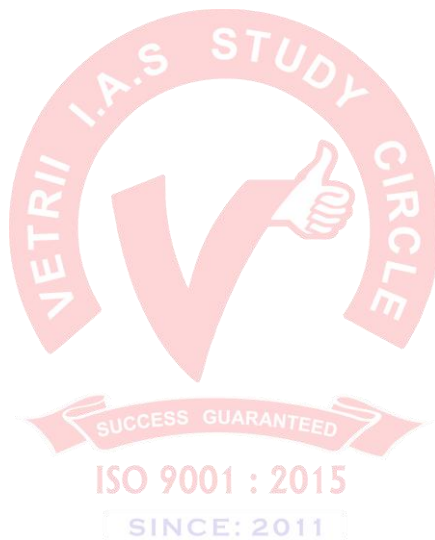


# PIB COMPILATION

FEBRUARY - 2019



**VETRII IAS STUDY CIRCLE**

**9884421666/9884472636**

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- National Commission for Safai Karmacharis
- GeM Start-up Runway and SWAYATT Initiative

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- Afghanistan launches new export route to India through Iran
- India successfully test-fires Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile
- Exercise Sampriti-2019



## INDIAN POLITY

### NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SAFAI KARMACHARIS

GS 2: Polity | Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies

Prelims Level: National Commission for Safai Karmacharis

#### Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for Extension of tenure of the National Commission for Safai Karmacharis(NCSK) beyond 31.3.2019 for three years.

#### Highlights:

- The major beneficiaries of the proposal would be the Safai Karamcharis and persons engaged in manual scavenging in the country since the NCSK will work for their welfare and upliftment.
- The number of Manual Scavengers identified under the MS Act Survey as on 31.01.2019 is 14226 and under the National Survey undertaken by Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment at the behest of NITI Aayog is 31128 on 31.01.2019.

#### NCSK:

- The NCSK has been giving its recommendations to the Government regarding specific programmes for welfare of Safai Karamcharis, study and evaluate the existing welfare programmes for SafaiKaramcharis, investigate cases of specific grievances etc.
- Also as per the provisions of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation Act, the NCSK has been assigned the work to monitor the implementation of the Act, tender advice for its effective implementation to the Centre and State Governments and enquire into complaints regarding contravention/non-implementation of the provisions of the Act. Though the Government has taken many steps for the upliftment of the SafaiKaramcharis, the deprivation suffered by them in socio-economic and educational terms is still far from being eliminated.
- Further the practice of manual scavenging is still prevalent in the country and its eradication continues to be an area of the highest priority for the Government.

#### Background:

- The NCSK was established in the year 1993 as per the provisions of the NCSK Act 1993 initially for the period upto 1997. Later the validity of the Act was initially extended upto

2002 and thereafter upto 2004. The NCSK Act ceased to have effect from 2004. After that the tenure of the NCSK has been extended as a non-statutory body from time to time. The tenure of the present Commission is upto 31.3.2019.

## **GeM Start-up Runway and SWAYATT Initiative**

### **GS 2: Polity | Ministries & Departments of the Government**

#### **Why in News?**

- Launched on 19th February 2019, "StartUp Runway" is a unique concept initiated by GeM to promote entrepreneurship through innovation.
- This program is an opportunity for Startups to reach out to the Government Buyers by offering products and services that are unique in concept, design, process and functionality.

#### **Highlights:**

- DPIIT (Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade) certified Startups are invited to offer their products/services for procurement on GeM.
- It seeks to support technology development, research and innovation by ensuring a conducive policy environment for industrial diversification and value addition to commodities.
- It aligns with Government's philosophy to turn Job-seekers into job-creators.

#### **SWAYATT Initiative:**

- It is an initiative to promote Start-ups, Women and Youth Advantage Through eTransactions on Government e Marketplace (GeM).
- This will bring together the key stakeholders within the Indian entrepreneurial ecosystem to Government e-Marketplace the national procurement portal.

#### **Government e-Marketplace:**

- GeM is a one stop portal to facilitate online procurement of common use Goods & Services required by various Government Departments / Organizations / PSUs.
- GeM aims to enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement.
- It provides the tools of e-bidding, reverse e-auction and demand aggregation to facilitate the government users achieve the best value for their money.



- The purchases through GeM by Government users have been authorized and made mandatory by Ministry of Finance by adding a new Rule No. 149 in the General Financial Rules, 2017.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **DIPP rechristened to include internal trade**

#### **GS 2: Governance**

#### **Why in news?**

- The government has notified changing the name of the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) to the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, and has enhanced its role.

#### **Highlights:**

- In addition to the previous responsibilities of the erstwhile DIPP relating to general industrial policy, administration of the Industries (Development and Regulation) Act, 1951, industrial management, productivity in industry, and matters related to e-commerce.
- The notification has also included four new categories of responsibilities the renamed body will be in charge of, including:
  - ✓ Promotion of internal trade (including retail trade)
  - ✓ Welfare of traders and their employees
  - ✓ Matters relating to facilitating Ease of Doing Business
  - ✓ Matters relating to start-ups

#### **DIPP:**

- DIPP was established in the year 1995, and was reconstituted in the year 2000 with the merger of Department of Industrial Development.
- The department functions under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It is responsible for formulation and implementation of promotional and developmental measures for growth of the industrial sector, keeping in view the national priorities and socio-economic objectives. While individual Administrative Ministries look after the production, distribution, development and planning aspects of specific industries allocated to them, DIPP is responsible for the overall industrial policy.

- It is also responsible for facilitating and increasing the foreign direct investment (FDI) flows to the country.
- It is currently working to frame a new industrial policy, to be the third such policy in India since its independence in 1947.

### **30<sup>th</sup> NATIONAL ROAD SAFETY WEEK**

#### **GS 2: Governance**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is all set to launch the 30<sup>th</sup> National Road Safety Week, with a host of initiatives planned for generating awareness and sensitizing people about safe road usage.

#### **Highlights:**

- Theme for this year campaign: Sadak Suraksha – Jeevan Raksha
- Minister of Road Transport and Highways will flag off a motor car rally to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- The rally will travel through places historically associated with Gandhiji, both in India, as well as in Bangladesh and Myanmar, and will pass through Sabarmati, Porbandar, Dandi, Yerwada, Sewagram, Jabalpur, Lucknow, Gorakhpur, ChauriChaura, Champaran, Shantiniketan and Kolkata in India before travelling to Dhaka in Bangladesh. It will conclude at Yangon in Myanmar.
- During the event MoRTH also launch the dashboard for Road Accident Data of India and its states.
- The Society of Indian Automobile Industry will also declare 2019 as the Year of Road Safety on the occasion, to underline its commitment and support for promoting safety on Indian roads.
- Amar Chitra Katha will release a set of comic books on road safety that it has published. This is aimed at creating awareness on the issue among children in an informal format that they can relate to.
- In addition to the above, Retro Reflective Stickers on Sadak Suraksha Jeevan Raksha will be launched on the occasion.

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## KISAN CREDIT CARD/CROP LOANS PROCESSING AND SERVICE CHARGES WAIVER

**GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development**

### Why in news?

- To provide direct benefit to farmers and ease the pressure on them, the Indian Banking Association today issued advisory guidelines requesting banks to waive off the processing, documentation, inspection, ledger folio charges and all other service charges for Kisan Credit Card /crop loans up to 3 Lakhs.

### Highlights:

- In India, Land Holding pattern is dominated by Small and Marginal farmers (SMF) category Roughly 85 per cent of the total operational holding in the country (about 43 percent of the gross cropped area) are in the SMF category.
- There are around 21.6 crore small and marginal farmers (or 4.3 crore families). Providing timely and affordable credit to this resource constrained group is the key to attaining inclusive growth.
- The small and Marginal farmers are the most affected during times of floods, droughts, and other natural calamities.
- As per parliamentary standing committee on Agriculture the losses due to climate change account for overall GDP loss of 1.5% of agriculture economy.
- The instability in income of the farmers due to various types of risks involved in production, low bargaining power, etc., add more distress to the already affected farmers.

### Kisan credit card:

- Scheme aims at providing adequate and timely credit support from the banking system under a single window with flexible and simplified procedure to the farmers to meet the short term credit requirements for cultivation of crops, investment credit requirements for agriculture and allied activities and other needs.

## PRADHAN MANTRI SHRAM-YOGI MAANDHAN YOJANA

### GS 2: Governance | Government Schemes

#### Why in News?

- Pradhan Mantri Shram-Yogi Maandhan Yojana social security scheme announced in the budget.

#### Scheme Highlights:

- It is a scheme for the unorganised sector workers with monthly income upto Rs 15,000. A sum of Rs 500 crore has been allocated for the Scheme.
- It shall provide an assured monthly pension of Rs 3,000 from the age of 60 years on a monthly contribution of a small affordable amount during their working age.
- An unorganised sector worker joining pension yojana at the age of 29 years will have to contribute only Rs 100 per month till the age of 60 years. A worker joining the pension yojana at 18 years, will have to contribute as little as Rs 55 per month only.
- The Government will deposit equal matching share in the pension account of the worker every month. It is expected that at least 10 crore labourers and workers in the unorganised sector will avail the benefit is expected that at least 10 crore labourers and workers in the unorganised sector will avail the benefit within next five years making it one of the largest pension schemes of the world.

## DIGITALISATION OF SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

### GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development

#### Why in News?

- The Central Government has launched an Integrated Scheme for school education- Samagra Shiksha, which subsumes the three erstwhile Centrally Sponsored Schemes of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA) and Teacher Education, from the year 2018-19.
- Under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Samagra Shiksha, Information & Communication Technology (ICT) component envisages covering all Government and Government Aided schools from classes VI to XII, subject to the availability of budgetary provision, progress of approved interventions and receipt of proposals from the States/UTs.

## Various initiatives for providing education through digital means:

- ICT in Education Curriculum for School System - ICT curriculum for teachers and students has been developed by NCERT.
- **e-pathshala** - e-pathshala has been developed by NCERT (National Council for Educational Research and Training) for showcasing and disseminating all educational e-resources including textbooks, audio, video, periodicals and a variety of other print and non-print materials.
- **National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER)** - The National Repository of Open Educational Resources (NROER) is an initiative to bring together all digital and digitisable resources across all stages of school education and teacher education.
- **SWAYAM**:- The 'Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds' (SWAYAM) is an integrated platform for online courses, using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and covering school (9th to 12th) to Post Graduate Level. It offers online courses for students, teachers and teacher educators. It may be accessed on [swayam.gov.in](http://swayam.gov.in).
- **SWAYAM PRABHA**:- A programme for utilization of satellite communication technologies for transmission of educational e-contents through 32 National Channels i.e. **SWAYAM PRABHA DTH-TV** has been launched.
- **CBSE initiatives**:- SARANSH is a tool for comprehensive self-review and analysis for CBSE affiliated schools and parents. It enables them to analyse students' performance in order to take remedial measures. SARANSH brings schools, teachers and parents closer, so that they can monitor the progress of students and help them improve their performance. It helps schools to compare their performance vis-à-vis all CBSE schools at various levels and also helps parents to compare their ward's performance within school State, Region and National level. It is currently available for Standards IX - XII.
- **KVS initiatives**:- ICT Skills are imparted in all the Kendriya Vidyalayas to the students of classes III to XII. Through e-Classrooms, Digital Language Labs and Computer labs further, a pilot project e-Prajna has been started for providing tablets pre-loaded with e-content in Maths and Science.

- **Operation Digital Board:-** An initiative has been taken by Government of India to provide interactive digital boards to nearly 15 lakh classrooms across the country for 9th standard to post graduate level, where they can receive lectures from best teachers/professors and access quality e-content, in order to enhance overall learning process and experience of the students.

## **NATIONAL TESTING AGENCY LAUNCHED MOBILE APP**

### **GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development**

#### **Why in News?**

- National Testing Agency launched Mobile App through which students can practice mock tests.

#### **Highlights:**

- Through the app students can practice or take mock tests on their own computers or smart phones.
- NTA has established a network of more than 4000 Test Practice Centres (TPCs) to acquaint the aspirants, especially those from rural areas with Computer Based Tests (CBTs) to ensure that no student is disadvantaged due to lack of resources.
- Students across the country can register themselves online at NTA Website or 'NTA Students App' for visiting the TPCs.
- The services are provided to the students free of cost.

#### **NTA:**

- The National Testing Agency (NTA) conducts entrance examinations for admission in higher educational institutions in the country.
- It will be society registered under Indian Societies Registration Act, 1860.
- Its main purpose is to bring reforms in the education system
- Establishment of NTA will free CBSE, AICTE and other agencies from conducting various exams and enable them to focus on their core areas and work on improving the quality of education
- Initially, the CBSE staff will be deployed in this department and but later on the specialised people will be hired in the NTA.

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## NATIONAL VIRTUAL LIBRARY OF INDIA

### GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development

#### Why in News?

- National Virtual Library of India (NVLI) is a major project set up by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India, under the National Mission on Libraries (NML).

#### Highlights:

- The objective of National Virtual Library of India (NVLI) is to facilitate creation of a comprehensive database on digital resources of India on information about India in an open access environment.
- The main goal of this project is to create, collect, encode, and collate various digital artifacts related to Indian culture, in the form of a portal, and to allow relevant information access through web-based search.
- This project is an important part of the larger vision of putting information of the entire Indian cultural heritage in the digital web world.

#### Vision of NVLI:

- Allowing easy access to digital information present in the form of books, texts, videos, audios, and similar artifacts in multiple languages
- Collecting, combining, and standardizing all available digital assets in an easily searchable form.
- Educating people to use the NVLI portal and enabling them to contribute by submitting digital artifacts
- Ensuring preservation of digital content for the future generation

#### Salient features of NVLI are:

- Federated searching through multilingual user interfaces
- Virtual learning environment
- E-Governance platform facilitating data analytics
- Multilingual searching and retrieval on ontology/thesaurus based
- The project of creation of National Virtual Library of India had been entrusted to IIT Bombay (in collaboration with C-DAC, Pune and IGNOU, Delhi). The Ministry of Culture continuously monitors the progress of the NVLI project.

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## DRAFT NATIONAL RIVER GANGA BILL, 2018

### GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development

#### Why in News?

- Draft of “The National River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Bill 2018” provides for the constitution of Ganga Protection Corps as an armed force of the union.

#### Highlights of the bill:

- The government has banned the construction of jetties, ports or “permanent hydraulic structures” in the Ganga, unless permitted by the National Ganga Rejuvenation Authority.
- Proposes to create a management structure that will supervise the health of the 2,500-kilometre long Ganga which, the draft Bill defines, as ‘India’s national river.’
- It lays down a host of restrictions to ensure the uninterrupted, ecological flow of the river.
- The proposed legislation specifies that “unauthorised” activities that cause obstruction or discontinuity of water in the River Ganga due to engineered diversion of water or stoppage of water could be liable to a prison term of 3 years or fines upto ₹50 crore, or both.
- The Ganga Protection Corps is proposed to be empowered to arrest or caused to be arrested for offence under the Act, and to take the person to the nearest police station. The Court would take cognizance of the offence on the basis of the complaint filed by the officers who are authorized under the proposed Act.
- The draft Act contemplates certain provisions conferring powers to the “National Council for Rejuvenation, Protection and Management of River Ganga” [National Ganga Council] to arrange to carry out or caused to be carried out impact assessment of certain projects and activities which affect or are likely to affect the flow of water in river Ganga, such as building barrages, deforestation on hill slopes, hydroelectric projects etc.

#### National Ganga Council:

- The National Ganga Council will be overall responsible for the superintendence, direction, development and control of River Ganga and the entire River Basin (including financial and administrative matters) for the protection, prevention, control and abatement of environmental pollution in River Ganga and its rejuvenation to its natural and pristine



condition and to ensure continuous adequate flow of water in the River Ganga and for matters connected therewith.

## **JAN DHAN DARSHAK APP**

### **GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development**

#### **Why in news?**

- Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance and National Informatics Centre (NIC) has jointly developed a mobile app called Jan Dhan Darshak as a part of financial inclusion (FI) initiative.

#### **Jan Dhan Darshak App:**

- As the name suggests, this app will act as a guide for the common people in locating a financial service touch point at a given location in the country.
- will be in a unique position to provide a citizen centric platform for locating financial service touch points across all providers such as banks, post office, CSC, etc.
- These services could be availed as per the needs and convenience of the common people.

#### **Salient features of this App:**

- Find nearby Financial touch points, based on current location (Branches/ATM/Post offices)
- Search by place name
- Search by place name also available with Voice Interface
- Phone number of bank branches available in app, with the facility of call button for integrated dialing
- Users' feedback will go directly to the concerned bank for carrying out the necessary updation in data on financial touch points.

#### **Significance of the App:**

- Financial inclusion
- Digital literacy
- Reach out to end beneficiaries
- Transparency in financial transactions
- Bridging rural urban divide

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## INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL SERVICES CENTRES AUTHORITY BILL, 2019

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

### Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet has approved establishment of a unified authority for regulating all financial services in International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) in India through International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019.
- The first IFSC in India has been set up at GIFT City, Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

### Highlights:

- An IFSC enables bringing back the financial services and transactions that are currently carried out in offshore financial centers by Indian corporate entities.
- They offer business and regulatory environment that is comparable to other leading international financial centers in the world like London and Singapore.
- Currently, the banking, capital markets and insurance sectors in IFSC are regulated by multiple regulators, i.e. RBI, SEBI and IRDAI.
- It requires regular clarifications and frequent amendments in the existing regulations governing financial activities in IFSCs.
- The development of financial services and products in IFSCs would require focussed and dedicated regulatory interventions.
- It provides world class regulatory environment to financial market participants.

### Significance:

- The establishment of a unified financial regulator for IFSCs will result in providing world-class regulatory environment to market participants from an ease of doing business perspective.
- This will provide a stimulus for further development of IFSCs in India and enable bringing back of financial services and transactions that are currently carried out in offshore financial centres to India.
- This would also generate significant employment in the IFSCs in particular as well as financial sector in India as a whole.

## Features of IFSC Authority Bill, 2019:

- The Authority shall consist of a Chairperson, one Member each to be nominated by the RBI, the Securities Exchange Board of India SEBI, the IRDAI and the PFRDA.
- Two members are to be dominated by the Central Government and two other whole-time or full-time or part-time members.
- The Authority shall regulate all such financial services, financial products and FIs in an IFSC which has already been permitted by the Financial Sector Regulators for IFSCs.
- The Authority shall also regulate such other financial products, financial services or FIs as may be notified by the Central Government from time to time.
- It may also recommend to the Central Government such other financial products, financial services and financial institutions which may be permitted in the IFSCs
- All powers exercisable by the respective financial sector regulatory (viz. RBI, SEBI, IRDAI, and PFRDA etc.) under the respective Acts shall be solely exercised by the Authority in the IFSCs.
- This is so far as the regulation of financial products, financial services and FIs that are permitted in the IFSC are concerned.
- The Central Govt. may, after due appropriation made by Parliament by law in this behalf, make to the Authority grants of such sums of money as the Central Government may think fit for being utilized for the purposes of the Authority.
- The transactions of financial services in the IFSCs shall be done in the foreign.

## **NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF MICRO MISSIONS OF NATIONAL POLICE MISSION**

### **GS 2: Governance | Government policies and intervention**

#### **Why in News?**

- The conference will discuss the issues of Skills and Competence at the grass-root level, Attitudinal Changes in Police, Gender Sensitization, harnessing technology and Community Policing.

#### **National Police Mission:**

- The National Police Mission (NPM) was announced in the year 2005 to transform the Police Forces in the country into effective instruments for maintenance of internal security

and challenges of the next century, by equipping them with the necessary material, intellectual and organisational resources and to create a “New Vision” for the Indian police.

- The objective of this Mission is to prepare the police forces for emerging challenges, to bring about specialization in areas like counter terrorism, counter insurgency, cyber and economic crimes, strengthen the metropolitan and rural policing, to bring in attitudinal changes in police by transforming the ‘force psychology’ into ‘service psychology, harness technology in aid of policing and to adopt community policing and ensure effective delivery of services to the citizens.

### **Famous projects of the National Police Mission (NPM):**

- NPM has developed 35 projects; some important among them are
  - ✓ Transparent Recruitment Process
  - ✓ Police- Community Policing
  - ✓ **Student Police Cadet Programme** (this project aims to develop a well-disciplined socially committed young generation of youth through submission to law, practised as a way of life by creating an action force comprising both girl and boy cadets who stay ever ready for rendering their services to the Nation
  - ✓ B-Trac (Technology-driven Traffic Management System)
  - ✓ Dial 100 – Integrated Emergency Response System,
  - ✓ Cyberdome
  - ✓ Pre-litigation Counseling Forum
  - ✓ Review and Implementation of Rules and Processes for the Internal Management of Prisons and Prisoners

## **ABOLITION OF INCOME-TAX OMBUDSMAN AND INDIRECT TAX OMBUDSMAN**

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

### **Why in News?**

- The Union Cabinet chaired by PM has approved the proposal for Abolition of Institution of Income-Tax Ombudsman and Indirect Tax Ombudsman.

