaining term of the Lok Sabha is less than one year from the date of occurrence of vacancies.

Section 151A of R.P. Act, 1951:

- Section 151A of the RP Act mandates the EC to fill the casual vacancies in the Houses of Parliament and State Legislatures.
- A bye-election for filling any vacancy referred to in any of the said sections shall be held within a period of six months from the date of the occurrence of the vacancy:
- Provided that nothing contained in this section shall apply if—
- The remainder of the term of a member in relation to a vacancy is less than one year; or
- The Election Commission in consultation with the Central Government certifies that it is difficult to hold the bye-election within the said period.



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GOVERNANCE

MoHUA partners with Google to launch #LooReview Campaign

GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development in various sectors & issues arising out of their design & implementation

Prelims level: Loo Review Campaign

Mains level: Measures to ensure proper sanitation and maintenance of Public Toilets to prevent open defecation and urination - Swachh Bharat Mission- Urban

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, under the aegis of Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban (SBM – U), has partnered with Google to launch the Loo Review campaign to encourage all local guides in India to rate and review public toilets on Google Maps.

Locating Public Toilets on G-maps - Objectives:

- The campaign is aimed to encourage all local guides in India to rate and review public toilets on Google Maps.
- This campaign will allow all citizens to locate public toilets in their cities on Google Maps, Search and the Assistant and also provide feedback on the same.
- 500+ cities in India with more than 30,000 toilets with the name of “SBM Toilet” are currently live on Google Maps.
- The joint campaign to be run throughout October and November 2018 is an effort to increase the awareness and ease of locating public toilets across India.
- Local Guides are people who share reviews, photos, and knowledge on Google Maps to help people explore the world.

Benefits of the campaign:

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- One of the objectives of the SBM- U is to provide sanitation coverage through public toilet facilities across cities in India for achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status.
- There is now a need to ensure that the ODF status is sustained through continuous usage and proper maintenance of public toilets.
- The 'Public toilets near me' feature will benefit citizens, particularly women and senior citizens, who often find it difficult to find access to clean toilets in the public space.
- The feedback provide by local guides through the Loo Review campaign will press upon the Urban Local Bodies to take proactive steps to improve public toilet facilities across the country

SATAT Initiative

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims level: SATAT initiative

Mains level: Promoting Compressed Bio-Gas as an alternative transport fuel

Why in News?

- The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas has launched the SATAT initiative to promote Compressed Bio-Gas as an alternative, green transport fuel.

Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT):

- Titled SATAT, the initiative is aimed at providing a Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation as a developmental effort that would benefit both vehicle-users as well as farmers and entrepreneurs.

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- This initiative holds great promise for efficient municipal solid waste management and in tackling the problem of polluted urban air due to farm stubble-burning and carbon emissions.
- Use of CBG will also help bring down dependency on crude oil imports and in realising the Prime Minister's vision of enhancing farmers' income, rural employment and entrepreneurship.

Benefits of the initiative:

- There are multiple benefits from converting agricultural residue, cattle dung and municipal solid waste into CBG on a commercial scale:
 - Responsible waste management, reduction in carbon emissions and pollution
 - Additional revenue source for farmers
 - Boost to entrepreneurship, rural economy and employment
 - Support to national commitments in achieving climate change goals
 - Reduction in import of natural gas and crude oil
 - Buffer against crude oil/gas price fluctuations

Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention

GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development in various sectors & issues arising out of their design & implementation

Prelims level: MGISC

Mains level: Nearing success of SBM-Rural

Why in News?

- The Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention is being organised by the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation to mark the beginning of the 150th birth

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anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi, also coinciding with the fourth anniversary of the launch of Swachh Bharat Mission.

- Fifty-three Ministers of Sanitation from around the world and more than 160 international representatives from 68 countries are participating in the convention. The international conference brings together Sanitation Ministers and other leaders in WASH (water, sanitation and hygiene) from around the world.

Mahatma Gandhi International Sanitation Convention:

- The President has inaugurated the MGISC organised by the Drinking Water and Sanitation Ministry to mark the beginning of the 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi.
- The MGISC is a four-day convention which includes more than 160 international representatives from 68 countries.
- It aims to share sanitation success stories and lessons from the participating countries.

Reality Check on ODF status:

- India is close to becoming open defecation free.
- The rural sanitation coverage of India has increased significantly, from 39% in October 2014 to 94.44% as of 30 September 2018.
- Nearly 86.5 million household toilets have been constructed under the Mission.
- 25 States/Union Territories, 509 districts, and 500,000 villages have declared themselves free from open defecation.
- The number of people practicing open defecation in rural India has gone down from 550 million in 2014, to less than 150 million till date.

Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility-2018 (HLC-2018)

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.



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Prelims level: CSR Provisions in India

Mains level: Reviewing the success of CSR activities in India and making proper modifications.

Why in News?

- The government has constituted a High Level Committee on Corporate Social Responsibility-2018 (HLC-2018) under the Chairmanship of Injeti Srinivas, Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA).
- It is aimed to review the existing framework, guide and formulate the roadmap for a coherent policy on CSR.

Reviewing the CSR Framework:

- According to MCA, the Committee will review the existing CSR framework as per Act, rules and circulars issued from time to time and recommend guidelines for better enforcement of CSR provisions.
- It will also analyse outcomes of CSR activities/programmes/projects and suggest measures for effective monitoring and evaluation of CSR by companies.
- Suggestions are also expected on innovative solutions, use of technology, platform to connect stakeholders, and social audit.

CSR Framework in India:

- The provisions of section 135 of Companies Act, 2013 pertaining to CSR w.e.f 2014 with a view to promoting responsible and sustainable business through inclusive growth.
- As per the said section, the companies having Net worth of INR 500 crore or more; or Turnover of INR 1000 crore or more; or Net Profit of INR 5 crore or more during any financial year shall be required to constitute a Corporate Social Responsibility Committee of the Board

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- The four years of implementation have enabled compilation of data on the number of companies complying with CSR provisions, funds allocated and spent across various sectors, geographical spread of CSR spending, etc.
- The existing provisions of in Companies Act, 2013 with respect to CSR fully empower the Board of a Company to decide on their CSR Policy, approve projects and oversee implementation.

Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) - Ease of Doing Business

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims level: RUN-LLP

Mains level: E-governance initiatives to facilitate EODB.

Why in News?

- Ministry of Corporate Affairs has launched another process re-engineering by making incorporation of Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) through a complete online system through a web service titled "RUN-LLP (Reserve Unique Name - Limited Liability Partnership)" and an e-form titled "FiLiP (Form for incorporation of Limited Liability Partnership)".

New initiatives - Significance:

- With the initiatives launched by Ministry of Corporate Affairs, one can start business by incorporating a company through an on-line process without visiting any Government office.
- This was achieved in January, 2016 by establishing Central Registry Centre (CRC) for on-line incorporation of the company and reserving its unique name.

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- Two on-line forms that were introduced for the purpose are Simplified Proforma for Incorporating Company Electronically (SPICe) and Reserve Unique Name (RUN).

What is a Limited Liability Company?

- A limited liability company is a corporate structure whereby the members of the company are not personally liable for the company's debts or liabilities.
- They are hybrid entities that combine the characteristics of a corporation and a partnership or sole proprietorship.
- In these the liability of each partner is limited to his share as written in the agreement.

RUN-LLP (Reserve Unique Name – Limited Liability Partnership):

- The Ministry of Corporate Affairs has contributed significantly towards 'Ease of Doing Business' in the country with a new initiative.
- A company can now be incorporated in less than two days along with allotment of PAN, TAN, DIN and Unique Name through the online process.
- It has launched process re-engineering by making incorporation of Limited Liability Partnership (LLP) through a complete online system.
- It is web service titled RUN-LLP (Reserve Unique Name – Limited Liability Partnership).
- Name can be allotted to LLP through an e-form titled "FiLiP (Form for incorporation of Limited Liability Partnership).

India's First Global Skills Park

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims level: Global Skills Park

Mains level: Enhancing skill development ecosystem in India

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Why in News?

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India signed a \$150 million Loan Agreement in today to establish a Global Skills Park (GSP) in Madhya Pradesh.

Global Skills Park (GSP):

- It is the First Multi-Skills Park in India, to enhance the quality of Technical and Vocational Education And Training (TVET) System in the State and create a more skilled workforce.
- The Project will help improve the quality and relevance of the State's TVET programs.
- It will help impart advanced job-ready skills training of international standards that can meet the employment needs of the State's emerging sectors.
- The Project will engage international TVET partners to support advanced training at the GSP who will bring global best practices in TVET management, training infrastructure, industry cooperation, and quality assurance.

GSP campus:

- The new GSP campus, which will be established in Bhopal will consist of core Advanced Training Institutes including the Center for Occupational Skills Acquisition and the Center for Advanced Agricultural Training as well as other support services.
- The sole aim is focussed on entrepreneurship, training of trainers, and skill-related research.
- The campus will have training facilities focusing on skills for manufacturing, service, and advanced agricultural jobs, benefitting about 20,000 trainees and trainers.
- The Project will also help in modernizing 10 industrial training institutes across the state by renovating training infrastructure and upgrading skills courses to align with industry and market needs.

NAREDCO signs MoU with Housing Ministry

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GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims level & Mains level: Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana, National Urban Livelihoods Mission

Why in News?

- Realtors body National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs to provide skill training and jobs in the construction sector for 2.5 lakh poor people.
- The partnership will strengthen skill trainings and employment opportunities in the construction sector for urban poor under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Urban Livelihoods Mission.

Memorandum:

- The two objectives of this MoU are to provide employment to urban poor waiting to enter construction sector and up-skill the semi-skilled construction workers working on construction sites to skilled category.
- NAREDCO will ensure implementation of this initiative through training providers.
- It will deliver majority of fresh and upskilling training programme at the construction sites.
- The training curriculum under this initiative will range from minimum 10 days (80 hours) to maximum of 6 months.
- Through this collaboration around 2,50,000 urban poor will be trained.

National Real Estate Development Council (NAREDCO):

- It is an autonomous self-regulatory body under Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- It was established in 1998 and is headquartered in New Delhi.

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- It serves as the apex national body for real estate industry and provides single platform for Government, industry and public to discuss various problems and opportunities face to face for speedy resolution of issues.
- Its mandate also includes to induce transparency and ethics in the real estate business and transform unorganized Indian real estate sector into a matured and globally competitive business sector

Methanol Cooking Fuel Program of India

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation

Prelims level: Particulars of the Methanol Cooking Fuel Program

Mains level: Various initiatives for cleaner cooking fuel.

Why in News?

- Signifying a paradigm shift towards the use of alternate cooking fuel technology, the Namrup-based Assam Petrochemicals Limited (APL) has rolled out the country's first methanol-based cooking fuel project-'Green and Clean Fuel Pilot Project on Methanol Cooking Stove'.

Methanol Cooking Fuel Program:

- Northeast and Assam Petro-chemicals, a state-owned company is launching Asia's first cannisters based and India's first "Methanol Cooking Fuel Program".
- 500 households inside the Assam Petro Complex will be the first pilot project, scaling it to 40,000 households in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Telangana, Goa and Karnataka.
- Assam Petrochemicals Limited has been manufacturing methanol for the last 30 years and is in the process of upgrading their 100 TPD methanol plant to 600 TPD by Dec 2019.

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- The safe handling cannister based cooking stoves are from Swedish Technology and through a Technology transfer a large-scale cooking stove manufacturing plant will come up in India.
- In the next 18 months it will be producing 10 lakh Cook stoves and 1 Crore Cannisters per year.

Fueling the North East:

- The cost of energy equivalent of one cylinder of LPG for Methanol is Rs. 650, compared to Rs. 850 per cylinder resulting in a minimum of 20% Savings.
- For instance, in Manipur the cost of transportation of LPG is Rs. 200, whereas same cost for Methanol will be Rs. 12.
- This provides for an excellent alternative as household fuel and commercial, institutional and fuel for restaurants.

Why Methanol?

- Methanol can be used as an energy producing fuel, transportation fuel and cooking fuel, cutting down India's oil import bill by an estimated 20% over the next few years. Unlike CNG, using methanol as a transportation fuel would require minimal alteration in the vehicles.
- Methanol is a clean-burning fuel that produces fewer smog-causing emissions – such as sulphur oxides (SO_x), nitrogen oxides (NO_x) and particulate matter – and can improve air quality and related human health issues.
- Methanol is most commonly produced on a commercial scale from natural gas. It can also be produced from renewable sources such as biomass and recycled carbon dioxide.
- As a high-octane vehicle fuel, methanol offers excellent acceleration and power. It also improves vehicle efficiency.

Benefits of the Fuel:

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- Methanol is a promising fuel as it is clean, cheaper than fossil fuels and a good substitute for heavy fuels.
- This technology is very unique as it handles methanol extremely safely, does not need regulator or any piping system.
- The cooking medium can directly substitute LPG, Kerosene, Wood, Charcoal and any other fuel for cooking.
- The gaseous form, Methanol – DME, can be blended in 20% ratio with LPG.
- 2 litres canister's can last for full five hours on twin burners and 8 such Canister's as rack can last for one month for a family of three.

Beyond Dispute: The SBM Facts

GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development in various sectors & issues arising out of their design & implementation

Prelims level: Stats related to SBM- Grameen

Mains level: The stats mentioned in the newscard highlights the success of SBM in rural India

Why in News?

- The Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) recently launched the 150th birth year celebrations of Mahatma Gandhi, as the Mission enters its fifth and final year of implementation. The SBM has transformed into a massive Jan Andolan.
- However, some recent reports have sought to undermine the progress made by the SBM on the ground, with incorrect claims.
- In this regard, the Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation presents the following clarifications highlighting the success of the mission.

Imbibing Behaviour Change:

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- The SBM has shown tremendous progress these last 4 years leading to massive behaviour change campaign and people's movement underway on the ground.
- Since the inception of the program, the rural sanitation coverage of India has increased significantly, from 39% in October 2014 to 95% today.
- Nearly 8.7 crore household toilets have been constructed under the Mission.
- As a result, 25 States/Union Territories, 529 districts, and 5,09,067 villages have declared themselves as free from open defecation.

Flagged by World Bank:

- The National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) conducted under the World Bank support project found that 93.4% of the households in rural India who have access to a toilet use it.
- It confirmed that behaviour change is happening on the ground.
- The survey covered 92040 households in 6136 villages across States and UTs in India.

Seamless Funding:

- The Swachh Bharat Mission is the world's largest public funded sanitation program.
- Between the Centre and State, over Rs. 1 lakh crore would have been allocated for the Mission in 2019.
- In addition to the budget allocation of ₹15,000 crore this year (FY 2018-2019), ₹15,000 crore has been further allocated through Extra Budgetary Resources.

Communication strategy:

- Behaviour Change Communication is undertaken under the SBM at the ground level and is complemented with mass media at the national level as well.
- For example, mass media campaigns such as Darwaza Band communicates the messages of women empowerment, promotion of twin pit toilets and usage of toilets.

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- While the SBM foot soldiers, Swachhagrahis, participate in the triggering of communities for behaviour change and sustaining improved behaviors through Inter-Personal Communication.
- There are currently over 5 lakh Swachhagrahis across the country undertaking behaviour change interventions at the grassroots.

Water for ODF:

- A policy decision has been taken under the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP) to prioritize the provision of piped water supply (PWS) for villages that become ODF.
- Of the 5 lakh plus ODF villages, translating to 14.13 lakh habitations, 6.16 habitations have PWS through public stand posts. The remaining are being covered on priority.
- At a technical level, the SBM promotes the use of the rural pan, a steep slope pan, which requires no more than 1-1.5 liters of water for every use of the toilet, addressing challenges related to scarcity of water.

ODF-Quality:

- A strong parallel focus is being maintained on the quality of the work on the ground and sustaining progress much after the program reaches its goal in 2019.
- Verification of all ODF declared villages is very unique to SBM as multiple rounds of verification are carried out for the village by the districts and States.
- Within 90 days of declaration, verification is done for each household in the village.
- Another round of sustainability verification is done 180 days after the first round.

