

1. A Massive Earthquake in Indonesia

Why in News?

- A strong 7.1-magnitude earthquake hit off the coast of North Maluku province in eastern Indonesia.

Indonesia and Earthquake

- Indonesia experiences frequent seismic and volcanic activity due to its position on the Pacific "Ring of Fire", where tectonic plates collide.
- The Ring of Fire, is a curving horseshoe-shaped chain of tectonic plate boundaries that hugs the Pacific basin.
- It is home to around 90 percent of the world's earthquakes.

2. Jharkhand statehood day

Why in News?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi today greeted the people of Jharkhand on their statehood day. Jharkhand - the land of forests - is celebrating its 19th year of constitution this year.

Jharkhand

- Jharkhand was carved out of 18 districts of Bihar in the year 2000 on November 15, where it came out as the 28th State of India.
- Its foundation day falls on the birth anniversary of tribal leader Birsa Munda, also known as "Bhagwan Birsa" who played a vital role in India's struggle for freedom

3. The Italian government has declared a state of emergency for Venice

Why in News?

- Venice was hit with its worst flood in over 50 years, caused by a nearly 6-foot tide that threatened its medieval, Baroque and Renaissance art and architecture.
- The cultural treasures, such as St Mark's Basilica are affected as the where water invaded the crypt.

Venice:

- Venice, is built on more than 100 small islands in a lagoon in the Adriatic Sea.
- The islands are located in the shallow Venetian Lagoon, an enclosed bay that lies between the mouths of the Po and the Piave rivers.

- Venice has been known as "Queen of the Adriatic", "City of Bridges", "The Floating City", and "City of Canals".
- The lagoon and a part of the city are listed as UNESCO World Heritage Site and are renowned for the beauty of their settings, their architecture, and artwork.

4. Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (OCSAE) Prevention and Investigation Unit

Why in News?

- The Central Bureau of Investigation has set up an Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (OCSAE) Prevention and Investigation Unit at its headquarter in New Delhi to counter the growing menace of child porn on the internet.

About:

- The new specialized unit will collect intelligence on those who are allegedly creating and transmitting such material on the internet.
- The unit also looks an eye on who are browsing and downloading such material.
- The perpetrators will be booked under relevant provisions of the Indian Penal Code, the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 and the Information Technology Act, 2000.

5. Sisiri River Bridge

Why in News?

- Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the Sisiri River Bridge in East Siang District and also said that the North Eastern Region is very crucial for the nation from a strategic point of view.

About:

- The Sisiri bridge will give better connectivity within states of Arunachal Pradesh connecting western and central parts Arunachal Pradesh with its Eastern section.
- The Sisiri bridge completion will also strategically boost up the troops movement in the international border with China.
- The Sisar(Sisiri), Mathun, Tangon, Dri, Ithun and Emra are the major tributaries of the Dibang.

6. 'Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar' Resolution

Why in News?

- The draft resolution named 'Situation of human rights of Rohingya Muslims and other minorities in Myanmar' was placed in the UNGA by the United Arab Emirates and Finland on behalf of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and European Union (EU). And the resolution has been passed.

About:

- The resolution calls upon Myanmar to review its controversial 1982 citizenship law which effectively denied citizenship to lakhs of Rohingyas living in Myanmar.
- The resolution also demands setting up of an independent investigative mechanism to arrive at an objective conclusion about the violation of the rights in Myanmar and establishing accountability.
- The resolution asks Myanmar to show clear political will for the safe, dignified, voluntary and sustainable return and reintegration of Rohingyas for the return of Rohingya refugees.

7. NISHTHA

Why in News?

- National Initiative for School Heads' and Teachers' Holistic Advancement (NISHTHA) was launched in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

About NISHTHA

- NISHTHA is a capacity building programme for "Improving Quality of School Education through Integrated Teacher Training" by Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- NISHTHA is the largest teachers' training programme of its kind in the world.
- It aims to build competencies among all the teachers and school principals at the elementary stage.
- Through this, teachers are trained to develop and strengthen the personal-social qualities of students and enable their holistic development.

