

UPSC MONTHLY MAGAZINE

JUNE 2017



GSLV MK-III

India successfully launches its heaviest Launch vehicle

PM's visit to the U.S.

Main focus on Fight against terrorism

SCO

India, Pakistan became full members of SCO

Agriculture distress

Are farm loan waivers bad?

Unruly behavior and No fly list

"Dare not to do these acts"

CONTENT

CHAPTER	TITLE	PAGE
1	Polity	3
2	Economy	17
3	Agriculture	30
4	Environmental Science and Ecology	33
5	Societal Issues	38
6	Science and Technology	39
7	Health Issues	45
8	Art and Culture	48
9	Bilateral Relations	49
10	World Affairs	58
11	Internal Security and Defence Related	60
12	Miscellaneous	63
13	Articles in News	64
14	Schemes in News	67
15	Topics in News	70
16	Prelims Worthy Factual Information	72
17	Prelims Practice Questions	74
18	Answer Keys	86

POLITY

COURT VERDICTS

1. 'Preventive detention no quick fix'

What's in news?

- Supreme Court ruling: Preventive detention of a person by a State after branding him a 'goonda' merely because the normal legal process is ineffective and time-consuming in 'curbing the evil he spreads' is illegal.
- The detention of a person was a serious matter affecting the liberty of the citizen.
- Preventive detention cannot be resorted to when sufficient remedies are available under the general laws of the land for any omission or commission under such laws.

2. SC to hear plea on cattle trade rules

Context:

- Centre banning sale and trade of cattle in livestock markets.

What's in news?

- The Supreme Court agreed to hear a petition challenging the new notifications issued by the Centre banning sale and trade of cattle in livestock markets for the purposes of slaughter and religious animal sacrifices.

Contention raised by the petitioner:

- The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Regulation of Livestock Markets) Rules and Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Care and Maintenance of Case Property Animals) Rules, both issued on May 23, were unconstitutional.
- The Livestock Markets Rules ban sale or purchase of cattle for slaughter in animal markets.
- The Rules are imposing an absolute ban on slaughtering of animals in the country, directly affecting the employment of the butchers and depriving citizens to have the food of their choice
- **Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (PCA) Act of 1960:** only intends to prevent the infliction of unnecessary pain or suffering on animals. It does not ban slaughter for food.
- The fundamental right to carry on trade under Article 19 could be restricted only by the legislature and not through a delegated executive fiat.
- Violates Article 25 and Article 29 of the constitution of India.

3. Linking of PAN to Aadhaar fine: SC

What's in news?

- The Supreme Court upheld the validity of an Income Tax law amendment linking PAN with Aadhaar for

filing tax returns and made Aadhaar or Aadhaar enrolment slip compulsory to apply for a Permanent Account Number (PAN) card.

Court observation:

Issue of duplicate/fake PANs:

- Section 139AA (1) of the Income Tax Act requiring citizens to mention their Aadhaar number or at least their Aadhaar enrolment ID to the designated authority. This provision seeks to curb with the issue of duplicate/fake PANs.
- Section 139AA (1) was not violative of the right to trade and profession under Article 19(1)(g) of the Constitution.
- Parliament was fully competent to enact Section 139AA and its authority to make this law was not diluted by the orders of the Supreme Court that Aadhaar was voluntary.
- **Partial stay:** the court issued a "partial stay" on the proviso to Section 139AA (2), which mandates that those who do not link Aadhaar with PAN by July 1 would face the consequences of invalidation of their PAN ab inito — that is, the effect of non-compliance would be the automatic invalidation of their PAN as if it had never existed.

4. SC notice to govt on abortion deadline

Context:

- A woman challenged a Section 3 of the Medical termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 which says that pregnancy cannot be terminated after 20 weeks.
- A 2014 pending bill proposes to extend the legally permissible period for termination to 24 weeks.
- Taking note of the distress plea, a vacation bench of SC sought response from the Bengal govt.
- **Key Fact:** Out of the 26 million births that occur in India every year, approximately 2-3% had severe congenital or chromosomal abnormality.

What's in news?

- Abortion in India is legal only up to twenty weeks of pregnancy under specific conditions and situations.
- One, the continuance of the pregnancy would involve a risk to the life of the pregnant woman or of grave injury of physical or mental health, or
- Two, there is a substantial risk that if the child were born, it would suffer from such physical or mental abnormalities as to be seriously handicapped.

What the draft MPT bill 2014 provides?

- The draft MTP increased the legal limit for abortion from 20 weeks to 24 weeks.
- It provides for abortion beyond 24 weeks under defined conditions.

- The Bill amends Section 3 of the 1971 Act to provide that “the length of pregnancy shall not apply” in a decision to abort a foetus diagnosed with “substantial foetal abnormalities” or if it is “alleged by the pregnant woman to have been caused by rape”.
- Under the 1971 Act, even pregnant rape victims cannot abort after 20 weeks, compelling them to move court.
- It allows a woman to take an independent decision in consultation with a registered health-care provider.
- It also takes into account the reality of a massive shortage of both doctors and trained midwives, and seeks to allow Ayurveda, Unani and Siddha practitioners to carry out abortions.

Why is it essential to change the MTP law?

- Foetal abnormalities show up only by 18 weeks, so just a two-week window after that is too small for the would-be parents to take the difficult call on whether to keep their baby.
- Even for the medical practitioner, this window is too small to exhaust all possible options before advising the patient.
- There is an urgent need to empower women with sexual rights, legal protection against sex crimes and sex choices both in their own interest and for the sake of reducing the fertility rate as a whole.
- The lack of legal approval moves abortion to underground and they are done in unhygienic conditions by untrained, thus, putting thousands of women at risk.

5. Cattle slaughter: Not infringing on State laws, says Arun Jaitley

Context:

- Recent notice issued by the center regarding regulating sales of Cattles in the markets.
- **Finance Minister Arun Jaitley response:** State laws on cattle slaughter “had nothing to do” with a recent notification by the Union Environment Ministry prohibiting the sale of bovines for slaughter at animal market places.
- The new notification says that buyers of cattle at animal markets will have to verify they are agriculturalists and declare that they will not sell the animal/s for a period of six months from the date of purchase.

6. EC wants govt to review changes in poll funding laws

What's in news?

- The Election Commission has conveyed its reservations to the government regarding the recent amendments to the Representation of the People Act and Companies Act, effected through the Finance Bill, with respect to political funding.

Amendments:

- RP Act amendment exempts political parties from declaring donations received through the electoral bonds route.

- Companies Act has been updated to remove the ceiling on corporate donations to political parties.
- Contention by Election Commission: undermine transparency in funding of political parties.

What does RP Act says regarding donations?

- Section 29 (c) of the RP Act, political parties must declare donations above Rs 20,000
- This is proposed to be further cut to Rs 2,000.

7. Give us contempt powers to act against those out to sully our image: EC to Govt

Context:

- The EC has written to the Law Ministry, seeking powers to act against those questioning the poll panel's credibility through unfounded allegations.

EC requirements:

- The Commission has sought amendments to the Contempt of Courts Act, 1971.
- This is to empower it to punish anyone being disobedient or discourteous towards its authority.

Examples abroad:

- In its letter, the EC has cited examples of its counterparts abroad.
- For instance, the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP), can initiate contempt proceedings against anyone sully its image.
- This year, the ECP issued a contempt notice to cricketer-turned-politician Imran Khan for accusing the election body of bias in a case of foreign funding.

Reasons for seeking such powers:

- The demand is made by the EC by virtue of being a constitutional authority.
- It is significant against the backdrop of political parties, especially Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), accusing the panel of playing favourites.
- The Commission has no specific powers to act in such cases.

The recent case

- Matters came to light when Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal questioned election commissioners A K Joti and O P Rawat's impartiality in a media interview.
- The decision was imperative to protect the credibility of the Commission.
- Kejriwal, in an interview, had alleged that two of the three election commissioners were close to the ruling dispensation.

Basic information:

- Contempt power.
- Contempt of Courts Act gives power to Court to punish anyone who does its contempt.
- This concept / law was developed in Britain.
- It spread through colonialism to protect the authority and legitimacy of Court power to punish for contempt

provided to Judiciary.

8. **EC disqualifies Minister in M.P.**

What's in news?

- The Election Commission disqualified Narottam Mishra, Minister in the Madhya Pradesh government from membership of any State legislature and contesting polls for the next three years.
- Why?: for filing wrong accounts of election expenditure.
- Mr. Mishra's membership has been revoked under section 10A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, to be read with Sections 77 and 78 of the Act.

Basic Information:

- Section 10A. Disqualification for failure to lodge account of election expenses.—If the Election Commission is satisfied that a person—
- (a) has failed to lodge an account of election expenses, within the time and in the manner required by or under this Act, and
- (b) has no good reason or justification for the failure, the Election Commission shall, by order published in the Official Gazette, declare him to be disqualified and any such person shall be disqualified for a period of three years from the date of the order.

Section 77. Account of election expenses and maximum thereof.

- Every candidate at an election shall, either by himself or by his election agent, keep a separate and correct account of all expenditure in connection with the election incurred or authorised by him or by his election agent between 2[the date on which he has been nominated] and the date of declaration of the result thereof, both dates inclusive. 3[4[Explanation 1.—For the removal of doubts, it is hereby declared that—
- a. The expenditure incurred by leaders of a political party on account of travel by air or by any other means of transport for propagating programme of the political party shall not be deemed to be the expenditure in connection with the election incurred or authorised by a candidate of that political party or his election agent for the purposes of this sub-section;
- b. Any expenditure incurred in respect of any arrangements made, facilities provided or any other act or thing done by any person in the service of the Government and belonging to any of the classes mentioned in clause (7) of section 123 in the discharge or purported discharge of his official duty as mentioned in the proviso to that clause shall not be deemed to be expenditure in connection with the election incurred or authorised by a candidate or by his election agent for the purposes of this sub-section. Explanation 2.—For the purpose of clause (a) of Explanation 1, the expression "leaders of a political party", in respect of any election, means,—
- i. where such political party is a recognised

political party, such persons not exceeding forty in number, and

- ii. Where such political party is other than a recognised political party, such persons not exceeding twenty in number, whose names have been communicated to the Election Commission and the Chief Electoral Officers of the States by the political party to be leaders for the purposes of such election, within a period of seven days from the date of the notification for such election published in the Gazette of India or Official Gazette of the State, as the case may be, under this Act: Provided that a political party may, in the case where any of the persons referred to in clause (i) or, as the case may be, in clause (ii) dies or ceases to be a member of such political party, by further communication to the Election Commission and the Chief Electoral Officers of the States, substitute new name, during the period ending immediately before forty-eight hours ending with the hour fixed for the conclusion of the last poll for such election, for the name of such person died or ceased to be a member, for the purposes of designating the new leader in his place.]

- (2) The account shall contain such particulars, as may be prescribed.

- (3) The total of the said expenditure shall not exceed such amount as may be prescribed.]

Section 78. Lodging of account with the 2[district election officer].

- Every contesting candidate at an election shall, within thirty days from the date of election of the returned candidate or, if there are more than one returned candidate at the election and the dates of their election are different, the later of those two dates, lodge with the 2[district election officer] an account of his election expenses which shall be a true copy of the account kept by him or by his election agent under section 77.

9. **Revenge porn surge makes government sit up**

What's in news?

- The government is considering changes in the law to ensure stringent action against cyber crimes targeting women such as 'revenge porn videos' in the light of an increasing number of such incidents surfacing on social media.
- Ministry of women and child development (WCD) seeking a greater focus on cyber crime to crack down on online sexual abuse.
- The ministry of women and child development is exploring ways to bridge the gap between existing provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act to deal with 'revenge porn'.

What is a revenge porn?