## Highlights:

- It is an Independent body comprises of former tax officials or Indian Revenue Service Officials formed by the Government, empowered to address and settle tax payer's grievances.
- The Ombudsman is governed by, and has to comply with the Income Tax Ombudsman Guidelines, 2006.
- At present, the Government has set-up Tax Ombudsman at 12 cities namely New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Kanpur, Chandigarh, Pune, Kochi, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Bhopal. The Institution of Income-Tax Ombudsman was created in the year 2003 to deal with grievances of public related to settlement of complaints relating to Income Tax. However, the Institution of Ombudsman failed to achieve its objectives.
- It was observed that institution of new complaints has in turn fallen to single digits.
- Also, tax payers started preferring alternate methods of grievance redressal like CPGRAMS (Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System), Aaykar Seva Kendras etc.

## MANAGEMENT OF GROUND WATER

### GS 2: Governance | Government policies and intervention

#### Why in News?

- CGWB has been entrusted with the responsibilities of developing & disseminating technologies, monitoring national policies for the scientific and sustainable development and management of India's ground water resources.

#### Highlights:

- It periodically takes up various studies which include ground water management studies, exploratory drilling programmes, monitoring ground water level and water quality through a network of ground water observation wells etc.
- The result collected is shared with the concerned States for taking up suitable ground water specific interventions.

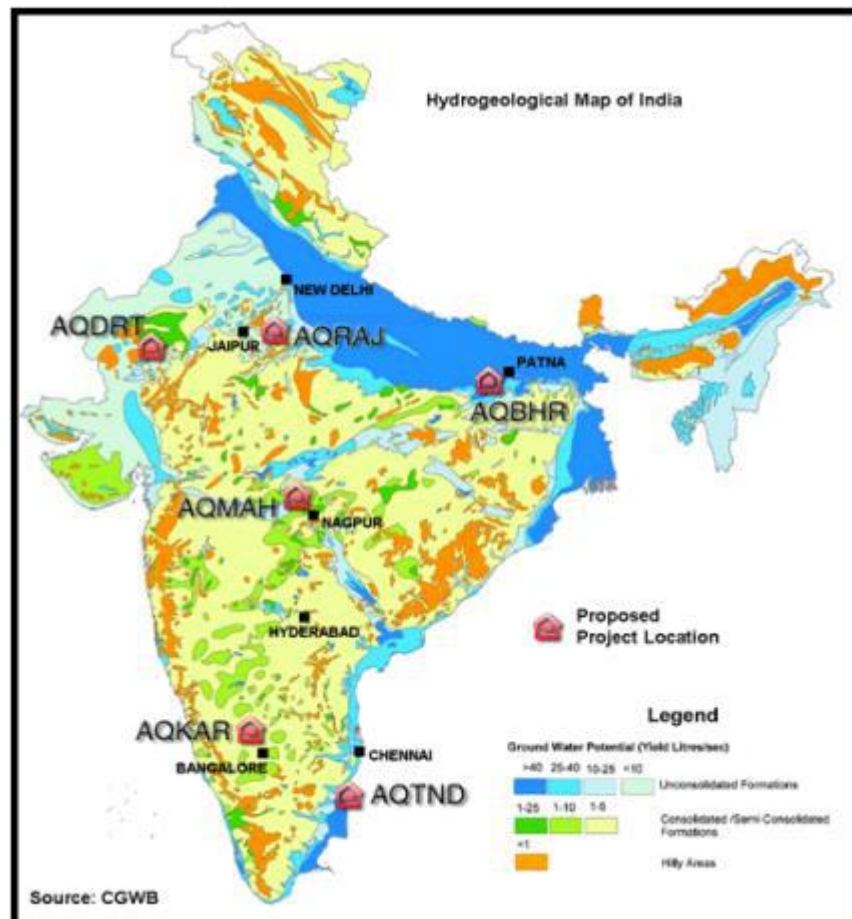
#### National Aquifer Mapping and Management Programme (NAQUIM):

- The NAQUIM is an initiative of the Ministry of Water Resources for mapping and managing the entire aquifer systems in the country.

- It maintains the Hydrogeological Map of India.
- It was initiated as a part of the Ground Water Management and Regulation scheme to delineate and characterize the aquifers to develop plans for ground water management.

### Objectives:

- It aims:
  - ✓ to identify and map aquifers at the micro level,
  - ✓ to quantify the available groundwater resources, and
  - ✓ to propose plans appropriate to the scale of demand and aquifer characteristics, and institutional arrangements for participatory management
- The AQUIM project is implemented in six selected areas in different hydrogeological environs of the country as shown below:



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## MERA ASPATAAL APPLICATION

### GS 2: Governance | Important aspects of governance, transparency and accountability

#### Why in News?

- The Mera Aspataal Initiative was launched precisely to find a mechanism to gauge patient reaction to the services offered in the hospital and help improve the services by taking corrective measures.

#### Highlights:

- The ranking of Hospitals in the Mera Aspataal Application for the facilities is done on the basis of Patient Satisfaction Score (PSS).
- The PSS is calculated as weighted average of number of satisfied and dissatisfied patients based on the feedback collected in a particular facility.
- The ranking keeps changing every month based on the feedback received from the patients. National Institute Ranking Framework of Ministry of Human Resource Development, AIIMS, Delhi has been ranked as number one institute.
- As per performance analysis report of Mera Aspataal for period Sept-2016 to Jan-2019, 24 per cent of patients were dissatisfied with the services offered at the public health facilities. Major Reasons for dissatisfaction were staff behavior, cost of treatment & cleanliness issues and other reasons like, long waiting time, overcrowding, inadequate information, lack of amenities, etc.
- The patients' feedback including, areas requiring improvement are shared with the respective State Govts. and Central Govt. hospitals for ensuring remedial follow-up actions.

## GOVT. GRANTS DIVISIONAL STATUS TO LADAKH

### GS 2: Governance | Development processes

#### Why in News?

- Jammu and Kashmir Governor has granted Ladakh a divisional status, thus creating three administrative units of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh in the State.

#### The Ladakh Division:

- The J&K government has approved the creation of a separate administrative and revenue division for Ladakh.

- It will comprise Leh and Kargil districts, with headquarters at Leh.
- Earlier, Ladakh was a part of the Kashmir division.
- Ladakh will now get its own Divisional Commissioner and Inspector General of Police.
- Ladakh's Kargil and Leh districts already have separate hill development councils for local administrative powers.
- The move leaves the Kashmir valley geographically the smallest division at 15,948 sq. km, Jammu division at 26,293 sq. km and Ladakh, the biggest division, at 86,909 sq. km.
- The remoteness and inaccessibility of the area makes it eligible for establishing a separate division.
- During the winter months, the entire Ladakh region remains cut-off from the rest of the country for almost six months.
- A section in Leh also has been demanding Union Territory status.

## NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON UNANI MEDICINE

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

**Prelims Level: Unani Medicine**

### Why in news?

- Two-day Conference on Unani Medicine for Public Health inaugurated. Organized by the Central Council for Research in Unani Medicine (CCRUM) as a part of 3rd Unani Day celebration here in New Delhi
- To pay tribute to Hakim Ajmal Khan, whose birth anniversary is celebrated as Unani Day on 11th February every year
- **Theme: 'Unani Medicine for Public Health'**

### Unani Medicine:

- Ibn-e- Sina popularly known as Avicenna, one of the greatest scholars of Unani Tibb (medicine), has defined Unani Medicine as "It is the science in which we learn various states of body in health and when not in health and the means by which health is likely to be lost and when lost, is likely to be restored".
- Unani-tibb or Unani Medicine is a form of traditional medicine practiced in Middle- East and South-Asian countries. It refers to a tradition of Graeco-Arabic medicine, which is



based on the teachings of Greek physician Hippocrates and Roman physician Galen and developed into an elaborate medical system in middle age era by Arabian and Persian physicians, such as Rhazes (al-Razi), Avicenna (Ibn-e- Sina), Al-Zahrawi, and Ibn Nafis.

- It originated in Greece almost 2500 years back, which is herbo- animo- mineral in origin (Approximately 90% herbal, 4-5% animal and 5-6 % mineral).
- It is not only the original science of medicine but also a rich store house of principles and philosophies of medicine which can be of immense value to the medicine in particular and science in general.

## **CULTURAL HERITAGE YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME (CHYLP)**

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

**Prelims Level: CHYLP Programme**

### **Why in news?**

- Information was given by Minister of State (independent charge) for Culture, in reply to an Unstarred Question in the Lok Sabha.

### **CHYLP Programme:**

- The scheme for Cultural Heritage Youth Leadership Programme (CHYLP) envisaged enriching awareness of Indian culture and heritage amongst the youth in order to promote, understand and develop fondness for India's rich cultural heritage, with a view to develop appropriate leadership qualities amongst youth.
- The focus of the programme was to be on less privileged children residing in backward areas by interacting with them in vernacular languages for their better understanding.
- Intermittently programme was given to Centre for Cultural Resources and Training (CCRT), an autonomous organization working under the purview of Ministry of Culture.
- CCRT organized workshops for the scheme. However, to accelerate the process, Museum Division of this Ministry arranged visits of children of unprivileged section of society to museums so that these children may get an opportunity to gain the knowledge relating to the Indian History and Culture and Science.

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## RECONSTITUTION OF INDIAN COUNCIL OF HISTORICAL RESEARCH (ICHR)

**GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development**

### Why in News?

- The Government has reconstituted the Indian Council of Historical Research (ICHR), New Delhi for a period of three years till 2022.

### Indian Council of Historical Research:

- The ICHR is an autonomous body of the HRD Ministry, which had been established by an Administrative Order of the then Ministry of Education.
- The body has provided financial assistance to the historians and direction to the research scholars in their multifarious topics of historical research through established historians and scholars of the country.
- ICHR disburses funds for carrying out research to Indian as well as foreign scholars on their applications for fellowships, grants, and symposia.

### Objectives:

- The objectives of the ICHR, as enunciated in the initial pamphlet published by the Department of Education, Government of India in 1972 are as under:
- to bring historians together and provide a forum for exchange of views between them;
- to give a national direction to an objective and scientific writing of history and to have rational presentation and interpretation of history;
- to promote, accelerate and coordinate research in history with special emphasis on areas which have not received adequate attention so far;
- to promote and coordinated a balanced distribution of research effort over different areas; and to elicit support and recognition for historical research from all concerned and ensure the necessary dissemination and use of results.

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## CONSTITUTIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE MEASURES TO PROTECT AND SAFEGUARD LAND RIGHTS OF STS

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

### Why in News?

- The Scheduled Tribes (STs) have been the most marginalized, isolated and deprived population.
- To protect and safeguarding the land rights and other rights of Scheduled Tribes, following constitutional and legislative measure have been put in place:

### Forest Rights:

- The Recognition of Forest Rights Act, 2006 to recognize and vest the forest rights and occupation in forest land to forest dwelling Scheduled Tribes.

### Fair Compensation:

- Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 safeguards against displacement of Scheduled Tribes.
- Special provisions have been made for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes under Sections 41 and 42 of the Act, which protect their interests. The RFCTLARR Act, 2013 also lays down procedure and manner of rehabilitation and resettlement.

### PESA Act:

- The Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 , provides that the Gram Sabha or the Panchayats at the appropriate level shall be consulted before making the acquisition of land in the Scheduled Areas. The actual planning and implementation of the projects in the Scheduled Areas shall be coordinated at the State Level.

### Fifth Schedule:

- Constitutional provisions under Schedule - V provide for safeguards against displacement of tribal population because of land acquisitions etc. The Governor of the State, having scheduled Areas, is empowered to prohibit or restrict transfer of land from tribals and regulate the allotment of land to members of the Scheduled Tribes in such cases. Land

being a State subject, various provisions of rehabilitation and resettlement as per the RFCTLARR Act, 2013 are implemented by the concerned State Governments.

### Legal Services:

- The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 provides for legal services to members of Scheduled Tribes.

### Prevention of Atrocities Act:

- The SCs and the STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989" has been introduced to prevent the commission of offences of atrocities.
- It aims to provide for the trial of such offences and for the relief of rehabilitation of the victims of such offences and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.
- Wrongfully dispossessing members of SCs and STs from their land or premises or interfering with the enjoyment of their rights, including forest rights, over any land or premises or water or irrigation facilities or destroying the crops or taking away the produce there from amount to atrocities and are offence.

### **CINEMATOGRAPH (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2019**

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

#### **Why in News?**

- The union government has introduced a bill in the Rajya Sabha to amend the Cinematograph Act and impose strict penalty to combat the menace of film piracy.

#### **Cinematograph (Amendment) Bill, 2019:**

- The Bill seeks to amend provisions of Cinematograph Act, 1952, in order to tackle film piracy by including penal provisions for unauthorized camcording and duplication of films. It aims to check piracy, particularly the release of pirated versions of films on the internet that causes huge losses to the film industry and the exchequer.
- The bill proposes to make film piracy offences punishable with imprisonment of up to three years and fines that may extend to ₹10 lakh or both. The proposed amendment states that any person, who without the written authorisation of the copyright owner, uses any recording device to make or transmit a copy of a film, or attempts to do so, or abet the making or transmission of such a copy, will be liable for such a punishment.

## Expected Outcomes:

- The film industry has been demanding for a long time that the government consider amendments to the law preventing camcording and piracy.
- The proposed amendments would increase industry revenues, boost job creation, fulfil important objectives of India's National Intellectual Property policy.
- It will give relief against piracy and infringing content online.

### **e-AUSHADHI PORTAL**

## **GS 2: Governance | Issues relating to development & management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health etc**

### **Prelims level: e-AUSHADHI Portal**

#### **Why in News?**

- Ministry of State (IC) for AYUSH, launched the e-AUSHADHI portal, for online licensing of Ayurveda, Siddha, Unani and Homoeopathy drugs and related matters at New Delhi.

#### **Significance:**

- e-AUSHADHI portal is intended for increased transparency, improved information management facility, improved data usability and increased accountability.
- Timelines will be fixed for processing of application through this portal with SMS and e-mail status updates at each step of the process.
- It will provide real-time information of the licensed manufactures and their products, cancelled and spurious drugs, contact details of the concerned authority for specific grievances.

### **NATIONAL POLICY FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS (DRAFT)**

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

### **Prelims Level: National Policy for Domestic Workers (draft)**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Central Government has not enacted any separate law to protect the interest of domestic workers. However, the Ministry of Labour & Employment is considering formulating a National Policy on Domestic Workers which is in the draft stage.

## Highlights:

- The salient features of the proposed draft National Policy on Domestic Workers are as under:
  - ✓ Inclusion of Domestic Workers in the existing legislations
  - ✓ Domestic workers will have the right to register as unorganized workers. Such registration will facilitate their access to rights & benefits.
  - ✓ Right to form their own associations/unions
  - ✓ Right to minimum wages, access to social security
  - ✓ Right to enhance their skills
  - ✓ Protection of Domestic Workers from abuse and exploitation
  - ✓ Domestic Workers to have access to courts, tribunals for grievance redressal
  - ✓ Establishment of a mechanism for regulation of private placement agencies
  - ✓ Establishment of a grievance redressal system for domestic workers.

## Background:

- The Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 has been enacted for providing social security to all unorganized workers including domestic workers.
- The Act provides the formulation of social security schemes viz life and disability cover, health and maternity benefits & old age protection.
- The State Governments are mandated under the Unorganized Workers' Social Security Act, 2008 to formulate suitable welfare schemes for the unorganized sector workers including domestic workers relating to provident fund, employment injury benefits housing, education schemes for children, skill up gradation of workers, financial assistance & old age homes.

## SATH-E Project

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

#### Prelims Level: SATH-E Project

#### Why in News?

- Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E) Project implemented by NITI Aayog.

## The SATH-E:

- An initiative in based on formal agreements with the States and will be funded through a cost-sharing mechanism between NITI Aayog and the participating states.
- The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Piramal Foundation for Education Leadership (PFEL) were chosen as knowledge partners for the project facilitating review, data collection and implementation.
- It aims to transform elementary and secondary school education.
- SATH-E roadmap refers to a time-bound, goal-driven exercise that will reach its logical culmination by the end of the academic year 2020.
- It envisages the entire governmental school education system responsive, aspirational and transformational for every child
- SATH-E aims to create role model States for education and mainstream 'islands of excellence' across the country to facilitate qualitative and quantitative transformation of learning outcomes. Marrying technology with need-based, data-driven assessment and a 'giving it what it takes' approach – be it innovation, incubation, external third party funding and Public- Private- Philanthropic Partnership (PPPP) experimentation – SATH-E puts the States in the driver's seat to transform education at scale.

## KUSUM SCHEME

### GS 2: Governance | Government policies & Schemes

#### Prelims Level: KUSUM Scheme

#### Why in News?

- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy has formulated a Scheme 'Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM)'.

#### KUSUM scheme:

- Installation of grid-connected solar power plants each of Capacity up to 2 MW in the rural areas. Installation of standalone off-grid solar water pumps to fulfil irrigation needs of farmers not connected to grid. solarisation of existing grid-connected agriculture pumps to make farmers independent of grid supply and also enable them to sell surplus solar power generated to DISCOM and get extra income.
- solarization of tube-wells and lift irrigation projects of Government sector.

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## CREDIT LINKED CAPITAL SUBSIDY AND TECHNOLOGY UP-GRADATION SCHEME (CLCS-TUS)

### GS 2: Governance | Government policies & Schemes

#### Why in News?

- Cabinet approves continuation of Credit Linked Capital Subsidy and Technology Up-gradation Scheme (CLCS-TUS) beyond 12th Plan for three years from 2017-18 to 2019-20

#### Highlights:

- The scheme aims at improving the competitiveness of MSMEs by integrating various ongoing schematic interventions.
- Scheme aims at improving the competitiveness of MSMEs by integrating various ongoing schematic interventions.
  - ✓ Hand holding for zero defect zero effect manufacturing (ZED).
  - ✓ Increasing productivity through waste reduction (Lean)
  - ✓ Design intervention (Design)
  - ✓ Cloud computing (Digital MSMEs)
  - ✓ Facilitation of intellectual property (IPR)
  - ✓ Nurturing new ideas (Incubation)
- Special provisions have been made in this scheme to promote entrepreneurship for SC/STs, women
- The scheme through Zero Defect & Zero Effect, component will promote reduction in emission level of greenhouse gases and and improve the competitiveness through reduction in defect / wastage during the manufacturing process of the products.
- It will also promote the innovation, digital empowerment of MSMEs, design interventions and support the protection of intellectual property of MSMEs.

#### Benefits:

- The scheme will facilitate technology up-gradation to MSEs
- Improvement in Quality of products by MSMEs,
- Enhancement in productivity,
- Reduction in waste and
- It shall promote a culture of continuous improvement.



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## **FIXING NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE**

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

### **Why in News?**

- Expert Committee Submits its Report on Determining Methodology for Fixing National Minimum Wage.

### **Highlights:**

- There have been several developments since the norms for the fixation of the minimum wages were recommended by the 15th ILC in 1957 and subsequently strengthened by the judgement of the Supreme Court in the judgement of Workmen v Reptakos Brett & Co. case in 1992. The Ministry of Labour and Employment had constituted an expert committee on January 2017, under the Chairmanship Dr. Anoop Satpathy, Fellow, V. V. Giri National Labour Institute (VVGNI) to review and recommend methodology for fixation of National Minimum Wage (NMW).
- The Expert Committee had the mandate to examine and review the norms and methodology for fixation of national minimum wage; and determine the base level National minimum wage/wages through an evidence-based approach.

### **About the report:**

- The report using scientific approach has updated the methodological framework of fixation of minimum wages based on the overall guidelines of the ILC 1957 and the Supreme Court Judgment of Workmen v Reptakos Brett & Co. in 1992.
- The report has undertaken a rigorous and meticulous analysis and has generated a large amount of evidence relating to changes in the demographic structure, consumption pattern and nutritional intakes, the composition of food baskets and the relative importance of non-food consumption items to address the realities in the Indian context by using official data made available by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO).

### **Recommended Nutritional intake:**

- Using the nutritional requirement norms as recommended by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for Indian population, the report has recommended a balanced diet approach which is culturally palatable for fixation of national minimum wage.

- Accordingly, it has proposed that food items amounting to the level of  $\pm 10$  per cent of 2,400 calories, along with proteins  $\geq 50$  gm and fats  $\geq 30$  gm per day per person to constitute a national level balanced food basket.

### **Committee recommendations:**

- On the basis of the aforesaid approach, the report has recommended to fix the need based national minimum wage for India at INR 375 per day (or INR 9,750 per month) as of July 2018, irrespective of sectors, skills, occupations and rural-urban locations for a family comprising of 3.6 consumption unit.
- It has also recommended to introduce an additional house rent allowance (city compensatory allowance), averaging up to INR 55 per day i.e., INR 1,430 per month for urban workers over and above the NMW.
- Apart from proposing the level of a single national minimum wage at an all-India level, the report has also estimated and recommended different national minimum wages for different geographical regions of the country to suit the local realities and as per socio-economic and labour market contexts.
- For the purpose of estimating national minimum wages at regional levels it has grouped the states into five regions based on a composite index.