Impact of SBM:

- A recent WHO study reports that SBM would have led to saving of 300,000 lives by 2019 and around 150,000 lives would be saved annually thereafter.

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- In a report titled 'The Financial and Economic Impact of SBM in India (2017)' UNICEF estimated that a household in an ODF village in rural India saves Rs. 50,000 every year.
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has released a study that shows significant improvements in diarrhoea prevalence and stunting among children in ODF villages, compared to nearby non-ODF villages.
- The Swachh Bharat model of sanitation has led India into a sanitation revolution, and the country is on track for an ODF India by October 2019.

Online Assurances Monitoring System

GS 2: Governance | Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications etc.

Prelims level: OAMS

Mains level: Ensuring better service delivery in Parliamentary Procedures..

Why in News?

- The union govt. has inaugurated the Online Assurances Monitoring System (OAMS), developed by the Union Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs (MPA).

Online Assurances Monitoring System:

- This system has made the information regarding assurances given on the floor of the Houses of Parliament paper less
- It is available in digital format.
- All assurances being culled out by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs through e-Office would be reflected on this system and various Ministries/Departments, Lok Sabha Secretariat and Rajya Sabha Secretariat would communicate for all purposes through this system.

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- This would encompass various actions related to Parliamentary Assurances including sending implementation reports, request for dropping, request for extension and decision thereon. Here after, physical communication would not be accepted.

Imbibing Accountability:

- With OAMS, all assurances being taken out by the Ministry through e-Office would be reflected on this system and various Ministries/Departments.
- This would encompass various actions related to Parliamentary Assurances including sending implementation reports, request for dropping, request for extension and decision thereon.
- Hereafter, physical communication would not be accepted.

Why need online monitoring of Assurances?

- A number of problems arise in the process of fulfillment of assurances due to human factors and non-compliance of guidelines, making the process less transparent.
- Hence, the need arose for an online assurances monitoring system to track the exact status of pending assurances and expedite their fulfillment.
- Since 2007, a total of 26,830 assurances given by the Ministers on the floor of the Houses were culled out by the MPA.
- Out of these 21,439 assurances have been fulfilled and 1,903 have been dropped, leaving a total of 3,488 assurances still pending for compliance.

National Policy on Electronics 2018

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims Level: Highlights of NPE.

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Mains Level: Potential, Significance and challenges ahead in the sector

Why in News?

- Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has issued draft 'National Policy on Electronics 2018' (NPE 2018) for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) Sector of India.

Highlights of the policy:

- **Aim:** To promote domestic manufacturing in entire value-chain of ESDM sector for spur economic development in the country. It also aims to double the target of mobile phone production from 500 million units in 2019 to 1 billion by 2025 to meet objective.
- Promoting ease-of-doing business for the entire electronic system design manufacturing or ESDM sector
- Encouraging industry-led research and development and innovation in all sub-sectors of electronics.
- The policy targets production of one billion mobile handsets by 2025
- Push the startup ecosystem in emerging technology areas.
- Provision of suitable direct tax benefits.
- Replacing the M-SIPS (Modified Special Incentive Package Scheme) with schemes that are easier to implement such as interest subsidy and credit default guarantee, etc.
- The ministry of electronics and information technology (MeitY) will "coordinate with the concerned ministries/departments to provide incentives to industry for rapid and robust expansion of electronics hardware manufacturing within the country.

Saubhagya scheme

GS 2: Governance | Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

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Prelims and Mains Level: Saubhagya scheme and its particulars.

Why in News?

- Ministry of Power and New & Renewable Energy has announced an award scheme under Saubhagya to felicitate the DISCOMs / Power Department of the States and their employees for achieving 100% household electrification in their area of operations. It includes cash prize and certificate of appreciation.

Significance of the Scheme:

- Providing last mile connectivity and electricity connections to all un-electrified households in rural areas
- Providing Solar Photovoltaic (SPV) based standalone system for un-electrified households located in remote and inaccessible villages / habitations, where grid extension is not feasible or cost effective.
- Providing last mile connectivity and electricity connections to all remaining economically poor un-electrified households in urban areas. Non-poor urban households are excluded from this scheme.
- There are around 4 Crore un-electrified households in the country and they are targeted for providing electricity connections by December 2018.

SAUBHAGYA Scheme:

- Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana - 'Saubhagya' was launched in September, 2017.
- Under Saubhagya free electricity connections to all households (both APL and poor families) in rural areas and poor families in urban areas will be provided.
- Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) has been designated as nodal agency for the Saubhagya scheme.

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- The scheme aims to achieve universal household electrification in all parts of the country at a cost of Rs 16,320 crore, including Gross Budgetary Support of Rs 12,320 crore from the government.
- All DISCOMs including Private Sector DISCOMs, State Power Departments and RE Cooperative Societies shall be eligible for financial assistance under the scheme in line with DDUGJY.
- The prospective beneficiary households for free electricity connections under the scheme would be identified using SECC 2011 data. However, un-electrified households not covered under SECC data would also be provided electricity connections under the scheme on payment of Rs. 500 which shall be recovered by DISCOMs in 10 instalments through electricity bill.

Award scheme:

- Awards would be provided for achieving 100% household electrification at DISCOM/Power Department level of the States. Eight States which have already achieved more than 99% household electrification prior to launch of Saubhagya (Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu), are ineligible for participation under the award scheme. All the remaining States and their Discoms are eligible for the award.
- **Award will be given in three categories:**
 - DISCOMs / Power Departments of Special Category States (which includes seven North Eastern States, Sikkim, J&K and Uttarakhand)
 - DISCOMs / Power Departments of other than Special Category States (which includes Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Rajasthan, Telengana, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal)having more than 5 Lakh un-electrified households
 - DISCOMs / Power Departments of other than Special Category States having less than 5 Lakh un-electrified households.

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Strategic Petroleum Reserves

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims Level: India's strategic oil reserves- locations.

For Mains: Need for Strategic Petroleum Reserves - Energy Security

Why in News?

- India is planning to forge partnerships with private players to build out its strategic petroleum reserves within the coming year.
- It is seeking \$1.5 billion of investments from global oil producers and traders to build additional emergency crude reserves that will act as a buffer against volatility in oil prices.
- The plan is to build underground caverns that can hold a combined 6.5 million tons of crude at two locations.

SPR and Facilities so far:

- India has built 5.33 million tons of underground reserves in three locations, including Padur, under an earlier phase that can meet 9.5 days of the country's oil needs. The government purchased crude to fill the caverns in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and half of another facility in Mangalore in Karnataka, while leasing out the other half to Abu Dhabi National Oil Co.
- Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves, which was formed in 2006, is scouting investors to fill the caverns at Padur. It will hold roadshows in New Delhi, Singapore and London this month to draw investors for the new caverns as well as filling the Padur facility.

Need for strategic oil reserves:

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- In 1990, as the Gulf war engulfed West Asia, India was in the throes of a major energy crisis. By all accounts India's oil reserves at the time were adequate for only three days. While India managed to avert the crisis then, the threat of energy disruption continues to present a real danger even today.
- It is unlikely that India's energy needs will dramatically move away from fossil fuels in the near future. Over 80% of these fuels come from imports, a majority of which is sourced from West Asia. This is a major strategic risk and poses a massive financial drain for an embattled economy and its growing current account deficit.
- To address energy insecurity, the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government mooted the concept of strategic petroleum reserves in 1998. Today, with India consuming upwards of four million barrels of crude every day (January 2015 figures), the case for creating such reserves grows stronger.

SPR programme:

- To ensure energy security, the Government of India had decided to set up 5 million metric tons (MMT) of strategic crude oil storages at three locations namely, Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Padur (near Udupi).
- These strategic storages would be in addition to the existing storages of crude oil and petroleum products with the oil companies and would serve as a cushion during any external supply disruptions.
- In the 2017-18 budget, it was announced that two more such caverns will be set up Chandikhole in Jajpur district of Odisha and Bikaner in Rajasthan as part of the second phase.
- The construction of the Strategic Crude Oil Storage facilities is being managed by Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL), a Special Purpose Vehicle, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB) under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

POCSO Act

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GS 2: Governance | Mechanisms, laws, institutions and Bodies constituted for the protection and betterment of these vulnerable sections.

Prelims: Section 19 of the POCSO Act

Mains level: Facilitating more ease for reporting child sexual abuse cases.

Why in News?

- The government has clarified that there is no time bar on reporting crimes related to child sexual abuse. Survivors of child sexual abuse can file a police complaint after they become adults.
- The WCD Ministry has recently consulted Ministry of Law in view of the overriding provisions of the POCSO Act over other criminal laws and provisions of mandatory reporting of such offences.

No time limit for reporting cases under POCSO Act:

- The POCSO Act does not provide for any period of limitation for reporting the child sexual offences.
- Now any victim, at any age, can complain the sexual abuse faced by him/her as a child.
- Ministry urged the victims to report the cases through POCSO e-Box.

Need for the move?

- Children are often unable to report such crimes as the perpetrator in most cases is either a family member, a relative or closely known person.
- Studies have also shown that the child continues to carry the trauma of sexual abuse till very late in life.
- In order to overcome this trauma many grown up people have started coming out to report the abuse faced by them as children.

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Significance:

- This is an important step for survivors of child abuse, who may try to file a complaint as adults but are turned away at police stations.
- The development assumes significance after considering the fact that on many occasions children are unable to report crimes that they suffered as the perpetrator in many cases happens to be from the family itself or any other known person. Several cases have been reported where the victims have grown up and understood the crime.

POCSO Act:

- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO), Act 2012, came into force on 14.11.2012.
- It is a gender neutral Act which has been enacted to strengthen the legal provisions for the protection of children from sexual abuse and exploitation.
- The POCSO Act, 2012 defines a child as any person below the age of 18 years and provides protection to all children under the age of 18 years from the offences of sexual assault, sexual harassment and pornography.

#Self4Society app & Ask Disha

GS 2: Governance | e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential; citizens charters, transparency & accountability and institutional and other measures.

Prelims and Mains: Features and significance of the app.

Why in News?

- #Self4Society app, developed by MyGov, has been launched by the government to help coordinate volunteer work undertaken by professionals.

#Self4Society App:

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- This platform will help to create better synergies among so many CSR and other initiatives and lead to a much better outcome of the efforts of professionals.
- Companies have observed that a spirit of service and volunteering improves employee satisfaction and reduces employee attrition.
- The app will have incentives, gamification and intra- and inter-company competitions, and social networking.
- The volunteer time for the government's flagship programmes such as Swachh Bharat is expected to increase.
- Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) has launched Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered chatbot- Ask Disha ((Digital Interaction to Seek Help Anytime) to help its users answer various queries.

Ask Disha:

- The chatbot is special computer programme designed to simulate conversation with users, especially over the internet.
- The first-of-its-kind initiative by IRCTC is aimed at facilitating accessibility by answering users' queries pertaining to various services offered to railway passengers.
- The chatbot is voice enabled and will support several regional languages in the near future. It will offer greatly improved and intuitive customer support by answering customer queries pertaining to all aspects of the services that IRCTC provides.
- The essential features of AskDisha include ability to quickly answer to customer queries, ability to provide round-the-clock customer support, ability to multitask, zero waiting time for query to get answered and overall ability to provide customer with stress-free experience and overall customer satisfaction.

Swasth Bharat Yatra national campaign

GS 2: Governance | Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.



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Prelims and Mains Level: Highlights and significance of the campaign & World Food Day.

Why in News?

- The Union Government has launched a national campaign 'Swasth Bharat Yatra' on occasion of World Food Day that is observed on 16 October to sensitise people about eating safe food and be healthy.
- The campaign has been launched in association with states and led by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).

Swasth Bharat Yatra national campaign:

- Under this campaign, a pan-India cycle rally is being organized to create consumer awareness about eating safe and nutritious food for becoming healthy and combating food adulteration.
- In this rally, about 7,500 cyclists are expected to participate in over 18,000 km travelling across six tracks through almost every state and UT over 100 days to propagate a powerful message 'Eat Right India'.
- The cyclathon will culminate in the national capital on January 27, 2019.
- This campaign will not only mobilise masses but also create a large pool of local community to sustain this movement.

World Food Day:

- World Food Day is celebrated on October 16 every year to raise awareness on the issues of poverty and hunger. World Food Day was established by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) in November 1979 and since then the day is celebrated worldwide by many organisations that are concerned with food security.

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana



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GS 2: Governance | Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes.

Why in News?

- The Central Warehouse of Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana at Bilaspur, Gurugram. It is setup by the Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI).

Highlights:

- The hi-tech Central Warehouse would facilitate seamless distribution of Jan Aushadhi generic medicines to all PMBJP Kendra functional across the country.
- The Digital Cash Management System for Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP), to be implemented as a partnership between BPPI and Bank of Baroda was inaugurated.
- This System will be implemented at all PMBJP Kendras for purchasing medicines and cashless payment system with BPPI.

PMBJP:

- The Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Govt. Of India
- To provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses through special kendra's known as Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra.

PMBJK:

- Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Jan Aushadhi Kendra (PMBJK) have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.

BPPI:

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- Bureau of Pharma Public Sector Undertakings of India (BPPI) has been established under the Department of Pharmaceuticals, Govt. of India, with the support of all the CPSUs.

Project Arya

GS 2: Governance | Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

Why in News?

- To attract the youth of the country towards agriculture, a project called 'Arya' is being run through Krishi Vigyan Kendras and the Farmer Fest program.

Highlights:

- Skill development internships for youth are provided at the graduation level.
- Startups in the fields of seed and plant production, food processing and post-mortgage management, veterinary, farm machinery, poultry, fish production, biological products and bioplasty.
- Implemented by ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research), Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare

Objectives:

- To attract and empower the Youth in Rural Areas to take up various Agriculture, allied and service sector enterprises for sustainable income and gainful employment in selected districts,
- To enable the Farm Youth to establish network groups to take up resource and capital intensive activities like processing, value addition and marketing, and

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- To demonstrate functional linkage with different institutions and stakeholders for convergence of opportunities available under various schemes/program for sustainable development of youth

Water Disinfection System “Oneer™”

GS 2: Governance | Welfare schemes for vulnerable sections of the population by the Centre and States and the performance of these schemes

Why in News?

- The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (CSIR-IITR) has developed a Drinking Water Disinfection System with trade name Oneer™.

Oneer™:

- It is useful for continuous treatment of water and eliminates all disease causing pathogens such as virus, bacteria, fungi, protozoa and cyst.
- It provides safe drinking water to domestic and communities settings as per National and International standards prescribed for potable water (BIS, WHO etc.).
- It will provide access to safe and clean drinking water at a cost of just 2 Paise / Ltr.

Significance of the development:

- A large proportion of India's rural community is consuming water that does not meet the WHO drinking water quality standards.
- According to the World Health Organization, access to safe drinking-water is essential to health, a basic human right and a component of effective policy for health protection.
- The Community level model is of 450 LPH capacities which can be scaled up to 5000 to 1 lakh L/day; and is also maintenance and membrane free.

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- The technology will be helpful especially for rural people since it can be solar powered and this development is in line with the 'Make in India' Mission.

India to receive University of Pennsylvania's Top Energy Policy Prize

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims level: Carnot Prize

Mains level: Prizes of such global recognition highlights success of India's efforts to reform power sector.

Why in News?

- Minister of Railways and Coal will receive the University of Pennsylvania's top prize in energy policy for his leadership in reforming India's power sector through various initiatives.

Carnot Prize:

- The Carnot Prize is intended to honour those leading revolutions in energy policy to further progress and prosperity.
- The ministry is being recognised for directing a fast-track effort to electrify 18,000 villages in remote parts of India, helping bridge the country's vast energy divide.
- The Carnot Prize is named in memory of French scientist Sadi Carnot, who in 1824 published Reflections on the Motive Power of Fire, which is recognised as the first statement of what, is now known as the second law of thermodynamics.
- Carnot recognised that the power of the steam engine would produce a great revolution in human development.