8. Trace Bribery Matrix

Why in News?

- TRACE, an anti-bribery standard setting organisation, measures business bribery risk in 200 countries, territories, and Autonomous and Semi-Autonomous Regions.

About:

- The matrix provides multi-dimensional, insights about business bribery risk that can be used by companies to develop more targeted compliance procedures.
- With a total risk score of 48, India is ranked higher than neighbouring China whose score is 59 and Bangladesh has the highest business bribery risk among South Asian countries.
- Among the BRICS nations, South Africa is ahead of other countries with a score of 42.
- New Zealand has the **Lowest Bribery Risk**.

9. National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)

Why in News?

- The Supreme Court has set aside the judgment given by the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT).

About NCLAT:

- National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) was constituted under Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013 for hearing appeals against the orders of National Company Law Tribunal(s) (NCLT), with effect from 1st June, 2016.
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by NCLT(s) under Section 61 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC).
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India under Section 202 and Section 211 of IBC.
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal to hear and dispose of appeals against any direction issued or decision made or order passed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

Composition:

- The President of the Tribunal and the chairperson and Judicial Members of the Appellate Tribunal shall be appointed after consultation with the Chief Justice of India.
- The Members of the Tribunal and the Technical Members of the Appellate Tribunal shall be appointed on the recommendation of a Selection Committee consisting of:

1. Chief Justice of India or his nominee—Chairperson.
2. A senior Judge of the Supreme Court or a Chief Justice of High Court— Member.
3. Secretary in the Ministry of Corporate Affairs—Member.
4. Secretary in the Ministry of Law and Justice—Member.
5. Secretary in the Department of Financial Services in the Ministry of Finance— Member.

10. Indian Forest Act, 1927

Why in News?

- The Union Environment Ministry on Friday withdrew a draft amendment that proposed updates to the Indian Forest Act, 1927 (IFA).

About IFA, 1927:

- The Indian Forest Act, 1927 was largely based on previous Indian Forest Acts implemented under the British. The most famous one was the Indian Forest Act of 1878.
- Both the 1878 act and the 1927 one sought to consolidate and reserve the areas having forest cover, or significant wildlife, to regulate movement and transit of forest produce, and duty leviable on timber and other forest produce.
- It also defines the procedure to be followed for declaring an area to be a Reserved Forest, a Protected Forest or a Village Forest.
- It defines what a forest offence is, what are the acts prohibited inside a Reserved Forest, and penalties leviable on violation of the provisions of the Act.

Dropped Draft:

<p>Green concern</p> <p><i>Some of the contentious suggestions in the 'zero draft' of the proposed Indian Forest Act, 2019</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Forest officers can issue search warrants, enter and investigate land within their jurisdictions▪ Forest officers will get	<p>indemnity for using arms to prevent forest-related offences</p> <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Forest officials will get powers to remove tribals from areas earmarked for conservation <hr/> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ It will allow government to open any patch of forest it deems fit for commercial plantations
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11. SC dismisses pleas to review Rafale Ruling

Why in News?

- The Supreme Court has dismissed a review petition seeking a court-monitored criminal probe in Rafale fighter jet deal between the Indian government and France's Dassault Aviation.

Highlights:

- The three-judge bench was presided over by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and comprised Justices S.K. Kaul and K.M. Joseph.
- The bench stated there was no merit in the review petition and that no probe was required in the purchase deal. In a unanimous verdict, the bench concluded that it was not appropriate to order a roving inquiry into the allegations.
- The petition was dismissed on the grounds that it is not within the purview of judicial review.