## **PMAY (U) MOBILE APPLICATION**

### **GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development**

#### **Why in News?**

- Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched PMAY (U) Mobile App.

#### **Highlights:**

- The App will allow beneficiaries to capture and upload high resolution photographs of completed houses along with their families.
- It will also allow uploading of selfies of beneficiaries with their house and a 30 – 60 seconds video clip where beneficiaries share their stories of owning a house under PMAY (U). A one-minute film showcasing the impact of PMAY(U) in the lives of beneficiaries was also released.
- The film narrates, how PMAY (U) is contributing in transforming the lives of all Indians starting from Kashmir to Kerala and empowering them from different walks of life.

- It has encapsulated the journeys and emotions of families belonging to different regions of the country who feel connected with a common feeling i.e. the pride of owning their dream house through PMAY (U).

### PMAY (U):

- The PMAY (U) mission was launched on 25th June 2015
- It aims to provide houses to every eligible urban household in India by the year 2022.
- The Mission seeks to address the housing requirement of urban poor including slum dwellers through following programme verticals:
- Slum rehabilitation of Slum Dwellers with participation of private developers using land as a resource
- Promotion of Affordable Housing for weaker section through credit linked subsidy
- Affordable Housing in Partnership with Public & Private sectors
- Subsidy for beneficiary-led individual house construction /enhancement.

## ECO CIRCUIT

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

#### Why in News?

- Union Minister for Tourism will be inaugurating the project 'Development of Eco Circuit: Pathanamthitta - Gavi - Vagamon - Thekkady' in Kerala under the Swadesh Darshan scheme.

#### Highlights:

- Major works carried out under the project includes Eco Adventure Tourism Park at Vagamon, Cultural Centre at Kadamanitta, Eco Log Huts at Peerumedu, Idukki, Approach Roads, Walking trails, Rain Shelters at Pine Valley Forest, Thekkady, Kumily, Moozhiyar Dam, Penstock and Kakki Dam.

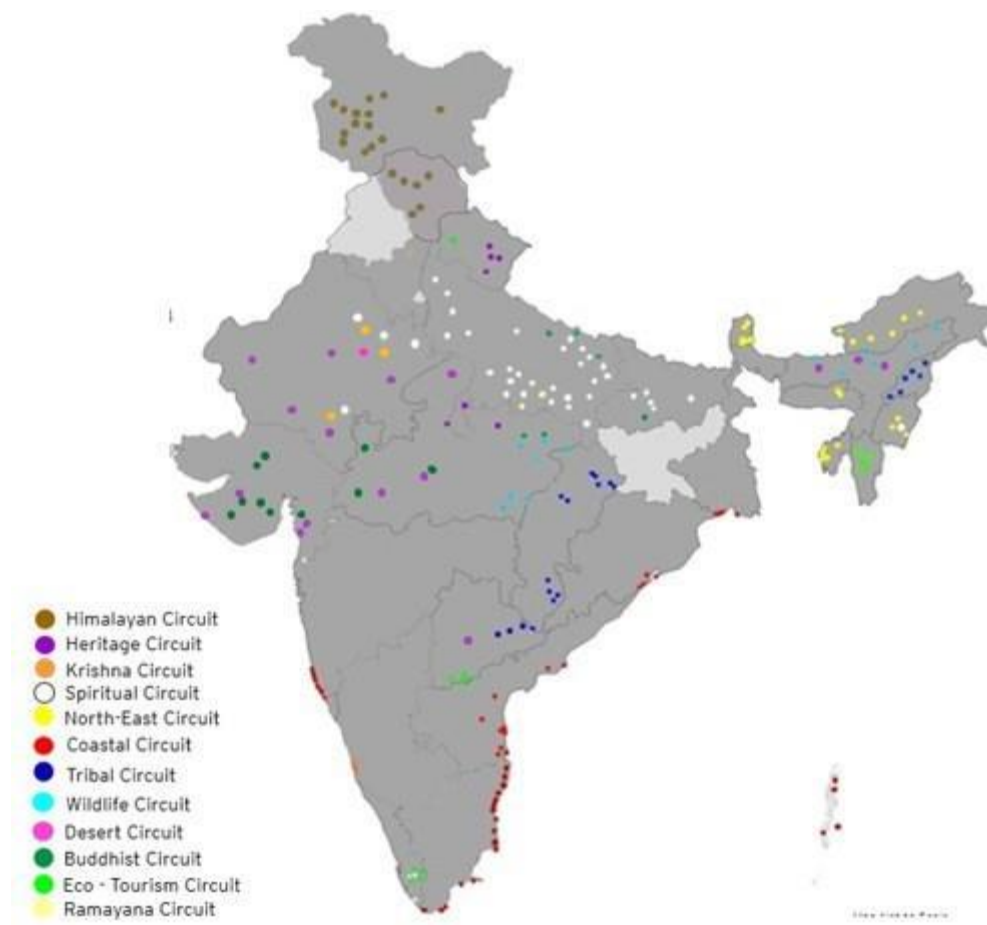
#### Eco Circuit project:

- Eco Circuit is one of the fifteen thematic circuits identified for development under Swadesh Darshan Scheme- Integrated development of theme- based tourist circuits in the country. The Eco tourism circuit aims at creating a positive interface between tourists and

nature. For the global and domestic tourists to appreciate the diverse eco-tourism products in India, the circuit aims to create nature and environment friendly destinations.

### List of 15 themes:

- Buddhist, Coastal, Desert, Eco, Heritage, Himalayan, Krishna, North East, Ramayana, Rural, Spiritual, Sufi, Tirthankar, Tribal, Wildlife.



## DEENDAYAL DISABLED REHABILITATION SCHEME (DDRS)

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

### Why in News?

- For the overall empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), a “Regional Conference on Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme (DDRS)” is being organized by the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India at Kolkata.

## Highlights:

- It will cover 13 States of Eastern & North Eastern region namely West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim & Tripura.
- The stakeholders i.e. the NGOs receiving grant under DDRS, State Government Officers & District level officers will be participating.
- The objectives of the Conference are to disseminate the provisions of the revised scheme and to sensitize various stakeholders about it.
- This conference also provides a unique opportunity for interactions amongst all stakeholders.
- The conference would ensure exchange of cross-sectoral views on the aspects of the efficacy of the scheme as well as the scope of improvements in it.

## Deendayal Disabled Rehabilitation Scheme:

### Objective:

- To create an enabling environment to ensure equal opportunities, equity, social justice and empowerment of persons with disabilities
- To encourage voluntary action for ensuring effective implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016.

### Approach:

- The approach of this Scheme is to provide financial assistance to voluntary organizations to make available the whole range of services necessary for rehabilitation of persons with disabilities including early intervention, development of daily living skills, education, skill-development oriented towards employability, training and awareness generation. With a view to inclusion of persons with disabilities in the mainstream of society and actualizing their potential, the thrust would be on education and training programmes.

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## **CHARTERING UNDER REVISED GUIDELINES - SHIPS BUILT IN INDIA TO GET PRIORITY**

### **GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development**

#### **Why in News?**

- The government has revised guidelines for chartering of ships by providing the right-of-first-refusal to ships built within the country, a move to Ships built in India to get priority in chartering under revised guidelines and to promote the Make in India initiative and incentivise shipbuilding activity.
- Earlier, the right of first refusal was reserved for Indian flag vessels as per relevant provisions of the Merchant Shipping Act 1958.

#### **Highlights:**

- Now when a tendering process is undertaken to charter a vessel, a bidder offering a ship built in India will be given the first priority to match L1 quote.
- It is expected that the initiative will increase the demand for such vessels, providing them with additional market access and business support.
- The review is also in line with the need to give a long term strategic boost to the domestic shipbuilding industry.
- The shipping ministry has also laid down eligibility conditions and rules for exercise of the RoFR.
- One of the rules says: "The RoFR would be exercised only in case the vessel being offered for charter by the lowest bidder has been built outside India."
- The government has taken several steps to promote shipbuilding in India, especially by providing long-term subsidy under the Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy (2016-2026).
- Budgetary provision of ₹30 crore was earmarked in 2018-19 for providing financial assistance to all Indian shipyards, excluding Defence Shipyards.
- An amount of ₹11.89 crore has already been disbursed to three shipyards.

## GOVT ISSUES GUIDELINES TO SET UP EV CHARGING STATIONS

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

### Why in News?

- In line with the 2030 deadline of 25 percent of vehicles in India to be all-electric, the government has issued new guidelines for strengthening the country EV infrastructure.

### Highlights:

- The MoHUA has made amendments to the Model Building Byelaws (MBBL) 2016 and Urban Regional Development Plans Formulation and Implementation (URDPFI) Guidelines 2014, making provisions for establishing EV charging infrastructure.
- The guidelines will act as a guiding document to the state governments and UTs to incorporate the norms and standards of such vehicles in their respective building byelaws.

### Charging Stations:

- It has issued a set of guidelines to set up charging stations for electric vehicles across the country, outlining ways to build such fuelling points every 25 km.
- For long range and heavy-duty electric vehicles, there should be at least one station on each side of the highway every 100 kilometers. The government has also advocated for charging points in residential areas. It also stated a public charging station should be on both sides of the highways or roads on every 25 km.

## 112 HELPLINE UNDER THE ERSS LAUNCHED IN 16 STATES AND UTS

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

### Why in News?

- The 112 helpline which was earlier launched in Himachal Pradesh and Nagaland was launched in 16 states and UTs by Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh under the Emergency Response Support System (ERSS).

### Highlights:

- The 16 states and Union Territories where the helpline was launched were Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh,

Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Puducherry, Lakshadweep, Andaman, Dadar & Nagar Haveli, Daman & Diu and Jammu & Kashmir.

### **Emergency Response Support System (ERSS):**

- The Emergency Response Support System (ERSS) integrates police (100), fire (101) and women (1090) helpline numbers into a single 112 helpline number and the process is on to integrate the health emergency number (108) soon.
- To access the ERSS, a person can dial 112 on a phone.
- The person can also press the power button of a smartphone three times quickly to send a panic call to the Emergency Response Centre or long press the '5' or '9' key to activate the panic call from the normal phone.
- The ERSS can also be accessed through '112' India mobile app, which is available free on Google Play Store and Apple Store or log onto the ERSS website for the respective state and send an emergency email or SOS alert to State Emergency Response Centre.

### **NATIONAL POLICY ON ELECTRONICS 2019**

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

#### **Why in News?**

- The Union Cabinet on February 19, 2019 approved the National Policy on Electronics 2019 (NPE 2019), proposed by the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- The 2019 Policy on Electronics proposes to propel the growth of Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) industry in the country. It replaces the National Policy of Electronics 2012 (NPE 2012).

#### **Objective:**

- The Policy aims to position India as a global hub for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) by encouraging and driving capabilities for developing core components and creating an enabling environment for the industry to compete globally.

#### **National Policy on Electronics 2019:**

- Create eco-system for globally competitive ESDM sector by promoting domestic manufacturing and export in the entire value-chain of ESDM



- Provide incentives and support for manufacturing of core electronic components
- Provide special package of incentives for mega projects which are extremely high-tech and entail huge investments, such as semiconductor facilities display fabrication, etc.
- Formulate suitable schemes and incentive mechanisms to encourage new units and expansion of existing units
- Promote Industry-led R&D and innovation in all sub-sectors of electronics such as 5G, IoT/ Sensors, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning, Virtual Reality (VR), Drones, Robotics, Additive Manufacturing, Photonics, Nano-based devices, etc
- Provide incentives and support for significantly enhancing availability of skilled manpower
- Special thrust on Fabless Chip Design Industry, Medical Electronic Devices Industry, Automotive Electronics Industry and Power Electronics for Mobility and Strategic Electronics Industry
- Create Sovereign Patent Fund (SPF) to promote the development and acquisition of IPs in ESDM sector. Promote trusted electronics value chain initiatives to improve national cyber security profile. The Policy will lead to the formulation of several schemes, initiatives, projects and measures for the development of ESDM sector in the country.

### **Targets and Significance:**

- The scheme targets to promote domestic manufacturing and export in the entire value-chain of ESDM for economic development to achieve a turnover of USD 400 billion by 2025.
- This will include targeted production of 1.0 billion (100 crore) mobile handsets by 2025 valued at USD 190 billion, including 600 million (60 crore) mobile handsets valued at USD 110 billion for export.
- The NPE 2019 will lead to formulation of several schemes, initiatives, and projects in consultation with the concerned Ministries and Departments for the development of ESDM sector in the country.
- It will enable flow of investment and technology, leading to higher value addition in the domestically manufactured electronic products, increased electronics hardware manufacturing in the country and their export.

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## **NATIONAL SURVEY ON EXTENT AND PATTERN OF SUBSTANCE USE IN INDIA**

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

### **Why in News?**

- An addiction plague has steadily swallowed India a/c to a study conducted by the National Drug Dependence Treatment Centre (NDDTC) of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).
- The study, named “National Survey on Extent and Pattern of Substance Use in India” is a first of its kind as it gives pan-India and state-level data.

### **National Survey on Extent and Pattern of Substance Use in India:**

- The survey report, which was submitted to the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on noted that 5.7 crore people in the country suffered from alcohol related problems.
- The survey spanned all the 36 states and UTs of India and citizens between the ages of 10 to 75 responded to the questions set in the study regarding substance abuse.
- The intoxicant categories that were studied are as follows: alcohol, cannabis (bhang and ganja/charas), opioids (opium, heroin and pharmaceutical opioids), cocaine, amphetamine type stimulants (ATS), sedatives, inhalants and hallucinogens.

### **Magnitude of Substance use in India:**

#### **1. Alcohol:**

- Of the 16-crore people who consumed alcohol across the country, prevalence of alcohol consumption was 17 times higher among men than among women.
- More than four lakh children and 1.8 million adults needed help for inhalant abuse and dependence.
- The male to female ratio of alcohol users in India is 17:1 and most men consume either ‘desi’ liquor (30 per cent) or Indian Made Foreign Liquor (30 per cent).
- A total of 5.2 per cent of the population indulge in harmful alcohol use, means that every third drinker in the country is in dire need of medical help in curing his/her addiction.

## 2. Cannabis (Bhang, Ganja & Charas):

- According to the survey, over 3.1 crore Indians (2.8%) reported to have used any cannabis product in last one year. Although, the usage of Bhang use is more common than Ganja or Charas but in case of addiction, the number of dependent users is higher for addicts of Ganja and Charas. Cannabis consumption is higher than the national average in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Sikkim, Chhattisgarh and Delhi.
- In Punjab and Sikkim, the prevalence of cannabis use disorders is considerably higher (more than thrice) than the national average.

## 3. Heroin, Opium & others:

- At the national level, Heroin is most commonly used substance followed by pharmaceutical opioids, followed by opium (Afeem). However, in case of harmful dependence, more people are dependent on Heroin than other similar drugs like Afeem.
- Of the total 60 lakh users of Heroin and Afeem, majority of them are from Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat.

## 4. Sedatives and inhalants:

- Less than 1% or nearly 1.18 crore people use sedatives, non-medical or non-prescription use. However, what is more worrying that its prevalence is high among children and adolescents. At national level, there are 4.6 lakh children that need help against the harmful or dependence over inhalants.
- This problem of addiction of children is more prevalent in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Delhi and Haryana.
- Cocaine (0.10%) Amphetamine Type Stimulants (0.18%) and Hallucinogens (0.12%) are the categories with lowest prevalence of current use in the country.

## 5. Addicts who inject drugs:

- According to the survey, there are 8.5 lakh people in the country who inject drugs (PWID).
- Users of opium-based drugs report high incidence of injecting drugs (heroin 46% and pharmaceutical opioids 46%), a large number of these drug users report risky injecting practices.
- This risky practice more prevalent in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Manipur and Nagaland

## KISAN URJA SURAKSHA EVAM UTTHAAN MAHABHIYAN SCHEME

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

### Why in News?

- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on February 19, 2019 approved the launch of 'Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan' with the objective of providing financial and water security to farmers.
- The Central Government will provide a total financial support of Rs 34,422 crore for the scheme.

### Significance:

- The Scheme will have substantial environmental impact in terms of savings of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. All three components of the Scheme will save about 27 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emission per annum.
- The Component-B of the Scheme on standalone solar pumps may result in saving of 1.2 billion liters of diesel per annum and associated savings in the foreign exchange due to reduction of import of crude oil.
- The scheme will have direct employment potential. Besides increasing self-employment, it will generate employment opportunity equivalent to 6.31 lakh job years for skilled and unskilled workers.

### Components of scheme:

- The Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan scheme consists of three components:
  - ✓ **Component-A:** 10,000 MW of Decentralised Ground Mounted Grid Connected Renewable Power Plants.
  - ✓ **Component-B:** Installation of 17.50 lakh standalone Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps.
  - ✓ **Component-C:** Solarisation of 10 Lakh Grid-connected Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps.
- With all these three components combined, the scheme aims to add a solar capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022. The Component-A and Component-C will be implemented on pilot mode. The Component-A aims for 1000 MW capacity, while, Component-C aims for the

one lakh grid connected agriculture pumps. On the other hand, the Component-B will be implemented in full-fledged manner.

### Component-A

- Under Component A, Renewable power plants of capacity 500 KW to 2 MW will be setup by individual farmers, cooperatives, panchayats or farmer producer organisations (FPO) on their lands.
- The power generated will be purchased by the DISCOMs in tariffs determined by respective State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERC). The scheme will open a continuous source of income to the rural land owners.
- The DISCOMs will be provided with the Performance Based Incentives of Rs. 0.40 per unit for five years.

### Component-B

- Under Component B, individual farmers will be supported to install standalone solar pumps of capacity up to 7.5 HP. Under the scheme, the Solar PV capacity in kW equal to the pump capacity in Horsepower (HP) is allowed.

### Component C

- Under Component C, individual farmers will be supported to solarise pumps of capacity up to 7.5 HP. Solar PV capacity up to two times of pump capacity in kW is allowed under the scheme. The farmer will be able to use the generated energy to meet the irrigation needs and the excess available energy will be sold to DISCOM. This will help to create an avenue for extra income to the farmers.

### Funding of Component-B and Component-C

- For both Component-B and Component-C, central financial assistance (CFA) of 30 percent of the benchmark cost or the tender cost, whichever is lower, will be provided.
- The State Government will give a subsidy of 30 percent; and the remaining 40 percent will be provided by the farmer. Bank finance may be made available for meeting 30 percent of the cost. The remaining 10 percent will be provided by the farmer.
- Higher CFA of 50 percent will be provided for North Eastern States, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

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## **DEVELOPMENT AND WELFARE BOARD FOR DE-NOTIFIED, NOMADIC AND SEMI-NOMADIC COMMUNITIES**

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

### **Why in News?**

- Development and Welfare Board for De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities
- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for constitution of Development and Welfare Board for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-nomadic Communities (DNCs).

### **Highlights:**

- These communities once branded as criminals under the colonial Criminal Tribes Act of 1871, the communities were 'denotified' in 1952.
- They continue to face stigma till this day.
- To this end, the condition of the denotified, nomadic and semi-nomadic communities merits special attention.
- The communities which have not been categorised as SC/ST/OBC do not get access to any welfare schemes.
- The earlier commissions – Renke and Idate – had tried to identify and list these communities but their major recommendations have not been implemented till date.

### **Welfare Board for DNTs:**

- The Government has decided to set up a Development and Welfare Board under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 under the aegis of Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- While most DNTs are spread across the SC, ST and OBC categories, some DNTs are not covered in any of these.
- These communities are hard to reach, less visible, and therefore frequently left out.
- It has, therefore, approved the setting up of a Committee under the Chairpersonship of Vice-Chairman, NITI Aayog.
- It will complete the process of identification of the Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Communities (DNCs) that have not yet been formally classified.

## National Commission for DNTs:

- The Government in July 2014 had constituted National Commission for Denotified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (NCDNT) for a period of three years to prepare a State-wise list of castes belonging to DNTs.
- The Commission recommended for the setting of up a Permanent Commission for these communities.
- Since most of the DNTs are covered in SC, ST or OBC, constitution of a Permanent Commission will not be very effective in implementing development programmes.
- Rather it will look at grievance redressal and will therefore be in conflict with mandate of existing commissions for SCs, STs and OBCs.

## HOPE PORTAL

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

#### Why in News?

- National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Organizations (NABH) has revamped Entry-Level Certification Process of hospitals to make it simpler, digital, faster and user-friendly.