Recognizing Indian efforts:

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- The 2018 Carnot Prize is a recognition of India's efforts, as the nation charts the path towards eliminating energy poverty with sustainable energy solutions.
- The rural electrification drive gave a significant breakthrough to the mission of '24x7 Affordable, Environment Friendly Power for all', as India eliminated decades of darkness in more than 19,000 villages April, 2018.
- With the Saubhagya Programme, the last-mile connectivity to every household in the villages is being fast tracked, with 51% of the 3.1 crore rural households electrified.
- The massive thrust to green energy is reflected in India's 175 GW target by 2022, being the world's largest renewable expansion programme with 72 GW already achieved.
- As solar and wind energy market prices achieve parity in India with record low tariffs, renewables are set to become the mainstay of development in the coming years.
- With the vision of "one world, one sun, one grid" of PM Modi India is playing its role as a committed solar leader through steady progress on all green energy goals.
- In the last four years, energy efficiency has become a people's movement in India, making the Government's UJALA scheme the world's largest LED distribution programme.
- Along with private sector participation, 130 crore LED bulbs have been distributed, making India brighter and cleaner.

Revised CBSE Affiliation Bye-laws

GS 2: Governance | Issues relating to development & management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

Prelims level: CBSE affiliation rules and bye-laws

Mains level: Assured outcome with the new bye-laws and its impacts on schooling

Why in News?

- The Union HRD Ministry has released the new CBSE Affiliation Bye-laws to ensure speed, transparency, hassle-free procedures and ease of doing business with the CBSE.

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What are Bye-laws?

- CBSE is a national level Board conducting examinations for Classes X and XII.
- It affiliates schools across India and abroad upon fulfillment of various conditions as prescribed in its Affiliation Bye Laws.
- The Affiliation Byelaws in position were first made in the year 1988 and were last modified in the year 2012.

What's special with new Bye-laws?

- The new byelaws denote a major shift from the highly complex procedures followed earlier, to a simplified system based on preventing duplication of processes.
- There is duplication of processes at CBSE and state government level.
- For issuing recognition under RTE Act and NOC, the state education administration verifies various certificates to be obtained from local bodies, revenue department, cooperatives department, etc.
- The CBSE re-verifies them after applications are received. This is very long drawn process.
- Therefore, to prevent this duplication, schools will now be required to submit only two documents at the time of applying for affiliation, instead of 12-14 documents being submitted earlier.
- These documents will include a document vetted by the head of district education administration validating all aspects such as building safety, sanitation, land ownership, etc, and a self-affidavit where the school would certify its adherence to fee norms, infrastructure norms, etc.

Expected benefits:

- As a result of this major change CBSE shall not revisit any of the aspects vetted by the state during inspection.

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- The delay due to scrutiny and non-compliance of deficiencies in these documents shall be drastically curtailed.

Other major benefits include:

- Inspection of schools will now be outcome-based and more academic and quality
Outcome based Inspection
 - oriented, rather than focussing only on school infrastructure.
 - The inspection will focus on academic excellence and progress of students over time, innovations and quality of pedagogy, capacity of teachers and teacher training etc.
 - This will not only help the Board and the school to track students' progress over time, but will also identify areas that would need further efforts.
- **Provision of mandatory training**
 - The new affiliation bye laws also lay thrust on achieving academic excellence through mandatory teacher training.
 - Even the Principals and Vice Principals of every school are expected to undergo two days mandatory training on an annual basis.
- **Focus on Innovation and Conservation**
 - A special category of innovative schools has been added to include specialized schools which will implement innovative ideas in the fields of skill development, sports, arts, sciences, etc.
 - The byelaws encourage schools to promote environmental conservation through harnessing solar energy, rain water harvesting, greening of campus, recycling and segregation of waste, Swachhata on campus, etc.
- **Ensures Transparency in Fee structures**
 - Regarding fee, the provisions include full fee disclosure to be made and no hidden charges to be levied by schools in the garb of fees.

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- The byelaws clearly state that fee is to be charged as per the regulation of the government and fee revision shall be subject to laws, regulations and directions of the government.

Way Forward:

- CBSE has 20783 schools affiliated to it in India and 25 other countries, with over 1.9 crore students in these schools, and more than 10 lakh teachers.
- The revised bye laws will positively impact the existing and future schools by easing procedures and redirecting their focus towards improving the quality of education.

NITI Lecture Series

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

Prelims level: NITI lecture Series

Mains level: AI ecosystem in India

Why in News?

- NITI Aayog is organizing the fourth edition of NITI Lecture Series with theme this year is "AI for ALL: Leveraging Artificial Intelligence for Inclusive Growth".

NITI Lecture Series:

- The 'NITI Lectures: Transforming India' are being held annually since 2016 featuring eminent speakers from across the world.
- The aim of the series is to enable learning, both at the Centre & States, from successful development practice world over.

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- With the vision of disseminating cutting-edge, innovative ideas in development policy to India, the NITI Lectures are attended by the Government's top decision makers.
- Through the lectures, NITI Aayog has been bringing policy makers, academics, experts and administrators of global repute to India.

AI ecosystem in India:

- Union Budget-2018 mandated NITI Aayog to come up with a national programme on employing AI towards national development.
- NITI has, since, published a National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence.
- The Strategy is termed #AIForAll as it is focused on leveraging AI for inclusive growth in line with the Government policy of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas.
- NITI Aayog has signed Statements of Intent (SoI) with industry leaders such as Google, Microsoft and IBM to enable use of artificial intelligence in key, high gain sectors of social development – healthcare, agriculture, smart mobility, education and infrastructure.
- Example: India's diversity of languages is bridged by creating a AI based digital "Ek Bharat, Shrestha Bharat" platform using Natural Language Processing (NLP).
- NLP is a system of protocols which allow machines or computers to understand and interact with human speech and symbols.

Focus on R&D:

- Recognising the importance of research and its commercial adoption in success of AI, NITI has also proposed setting up of Centre of Research Excellence (CORE).
- It aims to focus on developing better understanding of existing core research.
- Besides this, the Aayog also recommends setting up of International Centres of Transformational AI with a mandate to develop and deploy application-based research in collaboration with private players.

Hurdles for AI in India:

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- Aiming to put AI to use for all and across sectors, NITI has identified barriers that need to be addressed to achieve success in the use of AI.
- These include lack of expertise, absence of enabling data ecosystem, high resource cost and low awareness, privacy and security issues and absence of collaborative approach to adoption and application of AI.

Transformation of Aspirational District Programme

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

Prelims level: Aspirational District Programme

Why in News?

- The 'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' initiative aims to remove this heterogeneity through a mass movement to quickly and effectively transform these districts.

Highlights:

- It aims to quickly and effectively transform some of India's most underdeveloped districts.
- It will identify areas of immediate improvement, measure progress, and rank districts.
- The broad ideas of the programme include -
 - convergence of central and state schemes
 - collaboration of central, state level 'Prabhari' (in-charge) officers and district collectors
 - competition among districts
- The states are the main drivers in the programme.
- Deliberately, the districts have been described as aspirational rather than backward.
- The motive is to view them as areas of opportunity and hope rather than of distress and hopelessness.

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Districts selection:

- The 115 districts were chosen by senior officials of the Union government.
- This was in consultation with State officials on the basis of a composite index.
- The parameters included are –
- Deprivation enumerated under Socio-Economic Caste Census
- Key health and education performance indicators
- State of basic infrastructure

Progress monitoring:

- NITI Aayog in partnership with the government of Andhra Pradesh has created a dashboard.
- Monitoring the real-time progress of the districts.
- District collectors of all the aspirational districts can input the latest available data of their respective district
- The dashboard will also be open to the public

Significance of ADP:

- This is the first time India's most backward districts are being focussed.
- ADP is a better vision of how public services are best delivered to those who need them the most.
- Achieving success in this programme necessitates the contribution of all 3 tiers of government.
- ADP takes the principle of competitive federalism down to district administrations.
- This will bring new ideas and fresh energy from non-government institutions, to join the "official" efforts.
- With real time data in ADP, those on the ground level can alter strategies after accurate feedback.

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- The ADP reorients how government does its business of delivering development.

Prabhari Officer:

- Each district has a prabhari (in-charge) officer:
 - Assigned from the Centre (of additional secretary or joint secretary rank)
 - Assigned from the State (of the rank of Secretary to State government)
 - A prabhari officer will work in cooperation with the district administration.

National Monitoring Framework on Sustainable Development Goals

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Prelims level: Particulars of SDG Monitoring Framework

Mains level: India's policy measures for attainment of SDGs

Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the constitution of a High Level Steering Committee for periodically reviewing and refining the National Indicator Framework (NIF) for monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with associated targets.

Highlights:

- Measures to mainstream SDGs into on-going national policies, programmes and strategic action plans to address the developmental challenges.
- Statistical indicators of NIF will be the backbone of monitoring of SDGs at the national and state level and will scientifically measure the outcomes of the policies to achieve the targets under different SDGs.

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- Based on statistical indicator, the MoSPI will bring out national reports on implementation of SDGs. The Report will facilitate assessment of progress, identify challenges and give recommendations for follow up at the national level.
- High Level Steering Committee will review the National Indicator Framework on regular basis for its improvement.
- Data source Ministries / Departments will be responsible for providing regular information to MoSPI on these indicators at required intervals and disaggregation for national and sub-national reporting of SDGs.
- Advanced IT tools will be used for close and effective monitoring.

Major impact:

- SDGs integrate economic, social and environmental dimensions of development. It intends eradicating poverty and promoting prosperity in a changing world with basic motto of 'SabkaSaathSabkaVikash'.
- SDGs with 17 Goals and 169 Targets intend for promotion of sustainable, inclusive and equitable economic growth, creating greater opportunities for all, reducing inequalities, raising basic standards of living, fostering equitable social development and inclusion, promoting integrated and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems.
- NIF will help in outcome-based monitoring & reporting on progress on SDGs at National level.

Sustainable Development Goals:

- The UN General Assembly adopted the Sustainable Development Goals(SDGs) for the next 15 years.
- The 17 SDGs came into force with effect from 1st January, 2016.
- They are not legally binding, the SDGs have become de facto international obligations and have potential to reorient domestic spending priorities of the countries during the next fifteen years.

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- Countries are expected to take ownership and establish a national framework for achieving these Goals.
- Implementation and success will rely on countries' own sustainable development policies, plans and programmes.
- Countries would be responsible for follow-up and review at the national level, with regard to the progress made in implementing the Goals and targets.
- Actions at the national level to monitor progress under SDGs will require quality, accessible and timely data.

India wins Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management Award

GS 2: Governance | Issues relating to development & management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

Prelims level: CAPAM Awards

Why in News?

- India's Unnayan Banka and Unified Agriculture Markets initiatives have won the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) award.

Details of the award winning Initiatives:

- The initiative entitled "Unnayan Banka- Reinventing Education Using Technology of Banka District, State of Bihar has been awarded under the Category "Innovation Incubation".
- "Unnayan Banka" is an initiative which envisages "Quality education for all' especially for those at the bottom of the Pyramid, using latest technologies.
- It's a holistic model of overall development of youths from Education to Employability.



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- Another initiative entitled “Unified Agriculture Markets” of Co-operation Department of Government of Karnataka has also been selected under the Category ‘Innovation in Public Service Management’.
- This initiative has also been awarded the overall Gold Award for CAPAM Awards, 2018.

CAPAM Awards:

- CAPAM is a non-profit association representing an international network of over 1100 senior public servants, Heads of Government, leading academics and researchers located in over 50 different countries across the Commonwealth.
- The association is guided by international leaders who believe in the value of networking, knowledge exchange and the promotion of good governance for the betterment of citizens in the Commonwealth countries.
- CAPAM has been announcing its International Innovations Awards (IIA) Programme bi-annually, since 1998.
- The CAPAM Awards celebrate the spirit of innovation in the public service by recognizing organizations that have made significant contributions to improve governance and services in the public sector.

Web portal of the Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC)

GS 2: Governance | Issues relating to development & management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources

Prelims level: SPARC Scheme

Mains level: Govt initiatives to improve of Research and Development ecosystem in India

Why in news?



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- The Govt. in August 2018 had sanctioned the SPARC scheme with IIT Kharagpur as the National Coordinating Institute to implement the SPARC programme.

SPARC Portal:

- The SPARC scheme aims at improving the research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in the world.
- Under this Scheme, 600 joint research proposals will be awarded for 2 years to facilitate strong research collaboration between Indian research groups with the best in class faculty and renowned research groups in the leading universities of the world.
- The collaboration will conduct research in areas that are at the cutting edge of science or with direct social relevance to the mankind, specifically India.

Salient Features of SPARC Scheme:

- This scheme will improve research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations/
- The Indian institutions will include those from top-100 or category-wise top-100 in NIRF (including such Private Institutions which are recognized under 12(B) of UGC Act)].
- The foreign institutions will be from top-500 overall and top-200 subject-wise institutions listed in QS World University Ranking) from 28 selected nations.
- As per the criteria mentioned above, 254 top Indian Institutes and 478 top ranked global Institutes have been already identified.

Areas of the Research:

- A set of 5 Thrust Areas has been identified for collaboration under SPARC.
- They are Fundamental Research, Emergent Areas of Impact, Convergence, Action-Oriented Research and Innovation-Driven.

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- Each Thrust Area will have a Section Chair. The role of Section Chair of each Thrust Area is to review shortlist and recommend the potential joint-proposals submitted under SPARC scheme.
- The role of a Nodal Institutions will be to help, handhold and coordinate with willing Participating Indian (PI) Institutions to forge alliance with the Institutions of concerned participating foreign country.

Academic Activities under SPARC:

- SPARC proposes to enable productive academic cooperation by supporting the following critical components that can catalyse impact making research:
 - Visits and long-term stay of top international faculty/researchers in Indian institutions to pursue teaching and research,
 - Visits by Indian students for training and experimentation in premier laboratories worldwide
 - Joint development of niche courses, world-class books and monographs, translatable patents, demonstrable technologies or action oriented research outcomes and products
 - Publication, Dissemination and Visibility through a high profile annual international conference in India.

CVC observes Vigilance Awareness Week 2018

GS 2: Governance | Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability, e-governance- applications, models, successes, limitations, and potential

Mains level: CVC and its functions

Why in News?

VETRII'S UPSC PIB COMPILATION October - 2018

- The Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) observes the Vigilance Awareness Week every year during the week in which the birthday of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel (31st October) falls with the theme this year will be “Eradicate Corruption-Build a New India.
- This year the event seeks to motivate stakeholders to collectively participate in the fight against corruption and also aims at raising public awareness regarding the consequences of corruption.

Awareness activities:

- Activities to be conducted include taking of the Integrity Pledge by all employees.
- A new feature is the establishment of ‘Integrity Clubs’ in schools and colleges to cultivate ethical values in the leaders of tomorrow.
- “Awareness Gram Sabhas” are also organized for dissemination of awareness in Gram Panchayats to sensitize the rural citizens about the ill-effects of corruption.
- In 2017, 67,131 such Gram Sabhas were organized during the Vigilance Awareness Week.
- Seminars, discussions and other outreach events are also organized involving the private sector, professional associations, trade unions and associations for wide participation of all sections of civil society.
- Organizations also conduct activities with high visibility and public appeal such as walkathons, marathons, cycle rallies, human chains, street plays and other public functions in various cities and towns across the country.

Central Vigilance Commission (CVC):

- It is an apex Indian governmental body created in 1964 to address governmental corruption. In 2003, the Parliament enacted a law conferring statutory status on the CVC.
- It has the status of an autonomous body, free of control from any executive authority, charged with monitoring all vigilance activity under the Central Government of India.
- It advises various authorities in central Government organizations in planning, executing, reviewing and reforming their vigilance work.



VETRII'S UPSC PIB COMPILATION October - 2018

Electoral Bond Scheme 2018

GS 2: Governance | Citizens charters, transparency & accountability & institutional & other measures

Prelims level: EBS 2018

Mains level: Funding to political parties

Why in news?

- Government of India has notified the Electoral Bond Scheme 2018.