Background:

- The Rafale deal pertains to a government-to-government agreement signed between India and France to purchase 36 Rafale fighter jets from the French aerospace giant Dassault. The deal was signed by PM Narendra Modi during his first term in office.
- The petitioners had alleged irregularities in the purchase of 36 Rafale fighter jets from France's Dassault Aviation.
- The deal became controversial over allegations that the government had bypassed established norms of acquisition to sign the deal and that industrialist Anil Ambani received undue favours under the deal.
- In December 2018, the Supreme Court said it had not seen any evidence that could raise doubts over the government's decision-making process and so, it ruled to dismiss the pleas seeking a court-monitored probe into the deal.

12. Largest FDI project of Indian Railways

Why in News?

- Indian Railways has entered into Procurement cum Maintenance Agreement with Madhepura Electric Locomotive Pvt. Ltd. (MELPL), a joint venture of Indian Railways and M/s Alstom.

Highlights:

- Indian Railways and Alstom came together in 2015 to transform the heavy freight transportation landscape of the country.
- A landmark agreement worth 3.5 billion Euro was signed to manufacture 800 electric locomotives for freight service and its associated maintenance.
- This is the first time such High Horse Power locomotive is being tested on Broad Gauge network in the World by any Railways.
- As part of the project, factory along with township has been set up in Madhepura, Bihar with capacity to manufacture 120 locomotives per year.

Benefits:

- Indian Railways have taken decision to have 12000 horse power twin Bo-Bo design Locomotive with 22.5 T (Tonnes) axle load upgradable to 25Tonnes with design speed of 120 kmph. This locomotive will be game-changer for further movement of coal trains for Dedicated Freight Corridor. With the success of this project it will boost the “Make in India” programme of the Government of India. This will further develop ancillary units for locomotive components. The project will allow faster and safer movement of heavier freight trains. It will haul 6000T trains at maximum speed of 100 kmph.
- With 100% electrification, the new locomotive will not only bring down operational cost for Railways, the locomotive will also reduce the congestion faced by Indian Railways.
- This will be used to haul heavier trains such as coal and iron ore.

Significance:

- More than 300 Engineers from India and France are working in Bangalore, Madhepura and France on the Project.
- The project is expected to create more than 10,000 direct and indirect jobs in the country.
- In two years' time, more than 90% parts will be manufactured in India. This is a truly Make in India project.

13. International Symposium on Lighting (iSoL)

Why in News?

- Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises has inaugurated the International Symposium on Lighting (iSoL).

International Symposium on Lighting (iSoL):

- The International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) organizes International Symposium on lighting (iSoL).
- The two days Symposium provides a common platform to professionals related directly or indirectly to the automotive lighting fraternity from all around the globe.
- The iSoL from 2009 has grown and transformed itself into a global event.
- ICAT has been associated with the field of lighting research and testing since 2006.
- Taking this commitment to a greater height, iSoL-2019 is aimed at creating a knowledge sharing platform ensuring the flow of information.

ICAT:

- The International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT), Manesar (Haryana) is located in the northern automotive hub of India.
- It is a leading world class automotive testing, certification and R&D service provider.
- It functions under the aegis of NATRiP (National Automotive Testing and R&D Infrastructure Project), Government of India.

14. Acqua alta

Why in News?

- High tides in the Adriatic Sea have caused floods in the historic city of Venice.

Acqua alta:

- Venice is situated on the coast of northeastern Italy, bounded by the Adriatic Sea. Acqua alta is the name given to exceptionally high tides in the Adriatic Sea.
- Water levels this week has reached heights of 1.87 metres (well over 6 feet) — only a little short of the 1.91-metre record that was set during the “great flood” of 1966.
- The city’s Saint Mark’s Square went under more than a metre of water, whereas the adjacent Saint Mark’s Basilica was flooded for only the sixth time in the last 1,200 years and for the fourth time in the last 20 years.
- Late autumn and winter are the seasons for high tides or acqua alta in Venice.
- At the end of October last year, over 75% of the lagoon city went underwater after high tides and stormy weather led to an increase in the water levels of the canals.