#### Highlights:

- HCOs and small HCOs that want to avail benefits associated with IRDAI and Ayushman Bharat. NABH accreditation provides assurance of quality and care in hospitals at par with international benchmarks. NABH has designed an exhaustive healthcare standard for hospitals and healthcare providers that have been accredited as per global standards.
- The revamped certification process is driven through a new portal called HOPE – Healthcare Organizations' Platform for Entry-Level-Certification.
- It is an online platform for smooth and secure registration which provides a self-explanatory questionnaire to be filled by the HCO/SHCOs.
- It ensures quality at nascent stages by enrolling a wide range of hospitals across the country including Healthcare Organizations (HCOs).
- HOPE also enables them to comply with quality protocols, improve patient safety and the overall healthcare facility of the organization.

## **NABH:**

- NABH, a constituent body of QCI, has been working to ensure reliability, efficiency and global accreditation in Indian healthcare sector.
- It uses contemporary methodologies and tools, standards of patient safety and infection control.

## **QCI:**

- Established in 1997 Quality Council of India (QCI) is an autonomous organization under the DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- It is the Quality Apex and National Accreditation Body for accreditation and quality promotion in the country.
- The Council was established to provide a credible, reliable mechanism for third party assessment of products, services and processes which is accepted and recognized globally.

## **OPERATION DIGITAL BOARD**

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

### **Why in News?**

- The Ministry of HRD launched Operation Digital Board to leverage technology in order to boost quality education in the country.

### **Operation Digital Board:**

- It is a revolutionary step which will make the learning as well as the teaching process interactive and popularize flipped learning as a pedagogical approach.
- The digital board will be introduced all over the country in government and government aided schools from class 9th onwards as well as in higher education institutions.
- The process will begin from the coming session of 2019 itself.

### **Implementation:**

#### **1. In Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):**

- UGC will be the implementing agency for ODB in HEIs.
- UGC will put in place a Portal for all the public funded HEIs to log-in and opt for the scheme giving details of this facility.



- This can be implemented as a Central scheme under a loan from HEFA.

## 2. In Schools:

- Digital / SMART board will be provided in all Government and Government - aided schools having Secondary and Sr. Secondary classes.
- Nearly 1.5 lakh Secondary / Sr. Secondary schools will be covered under the scheme in collaboration with the State and UTs

## Significance:

- ODB aims at converting a class room into a digital class room.
- It will make available e-resources at any time and at any place to students.
- It will also help in provisioning of personalized adaptive learning as well as Intelligent Tutoring by exploiting emerging technologies like Machine Learning, AI & Data Analytics.

## Other technological initiatives:

- The MHRD has launched of e-Pathshala, DIKSHA, NROER, NPTEL, E-PGpathshala SWAYAM and SWAYAM-Prabha DTH Channels etc.
- These have provided adequate content of high quality which can be taken to every classroom.
- These pedagogical interventions have raised the standards of teaching, irrespective of the location of the Schools and Colleges.

## PM-KISAN SCHEME

### GS 2: Governance | Government policies & interventions for development

#### Why in News?

- PM to launch PM-KISAN scheme from Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh.

#### Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM KISAN):

- The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana (PM-KISAN) was announced in the interim Budget 2019-20.
- Under the Scheme, Rs 6,000 will be given per year to small and marginal farmer families having combined land holding/ ownership of upto 2 hectares.
- The amount will be given in three installments of Rs.2000 each.

- The amount will be transferred directly to the bank account of beneficiaries through Direct Benefit Transfer. DBT will ensure transparency in the entire process and will save time for the farmers.
- PM KISAN is a Central Sector scheme with 100% funding from Government of India. The Scheme becomes effective from 1.12.2018 for transfer of benefit to eligible beneficiaries.
- State Government and UT Administration will identify the farmer families which are eligible for support as per scheme guidelines.

### Objectives of the scheme:

- The Scheme was introduced to augment the income of the Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs). It is estimated to benefit more than 12 crore small and marginal farmers.
- The PM-KISAN scheme aims to supplement the financial needs of the SMFs in procuring various inputs to ensure proper crop health and appropriate yields, commensurate with the anticipated farm income at the end of each crop cycle.
- This would also protect them from falling in the clutches of moneylenders for meeting such expenses and ensure their continuance in the farming activities.

## LABOUR BUREAU FILES MUDRA JOB REPORT

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

### Why in News?

- The Labour Bureau has completed its survey on employment generated by the MUDRA loan scheme, giving the Centre a potential data tool to combat other reports showing a dismal scenario on jobs.

### Highlights:

- Before stepping down as vice chairman of Niti Aayog in August 2017, Arvind Panagariya, had submitted a report on the recommendations of a task force he had chaired on improving jobs data. One recommendation was to analyse the extent of employment and self-employment generated by MUDRA loans. In December 2017, faced with mounting criticism on the failure to create job opportunities, the Labour Ministry had asked the Labour Bureau to initiate the survey on jobs created through the MUDRA scheme.

- According to reports, a leaked copy of the NSSO's findings showed that unemployment hit a 45-year high of 6.1% in 2017-18.
- Central government ministers and officials have already attempted to use the MUDRA scheme's performance to combat criticism based on the leaked NSSO job survey report.
- Some economists, however, have advised caution in the interpretation of MUDRA data, especially as it relates to jobs. "Every new loan certainly doesn't imply creation of a new job," ICRIER fellow Radhicka Kapoor, wrote in a working paper titled 'Waiting for Jobs'.

### **MUDRA Scheme:**

- The Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana was introduced in April 2015 as an effort to extend affordable credit to micro and small enterprises.
- Loans up to Rs. 10 lakh are extended to these non-corporate, non-farm enterprises by the Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency (MUDRA) through last-mile financial institutions. So far, 15.56 crore loans worth a total of Rs. 7.23 lakh crore have been disbursed. In December 2017, faced with mounting criticism on the failure to create job opportunities, the Labour Ministry had asked the Labour Bureau to initiate the survey on jobs created through the MUDRA scheme.

### **NSSO survey:**

- The NSSO's findings showed that unemployment hit a 45-year high of 6.1% in 2017-18.
- Central government ministers and officials have already attempted to use the MUDRA scheme's performance to combat criticism based on the leaked NSSO job survey report.
- Some economists have advised caution in the interpretation of MUDRA data, especially as it relates to jobs.

## **NATIONAL WAR MEMORIAL**

### **GS 2: Governance**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Prime Minister dedicates the National War Memorial to the nation in a solemn ceremonial function.

#### **National War Memorial:**

- The National War Memorial, near India Gate in New Delhi, is a fitting tribute to our soldiers who laid down their lives defending the nation, post-independence.

- The National War Memorial also commemorates the soldiers who participated and made the supreme sacrifice in Peace Keeping Missions, and Counter Insurgency Operations.
- The layout of the National War Memorial comprises four concentric circles, namely, the 'Amar Chakra' or Circle of Immortality, the 'Veerta Chakra' or Circle of Bravery, the 'Tyag Chakra' or Circle of Sacrifice, and the 'Rakshak Chakra' or Circle of Protection.
- The National War Memorial complex includes a central obelisk, an eternal flame, and six bronze murals depicting famous battles fought by Indian Army, Air Force and Navy.

**2<sup>nd</sup> EDITION OF SUJALAM SUFALAM JAL SANCHAY ABHIYAN  
LAUNCHED**

**GS 2: IR | Governance**

**Why in News?**

- The Government of Gujarat has launched the second edition of the water conservation scheme- Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan.

**Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan:**

- The scheme aims to deepen water bodies in the state before monsoon to increase storage of rainwater to be used during times of scarcity.
- The scheme involves cleaning and desilting of riverfronts. It also involves sprucing up of irrigation canals. The state government has increased its financial contribution for the scheme to 60 per cent, which meant private groups getting involved would have to give only the remaining 40 per cent.

**About the first edition:**

- During the first edition against its anticipated target of 16,616 works of deepening of ponds and lakes across the state, 18,220 works were accomplished.
- The first edition witnessed an increase in the water storage capacity of more than 11,000 lakh cubic feet rainwater through different sources like ponds, reservoirs, check dams, bori bandh and other.
- The desilting had also generated a huge amount of loose/soil or clay which can be used by farmers to increase.

## **SECOND APEX CONFERENCE OF CEOS OF SMART CITIES MISSION**

### **GS 2: Governance**

#### **Why in News?**

- ◆ The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs is organizing an Apex Conference on Smart Cities Project. The conference will deliberate on various initiatives in regard to Smart Cities Mission.

#### **Details of the Conference:**

- ◆ Discussion will be held on subjects like Ease of Living – How Smart Cities Mission is making an impact on ease of living for citizens; Connected Communities – How Smart Cities Mission is creating Connected Communities; Urban Resilience and Sustainability – How Smart Cities Mission is making Indian cities resilient and sustainable; Smart Governance – How Smart Cities Mission is creating a Smart Governance ecosystem in Indian cities etc.
- ◆ Over 130 experts from several countries will participate in the conference. The Conference is expected to chart out a roadmap for implementing Smart Cities mission.

### **4<sup>th</sup> GLOBAL DIGITAL HEALTH PARTNERSHIP SUMMIT**

### **GS 2: Governance | Government policies and interventions for development**

#### **Why in News?**

- Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare inaugurated the '4th Global Digital Health Partnership Summit'.

#### **Highlights:**

- The global intergovernmental meeting on digital health is being hosted by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in collaboration with World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP)
- The Ministerial Conclave discussed the implication of digital health interventions to health services accessibility, quality and affordability and explores ways of leveraging digital health technologies to strengthen the healthcare delivery systems globally.
- The Global Digital Health Partnership (GDHP) is an international collaboration of governments, government agencies and multinational organisations dedicated to

improving the health and well-being of their citizens through the best use of evidence-based digital technologies.

### Health information platform:

- Platform which Health Ministry is in the process of establishing for interoperability amongst various health IT systems and a pan-India exchange of Electronic Health Records of citizens ensuring privacy, security, and confidentiality of data.
- The same is to be supplemented by a pan-Indian network of disease surveillance, tele-medicine and tele-radiology and tele-education.

## **NATIONAL e-GOVERNANCE AWARDS, 2019**

### GS 2: Governance

#### Why in News?

- With a view to recognize and promote Excellence in the implementation of e-Governance initiatives, the Government of India presents National Awards on e-Governance.

#### Highlights:

- The Awards will be given in 6 categories to recognize achievements in the area of e-Governance.
- This initiative also seeks to disseminate knowledge on effective methods of designing and implementing sustainable e-Governance initiatives, to encourage innovations in successful e-Governance solutions and to exchange experiences in solving problems, mitigating risks, resolving issues and planning for success.
- The National e-Governance Award recognizes some of the best Government to Government (G to G), Government to Citizen (G to C), Government to Business (G to B) initiatives taken by government departments. It also recognizes initiatives in Start ups, Academic Research Institutions as well as initiatives in adopting emerging technologies.
- The six categories under which Awards will be presented are as follows:-
  - ✓ Excellence in Government Process Re-engineering for Digital Transformation.
  - ✓ Excellence in providing Citizen-Centric Delivery.
  - ✓ Excellence in District level Initiative in e-Governance (i) North-East States + Hilly States (ii) UTs (including Delhi) (iii) Other States.

- ✓ Outstanding research on Citizen Centric Services by Academic/Research Institutions.
- ✓ Innovative Use of ICT in e-Governance solutions by Start ups [Start up as defined by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) Government of India]
- ✓ Excellence in Adopting Emerging Technologies.

## **AYUSHMAN BHARAT WILL NOT COVER CATARACT OPS, DIALYSIS AND NORMAL DELIVERIES**

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

### **Why in News?**

- The National Health Authority (NHA) is planning to remove procedures covered under existing national programmes from the list of packages approved for reimbursement under PMJAY (Ayushman Bharat).
- Certain procedures like cataract surgeries, dialysis and normal deliveries will not be covered by the flagship health scheme.

### **Avoiding Duplication:**

- Procedures or diseases for which there is already an existing national programme, do not need to be covered under AB packages.
- Diseases for which there are existing national programmes and for which treatment is reimbursed under PMJAY for specified rates include tuberculosis, chronic kidney disease (dialysis), leprosy, malaria, HIV-AIDS and mental health disorders.
- For many diseases like malaria, where surgeries are not established protocol for treatment, PMJAY approves a daily hospitalization cost of Rs 2,000.

### **1. Cataract**

- Cataract surgeries have topped the list of claims submitted under PMJAY.
- In the first three months of PMJAY until Nov 2018 – 6,900 claims had been submitted for cataract surgeries.
- However, they are done for free under the National Blindness Control Programme (NBCP).

## 2. Normal Delivery

- The NHA is planning to leave out normal deliveries from the ambit of PMJAY.
- There are a host of national programmes for mother and child health, high-risk deliveries will continue to be covered.

## 3. Dialysis

- The Pradhan Mantri National Dialysis Programme was rolled out in 2016 under which dialysis is already provided free of cost.

## Bringing Implants under AB-NHPM

- The NHA is also in talks with the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA) to negotiate special rates for implants or other devices that are used under PMJAY to further bring down costs.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> EDITION OF ISL DICTIONARY**

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

#### **Why in News?**

- Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment launched the “2nd Edition of Indian Sign Language (ISL) Dictionary” brought out by ‘Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC)’ under Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), M/o Social Justice & Empowerment.

#### **Highlights:**

- The second edition, dictionary includes total 6000 words under the categories of academic, legal, medical, technical and everyday terms. The ISL Dictionary is also available on ISLRTC’s YouTube channel. It has been made with the involvement of the hearing-impaired community, by giving due consideration to their suggestions and understanding. The videos contain the sign, the English term for the sign and pictures where relevant. A word list is also given with the English and Hindi equivalents of the signs. The dictionary is intended to serve as a resource for ISL teachers, ISL learners, teachers of the hearing impaired, interpreters, parents of hearing-impaired children, researchers, etc. Hearing impaired persons will benefit from this dictionary since they can look up information about a particular sign and its English/Hindi equivalents.



## SATAT SCHEME

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

#### Why in News?

- SATAT is an initiative 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.

#### Highlights:

- SATAT was launched with a four-pronged agenda of-
  - ✓ utilising more than 62 million metric tonnes of waste generated every year in India
  - ✓ cutting down import dependence,
  - ✓ supplementing job creation in the country and
  - ✓ reducing vehicular emissions and pollution from burning of agricultural / organic waste.
- Bio-gas is produced naturally through a process of anaerobic decomposition from waste / bio-mass sources like agriculture residue, cattle dung, sugarcane press mud, municipal solid waste, sewage treatment plant waste, etc. After purification, it is compressed and called CBG, which has pure methane content of over 90%.
- Compressed Bio-Gas (CBG) is exactly similar to the commercially available natural gas in its composition and energy potential. CBG can be used as an alternative, renewable automotive.

#### Significance of CBG:

- 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

## **YUVA SAHAKAR SCHEME**

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

### **Why in News?**

- National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) launched 'Yuva Sahakar' scheme.

### **Highlights:**

- To attract youth to cooperative business ventures.
- It has created a dedicated fund with liberal features enabling youth to avail the scheme.
- It would provide more incentives for cooperatives of North Eastern region, Aspirational Districts and cooperatives with women or SC or ST or PwD members.
- The funding for the project will be up to 80 percent of the project cost for these special categories against 70 percent for others.
- The scheme envisages 2 percent less than the applicable rate of interest on term loan for the project cost up to Rs 3 crore including 2 years moratorium on payment of principal.
- All types of cooperatives in operation for at least one year are eligible to avail of the scheme.
- It would encourage cooperatives to venture into new and innovative areas.
- The scheme is expected to meet the needs of youth.

### **NCDC:**

- The NCDC has the unique distinction of being the sole statutory organisation functioning as an apex financial and developmental institution exclusively devoted to cooperative sector.
- It supports cooperatives in diverse fields apart from agriculture and allied sectors.
- It is an ISO 9001:2015 compliant organisation and has a distinctive edge of competitive financing.
- Being the most preferred financial institution in the world of cooperatives, it has also initiated Sahakar 22, a Mission for Doubling Farmers' Income by 2022.

## SHREYAS PROGRAM

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

#### Why in News?

- The Ministry of Human Resources Development has launched the Scheme for Higher Education Youth in Apprenticeship and Skills (SHREYAS) for providing industry apprenticeship opportunities to the general graduates exiting in April 2019 through the National Apprenticeship Promotional Scheme (NAPS).

#### Significance of the programme:

- To make our degree students more skilled, capable, employable
- It is aligned to the needs of our economy so that they contribute to country's progress and also obtain gainful employment. To fill the gap between education and industry/service sectors on a sustainable basis.

#### SHREYAS scheme:

- The program aims to enhance the employability of Indian youth by providing 'on the job work exposure' and earning of stipend.
- The programme basket comprising the initiatives of three Central Ministries, namely
  - ✓ Ministry of Human Resource Development,
  - ✓ Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and
  - ✓ The **Ministry of Labour & Employment** viz the National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme (NAPS), the National Career Service (NCS) and introduction of BA/BSc/BCom (Professional) courses in the higher educational institutions.
- It is a programme conceived for students in degree courses, primarily non-technical, with a view to introduce employable skills into their learning, promote apprenticeship as integral to education and also amalgamate employment facilitating efforts of the Government into the education system. To clear pathways towards employment opportunities are available to students during and after their graduation.

#### SHREYAS portal:

- The portal aims to provide internships to students pursuing general courses, connect recruiters and graduates.

- Portal will enable educational institutions and industry to log in and provide their respective demand and supply of apprenticeship.
- The matching of students with apprenticeship avenues will take place as per pre-specified eligibility criteria.
- The website, shreyas.ac.in, is operational and is already inviting applications from students from non-technical courses such as BA, BSc. BCom et al. Students and alumni can register themselves at the portal which will connect them with apprenticeship programmes and recruiters.

## **SCIENCE AND TECH**

### **CYBER-PHYSICAL SYSTEMS(CPS)**

**GS 3: Science & Technology | Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, Robotics, Nano-technology, bio-technology**

#### **Why in News?**

- The cabinet approved the launching of National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems (NMICPS) which is to be implemented by Department of Science & Technology for a period of five years.

#### **Cyber-physical system (CPS):**

- CPS is an interdisciplinary field that deals with the deployment of computer-based systems that do things in the physical world. It integrates sensing, computation, control and networking into physical objects and infrastructure, connecting them to the Internet and to each other.
- Examples of cyber physical systems are Smart Grid Networks, Smart Transportation System, Enterprise Cloud Infrastructure, Utility Service Infrastructure for Smart Cities, etc.
- CPS and its associated technologies, like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Machine Learning (ML), Deep Learning (DP), Big Data Analytics, Robotics, Quantum Computing, Quantum Communication, Quantum encryption (Quantum Key Distribution), Data Science & Predictive analytics, Cyber Security for physical infrastructure and other infrastructure plays a transformative role in almost every field of human endeavor in all sectors.

## Difference between CPS and Internet of Things (IoT):

- CPS are physical and engineered systems whose operations are monitored, coordinated, controlled and integrated by a computing and communication core. Where as IoT is is the network of devices such as vehicles, and home appliances that contain electronics, software, actuators, and connectivity which allows these things to connect, interact and exchange data.
- CPS engineering has a strong emphasis on the relationship between computation and the physical world. IoT has a strong emphasis on uniquely identifiable and internet-connected devices and embedded systems.
- CPS are not necessarily connected with internet. The Internet of Things (IoT) forms a foundation for this cyber physical systems revolution.
- CPS It may be individual system which integrates the physical and cyber technology like smart electricity meters. IoT is smart Home in which all appliances are connected to each other through internet like TV is connected to mobile, lights are connected to mobile etc.

## National Mission on Interdisciplinary Cyber-Physical Systems:

- It is a comprehensive mission which would address technology development, application development, human resource development, skill enhancement, entrepreneurship and start-up development in CPS and associated technologies.
- It aims at establishment of 15 numbers of Technology Innovation Hubs, six numbers of Application Innovation Hubs and four numbers of Technology Translation Research Parks (TTRP). These Hubs & TTRPs will connect to Academics, Industry, Central Ministries and State Government in developing solutions at reputed academic, R&D and other organizations across the country in a hub and spoke model.

## INDIA'S COMMUNICATION SATELLITE GSAT-31 LAUNCHED SUCCESSFULLY

### GS 3: Science & Technology | Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics etc.

#### Why in News?

- India's latest communication satellite, GSAT-31 was successfully launched from the Spaceport in French Guiana. The launch vehicle Ariane 5 VA-247 lifted off from Kourou

Launch Base, French Guiana carrying India's GSAT-31 and Saudi Geostationary Satellite 1/Hellas Sat 4 satellites.

### GSAT-31:

- It was launched in an elliptical Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit with a perigee (nearest point to Earth) of 250 km and an apogee (farthest point to Earth) of 35,850 km, inclined at an angle of 3.0 degree to the equator.
- With a lift-off mass of 2536 kg, GSAT-31 will augment the Ku-band transponder capacity in Geostationary Orbit.
- The satellite will provide continuity to operational services on some of the in-orbit satellites. GSAT-31 will provide DTH Television Services, connectivity to VSATs for ATM, Stock-exchange, Digital Satellite News Gathering (DSNG) and e-governance applications.
- The satellite will also be used for bulk data transfer for a host of emerging telecommunication applications. It is the India's 40th communication satellite which is configured on ISRO's enhanced 'I-2K Bus', utilising the maximum "bus capabilities" of this type.