Provisions of the scheme:

- Electoral Bonds may be purchased by a person, who is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India.
- A person can buy Electoral Bonds either singly or jointly with other individuals.
- Only the Political Parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and which secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last General Election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly of the State, shall be eligible to receive the Electoral Bonds.
- The Electoral Bonds shall be encashed by an eligible Political Party only through a Bank account.
- State Bank of India has been authorised to issue and encash Electoral Bonds.
- Electoral Bonds shall be valid for fifteen calendar days from the date of issue.

Benefits:

- Transparency in electoral funding
- Cashless transactions
- Easy and Quick medium of electoral donations

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- Accountability by political parties
- Reduces illegal donations to political parties

Terms and Conditions:

- It may be noted that Electoral Bonds shall be valid for fifteen calendar days from the date of issue.
- No payment shall be made to any payee Political Party if the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period.
- The Electoral Bond deposited by an eligible Political Party in its account shall be credited on the same day.

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana

GS 2: Governance | Mechanisms, laws, institutions & Bodies constituted for the protection & betterment of these vulnerable sections

Prelims level: CCTN System

Mains level: ICT initiatives to contain and monitor the crime activities

Why in News?

- The Union Home Ministry has inaugurated the two-day conference on “CCTNS–Good practices and Success Stories” organised by National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB).
- Crime and Criminal Tracking Network & Systems (CCTNS):
- The CCTNS is a project under Indian government for creating a comprehensive and integrated system for effective policing through e-Governance.
- The system includes nationwide online tracking system by integrating more than 15,000 police stations across the country.
- The project is implemented by National Crime Records Bureau.

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- The concept of CCTNS was first conceived in the year 2008 by the then Home Minister, P. Chidambaram in the aftermath of 2008 Mumbai attacks.

Functioning of CCTNS:

- CCTNS aims to integrate all the data and records of crime into a Core Application Software (CAS), which is presently spreading across 29 states and 7 union territories of India.
- CAS was developed by the Bangalore based IT firm, Wipro.
- It needs to integrate different software and platforms followed by different states and to digitise records of those states which have not digitized their police records.
- The project also involves training of police personnel and setting up of citizen portal to provide services to citizens.

Key Initiatives of Government

GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors

National Biopharma Mission:

- The mission is aimed at accelerating biopharmaceutical development in a bid to create a globally competitive biopharmaceutical industry.
- It is targeted to increase India's share in the global biopharmaceutical market to 5 per cent from the current 2.8 per cent.
- This brings together industry and academia to promote entrepreneurship and indigenous manufacturing in the bio-pharmaceutical sector.
- The mission will be implemented by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC).

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- It is expected to bring together expertise from national and international corridors to provide strategic guidance and direction to move promising solutions through the product development value chain.
- The flagship program is run in collaboration with the World Bank and will be implemented by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a Public-Sector Enterprise set up by DBT.

SANKALP and STRIVE:

- Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) aimed at providing market relevant training to youths across the country.
- Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE) aimed at improving the quality and the market relevance of vocational training provided in ITIs.
- The project will also strengthen the apprenticeship programme through industry-cluster approach.
- Both Schemes are under the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship and supported by World Bank loan assistance.
- The two schemes will help in setting up national body for vocational education – Vocational Education and Training (VET).
- VET shall regulate accreditation and certification in both long and short term thereby bringing about uniformity in vocational training.
- SANKALP is a centrally sponsored scheme and STRIVE is a central sector scheme.

Portal PENCIL:

- PENCIL (Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour) is an electronic platform for no child labour developed by the Labour Ministry.
- The portal creates a robust implementing and monitoring mechanism for enforcement of the legislative provisions of National Child Labour Policy (NCLP).

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- Since the subject of labour is in the concurrent list, the enforcement of the policy depends on respective state governments.
- This online portal aims to connect the Centre to the state government, district and to all project societies for effective implementation of NCLP.
- The portal has a component of child tracking system.

Atal Tinkering Labs:

- Niti Aayog brainchild Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has selected additional 1,500 schools across the country to establish Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs).
- ATLs are play workspaces fitted with state-of-the-art technologies like 3D printers, robotics, sensor technology kits, Internet of things (IoT), miniaturised electronics.
- The labs are designed to spur the spark of creativity, and go beyond regular curriculum and text book learning.
- AIM will enhance the coverage of ATLs to over 98 per cent smart cities and 93 per cent districts.
- The addition of these schools will give a major boost to realise the vision of the mission to cultivate one million children in India as the innovators of tomorrow.

Main Nahin Hum Portal and App:

- PM Modi has launched the “Main Nahin Hum” Portal and App for IT Professionals.
- It works on the theme “Self4Society”.
- The portal will enable IT professionals and organizations to bring together their efforts towards social causes, and service to society, on one platform.
- The portal is expected to help catalyse greater collaboration towards the service of the weaker sections of society, especially by leveraging the benefits of technology.
- It is also expected to generate wider participation of interested people who are motivated to work for the benefit of society.



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SRISTI:

- SRISTI – Sustainable Rooftop Implementation for Solar Transfiguration of India is a proposed scheme by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- The proposed scheme will incentivise the installation of roof top solar projects in India.
- It aims to achieve a national solar rooftop target of 40 GW by 2021-22.
- Under SRISTI, a central financial assistance will be provided only for installation of roof top solar plants in residential sectors.
- Once approved, the concept will act as a basis for phase – II of solar rooftop power programme.

Modified Special Incentive Package Scheme (M-SIPS):

- The scheme aims to provide a special incentive package to boost domestic electronic product manufacturing sector and move towards Union Government's goal of Net Zero imports' in electronics by 2020.
- It promotes large scale manufacturing in the Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) sector by:
 - Providing subsidy for capital expenditure upto 20% for investment in SEZ and 25% in non-SEZs.
 - Providing reimbursement of duties and central taxes for projects with high capital investments.
- The incentives will be available for investments made within 5 years from the date of approval of the project.
- Unit receiving incentive will provide undertaking to remain in commercial production for at least 3 years.

Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK):

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- The scheme entitles all pregnant women delivering in public health institutions to an absolutely free and no expense delivery including C- section.
- All expenses are borne by the government.
- A pregnant woman is also entitled to free transport from home to the government health facility.
- Entitlements include free drugs and consumables, free diagnostic, free blood, free diet up to 3 days for normal delivery and 7 days for C-section.
- Similar entitlements have been put in place for all sick newborns accessing public health institutions for healthcare till 30 days after birth.
- It also provides for free transport from home to institution, between facilities in case of a referral and drop back home.
- This initiative will also help in reducing maternal and infant mortality and morbidity.

IMPRESS scheme:

- Union HRD Ministry has launched the web portal of IMPRESS scheme with an aim to build a research ecosystem in educational institutions.

The scheme:

- The objective of Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences (IMPRESS) is to identify and fund research proposals in social sciences with maximum impact on the governance and society.
- The Indian Council of Social Science and Research (ICSSR) will be the project implementing agency.
- Provide an opportunity for social science researchers in any institution in the country which includes all universities (central and state) and also a few private institutions meeting the requirement.
- It will focus on broad thematic areas such as state and democracy, urban transformation; media, culture and society; employment, skills and rural transformation; governance;

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innovation and public policy; macro-trade and economic policy and social media and technology.

- The scheme will be implemented till March, 2021.

Cyber swachhta Kendra:

- It is a malware analysis centre aims to create a secure cyber space by detecting botnet infections in India and to notify, enable cleaning and securing systems of end-users to prevent further infections.
- The systems will be scanned by the Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-in) for free of all those users who register to the CSK website.
- This centre will work in coordination with the internet service providers (ISPs) and Industry.
- This Kendra will also enhance awareness among citizens regarding botnet and malware infection along with measures to be taken to secure their devices.
- It is part of Digital India initiative

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana:

- The Cabinet Committee has approved the renaming of SAMPADA (Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters) as “Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana.
- It is the new Central Sector Scheme that aims to supplement agriculture, modernize processing and decrease Agriculture waste.
- The implementation period of the scheme is 2016-20 coterminous with the 14th Finance Commission cycle.
- It is a comprehensive package to give a renewed thrust to the food processing sector in the country.
- The implementation of this scheme will result in creation of modern infrastructure, growth of food processing sector and providing better prices to the farmers.



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SCIENCE & TECH

IAF successfully conducts trials of Astra BVR-AAM

GS 3: Science & Technology | Indigenization of technology & developing new technology

Prelims level: Astra BVR-AAM

Why in News?

- Indian Air Force (IAF) has successfully undertaken a series of flight trials of Astra Beyond Visual Range Air-to-Air Missile (BVR-AAM) from September 26 to October 3, 2018.

Astra BVR-AAM Missile Test:

- The tests were conducted at Integrated Test Range (ITR), Balasore, Odisha as part of the final development trials of the missile.
- The missile was tested in a combination of complex tests for engagement of pilotless target in different modes of manoeuvring, off-boresight, medium and long ranges.
- These tests make the missile ready for induction in service in 2019.

Astra Missile:

- Astra is an air to air beyond visual range air-to-air indigenously developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- More than 50 private and public sector industries are involved in development and production of different sub-systems of the missile.
- It is one of the smallest weapon system developed by DRDO, having a length of 3.8-metre and weighing 154kg.
- It is a single stage solid fuelled missile and has a payload capacity of 15 kg conventional explosives.

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- It can be launched from different altitudes and is capable of engaging targets at varying range and altitudes at both short-range targets (up to 20 km) in tail-chase mode and long-range targets (up to 80 km) in head-on mode.
- It is a radar homing supersonic missile having a maximum speed of Mach 4 (four times speed of sound).
- It possesses high Single Shot Kill Probability (SSKP), making it highly reliable.
- It is an all-weather missile with active radar terminal guidance, excellent electronic counter-counter measure (ECCM) features, smokeless propulsion and process improved effectiveness in a multi-target scenario.
- It has an advance on-board electronic counter-measures that jam the radar signals from enemy radar, making tracking of the missile difficult.
- It is fitted with terminal active radar-seeker and an updated mid-course internal guidance system that helps missile to locate and track targets.
- The missile can be integrated with all fighter aircraft of IAF including Sukhoi-30 MKI, Mirage-2000, MiG-29, Jaguar and the Tejas Light Combat Aircraft (LCA).

Satish Dhawan Space Science Center

GS 3: Science & Technology | Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics, nano-technology, bio-technology

Mains level: Space Science Research and Development

Why in News?

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) signed an MoU with the Central University of Jammu (CUJ) in Jammu for setting up of the Satish Dhawan Center for Space Science in the University.

Space Sciences:

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- Space Sciences is a multidisciplinary subject which involves basic sciences such as physics, chemistry, biology, astronomy, geology, planetary science, mathematics, atmospheric sciences, geography, space engineering and even space law.

Highlights:

- To create awareness about space research.
- To motivate young minds to take up research related to space, astronomy, geology, atmospheric sciences and related fields, a two day workshop was also inaugurated at the CUJ campus.
- Tapping potential of Space Applications for the region of J&K in various fields like disaster management, health, education, communication, weather forecasting, land use planning, etc.
- Particular interest to J&K and the larger Himalayan region as its economy and habitations are affected by vegetation cover, forest area, snow, landslides, avalanches, ground water, cloud cover, atmospheric conditions etc. which can be easily monitored from space through remote sensing.
- It will have facilities for Geospatial Data analysis that will help in sustainable use of natural resources and planning land-use pattern.
- It will have ground-based observations for Atmospheric Studies, research lab for astrophysics, Atmospheric Sensing and Glacier studies Lab for better use of large quantity of water stored in the form of seasonal snow, ice and glaciers in the rivers of North India.

Indian Navy inducts its first Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle

GS 3: Science & Technology | Indigenization of technology & developing new technology

Prelims level: Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle

Mains level: Enhancing operational capabilities in IOR

VETRI'S UPSC PIB COMPILATION October - 2018

Why in News?

- Indian Navy has inducted its first Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) which is deployed to rescue downed or disaster-struck submarines at high sea.
- The DSRV that was inducted by India can be mobilised from the naval base in Mumbai to nearest mounting port by air, land and sea.
- With the move, India joined a select list of international navies with the ability to search, locate and provide assistance to downed or disaster-struck submarines at high sea.

Significance of DSRV:

- The vessels have played a significant role in saving lives as well as submarines during emergencies.
- Most of these are capable of rescuing 24 people at depths of up to 600m in one go.
- Besides for rescue operation, the vessels are also deployed for various other missions including to lay cables on the sea bed.

Key Highlights:

- The DSRV can reportedly be deployed at short notice for providing assistance to submarines in distress.
- The rescue vessel, completes with an associated kit in fly away configuration, can be crucial in quickly locating submarines through the vast expanse of sea and can be mobilised by air and water for rapid rescue.
- Some DSRV vessels are air transportable in very large military cargo.
- With this, India joined select list of international navies (United States, China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, Singapore UK, Sweden and Australia) with ability to search, locate and provide assistance to downed or disaster-struck or distressed submarines at high sea.
- The second DSRV is expected to be inducted at Visakhapatnam in 2019.



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INDIAN SOCIETY

First Regional Conference on Women in Detention and Access to Justice

GS 1: Society | Role of women and women's organization and related issues.

Prelims level: Details of the Conference

Mains level: Prison Reforms in India

Why in News?

- The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), Ministry of Home Affairs is organising the First ever Regional Conference at Shimla on 'Women in Detention and Access to Justice' in collaboration with the Prison Department, Himachal Pradesh.

Women in Detention and Access to Justice:

- This conference is organised with a view to provide a platform for the prison personnel of all ranks at the national level to share their candid views on various operational as well as administrative issues not only with their counterparts, but also with other experts of national repute in this field.
- The conference also seeks to identify best practices and standards in the working of Correctional Administration to meet new challenges in the present day's context to bring out prison reforms in objective terms.
- The Parliamentary Committee on Empowerment of Women on this subject has made several recommendations.
- There is a need to deliberate upon some of the recommendations to devise strategies and programs for bettering conditions of Women Prisoners and upholding their FRs.
- The following themes have been identified for discussions and deliberations:
 - Reproductive Health Rights of Women Prisoners: National and International Legal Norms

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- Health Needs of Women Prisoners
- Health, Skill, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Women Inmates and Their Children
- Prison Reforms, Structural Managerial and Legal Issues with Focus on Women Inmates & Comparison to Global Norms
- Neuro-Criminology Program for the Offender
- Transforming Prisons

Why we need reforms:

- Women also tend to lose ties with their children over the years, due to inadequate child custody procedures. Also, a robust grievance redressal mechanism was required to tackle cases of sexual harassment, violence and abuse against women in jails.
- Women in prisons face greater hardships than their male counterparts due to many factors such as social stigma, financial dependence on their families or husbands etc. These difficulties are further exacerbated when the woman has children.
- Women have to face numerous problems in prisons owing to inadequacy of female staff which often translates to the reality that male staff becomes responsible for female inmates, which is undesirable.
- Women are not provided with meals that are nutritious and according to their bodily requirements.
- Women are at a most disadvantageous position when it comes to their reintegration in society after release. Many are abandoned or harassed post-release, mainly due to the stigma attached with incarceration, which is even more pronounced in cases of women.

Sir Chhotu Ram - Agricultural Reforms

GS 1: Freedom Struggle | Various stages and important contributors /contributions from different parts of the country.

Prelims level: Sir Chhotu Ram and his Reforms

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Mains level: Agricultural reforms in colonial period

Why in News?

- PM unveiled a statue of Deenbandhu Sir Chhotu Ram in Rohtak, Haryana.

Sir Chhotu Ram (1881-1945):

- Sir Chhotu Ram was a prominent politician in British India's Punjab Province, an ideologue of the peasants of pre-Independent India. He championed the interest of oppressed peasants of the Indian Sub-continent and tried to create a non-sectarian peasant group consciousness.
- He formed the Unionist Party (Zamindara League) in 1923, which was a cross-communal alliance of Hindu Jats and Muslim agriculturists.
- He was awarded the title of 'Rao Bahadur' and was accorded knighthood in 1937. He popularly came to be known as Deen Bandhu.