- Sharing of images or videos with sexual content without the consent of the person whose images or videos are put out on the internet has come to be referred to as 'revenge porn'.
- This is often the act of a vengeful partner after a relationship has gone sour, the victim ends up being a target twice.

Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) consultations:

- Inter-Ministerial Committee (IMC) consultations led to interim measures to curb the menace of online child sexual abuse.
- Under this order, Internet Service Providers (ISPs) are required to adopt and implement the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) Resources. This foundation maintains a dynamic global list of websites and URLs which contain child sexual abuse material.
- Implementation of IWF Resources will result in relevant content being blocked or removed on an ongoing basis.
- This is an interim measure till the IMC puts in place a centralised mechanism to monitor online child sexual abuse material.

10. Rajnath bats for use of simple Hindi***What's in news?******Hindi Advisory Board committee meeting:***

- Home Minister Rajnath Singh said that government officials should use "simple Hindi" to encourage the spread of language among the masses.
- The committee also discussed the issue of non-publication of official documents and reports in the language and stressed the need for its promotion.

Suggestion:

- There should be a Hindi logo for "Indian Police Service," and all police officials should have bilingual name badges on their uniform.
- All official documents and reports be published in Hindi.
- Recently recommendations of a parliamentary committee on official languages has been accepted by the President.
- As many as 110 out of 117 recommendations in the report were accepted by the President.
- Options for students to write their exams in Hindi, minimum knowledge of Hindi must for government jobs and mandatory announcements in Hindi at railway stations in non-Hindi speaking States like Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Kerala.

11. New medical regulator may have elected members***What's in news?***

- The government is likely to amend the draft National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill-2016 to make way for elected members also in the new commission.

National Medical Commission has been planned as the main regulator for medical sector.

- National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill-2016 has proposed scrapping of Medical Council of India (MCI).
- The draft bill 2016 also proposes to have separate boards for regulating under-graduate courses, post-graduate, accreditation and assessment board and a board for registration of medical colleges as well as monitoring of ethics in the profession

Panagariya (Niti Aayog vice-chairman Arvind Panagariya) panel suggestion:

- **Elected members:** the electoral process of appointing regulators is inherently saddled with compromises and attracts professionals who may not be best suited for the task at hand. It creates an ab-initio conflict of interest and therefore this system must be discarded in favour of one based on search and selection.
- Panel has proposed a fully nominated commission in place of MCI to reform the medical education sector which has been under scrutiny for corruption and unethical practices.
- Panel proposes a Medical Advisory Council (MAC), with members from states who can be eminent professionals such as professors from a medical colleges and the like. There will be two members from Union Territories. NMC members will also be its members and its role will be advisory.

Why scrap MCI?

- The MCI has faced criticism from several quarters for alleged corruption in the top medical body.

12. Data protection law mooted***Context:***

- The government is mulling a new data protection law to protect personal data of citizens.
- It will also create an enabling framework to allow public data to be mined effectively.

Significance of the move

- It comes amid the debate over security of individuals' private data, including Aadhaar-linked biometrics.
- Owing to the rising number of cyber-crimes in the country, the law becomes even more important.
- **The working agency:** The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEIT) is working on the new data protection law.

Aim of the law

- To ensure that personal data of individuals remain protected and is not misused.
- To unlock the data economy.

Beneficial data

- A lot of benefits can be derived from the data that is publicly available, by using technology and big data analytics.
- The information can be used for the benefit of both individuals and companies.

No regulatory body

- Currently, India does not have a separate law for data protection.
- There is no body that specifically regulates data privacy.
- Nominal data protection law in India in the form of the Reasonable Security Guidelines under Section 43A of the Information Technology Act.
- However, it is a toothless law and is never used.

What is Consumer Protection Act?

- It was enacted in 2015.
- As per the Act, the disclosure of personal information given in confidence is an unfair trade practice.

Privacy:

- A fundamental right.
- Privacy is a fundamental human right.
- It is recognised as such in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- India has ratified the UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which contains an obligation to protect privacy.

13. Maharashtra capitulates, to grant farm loan waiver**What's in news?**

- Maharashtra government was forced to accept the demand for a complete farm loan waiver.
- The total outstanding crop loans amount to around Rs. 1.34 lakh crore.

Steering panel meeting:

- The decision came after a meeting between the steering committee of the agitating farmers and a high-powered ministerial group formed by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis under the leadership of Revenue Minister Chandrakant Patil.
- For smallholding farmers — those with land up to five acres, which is almost 78% of the 1.37 crore holdings in the State, as per the Maharashtra Economic Survey 2016-17 — their farm loans were waived.

M. S. Swaminathan Reports:

- Prof. Swaminathan is a geneticist, known as "Indian Father of Green Revolution" for his key contributions in Green Revolution (1960s) where he introduced high yielding varieties of wheat. Under his leadership, the committee submitted its report in five instalments over the period from December, 2004 to October, 2006. These reports made several recommendations for improvement in the situation of farmers in India. While several criticized the Government for not implementing the recommendations of this committee properly, other few questioned the recommendations itself.

Key Findings & Recommendations of the Report

- The major causes of the agrarian crisis are: unfinished agenda in land reform, quantity and quality of water,

technology fatigue, access, adequacy and timeliness of institutional credit, and opportunities for assured and remunerative marketing. Adverse meteorological factors add to these problems.

- Land Reforms were considered necessary and key suggestions in this regards were to distribute ceiling-surplus and waste lands; prevent diversion of agricultural land & forest to corporate sector for non-agricultural purposes; ensure grazing rights & seasonal access to forests to tribals and pastoralists; establish a National Land Use Advisory Service, etc.
- Timely and adequate supply of credit is a basic requirement of small farm families and to enhance the same key suggestions of the committee were: expand the outreach of Credit facilities System; issue Kisan Credit Cards to women farmers; establish an Agriculture Risk Fund to provide relief to farmers in the aftermath of successive natural calamities, etc.
- 28% of the families in India were found to be Below Poverty Line and therefore, food security needed attention. The committee recommended: ensure availability of quality seed and other inputs at affordable costs; Set up Village Knowledge Centres (VKCs) or Gyan Chaupals in the farmers' distress hotspots; need for focused Market Intervention Schemes (MIS) in the case of life-saving crops; have a Price Stabilisation Fund in place to protect the farmers from price fluctuations, etc.
- Improving the competitiveness of the small farmers was considered necessary. Suggestions in this area included: improvement in implementation of Minimum Support Price (MSP); MSP should be at least 50% more than the weighted average cost of production; availability of data about spot and future prices of commodities through the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCD) and the NCDEX, etc.
- The committee highlighted the need to create productive employment opportunities and to improve the quality of employment in several sectors such that real wages rise through improved productivity. For this purpose committee recommended emphasizing on relatively more labour intensive sectors and inducing a faster growth of these sectors and ensuring that the net take home income of farmers should be comparable to those of civil servants.
- The committee also recommended development of measures to reserve traditional rights of access to biodiversity and conservation, enhancement and improvement of crops, farm animals & fish stocks through breeding, etc.

14. Loan waivers are on you, FM tells States**Context:**

- Agitations led by farmers demanding farm loan waiver.
- States like Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh announcing waivers.

In news:

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley reiterated that the States going in for farm loan waivers will have to generate funds from their own resources.
- There are also demands for waivers in States such as Madhya Pradesh and Haryana, Punjab, and Tamil Nadu.

15. NEET-like exam for judge posts?**What's in news?**

- The government has proposed to the Supreme Court a NEET-like examination to recruit judges to the lower judiciary.
- The proposal comes close on the heels of several States, opposing the formation of an all-India judicial service, a 60-year-old idea.
- There were vacancies of 4,452 judges in subordinate courts as per the figures released on December 31, 2015.
- While the sanctioned strength is 20,502, the actual number of judges/judicial officers in subordinate courts is 16,050.
- The Ministry has suggested various models to the apex court so that vacancies in the subordinate courts are filled up fast. It also proposed that UPSC can hold an exam to recruit judicial officers.

16. 50% quota for women now in Punjab's civic bodies**Context:**

- Bid to empower women and give them a greater role in governance.

In news:

- The Punjab Cabinet decided to increase women reservation in urban local bodies and panchayati raj institutions from the existing 33 per cent to 50 per cent.
- A Bill to amend the Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, the Punjab Municipal Act, 1911, and the Punjab Municipal Corporation Act, 1976, will be tabled in the Budget Session.
- The move will enhance reservation for women in direct elections for members of municipal corporations, municipal councils, nagar panchayats, gram panchayats, panchayat samitis and zila parishads.

17. At Geneva, India agrees to total ban on child labour**What's in news?**

- India ratified two fundamental conventions against child labour — the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 and the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention, 1999— at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) conference currently under way in Geneva.
- The conventions provide a framework for the abolition of child labour so that each and every child has the opportunity to develop physically and mentally to their full potential and not getting engaged in work that jeopardises their education and development.

- The conventions allow a distinction to be made as to what constitutes acceptable and unacceptable forms of work for children at different ages as well as stages of development.

What needs to be done after ratification?

- India will now be responsible to develop and implement programmes to progressively eradicate child labour.

National rules and legislation:

- The amended Child Labour (Prohibition and Regulation) Central Rules completely prohibited employment of children aged below 14 years in any occupation or process, and of adolescents (aged 14 to 18 years) in hazardous occupations and processes.
- The amended ruled provided a broad and specific framework for the prevention, prohibition, rescue and rehabilitation of child and adolescent workers.

International Labour Organization (ILO):

- International Labour Organization (ILO), specialized agency of the United Nations (UN) dedicated to improving labour conditions and living standards throughout the world.
- Established in 1919 by the Treaty of Versailles as an affiliated agency of the League of Nations, the ILO became the first affiliated specialized agency of the United Nations in 1946. In recognition of its activities, the ILO was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1969.
- The functions of the ILO include the development and promotion of standards for national legislation to protect and improve working conditions and standards of living. The ILO also provides technical assistance in social policy and administration and in workforce training; fosters cooperative organizations and rural industries; compiles labour statistics and conducts research on the social problems of international competition, unemployment and underemployment, labour and industrial relations, and technological change (including automation); and helps to protect the rights of international migrants and organized labour.
- Among intergovernmental organizations the ILO is unique in that its approximately 187 member states are represented not only by delegates of their governments but also by delegates of those states' employers and workers, especially trade unions. National representatives meet annually at the International Labour Conference. The ILO's executive authority is vested in a 56-member Governing Body, which is elected by the Conference. The International Labour Office in Geneva, Switzerland, composed of the permanent Secretariat and professional staff, handles day-to-day operations under the supervision of an appointed director general.
- Among the ILO's many publications are the International Labour Review and the Year Book of Labour Statistics.

18. It's either salary or pension for regulatory body chiefs

What's in news?

- **New Centre norms:** The chairpersons and members of regulatory bodies to either take salary or pensions.
- Existing norms provide that chairpersons and members shall be deemed to have retired from Central or State government service on the date of their appointment to any regulatory authority.

Recent Incidence:

- There have been complaints against chairpersons and members of a few regulatory bodies for receiving pension in addition to the salary.
- **Effect of latest order:** such persons will have to face a cut in their salary. The amount of pension will be deducted from their salary.

19. Government targets 146 districts to accelerate India's population control drive

What's in news?

- To achieve the country's population control target faster, the government has decided to accelerate family planning measures by identifying 146 districts where the total fertility rate (TFR, the number of children born per woman) is more than three and which add up to 28% of the population.
- The health ministry is set to roll out "Mission Parivar Vikas" in these districts to improve access to family planning services, create awareness and make family planning choices available.
- The "high-focus" districts are in the seven states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Assam.
- Though India's population growth rate has declined, the pace is uneven across states, leading to the policy intervention.