### **NASA CONCLUDES A 15-YEAR MARS MISSION OPPORTUNITY**

### GS 3: Science & Technology | Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics etc.

#### Why in News?

- The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced that its Mars Mission- Opportunity has come to an end as they are unable to restore contact with Mars Rover.
- This marked the conclusion of the 15-year long mission.

#### Highlights:

- The decision to end the mission was made after all the efforts to restore contact with the Opportunity Mars rover didn't yield desired results.
- Reason for losing contact with an opportunity:
- A historic global dust storm reached the location of the Opportunity rover on Mars.
- The storm darkened the skies and cut off of the rover's solar power.
- All the efforts of NASA to restore the rover did not yield positive results.
- Things worsened with the onset of the winter at the location of the Opportunity rover.

- The reduced sunlight and colder temperatures during winter made it unlikely for the recovery of the Opportunity rover.

### The mission:

- Opportunity was the second of the twin Mars Exploration Rovers to land on Mars in January 2004.
- Opportunity landed 90 days after its twin rover Spirit landed.
- Spirit landed at Gusev Crater and Opportunity landed on the opposite side of Mars at Meridiani Planum. NASA expected 90-day lifetimes for the rovers.
- Both Opportunity and Spirit far exceeded their expected lifetime.
- Spirit's mission ended in May 2011 after travelling eight kilometres and Opportunity had logged 45 kilometres before losing contact in June 2018.

## GAGANYAAN'S REVIEW PANEL

### GS 3: Science & Technology | Awareness in the fields of IT, Space, Computers, robotics etc.

#### Why in News?

- A national review committee on Gaganyaan is slated to meet for the first time on March 5 and 6 and comprehensively scan the contours of the first Indian human mission to space.
- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) wants to unveil the human mission's details to stakeholders from multiple agencies, and also keep the nation in the loop about the prestigious mission, K.Sivan, ISRO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space, said. He added, "It should also give us the confidence that we are on the right track with such a humongous project."

#### Gaganyaan:

- Gaganyaan is an Indian crewed orbital spacecraft intended to be the basis of the Indian human spaceflight program. The spacecraft is being designed to carry three people, and a planned upgraded version will be equipped with rendezvous and docking capability.
- In its maiden crewed mission, Indian Space Research Organization's largely autonomous 3.7-tonne capsule will orbit the Earth at 400 km (250 mi) altitude for up to seven days with a three-person crew on board.
- The crewed vehicle is planned to be launched on ISRO's GSLV Mk III in 2022. This HAL-manufactured crew module had its first uncrewed experimental flight in 2014.

## Challenges of the Gaganyaan:

- A manned space mission is very different from all other missions that ISRO has so far completed.
- In terms of complexity and ambition, even the missions to the Moon (Chandrayaan) and Mars (Mangalyaan) are nowhere in comparison.
- For a manned mission, the key distinguishing capabilities that ISRO has had to develop include the ability to bring the spacecraft back to Earth after flight, building a spacecraft in which astronauts can live in Earth-like conditions in space
- Over the years, ISRO has successfully tested many of the technologies that are required. However, many other challenging ones are still to be developed and tested.

### **ATMOSPHERIC WATER GENERATOR (AWG)**

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

#### Why in News?

- A Navratna PSU Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) has unveiled the Atmospheric Water Generator (AWG).
- It can be used to provide drinking water in community centres and public places.

#### Atmospheric Water Generator:

- The AWG is being manufactured by BEL in collaboration with CSIR-IICT and MAITHRI, a start-up company based in Hyderabad.
- It employs a novel technology to extract water from the humidity present in the atmosphere and purify it.
- It uses heat exchange for condensing the atmospheric moisture to produce pure, safe and clean potable water.
- It comes with a Mineralization Unit, which is used to add minerals which are required to make the water potable.
- The AWG is configurable in static and mobile (vehicular) versions and is available in 30 litres/day, 100 litres/day, 500 litres/day and 1,000 litres/day capacities.



## KEY MISSIONS LAUNCHED ON FOUNDATION DAY OF DEPARTMENT OF BIOTECHNOLOGY

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

### Why in News?

- Department of Biotechnology in the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, celebrated its 33rd Foundation Day.
- Theme: “Celebrating Biotechnology: Building Indian as an Innovation Nation”.

### Missions launched:

- The Minister announced key missions at the foundation day ceremony including Atal JaiAnusandhan Biotech Mission - Undertaking Nationally Relevant Technology Innovation (UNaTI), which is expected to transform Health, Agriculture and Energy sectors during the next 5 years. This mission includes
- **GARBH-ini**- A Mission to promote Maternal and Child Health and develop prediction tools for pre-term berth,
- **IndCEPI**- A Mission to develop affordable vaccines for endemic diseases, Development of Biofortified and Protein Rich wheat - contributing to POSHAN Abhiyan,
- Mission on Anti-Microbial Resistance for Affordable Diagnostics and Therapeutics and
- Clean Energy Mission- Innovative Technology interventions for Swachh Bharat.

## INDIA'S FIRST INDIGENOUS SEMICONDUCTOR CHIPS FOR 4G/LTE AND 5G NR MODEMS

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

### Why in News?

- A Bengaluru based company SIGNALCHIP has fabricated high performance and cost-efficient semiconductor chips.
- These would enable high-speed wireless communication.

### Highlights:

- Four chips designed by SIGNALCHIP
  - ✓ **SCBM3412**: a single chip 4G/LTE modem including the baseband and transceiver sections in a single device

- ✓ **SCBM3404:** a single chip 4X4 LTE baseband modem
- ✓ **SCRF3402:** a 2X2 transceiver for LTE
- ✓ **SCRF4502:** a 2X2 transceiver for 5G NR standards

### Specifications:

- The RF sections cover all LTE/5G-NR bands upto 6 GHz.
- These chips also support positioning using India's own satellite navigation system, NAVIC. The combined multi-standard system-on-chip (SoC) can serve as a base station chipset for a wide range of form factors from low-cost indoor small cells to high performance base stations. Through the IPs created for devices, the company now has the potential to design products for multiple related fields.

### Significance:

- Currently, in India, all devices and infrastructure, whether imported or domestically manufactured, use imported silicon chips. Silicon chip design is a very challenging activity requiring high-cost R&D, deep knowhow and mastery of multiple complex domains.
- Hence, this technology is not available in most countries.

### Impact:

- Data Security is the paramount concern in the World today and India cannot remain secure in terms of data, unless it manufactures its own chips.
- India is just breaking into the elite club of the world and this will have huge implications for India's data security and data sovereignty, besides the positive economic implications.
- At present only 8 companies and a few countries can design and build semiconductor chips.

## INDIAN SOCIETY

### 20<sup>th</sup> BHARAT RANG MAHOTSAV

#### GS 1: Art and Culture

#### Why in news?

- The Minister of State for Culture (I/C), Govt. of India, inaugurated the 21-day-long nationwide theatre spectacle at Kamani Auditorium in a program presided over by Dr. Arjun Deo Charan, Acting Chairman, NSD Society and other senior officers of Culture Ministry, in New Delhi.

## **BHARAT RANG MAHOTSAV:**

- The 20th edition of Bharat Rang Mahotsav (BRM), the international theatre festival of India, is organized by National School of Drama (NSD), one of the prominent training institutions in the world.
- The 20th BRM comes with 111 national and international acts in its basket that includes folk and other traditional theatre forms, invitee plays, and productions by the students of the National School of Drama.

## **NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA:**

- The National School of Drama is one of the foremost theatre training institutions in the world and the only one of its kind in India.
- It was set up by the Sangeet Natak Akademi as one of its constituent units in 1959. In 1975, it became an independent entity and was registered as an autonomous organization under the Societies Registration Act XXI of 1860, fully financed by the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.
- Training in the School is highly intensive and is based on a thorough, comprehensive, carefully planned syllabus which covers every aspect of theatre and in which theory is related to practice. As a part of their training, students are required to produce plays which are then performed before the public.

## **WORKSHOP FOR VICTIMS OF COMMUNAL VIOLENCE**

### **GS 1: Indian Society**

#### **Why in News?**

- The National Foundation for Communal Harmony (NFCH) is organizing a special workshop for 42 Youth in the age group of 15 to 22 years, who have been victims of communal violence in the past, under the Know My India Programme beginning in Bengaluru.
- The Youth come from 6 states including Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Gujarat along with 10 official mentors.

#### **Highlights:**

- Its objectives is to help the children deal with the post-traumatic stress, provide them life tools to manage their emotions and eliminate disturbing impressions of the past events, to

have them experience deep relaxation and peace, give them a broader and more inclusive view of the world and how each individual is connected with the others beyond social identities, the participants, through fun interactive processes, will be taught various body-breath mechanisms, and practical tools of wisdom. The cornerstone is the powerful rhythmic breathing practice called Sudarshan Kriya, whose regular practice is known to significantly reduce stress hormones, improve clarity of mind and increase one's happiness quotient.

### **Know My India programme:**

- It is a unique programme initiated by the NFCH to bring together financially assisted children of the Foundation from different States/Regions of the country to promote oneness, fraternity and national integration.
- The programme is all about familiarization with the environment, family life, social customs, etc. of the people living in different parts of the country; developing understanding of the common historical and cultural heritage of the country.

### **NFCH:**

- The NFCH is an autonomous organization under the administrative control of the Ministry of Home Affairs. The main objective of the Foundation is to provide assistance to the children/youth rendered orphan/destitute in communal, caste, ethnic or terrorist violence for their rehabilitation besides promoting communal harmony and national integration through various activities.
- The NFCH sponsors/conducts different activities for the promotion of communal harmony and strengthening of national integration.

## **PROMOTION AND PROTECTION OF MAITHILI LANGUAGE AND ITS SCRIPTS**

### **GS 1: Art and Culture**

#### **Prelims Level: Maithili Language and its scripts**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development constituted a Committee in the year 2018 for making a report for the Promotion and Protection of Maithili Language and its scripts.

The Committee has submitted its report to MHRD in which it has made several recommendations for promotion and protection of Maithili language.

### Maithili language:

- Maithili is an Indo-Aryan language native to the Indian subcontinent, mainly spoken in India and Nepal. In India, it is spoken in the states of Bihar and Jharkhand and is one of the 22 recognised Indian languages.
- Mithilakshar or Tirhuta is the script of broader cultural Mithila.
- The scripts of Mithilaksar, Bangla, Assamese, Nebari, Odia and Tibetan are part of the family. It is an extremely ancient script and is one of the script and is one of the scripts of the broader North Eastern India.
- Mithilakshar had come to its current shape by 10th Century AD. The oldest form of Mithilakshar is found in the Sahodara stone inscriptions of 950 AD. Afterwards, the scripts have been used throughout Mithila from Champaran to Deoghar.
- Use of this script has been on decline since last 100 years and therefore our culture is getting decimated. Because its own script is not being used, the Maithili language is getting developed in a composite manner despite having been accorded a constitutional status in the constitution.

## TAGORE AWARD FOR CULTURAL HARMONY

### GS 1: Art and Culture

#### Why in News?

- The President of India will present the Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony to Shri Rajkumar Singhajit Singh; Chhayanaut (a cultural organization of Bangladesh); and Shri Ram Sutar Vanji for the years 2014, 2015 & 2016.

#### Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony:

- Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony was instituted by the Government of India from 2012 recognizing the contributions made by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore to humanity at large with his works and ideas, as part of the Commemoration of his 150th Birth Anniversary in 2012, for promoting values of Cultural Harmony.
- This annual award is given to individuals, associations, institutions or organizations for their outstanding contribution towards promoting values of Cultural Harmony.

- The Award is open to all persons regardless of nationality, race, language, caste, creed or gender.
- Normally, contributions made during ten years immediately preceding the nomination are considered. Older contributions may also be considered if their significance has become apparent only recently.
- A written work, in order to be eligible for consideration, should have been published during the last ten years. Work by a person since deceased cannot be the subject of an Award.

### Works of the awardees:

- **SHRI RAJKUMAR SINGHAJIT SINGH:** Born at Imphal, Manipur on 3 November 1932, Shri Rajkumar Singhajit Singh is a highly accomplished and senior most guru, exponent, choreographer, prolific writer and scholar of Manipuri dance.
- **CHHAYANAUT:** Chhayanaut (a cultural organisation) was established in 1961 by leading organizers of Tagore centenary celebration. This organization was part of the movement for an independent Bangladesh that provided a platform for cultural expression and assertion of the Bengali identity at a time when such activities were considered anti-state and acts of sedition. During the liberation war, Chhayanaut singers organized performances to inspire freedom fighters and refugees. After independence, Chhayanaut has been involved in seeking creative ways to broaden and intensify the practice and celebration of mainstream music and culture.
- **SHRI RAM VANJI SUTAR:** Born in Dhule District of Maharashtra on 19 February 1925, Shri Ram Vanji Sutar is a renowned sculptor and scholar. A gold medallist from Sir J. J. School of Art, Bombay in sculpture, Shri Sutar started his career in 1954 as a modeller in the Department of Archaeology, South Western Circle, Aurangabad. From 1959 onwards, he has been working as freelance sculptor making monumental statues.

## **GEOGRAPHY & ENVIRONMENT**

### **PRADHAN MANTRI KISAN SAMMAN NIDHI**

**GS 3: Agriculture | Issues related to direct and indirect farm subsidies and minimum support price**

#### **Why in News?**

- To provide an assured income support to the small and marginal farmers, the Government is launching the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN).

#### **Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi:**

- Under this programme, vulnerable landholding farmer families, having cultivable land upto 2 hectares, will be provided direct income support at the rate of Rs. 6,000 per year.
- This income support will be transferred directly into the bank accounts of beneficiary farmers, in three equal installments of Rs. 2,000 each.
- This programme will be funded by Government of India.
- Around 12 crore small and marginal farmer families are expected to benefit from this.
- The programme would be made effective from 1st December 2018 and the first installment for the period upto 31st March 2019 would be paid during this year itself.
- It will entail an annual expenditure of Rs.75, 000 crore.

#### **Expected Outcome:**

- It would not only provide assured supplemental income to the most vulnerable farmer families, but would also meet their emergent needs especially before the harvest season.
- It would pave the way for the farmers to earn and live a respectable living.

### **WASTE-TO-ENERGY PLANTS THREATS**

**GS3: Environment | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment**

#### **Why in news?**

- The Waste-to-Energy (WtE) plants that use solid waste as feedstock pose threat to environment as per the recent study.

#### **Highlights:**

- WtE plants process municipal solid waste to generate electricity through incineration.

- There are 5 municipal WtE plants operational in India with a total capacity of 66.4 MW electricity per day, of which 52MW per day is generated in Delhi by its three existing plants.

### **The problem:**

- WtE plants in India burn mixed waste.
- The presence of chlorinated hydrocarbons like PVC results in the release of dioxins and furans when the waste is burnt at less than 850-degree C.
- Dioxins and furans are known to be carcinogenic and can lead to impairment of immune, endocrine, nervous and reproductive systems. They are extremely difficult and costly to measure, as the experience of Okhla shows. The large amounts of flue gases, mercury vapour and lead compounds are released.
- About 30 per cent residue from incineration in the form of slag (bottom ash) and fly ash (particulate matter), which are also known to be serious pollutants of air and water.

### **Measures taken:**

- Solid Waste Management (SWM) Rules 2016 require that PVC be phased out in incinerators by April 2018. SWM policy requires that wet and dry wastes should not be mixed so that only non-compostable and non-recyclable wastes with at least 1,500 kcal/kg should reach WtE plants. As a preventive measure, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) directed the Ministry of Environment and Forests to consider the phase out of such single-use short-life PVC and issue appropriate directions by July 2017.

### **Way forward:**

- Wet and dry wastes segregation at source
- Awareness about the harmful effects of WtE technologies
- There should be adequate use of activated charcoal to filter out dioxins, furans and mercury from the emissions in plants.
- Strict penalties for non-compliance.
- Exploration of low-cost options such as composting and bio-methanation
- Proper implementation of SWM policy
- Follow NGT directions



## BHRINGRAJ PLANTS REMOVE LEAD FROM SOIL

**GS3: Environment | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment**

### Why in news?

- Researchers have identified a native roadside plant known as 'Bhringraj' that can take up lead from the soil and thus help in removing the metal from the environment.

### Highlights:

- The plant may be using the lead to protect itself from the pests, or other predators. Tribal people use it as an antidote for snake bites and treatment of scorpion stings.
- Hi-tech microscopic analysis showed that the lead travelled to the leaves and was deposited as lead nanoparticles in its cell wall, cytoplasm, and chloroplast.
- The plants can be burned up after they have taken up the lead. In this way, the metal can be effectively contained and later disposed off safely.
- The plant was found to accumulate lead at about 12,000 microgram/g of dry weight in the root and 7,000 microgram/g of dry weight in its shoot.
- These plants grow in soils that are continuously exposed to lead from vehicle exhausts.
- It is a significant further step in using the plant for bioremediation of lead-contaminated soil.

### Effects of Lead:

- Affects health particularly young children affecting the development of the brain and nervous system
- Biodiversity
- Affects ecosystem
- Affects soil productivity
- Agricultural productivity will decrease

### Bioremediation:

- Bioremediation is a process used to treat contaminated media, including water, soil and subsurface material, by altering environmental conditions to stimulate growth of microorganisms and degrade the target pollutants.

## CATEGORISATION OF FARMERS

### GS 3: Agriculture | Land reforms in India

#### Why in News?

- As per the results (provisional) of latest Agriculture Census 2015-16, the operational holdings are categorised in five size classes as follows:

| Sl. No. | Category     | Size-Class              |
|---------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 1.      | Marginal     | Below 1.00 hectare      |
| 2.      | Small        | 1.00-2.00 hectare       |
| 3.      | Semi- Medium | 2.00-4.00 hectare       |
| 4.      | Medium       | 4.00-10.00 hectare      |
| 5.      | Large        | 10.00 hectare and above |

- The operational holdings are also classified in three social groups, viz., Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Others.

#### Measures to double the farmers' income by 2022:

- To improve the condition of Small and Marginal farmers and to double the income of farmers by 2022, Government is realigning its interventions from production-centric approach to farmers' income-centric initiatives, with focus on better and new technological solutions.
- These include implementation of schemes like, Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY), Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Soil Health Card, Neem Coated Urea, Rainfed Area Development under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), National Agriculture Market scheme (e-NAM), National Food Security Mission (NFSM), National Mission on Oilseeds & Oilpalm (NMOOP), Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH),

Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY), National Mission on Agriculture Extension & Technology (NMAET) etc.

- In addition, farmers are provided information through Focused Publicity Campaigns, Kisan Call Centres (KCCs), Agri--Clinics and Agri-Business Centres (ACABC) of entrepreneurs, Agri Fairs and exhibitions, Kisan SMS Portal.

## **RASHTRIYA KAMDHENU AAYOG**

### **GS 3: Agriculture | Economics of animal-rearing**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for establishment of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog for Conservation protection and development of cows and their progeny.

#### **Highlights:**

- The creation of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog for the conservation, protection and development of cows and their progeny will provide the policy framework and direction to the cow conservation and development programmes in the country and for ensuring proper implementation of laws with respect to the welfare of cows.
- The setting up of Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog will lead to conservation, protection and development of cattle population in the country including development and conservation of indigenous breeds. It will result in increased growth of livestock sector which is more inclusive, benefitting women, and small and marginal farmers.
- The Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog will work in collaboration with Veterinary, Animal Sciences or Agriculture University or departments or organizations of the Central/State Government engaged in the task of research in the field of breeding and rearing of cow, organic manure, biogas etc.

## **NUCLEAR WASTE DISPOSAL**

### **GS3: Environment | Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment**

#### **Why in News?**

- All radioactive waste facilities are designed with numerous layers of protection to make sure that people remain protected for as long as it takes for radioactivity to reduce to background levels.

## Types of nuclear waste:

- Low-level waste is made up of lightly-contaminated items like tools and work clothing from power plant operation and makes up the bulk of radioactive wastes. It represent 90% of the total volume of radioactive wastes, but contain only 1% of the radioactivity.
- Intermediate-level wastes might include used filters, steel components from within the reactor and some effluents from reprocessing.
- High-level wastes from nuclear generation, but they contain 95% of the radioactivity arising from nuclear power.

| Types of nuclear waste   | Volume | Radioactive content |
|--------------------------|--------|---------------------|
| High-level waste         | 3%     | 95%                 |
| Intermediate-level waste | 7%     | 4%                  |
| Low-level waste          | 90%    | 1%                  |

## Waste disposal:

- Intermediate- and low-level wastes are disposed of closer to the surface, in many established repositories. Low-level waste disposal sites are purpose built, but are not much different from normal municipal waste sites.
- Low-level and intermediate wastes are buried close to the surface.
- High-level wastes require shielding and cooling, low-level wastes can be handled easily without shielding. High-level wastes can remain highly radioactive for thousands of years. They need to be disposed of deep underground in engineered facilities built in stable geological formations.
- The regular monitoring is done as per the requirements which are in line with the guidelines of International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).
- The monitoring of various environmental matrices such as air, water, soil etc., in and around the waste disposal facilities is carried out by independent Environmental Survey Laboratories (ESL) of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) which are stationed at all the nuclear sites.