Political activities:

- The Congress boycotted the 1920 elections, while Chhotu Ram got elected on a Zamindara Party ticket.
- His coalition party won the general elections of 1936 and formed a coalition government with himself becoming Revenue Minister.
- Chhotu Ram helped in the British Army recruitment effort for the First World War, and was instrumental in the recruitment of 22,144 from Rohtak area.
- He again backed a massive recruitment drive of the British during the Second World War.

Notable Agricultural Reforms:

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- As a member of the pre-Partition Punjab Legislative Council, his first major achievement was the passage of the Punjab Land Revenue (Amendment) Act, 1929, which remains a landmark social legislation till date.
- The exploitation of the peasantry by moneylenders was brought to an end with a series of measures, starting with the Punjab Regulation of Accounts Act, 1930.
- It was followed by the Punjab Debtors Protection Act of 1936 and the Punjab Relief of Indebtedness Act, 1943.
- It became mandatory for moneylenders to register themselves, without which they could not advance loans or prosecute farmers.
- All land attached and sold after June 8, 1901, and mortgaged for 37 years, was restored to its owners. Farmers were required only to give an application on plain paper to the district collector.
- If any moneylender had recovered twice the loan amount, the farmer was given his land back.
- Reconciliation boards were set up; confiscation of milch cattle, oxen, camels and carts or means of earning was barred.
- The Punjab Agricultural Produce Markets Act was passed in 1939, popularly called the Mandi Act which provided for the constitution of market committees in notified areas, and helped free the farmer from exploitation.
- A consolidation of land holdings was undertaken after passing the Consolidations Holding Act, 1936, amended in 1945.
- Not only were all these laws passed; Chhotu Ram also ensured their implementation.

Global Hunger Index 2018

GS 1: Society | Population and associated issues, poverty and developmental issues, urbanization, their problems and their remedies.

Prelims Level: GHI - Performance of India and other countries.

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Mains Level: GHI- findings on India, concerns and challenges,

Why in News?

- The Global Hunger Index report 2018 released annually by Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide.

Component indicators of GHI:

- **Undernourishment:** the share of the population which is undernourished and reflects insufficient caloric intake.
- **Child wasting:** The share of children under the age of five who are wasted (low weight-for-height), reflecting acute undernutrition.
- **Child Stunting:** the share of children under the age of five who are stunted (low height-for-age), reflecting chronic undernutrition.
- **Child mortality:** the mortality rate of children under the age of five.

Dimensions of hunger:

- The GHI scores are based on a formula that captures three dimensions of hunger-
 - Insufficient caloric intake
 - Child under nutrition
 - Child mortality

Performance of India:

- India has been ranked at 103 out of 119 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2018, with hunger levels in the country categorized as “serious”.
- At least one in five Indian children under the age of five is wasted.
- India's ranking has dropped three places from last year

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- The percentage of undernourished people in the population has dropped from 18.2% in 2000 to 14.8% in 2018.
- The child mortality rate has halved from 9.2% to 4.3%.
- The child stunting has dropped from 54.2% to 38.4% over the same period
- The only country with a higher prevalence of child wasting is the war-torn nation of South Sudan.

Concerns:

- Hunger and forced migration world wide
- The Index projects that at the current rate of progress, 50 countries will fail to reach the “low” hunger category by 2030.

National Health Profile-2018

GS 1: Society | Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector or Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Prelims level: Particulars of the Registry and other stakeholders involved, National Health Profile

Mains level: National healthcare facility registry

Why in News?

- The Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI), under the aegis of the Directorate General of Health Services released an Analytical Report of the National Health Profile-2018.

The Report:

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- The National Health Profile covers demographic, socio-economic, health status and health finance indicators, along with comprehensive information on health infrastructure and human resources in health.
- The National Health Resource Repository (NHRR) - country's first ever national healthcare facility registry of authentic, standardized and updated geo-spatial data of all public & private healthcare establishments.

The NHRR project:

- The NHRR project involves conducting a national census for all public and private healthcare facilities including hospitals, doctors, clinics, blood banks, pharmacies, diagnostic labs etc.
- The aim of the project is to develop a comprehensive platform for over 25 lakh healthcare establishments.
- The platform will be very useful for all key stakeholders - government, private health establishments and the public.
- Establish a National Health Resource Repository for evidence based decision making - aligned with Digital India mission.
- The vision of the NHRR project is to strengthen evidence-based decision making and develop a platform for citizen and provider-centric services by creating a robust, standardized and secured IT-enabled repository of India's healthcare resources.
- NHRR will be the ultimate platform for comprehensive information of both, Private and Public healthcare establishments including Railways, ESIC, Defense and Petroleum healthcare establishments.
- NHRR will cohesively work with Ayushman Bharat - National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM) and Central TB Division (CTD) on an integrated plan for the larger benefit of ensuing Hospital empanelment and private sector engagement.

Key benefits:

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- To create a reliable, unified registry of country's healthcare resources
- It shall generate real-world intelligence to identify gaps in health and service ratios
- Ensure judicious health resource allocation and management.
- It shall identify key areas of improvement by upgrading existing health facilities or establishing new health facilities keeping in view the population density, geographic nature, health condition, distance, etc.
- To ensure superior health access, service delivery and improve transparency & accountability for effective centre-to-state funding.
- Improve the visibility of Private providers to enable Public-Private Partnerships.
- Provide access to information on health service providers to the citizen of India.

75th Year of Establishment of Azad Hind Government

GS 1: Freedom Struggle | various stages and important contributors /contributions from different parts of the country

Prelims level: Azad Hind Govt.

Mains level: Contribution of AHG in Indian Independence

Why in News?

- Hon'ble PM will unveil the plaque to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the formation of Azad Hind Government, at the Red Fort, Delhi.

Azad Hind Government:

- The Provisional Government of Free India, or, more simply, Free India (Azad Hind), was an Indian provisional government established in occupied Singapore in 1943.
- C. Bose was the leader of Azad Hind Government (AHG) and also the Head of State of this Provisional Indian Government-in-exile.

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- It was established by Indian nationalists-in-exile during the latter part of the Second World War in Singapore with monetary, military and political assistance from Imperial Japan.
- It was a part of the freedom movement, originating in 1940s outside India with a purpose of allying with Axis powers to free India from British rule.
- Pertinently, the role of Azad Hind Fauj or the Indian National Army (INA) had been crucial in bequeathing a much needed impetus to India's struggle for Independence.

Administration of the AHG:

- Azad Hind was recognised as a legitimate state by only a small number of countries limited solely to Axis powers and their allies.
- Azad Hind had diplomatic relations with nine countries: Nazi Germany, the Empire of Japan, Italian Social Republic, Independent State of Croatia and Wang Jingwei Government, Thailand, the State of Burma, Manchukuo and the Second Philippine Republic.

Territories under AHG:

- AHG had been given a limited form of governmental jurisdiction over the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, which had been captured by the Imperial Japanese Navy early on in the war.
- Once under the jurisdiction of Azad Hind, the islands formed the government's first claims to territory.
- The islands themselves were renamed "Shaheed" and "Swaraj" respectively.

Collapse of AHG:

- INA under the leadership of Bose got defeated severely at Rangoon due to lack of support of Japanese.

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- Bose was suggested to leave Burma to continue his struggle for Indian independence and returned to Singapore before the fall of Rangoon.
- The AHG govt in the islands collapsed when the island garrisons of Japanese and Indian troops were defeated by British troops and the islands themselves retaken.
- The Provisional Government of Free India ceased to exist with the deaths of the Axis, the INA, and Bose in 1945.
- It was followed by the Famous Trials at Red Fort.

Importance of INA and AHG:

- The true extent to which the AHG and INA activities weakened the very foundation of the British Empire in India was the sparking of mutiny among Indian Soldiers.
- The Royal Indian Navy Mutiny made the British realize that the support of the Indian armed forces could no longer be relied upon.

GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENT

India's first dolphin research centre to come up soon in Patna

GS 3: Environment | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Prelims level: Gangetic Dolphin and its Habitat

Mains level: Conservation status of Gangetic Dolphins

Why in News?

- The much-awaited National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC), India's and Asia's first is set to be established in Patna.
- It will play an important role in strengthening conservation efforts and research to save the endangered mammal.

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- University will shift it to Bhagalpur where the number of dolphins is higher.

Threats to Dolphins:

- The water level has been decreasing and the flow has slowed down. Besides, siltation is increasing in the river. All this is not favourable for dolphins.
- The Gangetic river dolphin is India's national aquatic animal but frequently falls prey to poachers and is sometimes killed inadvertently after being trapped in plastic fishing nets and hit by mechanized boats.
- The mammals are being killed at an alarming rate with wildlife officials saying poachers covet them for their flesh, fat and oil.

Habitat of Gangetic Dolphins:

- The mammal's presence signals a healthy river ecosystem.
- Dolphins prefer water that is at least 5-8 feet deep. They are usually found in turbulent waters where there is enough fish for them to feed on.
- Gangetic dolphins prefer deep water with adjoining shallow water.
- They live in a zone where there is little or no current that helps them save energy. If they sense danger, they can go into deep waters.
- The dolphins swim from the no-current zone to the edges to hunt for fish and return.
- The Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary, India's only dolphin sanctuary, spread over 50 km along the Ganges, is located in Bihar's Bhagalpur district.
- Bihar is home to around half of the country's estimated 3,000 dolphin population.

Gangetic Dolphin:

- Gangetic river dolphins fall under Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act.
- It has been declared an endangered species by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

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- The Gangetic river species found in India, Bangladesh and Nepal is almost completely blind.
- It finds its way and prey using echoes with sound being everything for them to navigate, feed, escape danger, find mates, breed, nurse babies and play.
- The Gangetic river dolphin is one of the four freshwater dolphin species in the world.
- The other three are found in the Yangtze river, the Indus river in Pakistan and the Amazon river.

Crop damages in animal attacks put under PMFBY on pilot basis

GS 3: Agriculture | Issues related to direct & indirect farm subsidies & minimum support prices etc.

Prelims level: Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana

Mains level: Ensuring better implementation of PMFBY through additional provisions.

Why in News?

- The Union government has decided to cover damages to crops in wild animal attacks under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna in select districts on an experimental basis.

New Provisions to the PMFBY:

- Several parliamentarians have been raising this issue from time to time and demanding insurance cover for damages to the crops in animal attacks under the Centre's scheme.
- The government has also brought under the PMFBY ambit certain horticultural crops on an experimental basis, the minister said.
- Damages to individual or limited number of cultivators in localised events like water logging, land slide, hailstorms etc did not fall under the ambit of PMFBY scheme earlier.
- However they too are being covered now under new provisions.

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- Now damages to the individual fields due to incidents of local disasters like cloud bursts and fire too are being taken up now for insurance claims.

Easing Insurance Claims settlements:

- The amended provisions for the scheme also stipulate fines in cases of delay in clearing the insurance claims for crop damages.
- In case a firm now delays the clearances beyond two months, it will have to pay an annual interest of 12 per cent.
- Similarly the state government too will have to pay an interest of 12 per cent in case of delay in release of state's share of subsidy in premium to insurance firms.
- The insurances firms will also have to spend 0.5 per cent of their earnings from annual premium to advertise the provisions of the PMFBY among the peasants.

IPCC Report: How to reach a 1.5-degree world

GS 3: Environment | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Prelims level: Highlights of the Report

Mains level: Impacts of Global Warming

Why in News?

- Preventing an extra single degree of heat could make a life-or-death difference in the next few decades for multitudes of people and ecosystems on this fast-warming planet.
- The Nobel Prize-winning Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its gloomy report at a meeting in Incheon, South Korea.
- Global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate, the report states.

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IPCC:

- IPCC is a scientific government body under the UN established in 1988 by two UN organizations, the WMO and the UNEP and later endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly.
- The IPCC produces reports that support the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, which is the main international treaty on climate change.
- IPCC reports cover the scientific, technical and socio-economic information relevant to understanding the scientific basis of risk of human induced climate change, its potential impacts and options for adaptation and mitigation.
- Membership of the IPCC is open to all members of the WMO and the UNEP.

Findings of the Report:

- Half as many people would suffer from lack of water.
- There would be fewer deaths and illnesses from heat, smog and infectious diseases.
- Seas would rise nearly 4 inches (0.1 meters) less.
- Half as many animals with back bones and plants would lose the majority of their habitats.
- There would be substantially fewer heat waves, downpours and droughts.
- The West Antarctic ice sheet might not kick into irreversible melting.
- And it just may be enough to save most of the world's coral reefs from dying.

The 1.5°C Goal:

- In 2010, international negotiators adopted a goal of limiting warming to 2°C since pre-industrial times. It's called the 2° goal.
- In 2015, when the nations of the world agreed to the Paris climate agreement, they set dual goals – 2°C and a more demanding target of 1.5°C from pre-industrial times.
- The 1.5° was at the urging of vulnerable countries that called 2°C a death sentence.

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- The world has already warmed 1°C since pre-industrial times, so the talk is really about the difference of another half-degree C from now.
- There is no definitive way to limit global temperature rise to 1.5 above pre-industrial levels.

Advantages of warming below 2°C:

- The IPCC studies have looked at the physical impact on the land and ocean, as well as at the socio-economic impact, like health, malnutrition, food security and employment.
- Some examples:
- Limiting global warming to 1.5°C could prevent around 3.3 million cases of dengue every year in Latin America and the Caribbean alone.
- A World Bank report on Climate Change and Health, 2015 said that an additional 150 million people could be at risk from malaria if the temperature was allowed to increase beyond 2°C.
- A study in the journal Climate Change in 2016 claimed that the world could have 25 million fewer undernourished people by the end of the century, if the 1.5°C goal was achieved.
- A study published in PNAS in March 2017 said about 350 million additional people could be exposed to deadly heat waves if the warming increased to 2°C as compared to 1.5°C.
- A study in Nature Climate Change in March 2018 said the 1.5°C could prevent 153 million premature deaths due to air pollution by 2100, as compared to the 2°C scenario.
- A UNDP report in 2016 claimed that a 1.5°C strategy could create double the number of jobs in the energy sector by 2050.
- Also, compared to the 1.5°C scenario, extreme weather events such as heavy rainfall and heat waves are likely to become more severe and frequent, and freshwater supply could fall sharply, in a 2°C world.

How to reach the 0.5 °C target?

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- As of now, the world is striving to prevent the temperature rise beyond 2 degrees Celsius, in accordance with the stated objective of the Paris Agreement of 2015.
- To meet that target, the aim is to reduce greenhouse gases by only 20 per cent, from 2010 levels, by the year 2030 and achieve a net-zero emission level by the year 2075.
- Net-zero is achieved when the total emissions is balanced by the amount of absorption or removal of carbon dioxide through natural sinks or technological interventions.

Is the 1.5°C target attainable?

- The IPCC report suggests possible pathways to attain the 1.5°C objective.
- Any such path would involve much sharper and quicker emission cuts by big emitters like China, the US, the European Union and India, than what these countries currently plan to do.
- However, their publicly declared planned actions currently are not big enough to achieve even the 2°C target.
- In Paris in 2015, the countries had acknowledged that if they failed to do more, annual emissions of carbon dioxide could touch 55 billion tonnes in 2030.

Problem of CO₂:

- Carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas responsible for global warming, stays in the atmosphere for 100-150 years.
- That means even if all greenhouse gas emissions were to somehow miraculously stop all of a sudden, the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere would remain at the current levels for many years to come.
- That is why there is a significant interest these days in technologies that can physically remove the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and store it somewhere, either temporarily or permanently.
- Carbon Dioxide Removal (CDR) would be used to compensate for residual emissions.

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- CDR is a reference to physical removal of the stock of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to reduce its concentrations.
- But the technologies for CDR are still undeveloped and untested.