Key facts:

- According to government data, India's total fertility rate has declined from 2.6 in 2008 to 2.3 at present.
- India is now just 0.2 points away from reaching the replacement level of 2.1.
- The greater the TFR, the more will be the Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) and Infant Mortality Rate (IMR). Hence, reducing TFR would lead to decrease in maternal mortality and morbidity and infant mortality and morbidity.

Mission Parivar Vikas

- Under the mission, the government will study each district to find why fertility rates are higher and will take measures to address them.
- As part of the programme, the health ministry will distribute a kit containing products of family planning and personal hygiene among newlyweds.
- The kits will be distributed by ASHA workers to encourage inter-spousal communication and consensual decision making with regards to their reproductive and sexual health as well as delay the

birth of the first child and space the second.

- "Saas-Bahu Sammelans" will be held to facilitate improved communication between mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law and bridge the gap in their attitudes and beliefs about reproductive and sexual health.
- Special buses called "Saarathi-Awareness on Wheels" will travel through these districts to generate awareness as well as sensitise the community and disseminate family planning messages.
- The government will also augment sterilisation services through enhanced HFD (high fertility district) compensation scheme, roll out injectable contraceptive at sub centre level and generate awareness about condoms and pills.

20. Aadhaar mandatory for opening bank accounts, transactions over Rs 50,000

What's in news?

- The government, through a notification amending the Prevention of Money-laundering (Maintenance of Records) Rules, 2005, has made it mandatory to provide Aadhaar to open a bank account and to conduct a transaction of Rs 50,000 or more.
- **Notification:** It says that individuals who are eligible to be enrolled for an Aadhaar number need to provide that number and the Permanent Account Number (PAN) to open a bank account or conduct any transaction "of an amount equal to or exceeding rupees fifty thousand, whether conducted as a single transaction or several transactions that appear to be connected, or any international money transfer operations".
- **Even small accounts under scanner:** "The small account shall be opened only at core banking solution linked banking company branches or in a branch where it is possible to manually monitor and ensure that foreign remittances are not credited to a small account and that the stipulated limits on monthly and annual aggregate of transactions and balance in such accounts are not breached, before a transaction is allowed to take place."

21. No Aadhaar, no banking and threat to privacy: Do you have a choice?

What's in news?

- The government has made Aadhaar mandatory for access to banking and filing I-T returns.
- But there are serious concerns about possible breach of privacy with private entities having access to Aadhaar data.

Is Aadhaar mandatory?

- The Supreme Court has more than once told the government not to make Aadhaar mandatory for citizens.
- In 2015, on two occasions, the Supreme Court ruled that "it is not mandatory for a citizen to obtain an Aadhaar card" asking the government to advertise this prominently.

- The production of an Aadhaar card will not be condition for obtaining any benefits otherwise due to a citizen, the Supreme Court had said. However, the apex court has allowed the government to link various schemes including MNREGS, LPG, PDS, EPFO, Old Age Pension etc with Aadhaar.
- But, the Supreme Court ruling in 2015 clearly read, "... the Aadhaar card Scheme is purely voluntary and it cannot be made mandatory till the matter is finally decided by this Court one way or the other."
- The apex court has set up a constitutional bench to hear Aadhaar case. The Aadhaar Act 2016 also does not make Aadhaar mandatory for citizens.

HOW GOVERNMENT MADE IT MANDATORY?

- Budget 2017 (passed by Parliament), which mandated seeding of Aadhaar number with Permanent Account Number (PAN).
- The amended Finance Act 2017. It made enrollment in Aadhaar compulsory for obtaining a PAN and filing Income Tax returns.

Implications:

- The Finance Act effectively meant that an earning member of Indian society is a potential criminal if s/he does not have an Aadhaar as the citizen would not be able to file I-T returns, which s/he is legally bound to do.

ARE AADHAAR DATA IN SAFE HANDS?

- Recently a report by the Centre for Internet Society said that more than 13 crore Aadhaar data were leaked, stolen or compromised.
- Section 29 of the Aadhaar Act prohibits sharing, publishing, displaying or posting publicly the core biometric information collected under the project except in "the interest of national security". However, the Act does not state what constitutes national security.
- Section 57 of the Aadhaar Act, 2016 allows private companies to use the Aadhaar data to establish "identity of an individual for any purpose".

Access to aadhaar data:

- There are several reports confirming that the Aadhaar data of Indian citizens are with companies like Accenture, Ernst and Young, L-1 Identity Solutions - the American biometric technology provider.
- The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) and the government allow access to Aadhaar data of people by these companies through Authentication User Agencies, which are both governmental and non-governmental entities.

RIGHT TO PRIVACY IN INDIA

- There is no specific law passed by Parliament for protection against breach of privacy of individuals in India.
- A bill, Privacy Bill, 2011 was drafted by the UPA-II government but it is hanging fire since then.

- Only the Information Technology Act, 2000 has some express provision guarding individuals against breach of privacy by corporate entities. Section 43A was inserted into the IT Act in 2008 which makes the companies compromising sensitive personal data liable to pay compensation.
- The right to privacy is dealt with under Article 21 of the Constitution which guarantees right to life and personal liberty.

COURTS ON RIGHT TO PRIVACY

- In 1954, an eight-judge bench in MP Sharma vs Satish Chandra case and in 1962 a six-judge bench of the Supreme Court in Kharak Singh vs State of Uttar Pradesh case had equated the right to privacy with right to personal liberty but rejected it as fundamental or constitutional right.

22. Puducherry government demands more powers

Context:

- Tussle between Lt. Governor and Government: Lt. Governor of Puducherry Kiran Bedi has made it clear that she was the "real administrator" and all files have to be sent to her for approval.

In news:

- Lt. Governor view points: Purpose of such a move is to observe financial prudence.
- Government view points: it is an attempt to tarnish the government image by blocking files related to welfare schemes.

Resolution:

- Puducherry Legislative Assembly passed a resolution urging the Union Government to make necessary amendments in the Union Territories Act to bestow more powers on the elected government and curtail the role of the Lt. Governor.

23. Dr. Mahesh Sharma launches implementation of 'National Mission on Cultural Mapping of India' from Goverdhan Block, Mathura

Features of the scheme:

- villages over the span of next 3 years.
- This Mission is part of the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' umbrella.
- Ministry of Culture launched it in the year of commemoration of the birth centenary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay, who hailed from Mathura.
- The Cultural Mapping of India portal will serve as a repository/consolidated database of information about cultural assets and resources i.e. a cultural inventory at one place for essential planning, sustainable economic development and for preserving the scattered and near extinct art forms.

Key Point:

- The mission aims at converting the vast and widespread cultural canvas of India into an objective cultural map, designing a mechanism to fulfil the aspirations of the whole artist community of the

nation and preserving the rich cultural heritage of this country in the form of a cultural repository of artists and art forms.

- Mission encompasses data mapping, demography building formalising the processes and bringing all the cultural activities under one web based umbrella for better results.
- The Mission also seeks to open a direct channel of communication of artists with the Government and peer to peer communication among artists for talent honing and handholding of each other.
- **Main vision:** no cultural talent or heritage should remain unattended and if it is talent, it should be nurtured and if it is a heritage, it should be conserved and used as an icon to learn from the past, and also to propagate our cultural talent across all boundaries.

24. No-fly list norms likely in July next week, says Government

What's in news?

- The norms for no-fly list to rein in unruly passengers are expected to be ready early next month, the government said.
- The civil aviation ministry has already come out with draft rules for a 'national no-fly list' of unruly passengers for all domestic carriers, under which the flying ban could extend from at least three months to an indefinite period.
- As per the draft norms, the national no-fly list will include names of passengers identified as unruly after an inquiry by a committee constituted by a particular airline.
- A person identified as a threat by security agencies would also be included in this list.
- While the list is characterised as 'national' and would have data on disruptive passengers from all airlines, the ban recommended by the committee is not mandatory for all airlines to follow.
- The government had recommended three levels of unruly behaviours, each with a corresponding duration of flying ban.
- The first level of misdemeanour includes disruptive behaviour such as physical gestures, verbal harassment and unruly behaviour because of inebriation. This level of offence would carry a flying ban of three months.
- The second level relates to physically abusive behaviour such as pushing, hitting, grabbing, inappropriate touching or sexual harassment. Such actions could attract a six—month ban.
- The third category pertains to life threatening behaviour such as damage to aircraft operating system, physical violence and attempted breach of flight crew compartment. In such instances, the ban could be for two years or an indefinite period.
- If a passenger repeats the same degree of offence, he or she would be banned for twice the period of the previous ban.

25. Bihar Governor Ram Nath Kovind is NDA's presidential candidate

Context:

- The NDA government at the Centre has named Dalit politician Ram Nath Kovind as its Presidential candidate.

Who is Mr. Kovind?

- Presently the governor of Bihar.
- He is a two-time Rajya Sabha member.
- BJP's former national spokesperson.
- He headed the BJP's Scheduled Caste Morcha between 1999 and 2002.
- Hailing from the Koli community, which is classified as a Scheduled Caste in Uttar Pradesh.
- Kovind was an advocate by profession before entering politics full-time.

Basic Information:

- President election.
- The President of the Republic of India is the Head of State of India and the Commander-in-chief of the Indian Armed Forces.
- The President is indirectly elected by the people through elected members of both the houses of the Parliament of India, the Legislative Assemblies of all the states of India and the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of Puducherry, as well as, the Legislative Assembly of the National Capital Territory of Delhi.
- The election is held in accordance to the system of Proportional representation by means of the Single transferable vote method.
- The voting takes place by secret ballot system.
- The manner of election of President is provided by Article 55 of the Constitution.
- Each elector casts a different number of votes.
- The general principle is that the total number of votes cast by Members of Parliament equals the total number of votes cast by State Legislators.
- Legislators from larger states cast more votes than those from smaller states.
- The actual calculation for votes cast by a particular state is calculated by dividing the state's population by 1000, which is divided again by the number of legislators from the State voting in the electoral college.
- This number is the number of votes per legislator in a given state.
- Every elected member of the parliament enjoys the same number of votes, which may be obtained by dividing the total number of votes assigned to the members of legislative assemblies by the total number of elected representatives of the parliament.

26. GST: Anti-profiteering panel to levy penalty, to have sunset date of two years

What's in news?

- The National Anti-Profiteering Authority, to be set up under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, will have wide-ranging powers.
- It will be able to issue notices to anybody that it feels warrants a "fair enquiry," as per the rules finalised by the GST Council

Powers given to authority:

- Order a reduction in prices.
- Impose a penalty.
- Cancel the registration of a company deemed to have not passed on a tax rate reduction to consumers.

Structure of proposed authority:

- Authority is to be chaired by either a retired High Court judge OR a member of the Indian Legal Service who has at least three years of experience at the level of Additional Secretary or higher.

Process:

- **Step 1:** There will be a Standing Committee, which would receive complaints from anyone about profiteering practices.
- **Step 2:** The Standing Committee, after reviewing the prima facie evidence, will refer the matter to the Director-General of Safeguards (DGS) for a detailed investigation.
- **Step 3:** The DGS must complete its investigation within three months of receiving the reference from the Standing Committee OR furnish in writing reasons for a delay, which itself cannot exceed three months more.
- **Total time to be taken:** The Authority will have three months to issue its verdict following the investigation by the DGS, which means the entire procedure, from investigation to verdict, cannot exceed nine months.

Basic Information:

Anti Profiteering:

- Since goods and services are taxed at multiple stages of supply chain, any changes in tax structure or tax rates create an opportunity for improved profit margin at each stage of supply chain.
- Clause 171 has been inserted in the GST bill which provides that it is mandatory to pass on the benefit due to reduction in rate of tax or from input tax credit to the consumer by way of commensurate reduction in prices.