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## CONVENTION ON THE CONSERVATION OF MIGRATORY SPECIES OF WILD ANIMALS (CMS)

### GS3: Environment | Conservation

#### Why in News?

- The 13th Conference of Parties (COP) of the Convention on the conservation of migratory species of wild animals (CMS), an environmental treaty under the aegis of United Nations Environment Programme, is going to be hosted by India during 15th to 22nd February, 2020 at Gandhinagar in Gujarat.

#### CMS:

- In order to protect the migratory species throughout their range countries, a Convention on Conservation of Migratory Species (CMS), has been in force, under the aegis of United Nations Environment Programme.
- It also referred to as the Bonn Convention.
- It provides a global platform for the conservation and sustainable use of migratory animals and their habitats and brings together the States through which migratory animals pass, the Range States.
- It lays the legal foundation for internationally coordinated conservation measures throughout a migratory range.
- The convention complements and co-operates with a number of other international organizations, NGOs and partners in the media as well as in the corporate sector.

#### India's contribution:

- India has signed non-legally binding MOU with CMS on the conservation and management of Siberian Cranes (1998), Marine Turtles (2007), Dugongs (2008) and Raptors (2016).
- India is temporary home to several migratory animals and birds.
- The important among these include Amur Falcons, Bar headed Gheese, Black necked cranes, Marine turtles, Dugongs, Humpbacked Whales, etc.
- India has launched the National Action Plan for conservation of migratory species under the Central Asian Flyway.

- The Indian sub-continent is also part of the major bird flyway network, i.e, the Central Asian Flyway (CAF) that covers areas between the Arctic and Indian Oceans, and covers at least 279 populations of 182 migratory water bird species, including 29 globally threatened species.

### **Migratory species:**

- Migratory species are those animals that move from one habitat to another during different times of the year, due to various factors such as food, sunlight, temperature, climate, etc.
- The movement between habitats, can sometimes exceed thousands of miles/kilometres for some migratory birds and mammals.
- A migratory route can involve nesting and also requires the availability of habitats before and after each migration.

## **106 COASTAL SITES PICKED FOR CONSERVATION**

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

#### **Why in News?**

- The Centre has identified over 100 coastal and marine sites as conservation reserves under its National Wildlife Action Plan for 2017-2031, says a biennial report released by the government.

#### **Highlights:**

- Under the National Wildlife Action Plan for the period 2017 to 2031, the government is working towards the conservation of coastal and marine ecosystems from the impacts of climate change. In the last four and a half years, India has not only been able to sustain but also increase its mangrove cover at a time when these ecosystems are disappearing at an alarming rate across the world.

#### **India's rich marine wealth:**

- As per the report, India has rich coastal and marine wealth along the eastern and western coasts as well as the Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands. The coastal and marine sector is also a source of valuable fish protein not only for the growing population but also contributes to the global food basket and in turn provides valuable foreign

exchange to the country. "India produced 3.8 million metric tonnes of seafood during 2017, valued at Rs 5.28 lakh million at landing centre and Rs 8 lakh million at the retail level.

- The fisheries sector supports around 9.3 lakh active and part-time fishers, one of the largest workforces of fishers in the world, the report said.
- India is encouraging participation of local communities in governance by recognising the conservation reserves.
- India is implementing measures to sustainably harness the potential of blue economy while building the climate resilience of the ecosystems and local coastal communities.

### 3rd NWAP 2017-2031:

- Mitigation of human-wildlife conflict, coastal and marine ecosystem conservation and a focus on wildlife health are among the key areas.
- The draft emphasises on aspects like preservation of genetic diversity and sustainable utilization of species and ecosystems. This has a direct bearing on the country's scientific advancements and support to millions of rural communities.
- The first NWAP was adopted in 1983, while the second was adopted in 2002, which ended in 2017.

## INDIAN ECONOMY

### UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME (UBI)

#### GS 3: Economy

#### Why in News?

- Economic Survey for the year 2016-17 has an entire chapter dedicated to the discussion on Universal Basic Income (UBI).

#### Highlights:

- Universal Basic Income is a periodic, unconditional cash transfer to every citizen in the country.
- Here, social or economic positions of the individual are not taken into consideration.

#### Main features of UBI:

- UBI is universal in nature. It means UBI is not targeted.

- The second feature of UBI is cash transfer instead of in-kind transfer.
- The third feature is that UBI is unconditional. That means one need not prove his or her unemployment status or socio-economic identity to be eligible for UBI.

### How UBI works?

- Under UBI, only those with zero income will receive the full benefits in net terms.
- For those, who earn additional income over the basic income, the net benefits will taper off through taxation.
- So even though the basic income is universal, only the poor will receive the full benefits.

### What UBI means to the Government?

- There would be drastic changes in the way government spends its revenue generated from taxation and other sources.
- Currently, Government spends its revenue on various services as well as on subsidies.
- UBI would mean that government may move away from service delivery and empower its citizens to access services through cash transfer.

### Advantages of UBI:

- UBI strengthens economic liberty at an individual level.
- It would be a sort of an insurance against unemployment and hence helps in reducing poverty.
- UBI will result in equitable distribution of wealth. As explained above, only poor will receive the full net benefits.
- Increased income will increase the bargaining power of individuals, as they will no longer be forced to accept any working conditions.
- UBI is easy to implement. Because of its universal character, there is no need to identify the beneficiaries.
- It promotes efficiency by reducing wastages in government transfers.
- Considerable gains could be achieved in terms of bureaucratic costs and time by replacing many of the social sector schemes with UBI.

### Arguments against UBI:

- A guaranteed minimum income might make people lazy and it breeds dependency. They may opt out of labour market.



- There is no guarantee that the additional income will be spent on education, health etc. there are chances that the money will be spent on 'temptation goods' such as alcohol, tobacco, drugs etc.
- Given the large population size, the fiscal burden on government would be high.
- If the UBI is funded by higher taxes, especially by the indirect taxes, it will result in inflation.
- A 'guaranteed minimum income' might reduce the availability of workers in some sectors which are necessary but unattractive and raise the wages of such works.

### **RBI LIFTS CURBS ON THREE PSBS**

#### **GS 3: Economy**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has decided to allow three public sector banks – Bank of India, Bank of Maharashtra and Oriental Bank of Commerce – to exit the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework following capital infusion by the government and a decline in net non-performing asset ratio.

#### **Highlights:**

- These banks have provided a written commitment that they would comply with the norms of minimum regulatory capital, net NPA and leverage ratio on an ongoing basis.
- The government has assured that the capital requirements of these banks will be duly factored in while making bank-wise allocations during the current financial year.
- It will boost credit growth.

#### **What is PCA?**

- To ensure that banks don't go bust, RBI has put in place some trigger points to assess, monitor, control and take corrective actions on banks which are weak and troubled. The process or mechanism under which such actions are taken is known as Prompt Corrective Action, or PCA.

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## UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME (UBI)

### GS 3: Economy

#### Why in News?

- Economic Survey for the year 2016-17 has an entire chapter dedicated to the discussion on Universal Basic Income (UBI).

#### Highlights:

- Universal Basic Income is a periodic, unconditional cash transfer to every citizen in the country.
- Here, social or economic positions of the individual are not taken into consideration.

#### Main features of UBI:

- UBI is universal in nature. It means UBI is not targeted.
- The second feature of UBI is cash transfer instead of in-kind transfer.
- The third feature is that UBI is unconditional. That means one need not prove his or her unemployment status or socio-economic identity to be eligible for UBI.

#### How UBI works?

- Under UBI, only those with zero income will receive the full benefits in net terms.
- For those, who earn additional income over the basic income, the net benefits will taper off through taxation.
- So even though the basic income is universal, only the poor will receive the full benefits.

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## HIGHLIGHTS OF INTERIM BUDGET 2019-2020

### GS 3: Economy

#### Why in News?

- The key highlights of the Interim Budget 2019-20 presented by the Union Minister for Finance.

#### Farmers:

- 12 crore small and marginal farmers to be provided with assured yearly income of Rs. 6000 per annum under PM-KISAN. Outlay of Rs. 75,000 crore for FY 2019-20 with additional Rs. 20,000 crore in RE 2018-19
- Outlay for Rashtriya Gokul mission increased to Rs 750 crore
- Rashtriya Kamdhenu Ayog to be setup for sustainable genetic up-gradation of the Cow resources
- New separate Department of Fisheries for welfare of 1.5 crore fishermen
- 2% interest subvention to Farmers for Animal husbandry and Fisheries activities; additional 3% in case of timely repayment.
- Interest subvention of 2% during disaster will now be provided for the entire period of rescheduling of loan

#### Labour:

- Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan scheme to ensure fixed monthly pension to 10 crore unorganized sector workers
- Rs 3000 per month after 60 years of age with an affordable contribution of only Rs 100/55 per month

## Health:

- 22nd AIIMS to be setup in Haryana

## Direct Tax proposals:

- Income upto Rs. 5 lakh exempted from Income Tax
- More than Rs. 23,000 crore tax relief to 3 crore middle class taxpayers
- Standard Deduction to be raised to Rs. 50,000 from Rs. 40,000
- TDS threshold to be raised from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 40,000 on interest earned on bank/post office deposits. Existing rates of income tax to continue
- Tax exempted on notional rent on a second self-occupied house. Housing and real estate sector to get boost-
- TDS threshold for deduction of tax on rent to be increased from Rs. 1,80,000 to Rs. 2,40,000
- Benefit of rollover of capital gains increased from investment in one residential house to two residential houses for capital gains up to Rs. 2 crores.
- Tax benefits for affordable housing extended till 31st March, 2020 under Section 80-IBA of Income Tax Act. Tax exemption period on notional rent, on unsold inventories, extended from one year to two years

## Fiscal Programme:

- Fiscal deficit pegged at 3.4% of GDP for 2019-20
- Target of 3% of fiscal deficit to be achieved by 2020-21.
- Fiscal deficit brought down to 3.4% in 2018-19 RE from almost 6% seven years ago

## Poor and Backward Classes:

- 25% additional seats in educational institutions to meet the 10% reservation for the poor
- Targeted expenditure to bridge urban-rural divide & to improve quality of life in villages
- All willing households to be provided electricity connections by March 2019

## North East:

- Allocation to be increased by 21% to Rs. 58,166 crores in 2019-20 BE over 2018-19 BE
- Arunachal Pradesh came on the air map recently. Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram came on India's rail map for the first time
- Container cargo movement through improved navigation capacity of the Brahmaputra

### **Vulnerable sections:**

- A new committee under NITI Ayog to identify all the remaining De-notified nomadic and semi-Nomadic tribes. New Welfare development Board under Ministry of social justice and empowerment for development and welfare of De-notified nomadic and semi nomadic tribes

### **Defence:**

- Defence budget to cross Rs 3,00,000 crore for the first time ever

### **Railways:**

- Capital support of Rs.64,587 crore proposed in 2019-20 (BE) from the budget
- Overall capital expenditure programme to be of Rs. 1,58,658 crores
- Operating Ratio expected to improve from 98.4% in 2017-18
- to 96.2% in 2018-19 (RE) and
- to 95% in 2019- 20 (BE)

### **Entertainment Industry:**

- Indian filmmakers to get access to Single window clearance as well for ease of shooting films. Regulatory provisions to rely more on self-declaration
- To introduce anti-camcording provisions in the Cinematograph Act to control piracy

### **MSME and Traders:**

- 2% interest subvention on an incremental loan of Rs 1 crore for GST registered SMEs
- Atleast 3% of the 25% sourcing for the Government undertakings will be from women owned SMEs. Renewed Focus on Internal trade; DIPP renamed to Department for Promotion of Industries and Internal trade

### **Digital Villages:**

- The Government to make 1 lakh villages into Digital Villages over next five years

### **Other Announcement(s):**

- New National Artificial Intelligence portal to support National Program on Artificial Intelligence

### **Key message in the Interim Budget 2019-20:**

- Moving towards realizing a 'New India' by 2022 -

- Clean and healthy India with universal access to toilets, water and electricity to all
- An India where Farmers' income would have doubled
- Ample opportunities to youth and women to fulfil their dreams
- An India free from terrorism, communalism, casteism, corruption and nepotism
- Vision for the next Decade:
- Foundation for India's growth and development laid in the past 5 years
- Poised to become a Five Trillion Dollar Economy in the next five years
- Aspire to become a Ten Trillion Dollar Economy in the next 8 years thereafter
- Ten dimensions of Vision for India of 2030:
- India would be a modern, technology driven, high growth, equitable and transparent society.
- To build physical as well as social infrastructure and to provide ease of living
- To create a Digital India, digitize government processes with leaders from youth
- Making India pollution free by leading transport revolution with Electric Vehicles and focus on Renewables
- Expanding rural industrialisation using modern digital technologies to generate massive employment
- Clean Rivers, safe drinking water to all Indians and efficient use of water through micro-irrigation
- Besides scaling up of Sagarmala, Coastline and Ocean waters powering India's development and growth
- Aim at our space programme - Gaganyaan, India becoming the launch-pad of satellites for the World and placing an Indian astronaut into space by 2022
- Making India self-sufficient in food, exporting to the world to meet their food needs and producing food in the most organic way
- A healthy India via Ayushman Bharat with women having equal rights and concern for their safety and empowerment
- Transforming India into a Minimum Government Maximum Governance nation with pro-active and responsible bureaucracy

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## 220 KV SRINAGAR- ALUSTENG - DRASS- KARGIL - LEH TRANSMISSION LINE

**GS 3: Economy | Infrastructure: Energy**

### Why in News?

- The Prime Minister dedicated the 220 kV Srinagar- Alusteng - Drass- Kargil - Leh Transmission System to the Nation today, a step that would ensure quality power supply to Ladakh round the year.

### Srinagar- Alusteng - Drass- Kargil - Leh transmission line:

- Built at a height of around 3000-4000 meters, this approx. 335 km long transmission line has been constructed by POWERGRID.
- In this project, the four new State-of-the-Art 220/66 kV Gas Insulated Sub-stations built at Drass, Kargil, Khaltsi and Leh will help to ensure 24×7 quality power in all weather conditions.
- Funding provisions have been in the ratio of 95:05 (95% Govt. of India share and 5% J&K state share).

### Significance:

- The implementation of this project was also aimed to supply power to the people of Ladakh in harsh winters and evacuation of surplus power of Kargil & Leh Hydel stations of NHPC in summers.
- It is a flagship project of Government of India, under Prime Minister's Reconstruction Plan for J&K ( PMRP J&K) scheme which was aimed to improve reliability & quality of power supply in Ladakh region of J&K by connecting with National Grid.
- The project will meet the power demand of Ladakh region at economical rates.
- This would give huge boost to the tourism sector and enhance socio-economic development of Ladakh.

### Powergrid:

- POWERGRID is one of the World's Largest Power Transmission Utility, and has a wide network of 150,874 circuit kilometers transmission lines, with 238 Sub-stations and transformation capacity of 351,106 MVA.



## GEMS AND JEWELLERY DOMESTIC COUNCIL

### GS 3: Economy

#### Why in News?

- An Ad-hoc National Committee of Domestic Council for Gems and Jewellery consisting 14 Members representing various associations of Gems and Jewellery Sector has been constituted to draft Memorandum and Article of Association and other Rules/Bye-laws of the domestic council.

#### Significance of the council:

- It is envisaged that the domestic industry would be benefited from such a representative body which would be the forum for highlighting the issues and concerns of the industry that require redressal through policy measures.

#### Highlights:

- To encourage and boost domestic gems and jewellery sector
- Establishment of Special Notified Zone (SNZ)
- Setting up of Common Facility Centres for gem and jewellery sector
- Announcement of separate ITC HS Code for lab-grown diamonds
- Providing financial assistance for participation in international fairs, organizing buyer-seller meets, creation of export related infrastructure, etc.

## LABOUR MINISTRY NOTIFIES RULES TO ALLOW EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN MINES

### GS 3: Economy | Development & Employment

#### Why in News?

- The Central Government has exempted the women employed in any mine above ground and in any mine below ground from the provisions of section 46 of the Mines Act, 1952, subject to following conditions.

#### Highlights:

#### Rules above ground:

- The owner of a mine may deploy women between the hours of 7 pm and 6 am in the mine above ground including opencast workings;

- the deployment of women shall be after obtaining the written consent of the concerned woman employee;
- the women so deployed shall be provided with adequate facilities and safeguards regarding occupational safety, security and health;
- the deployment of women shall be subject to the framing and implementation of Standard Operating Procedures on the basis of the guidelines issued in this regard by the Chief Inspector of Mines from time to time;
- the deployment of women shall be in a group of not less than three in a shift.

### Rules below ground:

- The owner of a mine may deploy women between the hours of 6 am and 7 pm in technical, supervisory and managerial work where continuous presence may not be required;
- the deployment of women shall be after obtaining the written consent of the concerned woman employee;
- the women so deployed shall be provided with adequate facilities and safeguards regarding occupational safety, security and health;
- the deployment of women shall be subject to the framing and implementation of Standard Operating Procedures on the basis of the guidelines issued in this regard by the Chief Inspector of Mines from time to time;
- the deployment of women shall be in a group of not less than three.

### Why such move?

- The Mines Act, 1952, restricted the employment of women in underground mines and also in opencast or aboveground workings of the mine during night hours between 7PM and 6AM.
- Several women employees groups, industry and students has enrolled with various institutions pursuing mining engineering courses at degree and diploma levels.
- They have been representing to the government at different forum that women should be provided equal employment opportunity for working in mines.

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## NATIONAL GAS GRID

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

### Why in news?

- Government has launched National Gas Grid gas pipeline project which aims to provide piped cooking gas.

### Objectives:

- To remove regional imbalance within the country with regard to access of natural gas and provide clean and green fuel throughout the country.
- To connect gas sources to major demand centres and ensure availability of gas to consumers in various sectors. Development of City Gas Distribution Networks in various cities for supply of CNG and PNG.

### National Gas Grid:

- At present about 16,788 Km natural gas pipeline is operational and about 14,239 Km gas pipelines are being developed to increase the availability of natural gas across the country.
- These pipelines have been authorized by Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) and are at various stages of execution viz. Pre-Project activities/laying/testing/commissioning etc.

### Natural gas:

- Natural gas is a naturally occurring hydrocarbon gas mixture consisting primarily of methane, but commonly including varying amounts of other higher alkanes, and sometimes a small percentage of carbon dioxide, nitrogen, hydrogen sulfide, or helium.
- Natural gas available in India can broadly be classified into two categories, viz.
  - ✓ Domestic Natural Gas
  - ✓ Imported Re-gasified Liquefied Natural Gas (R-LNG)

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## 2ND PHASE OF RIVER INFORMATION SYSTEM BETWEEN FARAKKA- PATNA

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

### Why in news?

- The Union Minister of Water resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, inaugurate Phase 2 of the River Information System on National Waterway-1 (River Ganga) between Farakka and Patna and also unveil new arrangement of Navigation Lock at Farakka that would enable breeding of Hilsa fish in River Ganga and help preserve the river ecosystem.

### The River Information System (RIS) (Farakka -Patna):

- It will enhance the swift electronic data transfer between mobile vessels and base stations on shore through advance and real-time exchange of information.
- It is a form of vessel traffic management using next generation technology. It will help in crises management and enhanced inland navigation safety by preventing ship-to-ship collisions, ship – bridge collisions, groundings etc.
- The service will immensely help in optimization of navigation and minimize collision risks in the waterway thus benefitting the users greatly. The services are being used in advanced waterways of Europe, China and U.S.A. The operationalization of this system in India is a landmark in itself.
- Under phase II, five base stations – Manihari, Bhagalpur, Munger, Barh and Hatidah and one control station have been made at Patna.
- IWAI (Inland Waterways Authority of India) is implementing the project in three phases on NW-1. Earlier, in 2016, the first phase of RIS – on Haldia- Farakka stretch was commissioned. Work on third, Patna-Varanasi stretch is currently in progress.

### RIS:

- RIS Services are a combination of sensors like Automated Identification system, Meteorological and Hydrological equipment and software related services designed to optimize traffic and transport processes in inland navigation. RIS works on the lines of Air Traffic Controls.
- It aims to streamline the exchange of information between waterway operators and users

## 7 EXTRA HIGH VOLTAGE (EHV) SUB-STATIONS AND 24 LOW TENSION (LT) SUB-STATIONS AT ITANAGAR

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

### Why in news?

- The Prime Minister laid the foundation stone for 7 Extra High Voltage (EHV) Sub-stations and 24 Low Tension (LT) Sub-stations today in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.