Way Forward:

- Limiting warming to the lower goal is not impossible but will require unprecedented changes
- To limit warming to the lower temperature goal, the world needs “rapid and far-reaching” changes in energy systems, land use, city and industrial design, transportation and building use, the report said.
- Meeting the more ambitious goal would require immediate, draconian cuts in emissions of heat-trapping gases and dramatic changes in the energy field.
- It is up to governments to decide whether those unprecedented changes are acted upon.

Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi

GS 3: Environment | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Mains Level: Graded Response Action Plan (GRA)

Why in News?

- Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi launched.

Highlights:

- The System is designed to predict extreme air pollution events
- Give alerts to take necessary steps as per Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) of the Government of India.

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- A new website developed for archiving all the observational and prediction products was also launched

Air pollution system:

- The air pollution system has been developed jointly by the scientists at Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, India Meteorological Department and National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecasting (NCMRWF).
- Real time observations of air quality over Delhi region and details about natural aerosols like dust (from dust storms) and particulate matter using different satellite data sets.
- Predictions of air pollutants from two different air quality prediction systems based on state-of-the-art atmospheric chemistry transport models
- Warning Messages and Alerts and Bulletins.

Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP):

- Graded Response Action Plan denotes the measures to taken based on air quality on the basis of PM 2.5 and PM 10 in the atmosphere.
- Based on the air quality the grades have been classied as Emergency, Severe, Very Poor and Moderate poor. It will be enforced by Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA).
- Under this plan eemergency measures will be automatically enforced in NCR if level of PM2.5 breaches 300 micrograms per cubic metre ($\mu\text{gm}/\text{m}^3$) and PM10 levels stay above 500 ($\mu\text{gm}/\text{m}^3$)for two consecutive days.
- The plan recommends measures like odd-even car rationing scheme and ban on construction activities to combat air pollution.
- During 'very poor' air quality, it recommends banning diesel generators and parking fee increased by three to four times.

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- It also lists a number of other measures such as closing brick kilns, stone crushers, hot mix plants and intensifying public transport services and increasing the frequency of mechanised cleaning and sprinkling of water on roads.
- For enforcement of the action plan, the Union Government has assigned the task of implementation of the Graded Response Action Plan to the EPCA (Environment Pollution Control Authority) in pursuance of sub-section (1) of section 3 of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 (29 of 1986).

Sikkim world's first 100 percent organic state

GS 3: Environment | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

Why in News?

- North-eastern state Sikkim on October 12, 2018 won the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) Future Policy Award 2018 for being the world's first 100 percent organic state.
- Sikkim defeated 51 nominated policies from 25 countries, winning the Gold Prize of the Future Policy Award 2018, also known as "Oscar for Best Policies".
- This year's award is co-organised by the FAO, the World Future Council (WFC) and IFOAM - Organics International. Brazil, Denmark and Quito shared the silver award.

Sikkim's policy and achievement:

- Sikkim's transition to organic farming "has benefited over 66,000 family farmers, reaching beyond just organic production to include socioeconomic aspects such as consumption and market expansion, rural development and sustainable tourism with its comprehensive and inclusive approach.
- Sikkim implemented a phase out policy of chemical fertilisers and pesticides, and achieved a total ban on sale and use of chemical pesticides in the state.

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- Sikkim tourism sector got benefitted greatly from the state's transition to 100 percent organic as the number of tourists increased by over 50 percent between 2014 and 2017.

Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali" campaign

GS 3: Environment | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Prelims level: Green Good Deed Campaign, Harit Diwali Campaign

Mains level: Community sensitization initiatives to curb menace of air pollution.

Why in News?

- Keeping in view the detrimental effects of bursting Crackers and also the importance of the festival, MoEFCC has initiated a "Harit-Diwali" campaign.

Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali:

- This campaign was initiated in 2017-18 in Delhi wherein large number of school children especially from eco-clubs participated and took pledge to minimize bursting of crackers.
- During this intensive campaign, the children were advised to celebrate Diwali in an environment-friendly manner by gifting plant sapling to their relatives and friends along with sweets etc.
- The children were encouraged to light up their houses and their schools with candles and diyas.
- The above campaign was extremely successful and the air quality had not deteriorated post Diwali in 2017 unlike what was experienced in 2016.

A pan-India Campaign:

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- On the above lines, the Ministry has initiated the similar campaign, but this year the campaign has been extended Pan-India.
- The “Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali” campaign is now merged with “Green Good Deed” movement that has been initiated as a social mobilization for conservation and protection of environment.
- The Ministry encourages all schools and colleges to be part of this campaign.

3rd Decadal International Year of Reefs-2018

GS 3: Environment | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Prelims level: 3rd IYOR, STAPCOR

Mains level: Conservations of Corals and measures to save them

Why in News?

- The International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (STAPCOR - 2018) with the theme “Reef for Life” was inaugurated by the Union Environment Ministry at Bangaram coral Island of Territory of Lakshadweep.

STAPCOR:

- The effect of climate change and global warming along with El-Nino on the corals has lead to heavy bleaching internationally during the year 1998.
- This led to the foundation of STAPCOR with a decision to have a international conference in every 10 years to review the status and progress of coral reefs all over the world.

3rd International Year of the Reef 2018:

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- The first IYOR was designated in 1997 in response to the increasing threats on coral reefs and associated ecosystems.
- The hope was to increase awareness of the value of and threats to coral reefs, and to promote conservation, research and management efforts on a global scale.
- Over 225 organizations in 50 countries and territories participated, publishing over 700 articles in papers and magazines and undertaking hundreds of scientific surveys.
- This effort was repeated 11 years later, when 2007 was designated as the second IYOR.

The goals of the 3rd IYOR – 2018 are to:

- Strengthen awareness about ecological, economic, social and cultural value of coral reefs and associated ecosystems
- Improve understanding of the critical threats to reefs and generate both practical and innovative solutions to reduce these threats
- Generate urgent action to develop and implement effective management strategies for conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems.

Corals:

- Corals are invertebrates belonging to a large group of colourful and fascinating animals called Cnidarians. Other animals in this group include jellyfish and sea anemones.
- Each individual coral animal is called a polyp, and most live in groups of hundreds to thousands of genetically identical polyps that form a 'colony'.
- The colony is created by a process called budding, where the original polyp literally grows copies of itself.

Coral reefs:

- Coral reefs have evolved on earth over the past 200 to 300 million years, and have developed a unique and highly evolved form of symbiosis.

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- Coral polyps have developed this relationship with tiny single-celled algae known as zooxanthellae. Inside the tissues of each coral polyp live these zooxanthellae, sharing space and nutrients.
- This symbiosis between plant and animal also contributes to the brilliant colors of coral that can be seen while diving on a reef.
- It is the importance of light that drives corals to compete for space on the sea floor, and so constantly pushes the limits of their physiological tolerances in a competitive environment among so many different species.

CSIR develops Green Crackers and E-crackers

GS 3: Environment | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Mains level: Tackling air pollution with alternatives

Why in News?

- CSIR scientists have developed Less Polluting Firecrackers which are not only environment friendly but 15-20 % cheaper than the conventional ones.

Less Polluting Crackers:

- CSIR scientists has developed Less Polluting Firecrackers which are not only environment friendly but 15-20 % cheaper than the conventional ones
- These crackers have been named as SWAS, SAFAL and STAR.
- It has unique property of releasing water vapour and /or air as dust suppressant and diluent for gaseous emissions and matching performance in sound with conventional crackers.

SWAS (Safe Water Releaser):

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- SWAS crackers eliminates usage of (KNO₃) Potassium nitrate and Sulphur with consequent reduction in particulate matter (30-35%) SO₂ and NO_x.
- It has matching sound intensity with commercial crackers in the range of 105-110 dBA.
- STAR eliminates usage of KNO₃ and S with consequent reduction in particulate matter (35-40%), SO₂ and NO_x. It has matching sound intensity with commercial crackers in the range of 105-110 dBA.
- SWAS has been tested for shelf life upto 3 weeks with consistent performance.

SAFAL (Safe Minimal Aluminium):

- SAFAL has minimal usage of aluminium (only in flash powder for initiation) with consequent significant reduction in particulate matter(35-40 %) compared to commercial crackers.
- It has matching sound intensity with commercial crackers in the range of 110-115 dBA.
- PESO has been approached to analyse and test SWAS/STAR/SAFAL from point of view of safety, stability and other related issues.
- Also functional prototypes of flower pots for substitution of BaNO₃ (Barium nitrate) by low cost eco-friendly materials have been developed with significant reduction in particulate matter (30-35%).

STAR (Safe Thermite Cracker):

- STAR has the capability to eliminate the usage of KNO₃ and S with a consequent reduction in particulate matter (35-40 per cent), SO₂ and NO_x.

E-Crackers:

- CSIR-CEERI, being an electronics laboratory, is developing safe and pollution free technology of electronic crackers (E-crackers) to meet latent social aspiration of enjoying fireworks.

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- It includes various products like E-Ladi, E-Anar, system for E-cracker show etc. At present CSIR-CEERI is ready with the laboratory level prototype of E-Ladi.
- E-Ladi is based on high-voltage electrostatic discharge to generate light/sound effect.
- It is triggered by providing heat to the thermal switch which will give the excitement of firing the conventional cracker.
- The E-Ladi is also programmable to give various light/sound effect.

Working of E-Ladi:

- High voltage generator is capable of producing very high voltage using the concept of tesla coil.
- These pods are connected in parallel to achieve desired light/sound pattern.
- The controller block consists of a pulse generator and a solid state device based circuit to control the switching of these pods.
- The second version of this prototype will include compact form factor and thermal actuation arrangement.

WHO's First Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health

GS 3: Environment | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment

Why in News?

- The first Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health will be held at WHO Headquarters in Geneva on 30 October – 1 November 2018.

Key Highlights:

- The conference is being held in collaboration with UN Environment, World Meteorological Organization (WMO), the Secretariat of the UN Framework Convention on

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Climate Change (UNFCCC), the Climate and Clean Air Coalition to Reduce Short-Lived Climate Pollutants (CCAC) and the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).

- The conference responds to a World Health Assembly mandate to combat one of the world's most significant causes of premature death, causing some 7 million deaths annually.
- Air pollution in most cities exceeds recommended WHO Air Quality levels and household air pollution is a leading killer in poor rural and urban homes. Up to 1/3 of deaths from stroke, lung cancer and heart disease are due to air pollution.
- Affordable strategies exist to reduce key pollution emissions from the transport, energy, agriculture, waste and housing sectors.
- Health-conscious strategies can reduce climate change and support Sustainable Development Goals for health, energy and cities.

INDIAN ECONOMY

Udyam Abhilasha

GS 3: Indian Economy | Issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth

Prelims level: Udyam Abhilasha

Mains level: Startup Ecosystem in India

Why in News?

- Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI), had launched a National Level Entrepreneurship Awareness Campaign, Udyam Abhilasha in 115 Aspirational Districts identified by NITI Aayog.

Udyam Abhilasha:

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- The campaign would create and strengthen cadre of more than 800 trainers to provide entrepreneurship training to the aspiring youths across these districts.
- SIDBI has partnered with CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle, (CSC SPV) set up by the Ministry of Electronics & IT, Govt. of India for implementing the campaign.
- SIDBI is also taking-up with stakeholders including Banks, NABARD, NBFCs, SFBs, District Industries Centres, State Govt. etc. to be a part of this campaign and ensure multifold impact.

Objectives of the Campaign:

- To inspire rural youth in Aspirational districts to be entrepreneurs by assisting them to set up their own enterprise,
- To impart trainings through digital medium across the country,
- To create business opportunities for CSC VLEs,
- To focus on women aspirants in these Aspirational districts to encourage women entrepreneurship and
- To assist participants to become bankable and avail credit facility from banks to set up their own enterprise.

Role of Village Level entrepreneurs:

- CSC VLEs would play role of catalyst for these aspiring entrepreneurs.
- Apart from training, VLEs would also provide handholding support to the aspirants to establish new units by assisting them in availing loans for their enterprise.
- They will help making youth aware about various initiatives of Government of India like Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, SUI etc.

Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI):

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- It is the Principal Financial Institution for the Promotion, Financing, Development and Coordination of the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) sector.
- SIDBI meets the financial and developmental needs of the MSME sector with a Credit+ approach to make it strong, vibrant and globally competitive.
- SIDBI, under its revamped strategy SIDBI 2.0, has adopted the theme of ease of access to MSEs and being Impact Multiplier & Digital Aggregator.

21 IORA Countries adopt the Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy

GS 3: Economy | Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, and Railways etc.

Prelims level: IORA, Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy, Global Renewable Energy Atlas

Mains level: Importance of the Declaration in tapping RE in the IOR.

Why in News?

- As many as 21 countries in the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) today adopted the Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy in the IOR.
- The Declaration aims for collaboration among IORA member states in meeting the growing demand for renewable energy in the Indian Ocean littorals.
- It calls for development of a common renewable energy agenda for the Indian Ocean region and promote regional capacity building.

Highlights of the declaration:

- As per the declaration adopted, IORA member nations will collaborate with the member nations to exchange knowledge and share views and potential interests in the renewable energy sector;

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- The MoU signed between IORA and ISA with a focus on joint capacity-building programs, research & development activities in solar energy and exchange of best practices.
- The Delhi Declaration on Renewable Energy in the Indian Ocean Region calls for collaboration among IORA member states in meeting the growing demand for renewable energy in the Indian Ocean littorals and promote regional capacity building.
- The declaration also calls for promotion of technology development and transfer, strengthening of public private partnerships in renewable energy and collaboration among IORA member states and the member nations of the International Solar Alliance (ISA).

Global Renewable Energy Atlas:

- IORA member nations and International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) will undertake the expansion of the Global Renewable Energy Atlas.
- It will be the world's largest-ever joint renewable resource data project, coordinated by IRENA, thereby creating the IOR's first and most comprehensive map and database which will be used to tap RE potential of the region.
- It aims to collaborate on opportunities available under the International Renewable Energy Learning Platform (IRELP).

SEZ Policy Review Committee holds final meeting

GS 3: Indian Economy | Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth.

Prelims level: SEZ Policy (2005)

Mains level: Reconsidering the SEZ Policy in India

Why in News?

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- The SEZ Policy Review Committee has its final round of consultations with the members under the chairmanship of the Commerce Secretary.
- The Committee was of the opinion that SEZ should now transform into “Employment and Economic Enclaves” (3Es).

Why such Policy Review?

- The objective of the Committee was to evaluate the SEZ policy framed in 2000 and suggest measures to make the policy WTO compatible.
- It is aimed to give suggestions which will encourage manufacturing and services sector and lead to maximizing utilization of vacant land in SEZs.
- It further aims to create seamlessness between SEZ policy and other schemes like Costal Economic Zone, Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor, National Industrial Manufacturing Zone, Food Parks and Textile Parks.

Broadening the scope of SEZs:

- The changes in the macro-economic environment in India required a re-look at the SEZ Policy framework so that focus is on enabling generation of 100 million jobs in the manufacturing sector.
- It will enable manufacturing competitiveness within the framework of WTO rules, bringing in services sectors like health care, financial and legal services, repair and design services under SEZs.

Special Economic Zones (SEZ):

- SEZs are set up under Special Economic Zones Act, 2005 as duty free enclave and shall be deemed to be foreign territory for the purposes of trade operations and duties and tariffs in India.
- SEZ units are deemed to be outside the customs territory of India.

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- Goods and services coming into SEZs from the domestic tariff area or DTA are treated as exports from India and goods and services rendered from the SEZ to the DTA are treated as imports into India.

GI Tag for Alphonso from Konkan

GS 3: Indian Economy | Issues relating to intellectual property rights

Prelims level: Geographical Indications (GI)

Why in News?

- Alphonso from Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Palghar, Thane and Raigad districts of Maharashtra, is registered as Geographical Indication (GI).

Alphonso Mangoes:

- The king of mangoes, Alphonso, better known as 'Hapus' in Maharashtra, is in demand in domestic and international markets not only for its taste but also for pleasant fragrance and vibrant colour.
- It has long been one of the world's most popular fruit and is exported to various countries including Japan, Korea and Europe.
- New markets such as USA and Australia have recently opened up.