27. Dalveer Bhandari gets renomination to ICJ

What's in news?

- India has renominated its serving candidate at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the principal legal organ of the United Nations.

- Justice Dalveer Bhandari, 69, who received the re-nomination, will serve for a term of nine years as the Indian judge at the ICJ, which is the platform of the ongoing Kulbhushan Jadhav case.
- **Election process:** The Court consists of 15 judges who are elected to nine-year terms by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council. In order to be elected, a candidate must receive an absolute majority of the votes in both bodies.
- **Privileges:** As a judge of the ICJ, Justice Bhandari will enjoy privileges and immunities equal to the head of a diplomatic mission. Each member of the Court receives an annual salary and supplementary allowance. After leaving the court, members receive annual pensions.
- **Role of ICJ:** Founded in 1945, the ICJ settles disputes between sovereign states and gives advisory opinions on legal questions that have been referred to it by other authorised UN organs.
- The ICJ is open to all UN member states.

28. TB patients will need Aadhaar for cash benefits

What's in news?

New register norms:

- Tuberculosis patients, hospitals and healthcare workers availing cash assistance from the government will need to register with the Aadhaar database.

Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP):

- Under this scheme the government requires that patients diagnosed with TB and availing treatment be registered with Nikshay, a web-based application used by the authorities to track funds, treatment outcomes and health providers connected to the RNTCP.
- It is being implemented by State governments and Union Territory administrations via government health facilities and registered private health facilities across the country.

Who is eligible to receive payments now?

- Tribals, and health care workers involved with the DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment, Short Course). But to meet TB elimination goals, the cash benefits are likely to be made available to all patients.

Key fact:

- The World Health Organization has said that tuberculosis epidemic in India was "larger" than what had been previously estimated and asserted that the country was one of six nations which accounted for 60% of the new cases in 2015.
- According to reports, the prevalence of TB in India was at 217 per 1,00,000 population in 2015 as against the previously estimated 127.
- The government has pledged its commitment to eliminate tuberculosis by 2025, five years ahead of the global goal to reduce the number of such deaths by 90 per cent by 2030.

29. Facebook offers Indian women tools to protect privacy

New tool and Privacy: New register norms:

- Tool offers women greater control over their profiles and help keep them safe online.
- The first safeguard—identified by a small shield and blue border on the image—prevents strangers from downloading, sharing or tagging themselves in someone else's profile picture, or taking a screen shot of the image.
- The second overlays an additional design on the image that research shows dissuades people from making a copy of the image.
- **Privacy Issue:** Indian women were reluctant to show their faces in their profile pictures, fearing the images could be misused.
- **Key Fact:** Facebook has 184 million active monthly users in India, its second-largest market after the United States.

30. Punjab amends Excise Act to allow clubs, hotels near highways to serve liquor

Context:

- Last year, the SC scrapped licences for liquor sale along highways.
- **Reason:** that drunken driving was the main culprit for the large number of road accidents in the country.

In news:

- Punjab has become the first State to take the amendment route to make way for liquor sale near highways as the Assembly passed a legislation enabling hotels, restaurants and clubs to serve alcohol within 500 metres of highways.
- The Bill stated that it aims to ensure that hotels, restaurants, clubs and other notified places are allowed to serve alcohol to customers only for consumption within their premises to secure the livelihood of a large segment of population.
- However, sale of liquor for takeaway purposes shall be permitted only through licensed vends which shall not be located within 500 metres from the outer range of the National or State Highway or a service lane of those roads.

Measures taken by other states:

- States such as Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and the Union Territory of Chandigarh denotified hundreds of kilometres of highways as local roads in order to bypass the Supreme Court ruling.

31. Centre announces 30 more Smart Cities

In news:

- Thirty more cities from across the country have been added to the Centre's Smart Cities Mission, with a proposed investment of Rs.57,393 crore in various projects under the scheme.

Smart Cities Mission

- Second year anniversary.
- total number of cities covered 90 (including the 30 newly recognized ones).
- The cities were picked on the basis of the proposals they submitted for the Smart Cities Challenge. Among the cities selected, Kerala's capital, Thiruvananthapuram, topped the challenge.

Cities selected:

- Tamil Nadu emerged as the State with the highest number of cities selected in this round, with Tirupur, Tirunelveli, Thootukudi and Tiruchirappalli making it to the Mission.
- Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat had three cities each selected for the Mission. While Jhansi, Allahabad and Aligarh made it from U.P., Rakot, Gandhinagar and Dahod were the picks from Gujarat.
- Madhya Pradesh (Sagar and Satna), Bihar (Patna and Muzaffarpur), Chhattisgarh (Naya Raipur and Bilaspur) and Jammu and Kashmir (Srinagar and Jammu) had two cities each selected.
- Andhra Pradesh's new capital, Amaravati, was also selected, as was Karimnagar in neighbouring Telangana.
- Among the 11 State capitals selected were Bengaluru in Karnataka, Shimla in Himachal Pradesh, Aizawl in Mizoram and Gangtok in Sikkim. The other cities selected were Puducherry, Karnal in Haryana, Dehradun in Uttarakhand, Pimpri Chinchwad in Maharashtra, and Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh.

32. Modi government launches Liveability Index for 116 cities to measure quality of life

In news:

- The central government launched the "City Liveability Index" - a first of its kind initiative introduced by the Urban Development Ministry - to measure the quality of life in 116 major cities including capital cities and those with population over one million.
- Urban Development Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu launched the Index at a National Workshop on Urban Transformation.

Parameters:

- The cities will be assessed on a comprehensive set of 79 parameters to capture the extent and quality of infrastructure including availability of roads, education and health care, mobility, employment opportunities, emergency response, grievance redressal, pollution, availability of open, green spaces, and culture.

Reform incentive fund:

- Progress in respect of reforms like e-governance, audit of accounts, tax revision policies and extent of tax revenue collection, energy and water audit, establishing state level financial intermediaries for resource mobilisation and credit rating was taken into account.

- Marks scored by states were considered for deciding the quantum of incentive with high scorers getting more.
- The Urban Development Ministry also increased reform incentive fund for the next three financial years from Rs 900 crore to Rs 10,000 crore "to promote next generation reforms that would make a substantial difference to urban governance and service delivery and resource mobilization by urban local bodies,"
- The Ministry disbursed Rs 500 crore as incentive to 16 states that performed well in implementing urban reforms during 2016-17.
- (Facts and figures not important)
- Andhra Pradesh topped the list scoring 96.06 per cent marks. Others who received the incentive fund in order of merit were Odisha (95.38 per cent), Jharkhand (91.98 per cent), Chhattisgarh (91.37 per cent), Madhya Pradesh (90.20 per cent), Telangana (86.92 per cent) and Rajasthan (84.62 per cent).
- Punjab also scored 77.02 per cent along with Kerala (75.73 per cent), Goa (75.38 per cent), Mizoram (75 per cent), Gujarat (73.80 per cent), Chandigarh (72.73 per cent), Uttar Pradesh (70.67 per cent) and Maharashtra (70.52 per cent).

33. Panel to oversee progress in UN's SDG

What's in news?

- The Centre will soon set up a high-level committee headed by Chief Statistician of India to oversee the country's progress towards UN's Sustainable Development Goals aimed at ending poverty, fighting inequalities and tackling climate change.
- A dashboard is also being developed with technical support from the UN Development Programme (UNDP) to "strengthen the mechanism" for monitoring progress on these global goals.

National indicators

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has already developed a list of draft national indicators to measure progress of SDGs. These draft indicators have been put out in public domain. Based on the inputs received, national-level indicators will be finalised.
- India will hold bi-annual reviews with the State governments for identifying good practices and challenges.

34. Kasturirangan to head education committee

What's in news?

- Eminent scientist, former Chief of ISRO and Padma Vibhushan Dr. K. Kasturirangan has been appointed Chairman of the committee tasked with preparing the final draft of the National Education Policy.
- Members of the committee: The members of the panel are Vice-Chancellor of SNDP University, Mumbai, and educationist Vasudha Kamat; retired bureaucrat K.J. Alphonse; Princeton University Mathematics Professor Manjul Bhargava; Vice-Chancellor of Baba Saheb

Ambedkar University of Social Sciences, Mhau, Ram Shankar Kureel, who has written on inclusion of the marginal in mainstream education; Vice-Chancellor of Tribal University, Amarkantak, T.V. Kattamani; K.M. Tripathy from Uttar Pradesh; Professor of Persian, Guwahati University, Mahzar Asif and CABE member M.K. Shridhar.

35. HRD wants skill courses enrolment to be taken into account in GER calculation

What's in news?

- The HRD ministry has proposed to treat long-term skill development courses as higher education for the purpose of calculating the country's Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER).
- Age group for which GER is calculated: 18 to 23 years.
- **Current level:** The GER for 2015-15 is 24.5 per cent.

Effect on Higher Education Data

- The inclusion of skill courses in GER calculation is not expected to bring in significant improvement in higher education data immediately.
- Because the number of youngsters enrolled in long-term skill courses is small at this moment.

Basic Information:

- Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) or Gross Enrollment Index (GEI) is a statistical measure used in the education sector and by the UN in its Education Index to determine the number of students enrolled in school at several different grade levels (like elementary, middle school and high school), and use it to show the ratio of the number of students who live in that country to those who qualify for the particular grade level.
- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), describes 'Gross Enrolment Ratio' as the total enrolment within a country "in a specific level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the official age group corresponding to this level of education.

36. U'hand govt approaches SC challenging human status of Ganga, Yamuna

Context:

- Uttarakhand High Court March 20 order: bestowed on Ganga, Yamuna and their tributaries the status of living human entities and declares the state chief secretary as their local guardian (loco parentis).
- The Uttarakhand government has moved the Supreme Court challenging the High Court order granting rivers Ganga, Yamuna and their tributaries the status of living human entities.
- The state government has urged the apex court to consider "substantial questions of law" arising from the verdict.

Petition questions:

- Whether in case of human casualties in a flood, the affected people can file suit for damages against the chief secretary of the state and whether state government would be liable to bear such financial burden.
- The order was passed by the high court in spite of the fact that these rivers and their tributaries pass through different states through the jurisdiction of different governments.
- Citing the provisions under item no. 56 of the union list of the 7th Schedule (Article 246) of the Constitution, the petition also says it is the sole constituent right of the Union government to frame out rules for efficacious management of all the inter-state rivers and hence whether or not it will be within the powers of the state of Uttarakhand to declare the river Ganga and Yamuna as legal persons or living entities.

37. Whose privilege? Legislatures must not invoke power to punish for breach of privilege**Context:**

- Privileges of Legislative assembly.
- The Karnataka Assembly's resolution imposing a one-year prison sentence and Rs.10,000 fine on the editors of two tabloids is indefensible and deserving of unsparing criticism.

Constitutional Privileges:

- The Constitution confers certain privileges on legislative institutions with the idea of protecting freedom of speech and expression in the House and ensuring that undue influence, pressure or coercion is not brought on the legislature in the course of its functioning.

Issues:

- There is no law codifying the legislative privileges.
- There is little merit in subjecting anyone, leave alone a journalist, to penal action for allegedly breaching a legislator's privilege, unless there is a move or attempt to obstruct the functioning of either the House or its members.
- It is a thinly disguised mechanism to insulate elected representatives from criticism.

Conclusion:

- The legislature must use the power to punish for contempt or breach of privilege sparingly, invoking it mainly to protect the independence of the House and not to take away the liberty of critics.
- Legislators are in a position to clarify facts and refute misconceived criticism.
- There is no reason for them to seek imprisonment for contempt. There are many unsettled questions about the very nature of legislative privileges.
- The absence of codification gives the House the freedom to decide when and how breach of privilege occurs.