### Highlights:

- This project is a major step towards meeting the national objectives of affordable 24X7 power to all, especially in the remote locations of Arunachal Pradesh and shall also help in bringing the per capita power consumption of the State (233 kwhr) closer to national average (1075 kWh). The project will give impetus to the inclusive growth by enhancing the consumers' access to reliable and affordable grid connected power supply.
- It will lead to reduction in operation of Diesel Generating Plants in Arunachal Pradesh thus bringing socio-economic and environmental benefits to the people of Arunachal Pradesh. The project will also facilitate in development of small scale/cottage industries/tourism in the region and boost economic growth by enabling supply of quality power. This project will give impetus to integration of upcoming Hydro Power Generating Plants in Arunachal Pradesh with the National Grid.
- The project is being implemented by Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (POWERGRID) a 'Navratna' Company under Ministry of Power, Government of India.

## MEGA FOOD PARK AT MATHURA

**GS 3: Economy | Infrastructure**

### Why in News?

- Union Minister for Food Processing Industries laid foundation stone for M/s Nandvan Mega Food Park Private Limited located in Mathura in Uttar Pradesh.

### Mega food park:

- Government of India has approved a financial assistance of 40% to set up the Mega Food Park. The facilities being created by M/s Nandvan Mega Food Park Private Limited at Central Processing Centre (CPC) of this Mega Food Park include.
  - ✓ Multipurpose Cold Storage

- ✓ Individually Quick Frozen (IQF) with Frozen Storage
- ✓ Dry Warehouse
- ✓ Raw milk packaging Line
- ✓ Pulses and Grain packaging line
- ✓ Food testing lab. In addition,
- ✓ the lead promoter will also setup an Anchor Unit for Dairy Processing with plant capacity of 500 TPD

### **Mega Food Park:**

- The Scheme of Mega Food Park aims at providing a mechanism to link agricultural production to the market by bringing together farmers, processors and retailers so as to ensure maximizing value addition, minimizing wastage, increasing farmers income and creating employment opportunities particularly in rural sector.
- The Mega Food Park Scheme is based on “Cluster” approach and envisages creation of state of art support infrastructure in a well-defined agri / horticultural zone for setting up of modern food processing units in the industrial plots provided in the park with well-established supply chain.
- Mega food park typically consists of supply chain infrastructure including collection centers, primary processing centers, central processing centers, cold chain and around 30-35 fully developed plots for entrepreneurs to set up food processing units.

### **OPEN ACREAGE LICENSING POLICY (OALP)**

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

**Prelims Level: Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP)**

### **Why in News?**

- The ministry of petroleum and natural gas has launched the third bidding round under the Open Acreage Licensing Policy (OALP).

### **OLAP:**

- It provides uniform licences for exploration and production of all forms of hydrocarbons, enabling contractors to explore conventional as well as unconventional oil and gas resources. Fields are offered under a revenue-sharing model.
- It allows marketing and pricing freedom for crude oil and natural gas produced.

- Under the OALP, once an explorer selects areas after evaluating the National Data Repository (NDR) and submits the EoI
- It is to be put up for competitive bidding and the entity offering the maximum share of oil and gas to the government is awarded the block.

### **National Data Repository:**

- It has been created to provide explorers' data on the country's repositories, allowing them to choose fields according to their capabilities.
- Data received through the National Seismic Programme, an in-depth study of 26 sedimentary basins, are continuously being added to the NDR.

## **SELA PASS TUNNEL PROJECT**

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

**Mains Level: North-East India – Security and Developmental Issues**

### **Why in News?**

- In a key move aimed at improving all weather connectivity and enabling the swift movement of Indian troops to Arunachal Pradesh bordering China, PM laid the foundation stone for the Sela Tunnel Project.

### **Sela Pass Tunnel Project:**

- The tunnel covers a total distance of 12.04 kms which consist of two tunnels of 1790 metres and 475 meters.
- It is being built at an estimated cost of ₹687 crores by the Border Roads Organisation.
- It aims to provide all weather connectivity to Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh – an area claimed entirely by China – and other forward areas.
- Once built it will cut travel time to Tawang by at least an hour for Indian troops stationed in adjoining Assam's Tezpur town – the headquarters of the Indian army's IV Corps.

### **Strategic Importance:**

- The lack of motorable roads and rail connections in India's northeast and Arunachal Pradesh in particular were seen as distinct disadvantages for India vis a vis China in the region.
- Analysts had been warning of China building infrastructure including access roads right up to the Indian border that would give it a strategic advantage in any conflict with India.

- Once completed this would result in all-weather connectivity to Tawang and forward areas and reduction in more than one hour of travelling time from Tezpur to Tawang.

### **E-COCOON APP**

#### **GS 3: Economy | Infrastructure**

#### **Prelims Level: E-cocoon app**

#### **Why in News?**

- A mobile application e-cocoon was launched for quality certification in silkworm seed sector.

#### **Highlights:**

- It will help quality certification in silk worm sector.
- The application will be used by the Seed Analysts and Seed Officers nominated under Central Seed Act for system and product certification through real time reporting.
- India is the second largest producer of silk after China and the largest consumer of silk. India's silk production capacity is expected to reach about 38,500 tonnes by 2020 from the current level of 32,000 tonnes.

### **NATIONAL PRODUCTIVITY WEEK**

#### **GS 3: Economy | Issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources**

#### **Prelims level: Circular Economy, NPC**

#### **Why in News?**

- National Productivity Council (NPC) is celebrating its 61st Foundation Day on 12th February with the theme "Circular Economy for Productivity & Sustainability".
- NPC observes foundation day as Productivity Day and the National Productivity Week.

#### **Circular Economy:**

- A circular economy is an economic system aimed at minimising waste and making the most of resources.
- This regenerative approach is in contrast to the traditional linear economy, which has a 'take, make, dispose' model of production.
- In a circular system resource input and waste, emission, and energy leakage are minimized by slowing, closing, and narrowing energy and material loops.



- This can be achieved through long-lasting design, maintenance, repair, reuse, remanufacturing, refurbishing, recycling, and upcycling.
- The circular economy follows the principle of preservation and enhancement of natural capital by controlling finite stocks and balancing renewable resource flows.

### Significance:

- Circular economy has the potential to increase productivity and create jobs, whilst reducing carbon emissions and preserving valuable raw materials.
- It works by extending product life span through improved design and servicing and relocating waste from the end of the supply chain to the beginning - in effect, using resources more efficiently by using them over and over.
- The challenge lies in building circular economy knowledge and capacity.

### National Productivity Council:

- National Productivity Council (NPC) is an autonomous registered society under DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- It is national level organization to promote productivity culture in India.
- Established by the Ministry of Industry, Government of India in 1958, it is an autonomous, multipartite, non-profit organization with equal representation from employers' & workers' organizations and Government.
- NPC is a constituent of the Tokyo-based Asian Productivity Organisation (APO), an Inter-Governmental Body, of which the Government of India is a founder member.

## STRATEGIC PETROLEUM RESERVES

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

#### Prelims Level: Strategic Petroleum Reserves & Significance

#### Why in News?

- In a boost to energy security of the country, PM recently dedicated to the nation, 1.33 MMT Visakhapatnam Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR) facility of Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Limited (ISPRL).

#### Highlights:

- The Facility has the largest underground storage compartment in the country. 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

- The reserves 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.

### **LEAST AVAILABLE DEPTH INFORMATION SYSTEM (LADIS) PORTAL**

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

#### **Why in News?**

- Moving a step ahead towards ensuring optimum use of National Waterways, the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) launched a new portal LADIS - Least Available Depth Information System.

#### **Least Available Depth Information System Portal:**

- IWAI has designed LADIS to facilitate the day to day operations of inland vessels plying on National Waterways and to avoid any hindrance in service and operation.
- It will enhance credibility and efficiency of information sharing to achieve seamless operations on National Waterways, besides pre-empting problems that may occur during movement of vessels. LADIS will ensure that real-time data on least available depths is disseminated for ship/barge and cargo owners so that they can undertake transportation on NWs in a more planned way. The portal being hosted on IWAI's website iwai.nic.in has been developed in-house.
- Initially LAD information will be available for NW-1, NW-2, Indo-Bangladesh Protocol route and NW-3, along with the date of survey.

#### **Utility of the Portal:**

- An assured depth of waterway is required for seamless movement of vessels.

- If real time information is made available regarding LADs in stretches of various NWs, it will help transporters by guiding them on the suitability of time of movement.

## **20% LIMIT ON INVESTMENTS BY FPIs IN CORPORATE BONDS LIFTED BY RBI**

### **GS 3: Economy**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has withdrawn the earlier order which stipulated a 20% limit on investments by FPIs in Corporate Bonds.

#### **Highlights:**

- During the review of the FPI investment in corporate debt in April 2018, the limit was introduced to incentivize the FPIs to maintain a portfolio of assets.
- However, the market feedback suggested that foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have been constrained by this stipulation.
- As a result, to encourage a wider spectrum of investors to access the Indian corporate debt market, RBI has decided to withdraw the 20% limit on investments by FPIs in Corporate Bonds.

#### **Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI):**

- FPI consists of securities and other financial assets passively held by foreign investors.
- FPI does not provide the investor with direct ownership of financial assets.
- In India, FPIs are allowed to invest in various debt market instruments such as government bonds, treasury bills, state development loans (SDLs) and corporate bonds, but with certain restrictions and limits.
- FPI is part of a country's capital account and is listed on its balance of payments (BOP).

#### **FPI vs FDI**

##### **FPI:**

- FPI allows the investor to purchase stocks, bonds or other financial assets in a foreign country and the investor does not actively manage investments or companies that issue investment.
- Also, the investor does not have control over securities or business.

- FPI is more liquid and less risky than FDI.

### **FDI:**

- In FDI, the investor has a direct business interest in the entity into which the investment is made.
- The investor controls his monetary investments and actively manages the company into which the investments are made.

## **SECOND EDITION OF STATES' RANKING ON STARTUP INITIATIVES**

### **GS 3: Economy | Development and Employment**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has released second edition of Startup Ranking for 2019.

#### **States' Start-up Ranking:**

- The DPIIT launched this exercise to rank states and UTs on the basis of measures being taken by them to promote startups, and added that it was consulting states for their ranking framework.
- Erstwhile DIPP began this exercise from January, 2016.
- The State Startup Ranking Framework is aimed at bringing to fore progress made by States/UTs for promoting startup ecosystem.
- The report intends to foster competitiveness and propel the states/UTs to work proactively while facilitating states/UTs to identify learn and replicate good practices.

#### **2019 Framework:**

- The Ranking Framework 2019 comprises of 7 pillars and 30 action points.
- DPIIT has prepared the framework after several rounds of consultation with State and UT Governments.
- DPIIT also proposes to recognise States and UTs for their exemplary performance in seven pillars of the ranking framework:
  - ✓ Institutional support
  - ✓ Simplifying regulations
  - ✓ Easing public procurement
  - ✓ Incubation support

- ✓ Seed funding support
- ✓ Venture funding support
- ✓ Awareness and outreach related activities

## **SUPER-EFFICIENT AIR CONDITIONING PROGRAMME LAUNCHED BY EESL**

### **GS 3: Economy | Development - Energy**

#### **Why in News?**

- Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture of four National Public Sector Enterprises under Ministry of Power, Government of India, launched its Super-Efficient Air Conditioning Programme for residential and institutional consumers in the BSES area.
- The Super-Efficient ACs Super-Efficient Air Conditioning programme launched by EESL to be 40% more efficient than current 3-star technology.
- Besides promoting energy efficiency, the Super-Efficient AC programme will also help to reduce the peak power demand enabling the two organisations to harness synergies to promote energy security and sustainability.
- The programme directly addresses the prospect of the nearly four-fold increase in energy consumption from buildings and cooling appliances in India by 2032, while also addressing goals of India's Cooling Action Plan and Hydrochlorofluoro carbons Phase Out Management Plan, enabling achievement of India's targets under the Kigali and Paris Agreements.

#### **Highlights:**

- EESL will conduct all activities related to source, supply, complaint management and redressal, and fulfilment of warranty obligations for the products.
- Applying its proven business model of demand aggregation, EESL will mobilize the capital of INR 150 crores for the programme while redeeming its investment through upfront payments for the super-efficient ACs from customers.
- EESL has initiated the procurement process of super-efficient ACs, thereby capitalising on opportunities for leveraging economies of scale through demand aggregation, and so reducing the cost of this superior green technology to consumers.

- EESL's investment in the programme is partially supported by a grant from the Global Environment Facility (GEF).
- Further, Asian Development Bank (ADB) is providing necessary grant support and loan while United Nations Environment (UNEP) is providing technical assistance support to the Super-Efficient AC programme.

### **EESLmart.in:**

- During the event, EESL also launched its e-Commerce website, in, through which customers of BRPL, and of other DISCOMs that partner with EESL in future, can purchase the super-efficient air conditioners. With a focus on increasing consumer adoption of, and access to, energy efficient technologies, the website will also allow customers to purchase other appliances distributed by EESL, including induction cookstoves and products sold under the UJALA programme – 9-Watt LED bulbs, LED luminaries, and BEE 5-star rated energy efficient fans.

### **Global Environment Facility (GEF):**

- GEF is an independent financing mechanism that was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to address global environmental issues.
- The GEF is an international partnership of 183 countries, international institutions, civil society organizations and the private sector.

## **CONFERENCE ON THE FUTURE OF INDIAN BANKING**

### **GS 3: Economy**

#### **Why in News?**

- NITI Aayog co-hosted a conference on “The Future of Indian Banking” with the Foundation for Economic Growth and Welfare (EGROW Foundation).

#### **Objectives:**

- The conference aimed to increase and elevate the discourse on the banking sector in India, and help develop insights to inform the continued evolution of the Indian banking sector for optimally supporting the growing credit needs of the Indian economy.

#### **Highlights:**

- Technology has become critically important for banking already and will continue to become more important in future. This will serve to bring banking closer to the customer,

including those in rural areas, and also bring tremendous efficiencies with greater speed of service at much lower cost.

- Appropriate skilling of banking human resources is necessary to keep pace with best credit practices and new technology-based banking paradigm. In addition, banking staff needs to be trained to prepare for a larger role of banking in expanding the Indian economy.
- The banking industry has to be continuously prepared for fraud and rising cyber security risks.
- The banking industry requires a suitable vigilance mechanism for trustworthy banking but with a clear mandate to distinguish between deliberate action, criminal negligence, error in judgment or unforeseeable business risk.
- There may be a need to think again in terms of specialised and sector based banking.
- Public sector banks have consistently supported social banking, unlike private and foreign banks. Public sector banks should continue to do so.
- To compete effectively globally there is a need for bigger banks in India.
- There is a need for more research on banking sector issues, specific to the Indian context.

### **SOUTH COAST RAILWAY (SCOR)**

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

#### **Why in News?**

- As per item 8 of Schedule 13 (Infrastructure) of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014, Indian Railways was required to examine establishing a new railway zone in the successor State of Andhra Pradesh. The matter has been examined in detail in consultation with stakeholders and it has been decided to go ahead with creation of a new zone with headquarter at Visakhapatnam.

#### **Highlights:**

- The new zone named “South Coast Railway (SCoR)”, will comprise of existing Guntakal, Guntur and Vijayawada divisions.
- It will be the 18th zone in the country. Waltair division shall be split into two parts. One part of Waltair division will be incorporated in the new zone i.e. in South Coast Railway and will be merged with the neighbouring Vijayawada division.

- Remaining portion of Waltair division shall be converted into a new division with headquarter at Rayagada under East Coast Railway (ECoR).
- South Central Railway will comprise of Hyderabad, Secunderabad and Nanded divisions.

### **RBI TAKES 3 BANKS OFF PCA FRAMEWORK**

#### **GS 3: Economy**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Reserve Bank of India has taken off Allahabad Bank and Corporation Bank, from the public sector, and Dhanlaxmi Bank from the private sector out of prompt and corrective action (PCA) framework.

#### **Highlights:**

- The banks have shored up their capital funds and also increased their loan loss provision to ensure that the PCA parameters were complied with.
- Net NPA and leverage ratios are no longer in breach of the PCA thresholds.
- According to norms, PCA framework gets triggered when a bank breaches one of the three risk thresholds. Crossing 6% net NPA is one of them.
- RBI will continuously monitor the performance of these banks under various parameters.

#### **PCA framework:**

- RBI has issued a policy action guideline (first in December 2002 and revised in 2014 and 2017) in the form of Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) Framework if a commercial bank's financial condition worsens below a mark.
- The PCA framework specifies the trigger points or the level in which the RBI will intervene with corrective action.
- This trigger points are expressed in terms of parameters for the banks.
- The parameters of PCA:
  - ✓ Capital to Risk weighted Asset Ratio (CRAR)
  - ✓ Net Non-Performing Assets (NPA)
  - ✓ Return on Assets (RoA)



## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS & INTERNAL SECURITY**

### **INDIAN OCEAN RIM ASSOCIATION (IORA) MEET ON DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT**

#### **GS 3: Disaster Management**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Ministry of Home Affairs in collaboration with the Ministry of External Affairs and National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) is organising a meeting of Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) Cluster Group on Disaster Risk Management (DRM) in New Delhi.

#### **Highlights:**

- Indian Ocean Rim Association is an inter-governmental organisation and has many disaster-prone countries among its 22 members and nine dialogue partners. DRM is one of its priority areas and its Action Plan (2017-2021) has specific goals to improve resilience in IORA countries.
- The two-day meeting will feature interactive sessions and will focus on development of a draft Work Plan for DRM in IORA.
- It will also deliberate on the need for establishing a DRM Core Group to take forward the agreed objectives under the Work Plan.

#### **IORA action plan (2017-2021):**

- Under the IORA Action Plan 2017-2021, the development of DRM in IORA has been given focused direction. The Cluster Group on DRM, chaired by India for a period of two years, is tasked with leading the formulation of a Work Plan for this Priority Area, with the aim to enhance cooperation and develop resiliency in the IOR.
- The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) is sometimes called the “World’s Hazard Belt” as it is prone to disasters, both natural and man-made. Natural disasters under the group of Climatological (cyclones and droughts), Geological and Tectonic (earthquakes and tsunamis) and Hydrological (floods and tidal surges) origins are very common and reoccurring phenomena in the region.
- According to the UN ESCAP, around 50% of natural disasters occurring in this region are climatogenic and seismogenic in nature.

## SHEKATKAR COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

### GS 3: Internal Security | Various Security forces & agencies & their mandate

#### Why in News?

- The Committee of Experts (CoE) constituted by the Ministry of Defence under the chairmanship of Lt. Gen (Retd) DB Shekatkar to recommend measures to enhance combat capability and rebalance defence expenditure of the armed forces, submitted its report in December 2016. The Report was taken up by the Ministry of Defence to frame key action points and roadmap for implementation.

#### Recommendations taken up for implementation:

- Optimization of Signals Establishments to include Radio Monitoring Companies
- Restructuring of repair echelons (designated rank) in the Army
- Redeployment of Ordnance echelons to include Vehicle Depots, Ordnance Depots and Central Ordnance Depots apart from streamlining inventory control mechanisms.
- Better utilization of Supply and Transportation echelons and Animal Transport units.
- Closure of Military Farms and Army Postal Establishments in peace locations
- Enhancement in standards for recruitment of clerical staff and drivers in the Army
- Improving the efficiency of the National Cadet Corps

## INDIA-NORWAY OCEAN DIALOGUE

### GS 2: IR | Bilateral Relations

#### Why in News?

- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister has approved the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Norway on India-Norway Ocean Dialogue.

#### Highlights:

- It promotes cooperation in the areas of mutual interest pertaining to the development of blue economy. Norway is a global leader in the area of Blue Economy and has cutting-edge technologies and expertise in areas such as fisheries, hydrocarbons, renewable energy, sustainable harnessing of ocean resources and maritime transport. The MoU contribute to create opportunities for collaboration in areas such as exploitation of hydrocarbons and other marine resources, as well as management of ports and tourism

development for the mutual benefit of all stakeholders within the framework of the Joint Task Force (JTF).

- It contributes to the objective of Food Security through infusion of new technologies in fisheries and aquaculture. Further, offer a platform for businesses in both countries to execute profitable ventures.
- Scientists and researchers collaborate on studying ocean ecosystem also in the context of the Arctic region.

### **EXERCISE CUTLASS EXPRESS 2019**

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

##### **Why in News?**

- INS Trikand, a front-line warship of the Indian Navy, recently participated in a multinational training exercise 'CUTLASS EXPRESS - 19' held from 27 Jan to 06 Feb 19.