GI tag and its significance:

- A GI is primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product (handicrafts and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.
- Typically, such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness, which is essentially attributable to the place of its origin.

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- Once the GI protection is granted, no other producer can misuse the name to market similar products. It also provides comfort to customers about the authenticity of that product.

Geographical Indications in India:

- A Geographical Indication is used on products that have a specific geographical origin and possess qualities or a reputation that are due to that origin.
- The first product to get a GI tag in India was the Darjeeling tea in 2004. There are a total of 325 products from India that carry this indication.
- Darjeeling Tea, Mahabaleshwar Strawberry, Blue Pottery of Jaipur, Banarasi Sarees and Tirupati Laddus are some of the GIs.
- The Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 (GI Act) is a sui generis Act for protection of GI in India.
- India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Act to comply with the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
- Geographical Indications protection is granted through the TRIPS Agreement. See also the Paris Convention, the Madrid Agreement, the Lisbon Agreement, the Geneva Act.

India-China Trade

GS 3: Economy | Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy and their effects on industrial growth

Mains level: The ongoing trade war between the US and China and its latent benefits for India.

Why in News?

- Union Minister of Commerce & Industry has released a study by the Department of Commerce on India-China Trade.

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- The report tries to analyze the magnitude, extent and plausible reasons of India's rising trade deficit with China.

Addressing the Deficit:

- India's trade relationship with China is unique and no other bilateral trading relationship evokes as much interest in India as the India-China trade relationship.
- From being a small trading partner of India in 2001, within a span of fifteen years, China has rapidly become India's biggest trading partner.
- Trade between the two countries has been expanding but India's trade deficit with China has been growing.

Trade War Looming FTAs:

- Most industry associations want the Government to pursue a defensive approach to Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and raise tariffs on the doctrine of domestic markets for domestic producers.
- The global use of protectionist measures in 2018 was unprecedented with the trade wars looming between two of the largest economies of the world.
- This analysis helps in studying whether an FTA or tariff concessions by China to India can be beneficial in increasing India's exports to China.

Significance of the study:

- The idea behind this exercise has been to identify whether tariff concessions by China to other countries impede raising the share of India's exports in the Chinese market.
- These lines can be taken up by India for negotiations with China under agreements like Asia Pacific Free Trade Agreement (APTA) in which both India and China are involved during the review exercise.
- Competing countries that have FTAs with China, limits the scope for Indian exports.

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- This is due to higher tariffs faced by exporters as compared to competing nations who have secured tariff concessions under their FTAs.
- The study also underlines the opportunity available for India in increasing its services exports to China.
- The imports of China from these countries as well as China's Most Favored Nation (MFN) rates have been studied.
- Indices like Revealed Comparative Advantage (RCA) and Trade Complementarity Index (TCI) have been used to analyse the extent of India and China's competitiveness in this arena and the potential for the future.
- There is a separate section on the opportunities arising for India out of US - China trade standoff with a detailed analysis of specific tariff lines.
- The new tariffs that have been levied by China on the US amidst the ongoing trade war brings in the potential for India to fill the gaps left by America in the Chinese market.

Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution in India

GS 3: Economy | Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy & their effects on industrial growth

Prelims level: Industry 4.0

Mains level: Scope of 4th Industrial Revolution and its impact on India.

Why in News?

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) announced its new Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution in India, which would aim to bring together the government and business leaders to pilot emerging technology policies.

Industry 4.0:

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- The WEF has also entered into partnerships with the Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh governments for the launch of Industry 4.0.
- The centre would be based in Maharashtra and it has selected drones, artificial intelligence and blockchain as the first three project areas.
- NITI Aayog will coordinate the partnership on behalf of the government and the work of the centre among multiple ministries.
- The new centre will work in collaboration with the government on a national level to co-design new policy frameworks and protocols for emerging technology.
- The launch of this Centre is the fourth in the world after San Francisco, Tokyo and Beijing.

Focus of the Initiative:

- The first project will focus on expanding access to data to accelerate the adoption of artificial intelligence in socio-economic areas like education, healthcare and agriculture.
- The second will focus on the application of smart contracts to boost productivity and transparency while reducing inefficiency.
- At state level, the Government of Maharashtra in collaboration with the Centre is planning to undertake a drone mapping operation in the agriculture sector.

Revised Consumer Price Index Numbers on Base year

GS 3: Economy | Effects of liberalization on the economy, changes in industrial policy & their effects on industrial growth

Prelims Level: CPI

Mains level: Consumer price index and its effects on Consumers and services

Why in News?

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- The Central Statistics Office (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has revised the Base Year of the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Key Changes:

- The base year revised from 2010=100 to 2012=100.
- It will effect from the release of indices for the month of January 2015.
- The CPI (Rural, Urban, Combined) on Base 2012=100 is being released for the month of September 2018.
- The Consumer Food Price Index (CFPI) for all India Rural, Urban and Combined are also being released for September 2018.

CPI:

- A consumer price index (CPI) measures changes in the price level of market basket of consumer goods and services purchased by households.
- It is a statistical estimate constructed using the prices of a sample of representative items whose prices are collected periodically.
- The index is usually computed monthly, or quarterly in some countries, as a weighted average of sub-indices for different components of consumer expenditure.

Youth Road Safety Learners Licence Programme

GS 3: Infrastructure: Energy, Ports, Roads, Airports, Railways, etc

Why in News?

- Ministry of State for Road Transport and Highways launched the Youth Road Safety Learners Licence programme in New Delhi.

Highlights:

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- The programme is a PPP initiative to be run in collaboration with Diageo India and the Institute of Road Traffic Education (IRTE)
- Attempts to bring a formal and structured training program for young, first-time drivers as they apply for learner's license.
- This programme will help the Government achieve its target of reducing road accidents by 50 percent by 2020.

Reasons for high road accidents:

- Rash driving
- Drunken driving
- Lack of adequate safety measures like not wearing helmets

Road to Safety initiative:

- To provide capacity building training to traffic police officials and educate commercial drivers such as truckers and bus drivers and university students on the dangers of drunken driving.

Cabinet nod for Indian Institute of Skills

GS 3: Economy | Development & Employment

Prelims level: Indian Institute of Skills, Skill India Mission

Mains level: State of skill development institutes in the country

Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the setting up of Indian Institute of Skills (IISs) at different locations across the country in PPP.

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- The PPP Models will be explored for promotion of IIS at select locations based on demand and available infrastructure.

Benefits of IISs:

- The IISs shall providing high quality skill training, applied research education and a direct and meaningful connection with industry.
- The setting up of IISs shall augment the global competitiveness of key sectors of Indian economy
- It will provide opportunity to aspiring youth across the country to have access to highly skilled training.
- By leveraging advantages of private sector enterprise and public capital in terms of Government land, it would create new institutes of expertise, knowledge and competitiveness.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)

GS 3: Economy | Economics of animal-rearing

Prelims level: Particulars of the FIDF

Mains level: Credit facilities for Fisheries and Aquaculture development in India

Why in News?

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for creation of special Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF).

Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF):

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- FIDF would provide concessional finance to State Governments / UTs and State entities, cooperatives, individuals and entrepreneurs etc., for taking up of the identified investment activities of fisheries development.
- Under FIDF, loan lending will be over a period of five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23 and maximum repayment will be over a period of 12 years inclusive of moratorium of two years on repayment of principal.
- National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC) and all scheduled Banks shall be the nodal Loaning Entities.

Features of the FIDF:

- Creation of fisheries infrastructure facilities both in marine and Inland fisheries sectors.
- To augment fish production to achieve its target of 15 million tonne by 2020 set under the Blue Revolution; and to achieve a sustainable growth of 8% -9% thereafter to reach the fish production to the level of about 20 MMT by 2022-23.
- Employment opportunities to over 9.40 lakh fishers/fishermen/fisherfolk and other entrepreneurs in fishing and allied activities.
- To attract private investment in creation and management of fisheries infrastructure facilities.
- Adoption of new technologies.

Global Agriculture Leadership Summit 2018

GS 3: Economic Development | e-technology in the aid of farmers.

Prelims level: 11th Global Agriculture Summit 2018

Mains Level: Global Agriculture Summit and awards, about ICAF.

Why in News?

VETRII'S UPSC PIB COMPILATION October - 2018

- 11th Global Agriculture Leadership Summit & Awards were recently organised by Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA) with support of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare; Ministry of Food Processing Industries and Ministry of Commerce.

11th Global Agriculture Summit 2018:

- It aims to provide the platform towards facilitating farmers connect with the technologies, markets, industry, institutions and the Governmental programs.
- The event takes the opportunity to discuss the constraints and opportunities for a global momentum towards making agriculture high-tech, market linked and value added for best returns to farmers.
- ICFA is bringing together eminent personalities of Indian and global agriculture, food and agribusiness sectors on one platform on the event of 11th Global Agriculture Summit 2018.
- The experience will be combined with the presentation of 11th Global Leadership Awards and the launch of Agriculture Year Book 2018.

World Agriculture Prize 2018:

- Indian Council of Food and Agriculture organises World Agriculture Prize, to be presented annually to an individual or institution.
- It is awarded to a person for seminal role in transforming agriculture globally and saving the humanity from the curse of hunger.
- The World Agriculture Prize will be a single prize of \$100,000 and will be launched with a special session, named "Swaminathan Global Dialogue on Climate Change and Food Security".
- M S Swaminathan was awarded the 1st World Agriculture Prize this year.

Financial Stability and Development Council

GS 3: Economy | Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

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Why in News?

- 19th Meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) was held under the Chairmanship of the Union Finance Minister.

Highlights:

- To review the current global and domestic economic situation and financial sector performance.
- The Council decided that the Regulators and the Government would keep a close watch on the developing situation and take all necessary measures.
- The Council deliberated on the need for identifying and securing critical information infrastructure in financial sector.
- The Council deliberated on the issues and challenges of Crypto Assets/Currency.

FSDC:

- Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC) is an apex-level body constituted by the government of India.
- An autonomous body dealing with macro prudential and financial regularities in the entire financial sector of India.
- The new body envisages to strengthen and institutionalise the mechanism of maintaining financial stability, financial sector development, inter-regulatory coordination along with monitoring macro-prudential regulation of economy.

Composition of the council:

- **Chairperson:** The Union Finance Minister of India
- **Members:**
 - Governor Reserve Bank of India (RBI)
 - Finance Secretary and/ or Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA),

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- Secretary, Department of Financial Services (DFS),
- Secretary, Ministry of Corporate Affairs,
- Chief Economic Advisor, Ministry of Finance,
- Chairman, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI),
- Chairman, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDA),
- Chairman, Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA),
- Chairman, Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI)
- Additional Secretary, Ministry of Finance, DEA, will be the Secretary of the Council,
- The Chairperson may invite any person whose presence is deemed necessary for any of its meeting(s).

Responsibilities:

- Financial Stability
- Financial Sector Development
- Inter-Regulatory Coordination
- Financial Literacy
- Financial Inclusion
- Macro prudential supervision of the economy including the functioning of large financial conglomerates
- Coordinating India's international interface with financial sector

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

India signs \$150 million ADB loan to improve regional connectivity

GS 2: IR | Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Prelims: ADB

VETRII'S UPSC PIB COMPILATION October - 2018

Mains level: Regional connectivity Development in India

Why in News?

- The ADB and India signed a \$150 Million Loan to finance continued improvements to road connectivity and efficiency of the International Trade Corridor in West Bengal and North-Eastern Region of India.

Particulars of the Trade Corridor:

- Approved in 2014, the program aims to expand about 500 kilometers of roads in India's North Bengal and North-Eastern Region.
- The Program is an important initiative in Regional Connectivity aimed at increasing domestic and regional trade through North Bengal-North East Region International Trade corridor by upgrading key roads.
- The Project will reduce transaction costs along the targeted cross-border corridors substantially, creating economies of scale and commercial prosperity.
- This will enable efficient and safe transport within India and regionally with other SASEC member countries.
- It will give a boost to India's efforts to promote regional connectivity in the South Asia.

Asian Development Bank (ADB):

- The ADB is a regional development bank established on 19 December 1966 which is headquartered in Philippines.
- ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.
- The bank admits the members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP).
- The ADB was modeled closely on the World Bank, and has a similar weighted voting system where votes are distributed in proportion with members' capital subscriptions.



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- In 2017, ADB operations totalled \$32.2 billion, including \$11.9 billion in co-financing.
- The president has a term of office lasting five years, and may be reelected.
- Traditionally, and because Japan is one of the largest shareholders of the bank, the president has always been Japanese. ADB is an official United Nations Observer.

First assembly of International Solar Alliance

GS 2: IR | Important International institutions, agencies & fora, their structure, mandate

Prelims level: International Solar Alliance, IORA, RE-INVEST

Mains level: India's initiatives for transition towards Renewable Energy

Why in News?

- The PM today inaugurated the first Assembly of the International Solar Alliance and also marked the inauguration of the second IORA Renewable Energy Ministerial Meeting, and the 2nd Global RE-Invest (Renewable Energy Investors' Meet and Expo).

Highlights of the ISA Assembly:

- The target is to generate 40 percent of India's total energy requirements in 2030, by non-fossil fuel based sources.
- PM Modi emphasized that if the dream of "One World, One Sun and One Grid" is followed, uninterrupted power supply can be ensured.
- He announced plans to launch a National Energy Storage Mission that will look at manufacturing, deployment, technology development and policy framework.
- The first Assembly will lay the foundation for global Solar Agenda.
- The Assembly will adjudicate upon various administrative, financial and programme related issues.

IORA Meet:

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- The Indian Ocean Rim Association was set up with the objective of strengthening regional cooperation and sustainable development within the Indian Ocean Region with 21 Member States and 7 Dialogue Partners.
- India is hosting 2nd IORA Renewable Energy Ministerial meet.
- In this meeting, Ministers from 9 member countries and delegates from all 21 member countries are expected to participate.
- India, Australia, Iran, Indonesia Thailand, Malaysia, South Africa, Mozambique, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Tanzania, Bangladesh, Singapore, Mauritius, Madagascar, UAE, Yemen, Seychelles, Somalia, Comoros and Oman are members of IORA.

2ND RE-INVESTMENT:

- RE-Invest is a global platform to explore strategies for development and deployment of renewables.
- It showcases India's green energy market and the Government's efforts to scale up capacity to meet the national energy demand in socially, economically and ecologically sustainable ways.
- The 2nd RE-INVEST aims at accelerating the worldwide effort to scale up renewable energy and connect the global investment community with Indian energy stakeholders.
- The 2nd RE-INVEST will provide a great opportunity to various countries, states, business houses & organisations to showcase their business strategies, achievements and expectations.
- It would facilitate collaboration and cooperation with key stakeholders in India, which has today emerged as one of the world's largest renewable energy markets.

Renewable Energy Status of India:

- Globally, India stands 5th in renewable power, 4th in wind power and 5th in solar power installed capacity.

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- Renewable energy development and deployment has received proactive policy support, including 100% foreign investment.
- The Government of India is aiming to exceed the set target of 175 GW renewable energy capacity by 2022.

MoU between India and Russia

GS 2: IR | Bilateral, regional & global groupings & agreements involving India &/or affecting India's interest

Prelims level: Details of the project particulars.

Mains level: India-Russia bilateral relations.

Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Russia on bilateral cooperation in various developmental projects. The MoU will be signed during the upcoming visit of Russian President to India.

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises:

- The Union Cabinet approved signing of a MoU between National Small Industries Corporation Ltd (NSIC) - a Public Sector Undertaking of the Union Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSME) and JSC-Russian Small & Medium Business Corporation (RSMB Corporation), Russia.
- It would provide a structured framework and enabling environment to the MSME sector of the two countries to understand each other's strengths, markets, technologies, policies etc.
- It aims to enhance enterprise to enterprise cooperation and help initiate sustainable business alliances in terms of technology transfers, joint ventures and business partnerships in MSME sector.

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- This cooperation is expected to open doors of new opportunities for Indian MSME sector by way of new markets, joint ventures, sharing of best practices and technology collaborations etc.
- NSIC, under the Ministry of MSME has a considerable experience in carrying out such cooperation and is, therefore, appropriate organisation to implement the activities of this MoU.