38. Vice-President election to be held on August 5**Context:**

- Tenure of Vice-President Mohammad Hamid Ansari coming to an end on August 10.
- Election for the post will be conducted on August 5.

In news:

- The Election Commission said a notification to this effect would be issued on July 4. Contestants can file nominations till July 18, while the last date for the withdrawal of candidatures is July 21. The counting will be done on August 5.

What does the constitution of India say?

- An election to fill the vacancy to be caused by the expiration of the term of office of the outgoing Vice-President needs to be completed before the expiration of the term of the present incumbent.
- The Vice-President is elected by the Electoral College consisting of members of both the Houses of Parliament in accordance with the system of proportional representation, by means of single transferable vote. The nominated members of Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha are also eligible to participate in the election.
- The nomination paper of a candidate has to be subscribed by at least 20 electors as proposers and at least another 20 electors as seconders.
- An elector can subscribe to only one nomination paper as either a proposer or seconder.

Presidential and Vice Presidential Election Act, 1952:

- The law provides that the notification for election may be issued on, or as soon as conveniently may be after, the 60th day before the expiry of term of the office of the outgoing Vice-President.

39. Privilege of legislators: Breach a grey area, harsh punishment rare**Context:**

- On June 21, the Karnataka assembly Speaker ordered the imprisonment of two journalists for a year based on recommendations in two separate reports of its privilege committees.
- Though dozens of people are summoned every year before the privileges committees of Parliament and state legislatures on charges of breach of privilege of legislators, it is rare that punitive action like imprisonment has been ordered.
- With no codified laws for what constitutes a breach of privilege offence or prescriptions for punishment, this is largely a grey area in legal terms.

What provisions of the Constitution protect the privileges of the legislature?

- Article 105 pertains to the powers, privileges, etc, of Parliament, its members and committees
- Article 194, which is identical to 105, protects the privileges and powers of the houses of legislature,

their members and committees in the states.

- These sections protect the freedom of speech of parliamentarians and legislators.
- Insulate them against litigation over matters that occur in these houses, and
- Give powers to define the powers, privileges and immunities of a house, its members and committees.

What are the origins of the privileges?

- These are derived from the British House of Commons.
- The privileges are reported to have originated when a nascent British parliament was attempting to establish itself in the light of monarchy.

What constitutes a breach of privilege?

- These powers and privileges are not codified.
- There are no clearly laid out rules on what constitutes breach of privilege and what punishment it entails.
- In Karnataka, privileges panels often refer to Practice and Procedure of Parliament by M N Kaul to define breach of privilege.
- As per book, "It is a breach of privilege and contempt of the House to make speeches or to print or publish any libel reflecting on the character or proceedings of the house, its committees or any member of the house relating to his character or conduct as a member of Parliament".

What is the criticism of this provision?

- It is sometimes used to counter media criticism of legislators and as a substitute for legal proceedings.
- All persons have a right to trial by a competent, independent and impartial tribunal.
- Breach of privilege laws allow politicians to become judges in their own cause, raising concerns of conflict of interest and violating basic fair trial guarantees.

What is the procedure in privilege cases?

- All state legislatures have special privilege committees comprising 10 to 12 legislators as members and usually headed by a senior politician from the ruling party.
- Whenever a legislator has a complaint he can send a letter to the committee.
- These matters can pertain to the sidelining of a legislator by government employees when it comes to projects and initiatives, impolite behaviour by government servants, not being invited to public events etc.
- The committee will begin proceedings as per the Criminal Procedure Code.
- The accused person is summoned and an inquiry is conducted by the committee and based on findings a recommendation is made to the legislature.
- When the matter is tabled in the legislature, a debate can be initiated on the report.

- Based on the assertions of the House the Speaker can order the punishment as defined by the privileges committee or order otherwise.

ECONOMY

1. India is no longer the fastest-growing economy

What's in news?

- India lost its fastest-growing major economy tag in the fourth quarter of 2016-17, with GDP growth coming in at 6.1% compared with China's 6.9% in the same period.

Key data:

- GDP grew 7.1% in the financial year 2016-17, slower than the 8% registered in 2015-16.
- The GDP numbers were based on the new 2011-12 base year recently adopted.
- Gross value added (GVA) growth was 6.6% for 2016-17 and 5.6% in the fourth quarter, compared with 7.9% in 2015-16 and 8.7% in Q4 of that year.
- Reason:** Demonetization.

2. Plan for Indian SEZs in Bangladesh hits bump

In news:

- India's plan to step up investments in Bangladesh by setting up three mega Special Economic Zones (SEZ) at Mongla, Bheramara and Mirsarai – the sites in Bangladesh, exclusively meant for Indian companies in the latter's territory has hit a major hurdle.

Constraints:

- Inadequate infrastructure and lack of uninterrupted power supply.
- Ambiguity and uncertainty regarding incentives offered by the Bangladesh Government to develop the SEZs.

Background Information:

- India and Bangladesh had inked a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in June 2015 — during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Bangladesh — for cooperation on establishing Indian SEZs in Bangladesh.
- The plan was to develop Indian SEZs at Mirsarai (1,005 acres), Bheramara (about 480 acres) and Mongla (200 acres).
- The construction of these SEZs and Indian investment in the zones were to be facilitated through concessional Line of Credit extended by India to Bangladesh.

3. Draft Social Security Code raises doubts about efficacy 'It is evasive about the benefits accruing to workers in the unorganised sector'

In news:

- The Center's draft Social Security Code, combining upwards of 44 work laws, has made questions about its viability.
- It has held the downsides of before enactments and is

equivocal about the advantages gathering to laborers in the chaotic division.

- At a meeting activist said the code was a "confused arrangement of standards" and it didn't address the worry of workers in the areas of wages, welfare, mechanical relations and wellbeing and work conditions.
- Privatisation:** There appeared to be a move to privatize the administration of assets gathered for specialists' standardized savings.
- Criticism**
- The counsel to the Supreme Court's Commissioner morally justified to sustenance case, said the code was "hostile to workers" and was even more a political trick than a welfare measure.
- This code was hazy about the government managed savings benefits for sloppy workers.
- Code additionally would oblige them to make financial commitment to guarantee the advantages.
- In the event that the new laws came into compel, the advance made in a few States for cutting edge assurance of laborers would be vanquished.

4. As July 1 nears, GST interface not ready

Context:

- Government bid to roll out the GST regime from July 1st.

In news:

- GST Suvidha Providers (GSPs): who are expected to help taxpayers cope with the transition to the new regime and its compliance paperwork.
- GSPs may only be operationally ready a few months down the line, so it is difficult to meet the target of July 1st.
- Convenient methods:** Under the GST regime, the GSPs are expected to provide convenient methods to taxpayers to access and upload their documents and returns onto the GST Network (GSTN), the information technology backbone of the new indirect tax regime.

5. Centre notifies rules on capital gains tax

In news:

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has come out with a final notification specifying the securities transactions that would attract capital gains tax where the securities transaction tax (STT) hasn't been paid.
- An amendment has been made in the Finance Act 2017 to curb the declaration of unaccounted income as exempt long-term capital gains under the previous provisions of the Income Tax Act by entering into fake transactions.

- According to the notification, the chargeability to STT provision will not apply to all transactions of acquisitions of equity shares entered into on or after October 1, 2004, except the acquisition of listed shares in a preferential issue of a company whose shares are not frequently traded in a recognised stock exchange, the acquisition of existing listed equity shares in a company not through a recognised stock exchange of India, and the acquisition of shares of a company while it is de-listed.

6. **RBI holds rates to retain 'credibility'**

Context:

- Monetary policy review.

In news:

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) kept the policy repo rate unchanged at 6.25%.
- Reason given for the decision taken: aimed at ensuring retail inflation stayed close to 4%.

Basic Information:

What is a repo rate?

- Repo rate is the rate at which RBI lends to its clients generally against government securities.
- Reduction in Repo rate helps the commercial banks to get money at a cheaper rate and increase in Repo rate discourages the commercial banks to get money as the rate increases and becomes expensive.

The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC):

- The Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) is a committee of the Central Bank in India (Reserve Bank of India), headed by its Governor, which is entrusted with the task of fixing the benchmark policy interest rate (repo rate) to contain inflation within the specified target level.
- **Background:** MPC was set up consequent to the agreement reached between Government and RBI to task RBI with the responsibility for price stability and inflation targeting. The Reserve Bank of India and Government of India signed the Monetary Policy Framework Agreement on 20 February 2015.

Composition:

- MPC will have six members, - the RBI Governor (Chairperson), the RBI Deputy Governor in charge of monetary policy, one official nominated by the RBI Board and the remaining three members would represent the Government of India.
- These Government of India nominees are appointed by the Central Government based on the recommendations of a search cum selection committee consisting of the cabinet secretary (Chairperson), the RBI Governor, the secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance, and three experts in the field of economics or banking as nominated by the central government.
- The three central government nominees of the MPC appointed by the search cum selection committee will hold office for a period of four years and will not

be eligible for re-appointment. These three central government nominees in MPC are mandated to be persons of ability, integrity and standing, having knowledge and experience in the field of economics or banking or finance or monetary policy.

- RBI Act prohibits appointing any Member of Parliament or Legislature or public servant, or any employee / Board / committee member of RBI or anyone with a conflict of interest with RBI or anybody above the age of 70 to the MPC.
- Further, central government also retains powers to remove any of its nominated members from MPC subject to certain conditions and if the situation warrants the same.

Decision Making at MPC:

- Quorum for a meeting shall be four Members, at least one of whom shall be the Governor and in his absence, the Deputy Governor who is the Member of the MPC.
- The MPC takes decisions based on majority vote.

7. **India to remain among top 3 investment destinations till '19**

Context:

- UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2017.

In News:

- India will remain among the top three investment destinations globally till 2019, according to a survey by the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
- **UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2017:** said India ranked 10th in terms of FDI inflows in 2016, with \$44 billion coming in, as in 2015. Over the next two years, India will be behind only the U.S. and China in terms of investment attractiveness.
- **The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development:** The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in 1964 as a permanent intergovernmental body.
- UNCTAD is the principal organ of the United Nations General Assembly dealing with trade, investment, and development issues. The organization's goals are to: "maximize the trade, investment and development opportunities of developing countries and assist them in their efforts to integrate into the world economy on an equitable basis."
- The primary objective of UNCTAD is to formulate policies relating to all aspects of development including trade, aid, transport, finance and technology. The conference ordinarily meets once in four years; the permanent secretariat is in Geneva.

8. **Come next weekend, fuel prices will change daily**

In news:

- Retail prices for petrol and diesel would be revised on a daily basis starting from June 16, compared to the present system where oil marketing companies usually adjust prices on a fortnightly basis.

- The public sector oil marketers — Indian Oil Corporation, Hindustan Petroleum and Bharat Petroleum — launched a pilot project in May for daily dynamic pricing at petrol pumps in Udaipur, Puducherry, Visakhapatnam, Jamshedpur and Chandigarh.
- Based on the 'successful implementation' of the pilot project, the firms have decided to start daily revision across the country.

Advantages:

- Daily revisions will make retail prices more reflective of the current market conditions.
- Minimises the volatility in the retail sales price of petrol and diesel.
- Increased transparency.

9. Products used by common man to cost less: Centre

Context:

- Several consumer goods purchased on a daily basis by the common man would become cheaper once the GST is implemented.
- Branded foodgrains and flours will attract a 5% GST.
- No tax: Cereals, pulses and atta, fresh milk, vegetables and fruits, puffed rice, common salt, animal feed, organic manure, fire wood, raw silk, wool and jute will be tax-free.

Effectiveness of GST:

- GST is the most important tax reform since independence and is going to substantially ease doing of business in India which will promote new investment and contribute to the overall GDP growth.
- It will also help in removing the cascading effect of taxation and will give relief to the common man by leading to reduction in prices especially of essential consumer goods.