##### **Exercise Cutlass Express 2019:**

- Cutlass Express 2019 is sponsored by U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) and is conducted by U.S. Naval Forces Africa.
- It is an exercise designed to assess and improve combined maritime law enforcement capacity, promote national and regional security in East Africa as well as information sharing, planning and operating. The aim of the exercise was to improve law enforcement capacity, promote regional security and progress inter-operability between the armed forces of the participating nations. During the exercise, Naval, Coast Guard and Marine Police personnel from a number of East African countries were jointly trained by mentors from USA, India, and Netherlands, with support of international organisations.
- The Indian Navy played a significant role in the exercise, being involved in planning, coordination and execution.
- Through INS Trikand, the IN provided a platform for live Visit Board Search Seizure (VBSS) drills, which proved to be of immense training value to the participating nations.

##### **INS Trikand:**

- INS Trikand is equipped with a versatile range of sensors and weapons enabling her to address threats in all the three dimensions - air, surface and sub-surface.

- It is an ideal platform for prolonged deployments, including the present one, in which she is carrying out Presence and Surveillance missions and Anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden and Western Arabian Sea.
- The ship is a part of the Indian Navy's Western Fleet and operates under the Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Naval Command, headquartered at Mumbai.

### **DEFENCE INNOVATION HUBS (DIH)**

#### **GS 3: Internal Security | Various Security forces & agencies & their mandate**

##### **Prelims Level: DIH, iDEX**

##### **Why in News?**

- The Defence Innovation Organisation set up under iDEX has announced setting up of two DIHs in Tamil Nadu (Coimbatore) and Maharashtra (Nashik).

##### **Defence Innovation Hubs (DIH):**

- DIHs will serve as platforms where innovators can get information about needs and feedback from the Services directly and create solutions for India's major defence platforms.
- This structure is also geared towards attracting more innovators to work for the defence sector in India.

##### **iDEX:**

- An innovation ecosystem for Defence titled Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) was launched in April 2018.
- iDEX is aimed at creation of an ecosystem to foster innovation and technology development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging Industries including MSMEs, Startups, Individual Innovators, R&D institutes and Academia and provide them grants/funding and other support to carry out R&D which has good potential for future adoption for Indian defence and aerospace needs.
- iDEX will function as the executive arm of the Defence Innovation Organisation (DIO). The scheme mandates setting up of Defence Innovation Hubs across the country, to provide necessary incubation and infrastructure support to defence startups and innovators.

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## **MOU BETWEEN INDIA AND FINLAND ON COOPERATION IN THE FIELD OF PEACEFUL USES OF OUTER SPACE**

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

### **Why in News?**

- Union cabinet approves Memorandum of Understanding between India and Finland on Cooperation in the field of peaceful uses of outer space.

### **Significance:**

- The signed MoU provide impetus to explore newer research activities and application possibilities in the field of remote sensing of the earth; satellite communication; satellite navigation; space science and exploration of outer space.
- Cooperation with the Government of Finland would lead to develop a joint activity in the field of application of space technologies for the benefit of humanity.

### **Highlights:**

- The MoU understanding shall enable the following potential interest areas of cooperation such as,
  - ✓ Remote sensing of the earth
  - ✓ Satellite communication and satellite-based navigation
  - ✓ Space science and planetary exploration
  - ✓ Development, testing and operation of space objects and ground system
  - ✓ Launching of Finnish Space objects by Indian launch vehicles
  - ✓ Processing and use of space data
  - ✓ Developing innovative applications and solutions based on space technologies and use of artificial intelligence
  - ✓ Cooperation around emerging new Space opportunities and data ecosystems and sustainable used of outer space.

## **PARALLEL TAXI TRACK OPERATION BY ALL WOMEN CREW**

### **GS 3: Internal Security**

#### **Why in News?**

- In a first for the IAF, the "OTTERS" squadron of Western Air Command has undertaken Parallel Taxi Track (PTT) Operations with a full women crew in the Dornier 228 aircraft.

#### **Highlights:**

- The pilots, Sqn Ldr Kamaljeet Kaur and her co-pilot Sqn Ldr Rakhi Bhandari carried out successful parallel taxi track landing and take-off operations at Sirsa. This achievement highlights the theme of Aero India 2019 which is earmarked on 23 February as the day to highlight the Achievements of Women in Aviation Sector.

#### **Parallel Taxi Track:**

- Parallel Taxi Track Operations are carried out to enable unhindered operations even when the runway is not available due to enemy action or any other reasons. PTT Operations is a challenging task as the crew is required to land and take off from the taxi track, which is considerably smaller in width than the runway, with proximity to obstructions as compared to the main runway. There is no of error during the most critical phases of flight, landing and take-off.

## **HAM RADIO OPERATORS PUT THEIR HOBBY TO TEST**

### **GS 3: Disaster Management**

#### **Why in News?**

- To help the public during natural calamities such as cyclonic storms members of the Amateur Radio Society of Odisha got together at an uninhabited island within the Chilika Lake to test their operational skill and technology.

#### **Highlights:**

- The use of this technology for communicating to the outside world can be useful for cyclone and flood-prone states like Odisha. The uninhabited island was chosen as it is inaccessible by conventional telecommunication network. Radio signals were used for the transmission of messages by the private HAM radio operators of Odisha. Solar power was used to operate the HAM radios. It was an attempt to simulate real-life situation during

any natural calamity when all conventional modes of communication cease to exist as it happened during the Titli cyclone.

### **HAM radio:**

- HAM radio or Amateur Radio is a popular hobby and service that brings people, electronics and communication together. People use ham radio to talk across town, around the world, or even into space, all without the Internet or cell phones.

## **GOVERNMENT LIBERALIZES THE E-VISA REGIME**

### **GS 2: IR | India and its neighborhood- relations**

#### **Why in News?**

- Recently, government has made series of amendments in e-visa regime, liberalizing it further and making it more tourist friendly. The e-Tourist Visa which was introduced in Sept. 2014 with 46 countries has now been made applicable for 166 countries.

#### **Changes in e-Tourist Visa:**

- On e-Tourist Visa continuous stay during each visit shall not exceed 90 days in case of nationals of all countries who are eligible for grant of e-visa except nationals of USA, UK, Canada and Japan. In case of nationals of USA, UK, Canada and Japan continuous stay during each visit shall not exceed 180 days.
- In all cases no registration will be required.

#### **Changes in e-Business Visa:**

- Continuous stay during each visit shall not exceed 180 days in case of nationals of all countries who are eligible for grant of e-visa. No registration will be required if the stay is for a period of less than 180 days.

#### **Other changes:**

- e-Visa is valid for entry through 2 (two) more designated Airports (Bhubaneswar and Port Blair) raising the total number of such airports to 28. Attending Destination wedding under normal e-Tourist visa or Tourist visa- No separate category of Destination Wedding Visa. Foreign nationals who fall sick during their stay in India can now avail medical treatment without converting their visa into Medical Visa. This would take care of sudden medical emergencies. Visa-on-Arrival facility extended to the nationals of Republic of Korea.

## **EXERCISE VAYU SHAKTI- 2019**

### **GS 3: Internal Security**

#### **Why in News?**

- A mega exercise, EXERCISE VAYU SHAKTI-2019 involving 140 fighter jets and attack helicopters, in a firepower demonstration was held close to the border with Pakistan at Pokhran in Rajasthan.

#### **Highlights:**

- The IAF showcased firepower capability of indigenously-developed platforms like Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas, Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and efficacy of Akash surface-to-air missile and Astra air-to-air missile.
- For the first time, the ALH and the Akash were deployed in a military exercise.
- A total of 137 aircraft including Sukhoi-30s, Mirage 2000s, Jaguars, Mig-21 Bison, Mig-27, Mig-29, IL78, Hercules and AN-32 aircraft participated in this mega exercise.
- Vayu Shakti and Gagan Shakti are two important exercises held by Indian Airforce.
- Exercise Vayu Shakti demonstrates the IAF's ability to strike targets on the ground such as enemy convoys and tanks, radar stations, railway yards and military headquarters.
- The other important dimension of air power, air-to-air combat is out into display at another exercise of IAF called Gagan Shakti.

## **INDIA AND ARGENTINA SIGN MOU FOR CO-OPERATION IN NUCLEAR ENERGY**

### **GS 2: IR | Bilateral Relations**

#### **Why in News?**

- During the visit of Argentine President Mauricio Macri, Argentina has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to boost cooperation in the sector of nuclear energy. The MoU signed was signed between the Department of Atomic Energy, India and National Atomic Energy Commission, Argentina.

#### **Highlights:**

- Argentina has expertise in building small-capacity reactors and it is looking to work with India in some third country in tripartite projects. The MoU for cooperation within the



framework of Global Center for Nuclear Energy Partnership would bolster institutional linkages in civil nuclear research, development and capacity building.

- The MoU will aid in enhancing and exploring cooperative ventures in the area of nuclear power and its societal uses in health, agriculture, industrial application, training and capacity building.

### **Nuclear Ties between India and Argentina:**

- In the year 2010 India and Argentina had signed an agreement for cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. INVAP which is an Argentinean Company is working on the Fission Molly Project to build a molybdenum plant in Mumbai.
- The plant would primarily focus on creating isotopes.
- Argentina is also an exporter of some nuclear components used in Indian power reactors.

## **INDUS WATERS TREATY 1960: PRESENT STATUS OF DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA**

### **GS 2: IR | India & its neighborhood- relations**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Indus system comprises of main Indus River, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej. The basin is mainly shared by India and Pakistan with a small share for China and Afghanistan.

#### **Indus Water Treaty 1960:**

- Under the Indus Waters Treaty signed between India and Pakistan in 1960, all the waters of three rivers, namely Ravi, Sutlej and Beas (Eastern Rivers) were allocated to India for exclusive use.
- The waters of Western rivers – Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab were allocated to Pakistan except for specified domestic, non-consumptive and agricultural use permitted to India as provided in the Treaty. India has also been given the right to generate hydroelectricity through run of the river (RoR) projects on the Western Rivers which, subject to specific criteria for design and operation is unrestricted.

#### **Present status of development in India:**

- To utilize the waters of the Eastern rivers which have been allocated to India for exclusive use, India has constructed Bhakra Dam on Satluj, Pong and Pandoh Dam on Beas and

Thein (Ranjitsagar) on Ravi. These storage works, together with other works like Beas-Sutlej Link, Madhopur-Beas Link, Indira Gandhi Nahar Project etc has helped India utilize nearly entire share (95 %) of waters of Eastern rivers.

- However, about 2 MAF of water annually from Ravi is reported to be still flowing unutilized to Pakistan below Madhopur. To stop the flow of these waters that belong to India for its utilization in India, following steps have been taken:

### **Resumption of Construction of Shahpurkandi project:**

- This project will help in utilizing the waters coming out from powerhouse of Thein dam to irrigate 37000 hectares of land in J&K and Punjab and generate 206 MW of power. The project was scheduled to be completed by September 2016.
- However, following a dispute between the state of J&K and Punjab, the work on the project had been suspended since 2014. The construction work has now resumed by Govt of Punjab under monitoring of Govt of India.

### **Construction of Ujh multipurpose project:**

- This project will create a storage of water on river Ujh , a tributary of Ravi for irrigation and power generation in India itself and provide a total irrigation benefits of 31,380 ha in Kathua, Hiranagar and Samba district of J&K apart from providing water for the district Kathua of J&K.

### **The 2nd Ravi Beas link below Ujh:**

- This project is being planned to tap excess water flowing down to Pakistan through river Ravi, even after construction of Thein Dam, by constructing a barrage across river Ravi for diverting water through a tunnel link to Beas basin.
- The project is expected to utilize about 0.58 MAF of surplus waters below Ujhdam by diverting the same to Beas basin for benefits of other co-basin states. The government of India has declared this project as National Project .
- The above three projects will help India to utilize its entire share of waters given under the Indus Waters Treaty 1960.

## SEOUL PEACE PRIZE

### GS 2: IR | India & Bilateral relations

#### Why in News?

- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi received the Seoul Peace Prize in South Korea.

#### Highlights:

- ◆ The Prime Minister is the 14th person to receive the honour.
- ◆ The award includes a diploma, a plaque and honorarium of US\$200,000.
- ◆ The prize has been given for PM Modi's contributions to the growth of the Indian and global economies.
- ◆ Past awardees include former UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and Grameen Bank founder Dr Muhammad Yunus.

#### Why is PM Modi getting the award?

- ◆ Prime Minister Narendra Modi was given the honour for his contributions to the growth of the Indian and global economies. The award committee has credited 'Modinomics' for reducing social and economic disparity between the rich and the poor.
- ◆ The committee has also lauded PM's initiatives to make the government cleaner through anti-corruption measures and demonetisation. The Prime Minister was hailed for his contribution towards regional and global peace through a proactive foreign policy with countries around the world under the 'Modi Doctrine' and the 'Act East Policy'.

#### About the award:

- ◆ Set up in 1990, the Seoul Peace Prize is biennially awarded to personalities to commemorate the success of the 24th Summer Olympic Games held in Seoul.
- ◆ The prize was established to reflect the wishes of the Korean people and to emphasise on their desire for everlasting peace on earth.

## HOME MINISTRY PUTS ASSAM RIFLES NOTIFICATION ON HOLD

### GS 3: Internal Security

#### Why in News?

- The Home Ministry has kept "in abeyance" its order that empowered the Assam Rifles, deployed along the Myanmar border, to arrest anyone and search a place without a

warrant in the border districts of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram. The notification was withheld after Opposition parties moved an adjournment motion against the order in the Assam Assembly. The Ministry said the matter would be “revisited in consultation with the State governments”.

### Highlights:

- Recently Assam Rifles, deployed along the Myanmar border, had empowered by the Centre to arrest anyone and search a place without warrant in the border districts of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Nagaland and Mizoram.
- According to a Home Ministry notification, “an officer of the rank corresponding to that of the lowest rank of members of the Assam Rifles” has been given these powers under the Code of Criminal Procedure.
- Earlier, Assam Rifles was making arrests only in areas where the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act was in effect. They were finding it difficult to make seizures and arrest in Mizoram, which doesn't have AFSPA. This is to basically correct that anomaly. As per law, they have to hand over the suspects to the local police within 24 hours.
- The MHA had lifted AFSPA from some areas of Arunachal Pradesh last year.

### Assam Rifles:

- Assam Rifles is the oldest of the Central Para Military Forces. Though the organisation has a cadre of its own officers, most senior positions are filled by taking officers on deputation from the Army.
- The Force functioned under the control of the Ministry of External Affairs till 1965. Its control was then transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs and has since been functioning under that Ministry.
- The Assam Rifles Act, 1941, presently governs the Force. Its charter of functions include –
  - ✓ Maintaining security of the North Eastern sector of the international border;
  - ✓ Helping states in the North East to maintain law and order and other states as and when needed
  - ✓ Taking counter insurgency measures in states of the North East.

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## **INDIA SIGNS MOU WITH CANADIAN UNIVERSITY FOR RESEARCH ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES**

**GS 2: IR | Bilateral**

### **Why in News?**

- Government of India has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada to work on various environmental issues including climate change, forest resource management and wildlife.

### **Highlights:**

- The MoU was signed by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) for the next 10 years to explore opportunities for collaborations in the field of forestry science.
- The opportunities for collaboration will be explored through organizations like Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE), Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Forest Survey of India (FSI), Indira Gandhi National Forest Academy and Directorate of Forest Education, Uttarakhand, and UBC.
- The MoU will assist in the exchange of students, researchers and faculty, developing research projects, livelihood opportunities and augment the income of the forest-based communities.
- The MoU will also assist industries to optimise the utilisation of forest-based resources with access to technology to different stakeholders by the respective organisations.
- The areas to be explored for collaboration under the MoU include collaborative research on wood sciences, forest resource management, adaptation and mitigation to climate change, forest genetics and breeding, wildlife, ecology, remote sensing, insect and disease pests, extension, conservation of flora and fauna, biotechnology, bio-energy and bio-economy.
- Also, joint conferences, seminars, workshops and exhibitions will be arranged as part of the MoU to take the collaboration forward.

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## **INDIA TO HAVE OWN DNS FOR SAFE BROWSING**

### **GS 3: Internal Security - Cyber Security**

#### **Why in News?**

- The Government of India will soon roll out a public Domain Name Server, or DNS for India.

#### **Highlights:**

- It aimed at providing a faster and more secure browsing experience for Internet users in the country, while ensuring that citizens' data is stored locally.
- To ensure availability, particularly for smaller Internet Service Providers (ISPs) who don't have credible DNS
- The roll-out, which will be executed by the National Informatics Centre – the technology arm of the government
- NIC is already using the public DNS within the government network.
- The government's system would prevent users from visiting malicious websites.

#### **DNS:**

- A DNS is a like a directory for the Internet. It helps to convert domain names that are easy for people to remember into IP addresses, which are used by computers/machines to communicate. If the DNS is either slow or fails to work, users will not be able to locate web addresses.

## **ALL INDIA CITIZENS SURVEY OF POLICE SERVICES**

### **GS 3: Internal Security | Various Security forces & agencies & their mandate**

#### **Why in News?**

- A globally accepted way to assess the impact or outcomes of such endeavors is through a holistic analysis of services rendered to the public, through public perception surveys conducted by professional and independent agencies.
- Such surveys are globally tested tools for improving service delivery in policing and enhancing public satisfaction. With the above aim and to further strengthen the good governance practices in the working of police, Ministry of Home Affairs has commissioned the Bureau of Police Research and Development to conduct this pan-India

survey. The survey will be conducted through the National Council of Applied Economic Research, New Delhi.

### **Aims and Objectives:**

- To understand public perceptions about Police
- Gauge the level of non-reporting of crimes or incidents to Police
- The position on ground relating to crime reporting & recording
- Timeliness and quality of police response and action, and
- To assess citizens' perception and experience about women and children's safety

### **Conduct of the Survey:**

- The survey will commence in March, 2019 and cover a representative sample of 1.2 lakh households spread over 173 districts across the country.
- It will be based on the National Sample Survey framework.
- All States and UTs would be included in this survey and will be completed in 9 months.

### **Expected Outcomes:**

- The outcome of the survey is expected to bring out useful suggestions for stakeholders in formulating and implementing appropriate policy responses.
- It will imbibe changes in the functioning of police at the cutting edge and for improve crime prevention and investigation.
- It will cater to transformation in community policing, improvement in the access to the justice and increased/ appropriate resource allocation for police in a systematic manner.

## **AFGHANISTAN LAUNCHES NEW EXPORT ROUTE TO INDIA THROUGH IRAN**

### **GS 2:IR| Agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests**

#### **Why in News?**

- Afghanistan began exports to India through the Chabahar as the landlocked, war-torn nation turns to overseas markets to improve its economy.

#### **Afghan Exports to India:**

- 23 trucks carrying 57 tonnes of dried fruits, textiles, carpets and mineral products were dispatched from western Afghan city of Zaranj to Iran's Chabahar port.

- The consignment will be shipped to the Indian city of Mumbai.
- The Iranian port provides easy access to the sea to Afghanistan and India has helped developed this route to allow both countries to engage in trade bypassing Pakistan.
- Afghanistan, a new trade partner:
- India has sent 1.1 million tonnes of wheat and 2,000 tonnes of lentils to Afghanistan through Chabahar.
- Both countries established an air corridor in 2017.
- Afghan exports to India stood at \$740 million in 2018, making it the largest export destination.

## **INDIA SUCCESSFULLY TEST-FIRES QUICK REACTION SURFACE-TO-AIR MISSILE**

### **GS 3: Internal Security**

#### **Why in News?**

- India has successfully test-fired two indigenously developed Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air missiles (QRSAM) from a test range off the Odisha coast.
- The trials were conducted by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) from Launch Complex 3 of the Integrated Test Range (ITR) at Chandipur.

#### **QRSAM:**

- This missile has been developed to replace the 'Akash' missile defence system, and has 360-degree coverage, light weight, high mobility and shorter second reaction time as compared to 'Akash'.
- It also uses solid fuel propellant and has a stated range of strike range of 25-30 km with capability of hitting multiple targets.
- It is capable of hitting the low flying objects.
- It successfully demonstrated the robust Control, Aerodynamics, Propulsion, Structural performance and high manoeuvring capabilities thus proving the design configuration.
- Radars, Electro Optical Systems, Telemetry and other stations have tracked the Missiles and monitored through the entire flights.



## EXERCISE SAMPRITI-2019

### GS 2: IR | India and its neighborhood relation

#### Why in News?

- It is an important bilateral defence cooperation endeavour between India and Bangladesh and this will be the eighth edition of the exercise which is hosted alternately by both countries.
- As part of the ongoing India Bangladesh defence cooperation, the joint military exercise will be conducted at Tangail, Bangladesh.
- The exercise is aimed to strengthen and broaden the aspects of interoperability and cooperation between the Indian and Bangladesh Armies.
- The exercise will involve tactical level operations in a counter insurgency and counter terrorism environment under the UN mandate.
- In addition to understanding each other in tactical level operations, emphasis will also be laid for greater cultural understanding to strengthen military trust and cooperation between the two nations.