Cooperation in road transport:

- Both the countries will benefit by mutual cooperation in the field of Road Transport and Road Industry.
- Increased co-operation, exchange and collaboration with Russia will contribute to establish a long-term and effective bilateral relationship of communication and cooperation in road transportation and road industry and Intelligent Transport System (ITS).
- This will also help in planning and administration of road infrastructure and road network management, transport policy, technologies and standards for the construction and operation of highways in the country.
- It will further go a long way in strengthening ties and bilateral relations between India and Russia.

IBSAMAR-VI Multi - National Maritime Joint Exercise

GS 2: IR | Bilateral, regional & global groupings & agreements involving India &/or affecting India's interest

Prelims level: IBSAMAR VI, IBSA

Why in News?

VETRII'S UPSC PIB COMPILATION October - 2018

- The sixth edition of IBSAMAR, a joint Multi-National Maritime Exercise between the Indian, Brazilian and South African Navies, is being held at Simons Town, South Africa.
- The last edition of IBSAMAR (IBSAMAR V) was conducted on Goa, from 19 – 26 Feb 16. The aim of the exercise is to undertake collective training for participating navies, building interoperability and mutual understanding as well as sharing of best practices.

IBSAMAR 2018:

- This edition exercise included both harbour and sea phases with various navigation and seamanship evolutions, force protection exercises, surface weapons firing, antipiracy exercise, anti-air and antisubmarine exercise and flying operations were also conducted. Apart from professional activities, sports and social engagements were also conducted.
- The Indian Navy is represented by Guided Missile Frigate Tarkash, Guided Missile Destroyer Kolkata, Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft P8I, Seaking and Chetak helicopters as well as a MARCOS contingent.

IBSAMAR:

- It is international tripartite grouping for promoting international cooperation among India, Brazil, South Africa.
- It aims at galvanizing South-South cooperation and greater understanding between three important continents of developing world form Africa, Asia and South America.
- The aim of the exercise is to undertake collective training for participating navies, building interoperability and mutual understanding as well as sharing of best practices.
- The forum provides three countries with platform to engage in discussions for cooperation in field of agriculture, trade, culture, and defence among others. It also plays important role in foreign policies of India, Brazil and South Africa.
- The first exercise took place in 2008.

WHO launches first Global Guidelines on Sanitation and Health

VETRII'S UPSC PIB COMPILATION October - 2018

GS 2: IR | Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Mains level: Health impact of sanitation interventions

Why in News?

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched first global guidelines on sanitation and health.
- These guidelines summarize evidence on effectiveness of range of sanitation interventions.
- They also articulate role of health sector in maximizing health impact of sanitation interventions.

Salient Features - WHO Guidelines:

- WHO's Sanitation and Health Guidelines are aimed at securing health and wellbeing for everyone, everywhere by considering sanitation as the fundamental foundation of human health and development.
- These guidelines provide a comprehensive framework for health-protecting sanitation, covering policy and governance measures, implementation of sanitation technologies, systems and behavioural interventions, risk-based management, and monitoring approaches.
- They also identify gaps in evidence-base to guide future research efforts to improve the effectiveness of sanitation interventions.
- By adopting these new guidelines, countries can significantly reduce diarrhoeal deaths due to unsafe water, sanitation and hygiene.
- For every US \$1 invested in sanitation, it is estimated nearly six-fold return as measured by lower health costs, increased productivity and fewer premature deaths.

India - ADB Signs \$110 Million Loan to Improve Rural Connectivity in MP

VETRII'S UPSC PIB COMPILATION October - 2018

GS 2: IR | Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Prelims: ADB

Mains level: Regional connectivity Development in India

Why in News?

- India and Asian Development Bank (ADB) has signed \$110 million loan to finance the upgrade of 2,800 kilometers all-weather rural roads in the State of Madhya Pradesh under the Prime Minister's Rural Roads Program (PMGSY).

Significance of the Program:

- The overall program is aimed at improving rural connectivity, facilitating safer and more efficient access to livelihood and socio-economic opportunities for rural communities through improvements to about 12,000 kilometers rural roads across the states of Assam, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, and West Bengal.
- The loan will improve mobility for self-employment and livelihood opportunities in rural areas by improving access to district centers.
- The project will continue to support the Government's drive for innovative approaches to reduce costs, conserve non-renewable natural resources, and promote the use of waste materials in rural road construction.
- Considering the increased rainfall and storm surges in Madhya Pradesh, the road designs take into account the climate risks with measures such as greater elevation of road embankments and slope protection.
- Women were extensively consulted during the project design and will gain some key benefits, including improved access to healthcare, livelihoods and schooling.

Tranche Loans:

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- Tranche 2 loan is part of the \$500 million Second Rural Connectivity investment Program for India approved by the ADB Board in December 2017.
- Tranche 1 loan of \$250 million is currently under implementation in the 5 project states, upgrading over 6,000 km of rural roads.

JIMEX 2018

GS 2: IR | Bilateral, regional & global groupings & agreements involving India &/or affecting India's interests

Prelims level: JIMEX 2018

Why in News?

- Japan and India would be participating in the third edition of Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX) with the ships of Eastern Fleet of the Indian Navy (IN) from 07 to 15 October 18.

Japan-India Maritime Exercise (JIMEX) 2018:

- JIMEX-18 is aimed to enhance interoperability, improve understanding and imbibe the best practices of each other.
- The ships participating are INS Satpura, multipurpose stealth frigate, INS Kadmat, Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette, Missile Corvette and INS Shakti, the Fleet Tanker.
- In addition, one submarine, P8I Long Range Maritime Patrol Aircraft and a number of integral helicopters would also be participating in the exercise.

JIMEX 18:

- JIMEX 18, spread over eight days, will comprise a Harbour Phase and a Sea Phase of four days each.



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- The Harbour Phase will include professional and social interactions between ship's crews, sports fixtures and operational planning for the Sea Phase.
- The Sea Phase would include Anti-Submarine Warfare Exercises, VBSS (Visit, Board, Search and Seizure) Drills, Gun Firings, Cross Deck Helo Operations and coordinated operations in Anti-Submarine/ Anti-Air threat scenarios.
- The last edition of JIMEX was conducted in Dec 2013 off Chennai.
- Importance of the exercise:
- The conduct of JIMEX-18 after five years is indicative of an upswing in the Indo-Japanese defence relations and the continued efforts to work closely to enhance safety and security of the global commons.
- It will help establishing rule based order on the IOR.

CII and UNEP sign MoU for implementation of sustainable development

GS 2: IR | Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Prelims level: CII, UNEP, #Un-plastic Initiative

Mains level: Sustainable Development

Why in News?

- The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the UN Environment has signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development.

Highlights of the MoU:

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- The CII will work towards voluntary codes in Indian industry on the issue of plastics, for which there is already a precedent with benefits to firms in terms of credit and shareholder value.
- The MoU encompasses 'coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development according to an official statement.
- It provides a framework of cooperation and facilitates cooperation in issues of environment, climate change, renewable energy, energy efficiency, resource conservation and management, water sanitation, smart cities and urban infrastructure.
- A major activity planned under the MoU, will be the #Un-plastic Initiative of CII and UN Environment, beginning with a Call to Action, including commitments by industry on actions to curb plastic pollution.

Confederation of Indian Industry (CII):

- CII is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organization.
- Founded in 1895, it has over 9,000 members, from the private as well as public sectors, including SMEs and MNCs, and an indirect membership of over 300,000 enterprises from around 265 national and regional sectoral industry bodies.
- CII works with the Government on policy issues. It played a very important role during economic liberalisation in 1991 which knocked down the high walls of protection between Indian industry and the rest of the world.
- CII serves as a reference point for Indian industry and the international business community.
- It has 65 offices, including 9 Centres of Excellence, in India, and 11 overseas offices in Australia, Bahrain, China, Egypt, France, Germany, Iran, Singapore, South Africa, United Kingdom and United States.

World Bank's Human Capital Index

GS 2: IR | Important International institutions, agencies and fora, their structure, mandate.



VETRII'S UPSC PIB COMPILATION October - 2018

Prelims level: Human Capital Index Report and its findings

Mains level: Human Capital Project, Human Capital Index

Why in News?

- The World Bank released a Human Capital Index (HCI) as part of the World Development Report 2019.
- Theme of the World Development Report is "The Changing Nature of Work".

Highlights of the Report:

- The World Bank has launched a Human Capital Project (HCP).
- The HCP programme is claimed to be a program of advocacy, measurement, and analytical work to raise awareness and increase demand for interventions to build human capital.

Components of HCP:

- A cross-country human capital measurement metric called the Human Capital Index (HCI).
- A programme of measurement and research to inform policy action
- A programme of support for country strategies to accelerate investment in human capital.

HCI:

- The HCI has been constructed for 157 countries.
- It claims to seek to measure the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18.
- The HCI index values are contended to convey the productivity of the next generation of workers, compared to a benchmark of complete standard education and full health.

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The components of HCI:

- Survival, as measured by under-5 mortality rates
- Expected years of Quality-Adjusted School which combines information on the quantity and quality of education
- Health environment using two proxies of (a) adult survival rates and (b) the rate of stunting for children under age 5

HCI for India in the Report:

- Human Capital Index: A child born in India today will be only 44 per cent as productive when she grows up as she could be if she enjoyed complete education and full health.
- The HCI in India for females is marginally better than that for males.
- Probability of Survival to Age 5: 96 out of 100 children born in India survive to age 5.
- Expected Years of School: In India, a child who starts school at age 4 can expect to complete 10.2 years of school by her 18th birthday.
- Adult Survival Rate: Across India, 83 per cent of 15-year olds will survive until age 60.
- Gender Differences: In India, HCI for girls is marginally higher than for boys.

Goa Maritime Symposium – 2018

GS 2: IR | Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Mains level: India's Maritime relations with the IOR countries

Why in News?

- Indian Navy through the Naval War College Goa is hosting the 'Goa Maritime Symposium – 2018' on October 16 in order to Foster friendly relations with India's maritime neighbours.

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Goa Maritime Symposium - 2018:

- Aimed at establishing academic excellence and sharing of ideas among India's maritime neighbours, the symposium will facilitate interaction between senior representatives of navies and maritime agencies in the Indian Ocean Region on common issues of maritime interest.
- The event is likely to be attended by senior naval officers and representatives from 16 Indian Ocean littoral countries and island nations.
- The theme for the one day symposium is "Building Stronger Maritime Partnerships in IOR."
- The focus of the symposium is on capacity building among IOR Navies to tackle emerging maritime threats, as well as discussing cooperative strategies for enhancing interoperability among partner maritime agencies.
- With the Indian Ocean becoming the locus of the 21st century strategic landscape, the symposium will play a constructive role in bringing together stakeholders that have a role in evolving strategies, policies and implementation mechanisms in the maritime domain.

12th ASEM Summit

GS 2: IR | Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interest

Prelims level: ASEM

Mains level: Importance of such international engagements

Why in News?

- The Vice President of India has left for Belgium to attend the two-day 12th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) in Brussels.

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- The bi-annual event is considered the highest platform for dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe in the areas of trade, investment, security and tourism.
- The theme of the ASEM Summit is 'Global Partners for Global Challenges'.

Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM):

- The Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) is an intergovernmental process established in 1996 to foster dialogue and cooperation between Asia and Europe.
- The initial ASEM partnership in 1996 consisted of 15 EU member states and 7 ASEAN member states plus China, Japan, Korea and the European Commission.
- Presently it comprises 53 partners: 30 European and 21 Asian countries, the European Union and the ASEAN Secretariat.
- ASEM addresses political, economic, social, cultural, and educational issues of common interest, in a spirit of mutual respect and equal partnership.
- The main components of the ASEM process rest on the following 3 pillars:
 - Political & Security Pillar
 - Economic & Financial Pillar
 - Social, Cultural & Educational Pillar

Exercise Dharma Guardian- 2018

GS2: IR | Bilateral, regional & global groupings & agreements involving India &/or affecting India's interests

Prelims level: Ex. Dharma Guardian

Mains level: India -Japan Defence cooperation

Why in News?

VETRII'S UPSC PIB COMPILATION October - 2018

- To promote Military cooperation, India and Japan are all set to hold the first ever joint military exercise 'DHARMA GUARDIAN-2018' involving the Indian Army and Japan Ground Self Defence Force.

Exercise Dharma Guardian- 2018:

- The Indian contingent will be represented by 6/1 GORKHA RIFLES while the Japanese contingent will be represented by 32 Infantry Regiment of the Japanese Ground Self Defence Force.
- During the 14 day long exercise, due emphasis will be laid on increasing interoperability between forces from both countries.
- Both sides will jointly train, plan and execute a series of well developed tactical drills for neutralisation of likely threats that may be encountered in urban warfare scenario.
- Experts from both sides will also hold detailed discussions to share their expertise on varied operational aspects.

Significance of the Exercise:

- The exercise will be another step in deepening strategic ties including closer defence cooperation between the two countries.
- It will contribute immensely in developing mutual understanding and respect for each other's militaries and also facilitate tracking the worldwide phenomenon of terrorism.

ASEAN Defence Ministers Meet

GS 2: IR | Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Prelims level: ADMM and ADMM Plus

Mains level: India-ASEAN Strategic Relations

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Why in News?

- Defence Minister has attended the 5th ADMM plus meet in Singapore, which is a forum for Defence Ministers from ten ASEAN and eight ASEAN Plus countries.

5th ADMM Plus Meet:

- The theme of this year's dialogue was 'Strengthening Cooperation, Building Resilience'.
- The dialogue adopted two resolutions on 'Countering the Threat of Terrorism' and 'Practical Confidence Building Measures'.

ADMM:

- The ASEAN Security Community (ASC) Plan of Action, adopted at the 10th ASEAN Summit, stipulates that ASEAN shall work towards the convening of an annual ADMM.
- Against this background, the Inaugural meeting of the ADMM was held in Kuala Lumpur on 9 May 2006.
- ADMM is the highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN.
- The ADMM aims to promote mutual trust and confidence through greater understanding of defence and security challenges as well as enhancement of transparency and openness.
- All ASEAN Member States, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam are members of the ADMM.

ADMM Plus:

- The ADMM-Plus is a platform for ASEAN and its eight Dialogue Partners to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region.
- The main objective of ADMM Plus is to benefit ASEAN member countries in building capacity to address shared security challenges.

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- The ADMM-Plus countries include ten ASEAN Member States and eight Plus countries, namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, and the United States.
- The principles for membership to the ADMM-Plus process a country shall be
 - A full-fledged Dialogue Partner of ASEAN;
 - Have significant interactions and relations with ASEAN defence establishment;
 - Able to work with the ADMM to build capacity so as to enhance regional security in a substantive way in order to promote capacity-building in the region in the fields of defence and security.

First India-China High Level Meeting on Bilateral Security Cooperation

GS 2: IR | Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Mains level: India-China mutual belief and indulgences in bilateral talks for security cooperation

Why in News?

- Union Home Minister co-chaired the first India-China High Level Meeting on Bilateral Security Cooperation with his Chinese counterpart.
- During the meeting, the two sides discussed issues of mutual interest, including bilateral counter-terrorism cooperation, and welcomed increased cooperation between India and China in the area of security cooperation.

Highlights of the meeting:

- An Agreement on Security Cooperation between the MHA and China was signed.
- The agreement aims to strengthen and consolidate discussions and cooperation in the areas of counter-terrorism, organized crimes, drug control and other such relevant areas.



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- India again raised the issue of China repeatedly blocking the proposal to designate Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) chief Maulana Masood Azhar as a global terrorist.

Recent meets:

- This meeting comes in the wake of PM Modi's visit to Chinese city of Wuhan in April, where they decided on a number of steps to bring down tensions and normalize ties following the Doklam standoff.
- The Wuhan meeting was also followed by meetings between the two leaders on the sidelines of the SCO in Qingdao in June and the BRICS leaders' summit in Johannesburg in July.