10. FinMin debating on bad bank, UBI concept: Jaitley

In news:

- Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said that he had been discussing the two concepts introduced in this year's Economic Survey — Universal Basic Income (UBI), and the creation of a bad bank — with Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian, but added that political and economic considerations make UBI a tough task.
- The CEA had, in the Economic Survey, also introduced the idea of the creation of a bad bank to take over the debt of the NPA-laded banks so as to ease their stress and enable them to begin lending again.

Basic Information:

- Universal Basic Income (UBI): A basic income (also called basic income guarantee, Citizen's Income, unconditional basic income, universal basic income (UBI), or universal demogrant) is a form of social security in which all citizens or residents of a country regularly receive a regular, unconditional sum of money, either from a government or some other public institution, in addition to any income received

from elsewhere.

11. CPI inflation slows to lowest since 2012

In news:

- Retail inflation in May, at 2.18%, eased to its lowest level since the Centre began measuring it on a nationwide basis in 2012, driven in large part by cooling food prices, according to a latest government release.
- Inflation measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI) was even slower than the 2.99% seen in April, the previous record low. Within the index, food and beverages category witnessed a contraction of 0.2% in May, compared with a growth of 1.3% in April.
- Industrial output expanded by 3.1% in April.
- Growth in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) was spurred by the manufacturing sector within which the tobacco and the pharmaceuticals sectors grew the fastest.

Basic Information:

Index of Industrial Production (IIP)

- The Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an index for India which details out the growth of various sectors in an economy such as mineral mining, electricity and manufacturing.
- The all India IIP is a composite indicator that measures the short-term changes in the volume of production of a basket of industrial products during a given period with respect to that in a chosen base period.
- It is compiled and published monthly by the Central Statistical Organisation (CSO) six weeks after the reference month ends.
- The level of the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) is an abstract number, the magnitude of which represents the status of production in the industrial sector for a given period of time as compared to a reference period of time. The base year was at one time fixed at 1993–94 so that year was assigned an index level of 100.
- The current base year is 2011-2012.
- The Eight Core Industries comprise nearly 40.27% of the weight of items included in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP). These are Electricity, steel, refinery products, crude oil, coal, cement, natural gas and fertilisers.

12. New labour survey to generate quarterly and annual data

In news:

- The Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation has started a Periodic Labour Force Survey.
- It will provide quarterly labour and employment data for urban India and annual data for rural India.
- It would supply data not only about the formal sector, but also about the informal sector.

- This survey will supersede the earlier system where such data was available only every five years.
- The first release of data will be in December 2018.

Revision of base year:

- The Statistics Ministry is also preparing to revise the base year of national accounts to 2017-18 from 2011-12.
- This will be done after the completion of the household consumer expenditure survey and the labour force survey at the end of 2018.

CAPI method:

- The Periodic Labour Force Survey will also incorporate a Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) method.
- In this method, field operators will be using tablets to enter the data in order to generate more accurate and timely information.

Other measures in pipeline:

- The Ministry of Statistics is also developing a fact sheet on the Indian economy, incorporating inputs from all important ministries on 100 indicators.
- It is also considering an Annual Survey of Services, along the lines of the Annual Survey of Industries already being carried out.

13. Nod for Insolvency Bill for financial entities

In news:

- The Union Cabinet approved the introduction of a new Bill to resolve bankruptcy cases affecting financial sector entities, including banks and insurance companies.
- The Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill 2017, when enacted, will have a provision for the setting up of a Resolution Corporation.
- **Main aim:** It aims to limit the use of public money to bail out distressed firms during a financial crisis.
- The passage of the Act will also lead to the repealing of the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation Act, 1961 in order to transfer the deposit insurance powers and responsibilities to the Resolution Corporation.
- The Bill seeks to decrease the time and costs involved in resolving distressed financial entities and complements the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 for the insolvency resolution of non-financial entities.

14. India Aims To Lift 'Doing Business' Ranking

In news:

- World Banks Ease of Doing Business Report: India ranked 130 out of 190 Countries last year.
- Starting a business ranking : 155th position.
- Dealing with construction permits: 185th position .

Focus:

- India focusing upon major reforms in the areas such as 'Starting a business' and dealing with construction permits to significantly improve its ranking.

Measures taken:

- SPICe (The simplified Performa for Incorporating a Company Electronically), is the only default application for incorporation of Companies.

SPICe combines five procedures :

- Incorporation of a company.
- Obtaining Director Identification Number.
- Reservation of Company name.
- Application for Permanent Account Number.
- Application for Tax deduction and Collection Account number.
- Procedure associated with Employee State Insurance Corporation and Employee Fund organization has been made electronic.

15. India's engineering exports to Doha hit by Qatar crisis

Context: Gulf Crisis

In news:

- India's engineering exports to Doha have been hit following sanctions imposed on Qatar by some nations including Saudi Arabia.
- The Engineering Export Promotion Council (EEPC) of India said shipments from India were being affected as the Middle East and West Asia trade has a lot of inter-operability between different ports, observing that the banking channels particularly in Doha and some other parts of the region have also been disrupted.

Key Fact:

- The Middle East and West Asia are one of the key destinations for Indian engineering exports, accounting for 13 per cent of the country's total engineering exports.
- India's major trading partners include the UAE, Oman and Saudi Arabia.
- The engineering shipments to the region include products like iron and steel, non-ferrous metals, industrial and electrical machinery.

16. India top remittance-receiving country in 2016: UN report

In news:

- Indians working across the globe sent home USD 62.7 billion last year, making India the top remittance-receiving country surpassing China, according to a UN report.
- The 'One Family at a Time' study by the UN International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) said about 200 million migrants globally sent more than USD 445 billion in 2016 as remittances to their families, helping to lift millions out of poverty.

Recent trends in remittance flows:

- The study is the first-ever of a 10-year trend in migration and remittance flows over the period 2007-2016.
- Remittance flows have grown over the last decade at a rate averaging 4.2 per cent annually.
- It said 80 per cent of remittances are received by 23 countries, led by India, China, the Philippines, Mexico and Pakistan.
- The top 10 sending countries account for almost half of annual flows, led by the US, Saudi Arabia and Russia.
- Asia remains the main remittance-receiving region, with 55 per cent of the global flows and 41 per cent of total migrants.
- Over the past decade, remittances to Asia and the Pacific increased by 87 per cent.

Remittance and poverty reduction:

- The study added that the amount of money migrants send to their families in developing countries has risen by 51 per cent over the past decade.
- This dramatic increase in the amount of money migrants sent home to their families in developing countries is helping to lift millions out of poverty and in attaining the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).
- About 40 per cent of remittances – USD 200 billion – are sent to rural areas where the majority of poor people live.
- The money is spent on food, health care, better educational opportunities and improved housing and sanitation.
- The small amounts of USD 200 or USD 300 that each migrant sends home make up about 60 per cent of the family's household income, and this makes an enormous difference in their lives and the communities in which they live.

Impacts on the global economy and political landscape:

- Currently, about 200 million migrant workers support some 800 million family members globally.
- In 2017, an expected one-in-seven people globally will be involved in either sending or receiving more than USD 450 billion in remittances.
- Total migrant earnings are estimated at USD 3 trillion annually, approximately 85 per cent of which remains in the host countries.
- The money sent home averages less than one per cent of their host's GDP.
- Taken together, these individual remittances account for more than three times the combined official development assistance (ODA) from all sources, and more than the total foreign direct investment to almost every low-and middle-income country.

17. India top remittance-receiving country in 2016: UN report**In news:**

- Government may restrict bids of foreign companies for Government Procurement in India if in their country there is any restriction on Indian suppliers for the same.
- **Reasons:** This provision of "reciprocity" has been included in the Indian government's new policy to encourage 'Make in India' by granting preference to local suppliers in public procurement.
- **Committee for implementation:** A five-member committee chaired by the Secretary in the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion has been set up to oversee the implementation of the policy.
- **Aim of the tit-for-tat policy:** This policy is aimed at boosting domestic manufacturing and services, thereby creating employment and enhancing income, as well as to stimulate the flow of capital and technology into domestic manufacturing and services.

18. CAD widens to \$3.4 billion in Q4**In news:**

- The current account deficit widened in the fourth quarter of 2016-17 to \$3.4 billion or 0.6% of the GDP.
- It was \$ 0.3 billion or 0.1% of the GDP during the same period of the previous financial year.

Reason behind this increase:

- The widening of the CAD on a year-on-year basis was primarily on account of a higher trade deficit (\$29.7 billion) brought about by a larger increase in merchandise imports relative to export.

Basic Information:

- Countries trade with one another to buy goods not produced in domestic economy. With the advent of globalization, investment to and fro have also increased many fold. A country's trade and other economic exchanges with the world are recorded on its external account in the form of balance of payment (BoP) transactions.

There are two components of BoP

- Current Account
- Capital Account
- **Current Account** – It deals with current, ongoing, short term transactions like trade in goods, services (invisible) etc. It reflects the nation's net income.
- For instance, if you buy a laptop from US, it will be a current account transaction and it will be debit on current account as you have to pay to US.

There are 4 components of Current Account-

- Goods – trade in goods.
- Services (invisible) – trade in services eg. tourism
- Income – investment income.

- Current unilateral transfers – donations, gifts, grants, remittances.
- Note that grants might appear as component of capital account but are included in current account as they are unilateral, create no liability. Recipient does not have to give anything back in return.
- **Capital Account** – It deal with capital transactions i.e. those transactions which create assets or liabilities. It reflects the net changes in the ownership of national assets.
- For instance, if you buy a stocks or property in US, it will be a capital account transaction and it will be debit on capital account as you have to pay to US to buy the asset.

Components of Capital Account

- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)
- Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI)
- External Borrowings such as ECB
- Reserve Account with the Central Bank
- Note here that foreign investment is under capital account but dividends and income from investment comes under current account in the category income from abroad as dividend is transferred periodically, does not result in creation of asset or liability.
- Balance of Payment (BoP) = Current Account + Capital Account = 0

Why?

- Current Account and Capital Account always balance each other because a country always has to pay for its imports. It does so by exports or other two components of current account. If it cannot, it runs deficit on current account and has to pay off by drawing off on its assets i.e. running capital account surplus.

What is Current Account Deficit?

- It's simply deficit on all 4 components of current account.
- $(\text{Export} - \text{Import}) + \text{Net income from abroad} + \text{Net Transfers}$
- $(\text{Export} - \text{Import})$ is trade deficit.
- $\text{CAD} = \text{Trade Deficit} + \text{Net Income From Abroad} + \text{Net transfers}$
- Note that Trade Deficit and CAD are not one and the same. Trade deficit is only a component of CAD.

What does deficit on Current Account imply?

- If we forget income and transfers for a moment, what it means is that we import more than what we export.

How do we pay for that extra import?

- Either we get more foreign investment (FDI & FII) and pay via that or we borrow from foreign banks (ECB) or we will have to dip into our external reserves to pay for that.

- amount and in the process our forex reserves come down. When forex reserves come down below a critical level, country appears on the brink of BoP crisis.

So, is CAD such a bad thing?

- Depends on what you do with those extra imports and how you finance the deficit!
- **CAD is bad because:**
- If a CAD is financed through borrowing, it is unsustainable because borrowing lead to high interest payments in the future
- Attracting capital flows (hot money, FII) to finance the deficit is risky as when confidence falls, hot money flows dry up, leading to a rapid devaluation and crisis of confidence. Eg. East Asian Crisis.
- Run a CAD necessarily means running a surplus on the capital account. This means foreigners have an increasing claim on your assets, which they could redeem any time.

However a current account deficit is not necessarily harmful

- CAD during a period of inward investment particularly stable long term FDI may not be a bad things as investment can create jobs. Investments will lead to higher growth will be able to pay debts back.
- Developing countries may use CAD to buy Capital goods and later export consumer goods and thus repay the debt.
- Moderate current account deficit (2% of GDP) financed mainly by stable foreign investments which creates jobs and infrastructure in the economy can be helpful in the long run as it improves productivity.

What is this twin deficit?

- Current Account Deficit and Fiscal Deficit together are known as twin deficits and often both reinforce each other i.e. High fiscal deficit leads to higher CAD and vice versa.

19. Indians have 'rather few' deposits: Swiss banks

Context: Illegal black money funds parked in Swiss bank.

In news:

- Indians have "few deposits" in Swiss banks compared to other global financial hubs like Singapore and Hong Kong, says a grouping of private bankers in Switzerland.
- There are also few deposits of Indian residents in Switzerland, as opposed to Singapore or Hong Kong for instance.
- **Official data:** Money held by Indians in Swiss banks declined to a record low of 1.2 billion franc (about Rs 8,392 crore) at the end of 2015.

Automatic exchange of tax information:

- Last week Switzerland ratified the decision to implement this regime with India and 40 other jurisdictions.

- The framework for automatic exchange of information requires strict adherence to data confidentiality, but the Geneva-based Association of Swiss Private Banks said it has no particular concern over India, where the rule of law seems to be properly upheld.

20. Secrecy must for automatic info exchange, Swiss banks tell India

Context: : India recently signed automatic exchange window agreement with Switzerland.

In news:

- India will have to ensure strict confidentiality of information about its citizens' Swiss bank accounts received through the new automatic exchange window, failing which the Alpine nation will stop sharing the data.
- Switzerland and its banks will also keep a close watch on the data protection measures taken by India regarding the details received from other jurisdictions and want all other global financial centres to implement the global framework for automatic exchange of information (AEOI) on financial matters.
- The pact with India is planned for implementation in 2018, with the first set of data to be exchanged in 2019.
- The exchange of information would be based on the Multilateral Competent Authority Agreement (MCAA) on AEOI, which is in turn based on the international standard for the exchange of information developed by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).
- **Fuel price revisions:** Burying the administered price mechanism ghost

In News:

- India has formally dismantled the administered price mechanism or APM for petrol and diesel.
- In India, like in the US and Australia, domestic diesel and petrol prices have now been globalized.

Effects on Indian Economy Structure:

- India is now a step closer to become a competitive market economy defined by rules as opposed to the existing exception-based regime.

Drawbacks of earlier system:

- Prior to this decision, petroleum prices were administered (read subsidized).
- It led to inefficient allocation of a scarce resource.
- It also became a fiscal problem, as the subsidies were buried in what was known as the oil pool account, details of which were all but opaque.

Challenges:

- At present, crude oil prices are hovering around the \$50 mark.
- But if price increases then it can create political problems for government.

21. Nitty-gritty of bankruptcy code

In news:

- Reserve Bank of India said its internal advisory committee (IAC) had identified 12 accounts, which account for 25% of non-performing assets of the Indian banking system for immediate resolution under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
- The gross bad debt in the banking system as on March was Rs. 7.11 lakh crore, which means the 12 accounts contribute to about Rs. 1.78 lakh crore.

Meaning of bankruptcy

- A company is bankrupt if it is unable to repay debts to its creditors (banks, suppliers etc).

Bankruptcy out come:

- The inability to repay debts by some of the Indian firms has resulted in a huge pile of non-performing assets for the banking system.
- RBI had earlier hinted that stress was coming from sectors such as power, telecom, steel, textiles and aviation.

RBI and IBC role:

- The government had recently amended the RBI Act.
- It gave powers to the central bank to direct banks to take punitive action against individual accounts under IBC.

IBC Process:

- A mechanism to free up the money stuck as bad loans is one of the key for the banking system. IBC is seen as one such.
- **Step 1:** Any creditor including banks can start bankruptcy proceedings against defaulters by filing a petition with the National Company Law Tribunal.
- **Step 2:** After that, an insolvency professional with significant powers is appointed to take control of the defaulting company and assist the process.
- **Step 3:** A creditors committee is formed to represent the interest of lenders and any other party that have been affected due to the default by the company.

Committee task:

- The committee should come up with a resolution plan (which may include selling off defaulted loans or liquidate the company outright).
- The resolution would require a nod from 75% of the creditors on the committee.

Timeline:

- The insolvency professional gets 180 days to come up with a feasible solution on the default issue. The timeline can be extended by another 90 days.

After Deadline:

- If no solution is found within 270 days, a liquidator is appointed.
- The company can also opt for voluntary liquidation by a special resolution in a general meeting.

Basic Information:

- **The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT):**
- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) is a quasi-judicial body in India that adjudicates issues relating to companies in India. The NCLT was established under the Companies Act 2013 and was constituted on 1 June 2016.

The NCLT has the power under the Companies Act to adjudicate proceedings:

- Initiated before the Company Law Board under the previous act (the Companies Act 1956);
- Pending before the Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR), including those pending under the Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985;
- Pending before the Appellate Authority for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction; and
- Pertaining to claims of oppression and mismanagement of a company, winding up of companies and all other powers prescribed under the Companies Act.
- Decisions of the NCLT may be appealed to the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal.

22. Issue over poor man's food jowar. House panel questions need to develop GM Sorghum**Context:**

- The controversy over GM Mustard rages on
- Another row is over GM crop version of jowar – or sorghum.
- Sorghum is said to be the poor man's food in India.

Parliamentary Committee to study GM:

- The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology, Environment and Forests has decided to seek clarifications from Union Agriculture Ministry, and also ask the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) to do a comparative analysis of the nutritional values of GM and non-GM sorghum.
- The panel is examining the issue of GM crops and its impact on environment.
- It has called for samples of the crop developed by the Hyderabad-based Indian Institute of Millets Research (IIMR).

Questions of this committee

- To know the need to develop a genetically modified version of sorghum, which is the poor man's food.
- Sorghum yield was already not fetching a good market price and was more than enough to meet the demand.

So why was GM Sorghum required?

- The committee wants to know whether there is a plan to introduce GM Sorghum in ration shops under the PDS.

Finances for GM Sorghum

- The panel will look into issues such as expenditure incurred on research for GM Sorghum.
- The money from the public exchequer was spent on GM Sorghum research even before any forward-backward linkage planning was done.

Advantage of Bt Sorghum

- IIMR had begun research on transgenic jowar around four years ago.
- It has now developed Bt Sorghum.
- This is bigger in size.
- It also has greater pest resistance.

Activist opinion:

- Activists contend that the Central government should not allow consumption of genetically modified jowar by either humans or animals.
- They argue that since jowar is largely consumed by the poor, any ill-effect of the GM variety will impact more people.
- It will affect those without much access to preventive medicare.

Basic Information:

- Clearance giving Committee: Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC).

History of Bt crops in India

- The only genetically modified crop that is under cultivation in India is Bt Cotton.
- There was a proposal to allow cultivation of Bt Brinjal, a transgenic variety of brinjal, which did not receive approval.

23. IGST to help lower overall tax burden over time: Patel**In news:**

- Reserve Bank Governor Urjit Patel said the soon-to-be implemented goods and services tax (GST) will not only create a national market but will also broaden the tax base which in turn will lower the overall taxes in the long-term.

24. SEBI eases norms to buy stressed assets**In news:**

- The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has relaxed norms for investors acquiring assets in companies with stressed assets and facing bankruptcy proceedings.

Other Decisions:

- SEBI has also decided to provide exemption for acquisitions post the resolution plans approved by National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016.
- SEBI has decided to levy a 'Regulatory Fee' of \$1,000 on each subscriber of offshore derivative instrument (ODI).

- This Fee will have to be collected by the registered foreign portfolio investor (FPI) that issues the ODIs.

Forensic Audit

- The SEBI is in the process of appointing a forensic auditor to look into the co-location matter of the National Stock Exchange (NSE).
- At NSE, it is alleged that certain brokers had received preferential access to the exchange systems for execution of trades.
- The regulator is examining whether there was any connivance between NSE staffers and brokers.

Basic Information:

- The term "offshore derivative instrument" ("ODI") means any instrument, by whatever name called, which is issued overseas by a foreign portfolio investor against securities held by it that are listed or proposed to be listed on any recognised stock exchange in India, as its underlying.

25. 'Solar push could mean 3 lakh jobs by 2022'

In news:

- A new report by the think tanks, Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW) and the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) says solar and wind power could generate employment for 3,00,000 new workers.
- This will be possible if India is able to meet its commitment of adding 1,60,000 MW of renewable power (solar and wind power) by 2022.

Current situation:

- Currently both these industries employ around 21,000 people (Don't remember data, but see low level of employment).

Future prospects:

- With a strong domestic manufacturing policy in place, another 45,000 could find indirect full-time jobs.
- Solar jobs would be distributed fairly evenly across the country, with a pronounced tilt in favour of Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.
- Wind jobs were likely to be concentrated in a few States that have high wind potential.

India's commitment:

- As part of its commitments to dealing with global warming, India has committed to installing 1,75,000 MW of green power by 2022.
- Of this, only 10% has been installed so far.
- Council on Energy, Environment and Water (CEEW).
- The Council on Energy, Environment and Water, commonly known as CEEW, is a Delhi-based not-for-profit policy research institution.
- Some of CEEW's research areas include resource efficiency and security; water resources; renewable energy; sustainability finance; energy-trade-climate linkages; integrated energy, environment and water plans; and climate geoengineering governance.

- The think-tank advises the Indian government.

26. India's increasing green growth

India's declining energy(non-green) dependency

- India's energy intensity of gross domestic product (GDP) has declined from 1.09kg unit of oil equivalent (koe) in the 1980s to 0.66 in recent times.
- China's energy intensity is roughly 1.5 times that of India.

Energy efficiency: Urban vs. Rural

- Energy efficiency has improved in urban areas.
- **Why:** As urban settings have reduced the cost of electricity use per output level due to denser customer bases and more efficient plant sizes for local energy producers.
- Energy efficiency has not improved in rural regions when compared with urban regions.
- But large manufacturing enterprises are now de-urbanizing and moving into rural areas in search of lower land costs.

Performance of Energy intensive Industries on Energy Efficiency front

- The energy-intensive industries such as iron and steel, fertilizer, petroleum refining, cement, aluminum, and pulp and paper; account for the bulk of the energy consumed.
- They have recorded greater energy efficiency improvement.
- But many industries still remain inefficient by both national and international standards.
- There is substantial potential for energy savings in energy-intensive industries.

Comparison among Indian States

- The usage of electricity per unit output is remarkably high in states such as Madhya Pradesh and Odisha, and in some cases twice the level of India as a whole.
- But in states like Delhi and Haryana, electricity consumption levels are lower than the national average.

How to reduce Greenhouse gas emissions?

- Policymakers need to move on three fronts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
- (1) Increase energy efficiency
- (2) Improve access to technology
- (3) Promote renewable fuel

Where India stands on Energy Consumption?

- India's power system is the fifth-largest system in the world (after China, the US, Japan, and Russia) but it is still insufficient to meet India's rapidly increasing demand.
- Electricity consumption in India is only around 566 KWh per capita, compared to the world average of 2,782 KWh per capita.

The Way forward

- Electricity shortages are frequent in India and are estimated to cost the country around 7% of GDP.
- India is still home to more than 250 million people who have no access to electricity.
- India's green growth agenda should be extended beyond urban areas and also include rural areas.
- Policymakers need to review the incentives and regulations that govern self-production of electricity.

27. Software export growth set to slow: Nasscom**In news:**

- The country's software export growth is set to slow to 7-8% this fiscal year, down from 8.6% a year earlier, according to industry body Nasscom.
- The domestic market was projected to grow faster than the export market during this fiscal.

Factors that affect software exports:

- Increased rhetoric on protectionism.
- Elections, Brexit and visa issues.
- Macroeconomic uncertainties.
- Focus on cost optimisation.
- Currency volatility.

Inflection point in industry and way forward:

- Improvements in financial services and a high potential in digital businesses would be the key growth drivers.
- An improvement in legacy business and increased automation-based projects would also be among the growth drivers.
- The demand will be for technology-skilled professionals and it was imperative for new and existing people to reskill themselves.

28. M-banking now under ombudsman's purview**In news:**

- The Reserve Bank of India has widened the scope of the Banking Ombudsman Scheme 2006.
- A customer can now lodge a complaint against the bank for non-adherence to instructions related to mobile banking and electronic banking services.
- Pecuniary jurisdiction widened.
- The pecuniary jurisdiction of the Banking Ombudsman to pass an award has been increased from the existing Rs. 10 lakh to Rs. 20 lakh.
- Compensation (not exceeding Rs. 1 lakh) can also be awarded by the Banking Ombudsman to the complainant for loss of time, expenses incurred as also harassment and mental anguish suffered by the complainant.

Basic Information:**Banking Ombudsman Scheme 2006**

- The Banking Ombudsman Scheme enables an

expeditious and inexpensive forum to bank customers for resolution of complaints relating to certain services rendered by banks.

- The Banking Ombudsman is a senior official appointed by the Reserve Bank of India to redress customer complaints against deficiency in certain banking services.
- All Scheduled Commercial Banks, Regional Rural Banks and Scheduled Primary Co-operative Banks are covered under the Scheme.
- The Banking Ombudsman can receive and consider any complaint relating to the following deficiency in banking services (including internet banking + now mobile banking).
- One can file a complaint before the Banking Ombudsman if the reply is not received from the bank within a period of one month after the bank concerned has received one's representation, or the bank rejects the complaint, or if the complainant is not satisfied with the reply given by the bank.
- If one is not satisfied with the decision passed by the Banking Ombudsman, one can approach the appellate authority against the Banking Ombudsman's decision. Appellate Authority is vested with a Deputy Governor of the RBI.

29. M-banking now under ombudsman's purview**Context:**

- Privatization of the national carrier.

In news:**Different opinions:**

- NITI Aayog and the Finance Ministry: favour of an outright sale of the ailing airline.
- Civil Aviation Ministry: government should continue to remain a stakeholder in the national carrier after handing over the management to the private sector.
- Union Cabinet: three options available- full 100% sell-off, a 74% stake sale or retaining a 49% share in the airline. Consider the creation of a special purpose vehicle (SPV) to get rid of a major portion of its more than Rs 50,000-crore debt.

Special Purpose Vehicle plan:

- A major portion of the working capital loan, subsidiaries and prime properties owned by Air India is proposed to be housed in an SPV.
- According to the plan, of the airline's over Rs 30,000 crore total working capital loan, Rs 25,000 crore will be earmarked for the SPV.
- Air India has a total debt of around Rs 52,000 crore which comprises of Rs 22,000 crore as aircraft loan and the remaining as working capital loan.
- The income garnered through sale of assets and subsidiaries will be sufficient to meet the liability of the working capital loan of the SPV.

30. Before the colours fade away

Context:

- Possible effects of the GST on the textile industry.
- Combating international competition, the textile industry is looking to the Centre for help.

Concern of Indian Textile Exporters

- For an international buyer, quality and reliability are the main attraction point of Indian Textile and Clothing industry.
- The concern of exporters is that they should not be out-priced by competitors, after the implementation of the GST.

Flat growth in the exports

- During 2016-2017, textile and clothing exports increased by a mere 0.9% for the year ended March 2017.
- Data from Cotton Textiles Export Promotion Council (Texprocil) shows that export of cotton yarn, fabrics and made-ups declined 3.06% in 2016-17 compared with the previous year.
- Export of man-made yarn, fabric and made-ups also contracted 2.75 %
- However, ready-made garment clothing exports rose 2.31% \$17.35 billion.
- India has the second-largest integrated textile manufacturing facility globally, next to China, this low level of exports is a matter of concern.
- Whereas countries such as Bangladesh and Vietnam have seen exports rising.

India's share in Textile Exports Globally

- China has 35 % share in the world textile and clothing exports while India, in second position, has a mere 4.89% share.
- Bangladesh and Vietnam are close behind at 4.62% and 4.05% share respectively.
- How Indian Textile Sector is competing in a limited Space.
- Globally, 65% of the textile and clothing consumption is man-made fibre-based and the remaining 35% is cotton based.
- While 80% of Chinese exports are MMF-based(Man Made Fibre).
- But almost 80% of Indian exports are cotton based
- Thus, the Indian industry seems to be competing in a limited space.

Government Efforts

- In 2016, the Union Government had announced a Rs. 6,000 crore special package for the apparel sector.
- It is a special package for made-ups and a comprehensive scheme for the power loom sector.

The Way Forward

- The Textile sector needs better road connectivity, operation of vessels to key international destinations.
- Both the industry and the Government should work towards building the international competitiveness of the overall industry.
- This requires substantial incentives to strengthen the weaving and processing segments.
- Industries need to be encouraged to re-invest their profits in the textile value chain rather than investing in other sectors.
- Policies for the garment sector should look at exporters and domestic players separately.

31. China shares in MSCI index: what it means

Context:

- Last week, Morgan Stanley Capital International (MSCI), a widely-tracked global index provider, said it would add China's local currency shares, referred to as China 'A' shares, to its benchmark emerging markets index, after three years of having rejected overtures on the same.

What is MSCI?

- It is the world's biggest index compiler, with more than \$10 trillion in assets benchmarked to its products, with emerging markets alone accounting for \$2 trillion.

Why are MSCI indices important?

- The indices are closely tracked by global investors. Inclusion in MSCI Inc's stock indices opens up investment interest from foreign investors in a particular country and brings a stamp of financial credibility.

What is mainland China and why haven't its shares been featured in the MSCI index so far?

- It is an area under the direct jurisdiction of China and excludes special administrative regions of Hong Kong and Macau. Chinese mainland markets were not open to foreign investors.
- So, foreign investors hitherto had access to non-mainland shares — those that are traded in the markets of Hong Kong and Macau. The non-mainland shares have been part of the MSCI Emerging Markets Index. China has been working to ease restrictions on foreign investors, influencing MSCI's decision now.

What happens now?

- MSCI will add 222 China A shares (shares of large enterprises) starting next year. The stocks, which would represent a weightage of only 0.73% in the benchmark, will be included via a two-phase process in May and August next year.

How will this affect India?

- Most experts see only minimal impact on the Indian market in terms of outflows.

- However, MSCI has said it is open to adding more China A shares, provided it opens up its equity market further. If China continues to gain more weightage on the index, more money could well flow out of India.

32. **Bihar bets big on nuclear power; plans 3,000 MW plant**

Context:

- In its attempt to become power surplus and increase the share of renewable energy, the Bihar government has planned to set up a nuclear plant
- **Location:** Rajauli in Nawada district.
- **Capacity:** around 3,000 MW capacity.

33. **'Men preferred over women in hiring'**

Highlights of Randstad Workmonitor survey:

- Reality in corporate hiring: men are preferred to women even if the two are equally qualified.
- 55% of overall respondents from India indicated that men are favoured over women when two candidates are equally qualified for the same set of responsibilities.
- Gender pay gap: 91% of respondents from India believed that both men and women in similar roles were rewarded equally at their workplace, much higher than the global average of 79%.
- Promotion: 88% felt that both men and women were equally supported while seeking a promotion
- **Way forwards:** All the corporate and government initiatives are just a start, the real change can happen only when we succeed in addressing the deep-rooted mindsets about the role of women at work.

34. **Few household items may be cheaper on GST'**

In News:

- Cheaper: The Goods and Services Tax will make several household commodities like soap cheaper.
- How? Household items like soap, which were earlier taxed at 31% combining central and state taxes, will now be in the 18% bracket.
- 'Equivalence principle': The equivalence principle followed in setting the rates in GST was based on what the rate on a good or service was prior to June 30 combining the centre's excise duty and the states' VAT.

35. **Govt. to shed stake in loss-making AI**

Context:

- disinvestment of debt ridden national carrier –Air India.

In news:

- Disinvestment decided as a way out for the debt-ridden flag carrier.
- The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister met and took the following decisions:
- In-principle approval for strategic disinvestment of Air India and five of its subsidiaries.

Constitution of an Air-India specific Alternative Mechanism to decide the following:

- Treatment of unsustainable debt;
- Hiving off certain assets to a shell company.
- Demerger and strategic disinvestment of three profit making subsidiaries
- Quantum of disinvestment.
- Universe of bidders.
- A group of ministers under Finance Minister has been formed to work out the modalities for the strategic sale.

Key facts:

- Air India has been posting losses for more than a decade.
- Nationalization of Air India:1953-54

What are shell companies?

- A shell company is described as a non-trading organization that does not engage in any activity but exists only as medium for another organization's business activity.
- Shell companies are usually listed on the stock exchange and are not illegal inherently; however a large number of them are used as a vehicle for illegal activities like tax avoidance or for trying to cover up a trail of money. These companies exist only on paper and have no physical presence.

36. **Niti Aayog moots new regulator for coal, gas**

In News:

- Niti Aayog has suggested creation of regulators for coal as well as oil and gas.
- Reasons for not having a regulator till now:
- Strong presence of PSU's and
- Limited number of private operators.

37. **Draft National Energy Policy. Niti Aayog suggests to convert CIL subsidiaries into separate companies**

In News:

- NITI Aayog has Released the Draft National Energy Policy.
- Draft of the policy aims to find a way to achieve the energy security targets announced by the government.

Recommendations by NITI Aayog:

- Niti Aayog has recommended that the seven subsidiaries of India's largest coal miner Coal India Ltd should be converted into independent companies.
- And these subsidiaries be allowed to compete against each other in the open market.
- NITI Aayog's Criticism: Niti Aayog has criticised Coal India setting prices that are significantly higher than the implicit cost of mining by the independent power producers.

- NITI Aayog has also pushed for higher production from private coal miners.

38. **Govt. unveils new hydrocarbon policy**

In News:

- Petroleum Ministry introduced a new oil and gas block licensing policy – Open Acreage Licensing policy and The National Data Repository, that is expected to open up 2.8 million square kilometers of sedimentary basins to exploration and production activities.

National Data Repository:

- Lack of sedimentary data had been hampering oil and gas exploration and production.
- 52% of India's basin had not been appraised yet.
- Repository is expected to improve the situation.

Open Acreage Licensing policy:

- The OALP, is a part of government's Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy.
- It gives exploration companies the option to select the exploration blocks on their own, without having to wait for the formal bid round from the government.
- The company then submits an application to the government, which puts that block up for bid.
- Initially the applications and related bids for the blocks would be held twice a year- January and July- this could be held more frequently as the industry becomes used to the new model.

Industrialists opinion:

- Policy reiterates governments commitment to reduce administrative and regulatory burden, thus enhancing ease of doing business.
- A single license to explore all forms of hydrocarbons, no oil cess, reduced rates of royalty are just few of many enabling provisions which will stimulate the investments in the sector.
- Reduce import dependence and helps India to achieve energy security.

39. **Sri Lanka, India to setup solar unit soon**

Location:

- Eastern port town Trincomalee, Sri Lanka.

In news:

- April 2017: both the governments signed a Memorandum of Understanding, for cooperation in a host of development projects including the setting up of a Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) plant in suburban Colombo and a solar power plant in Sampur, Trincomalee.
- Sampur: India and Sri Lanka have agreed to jointly operate a world war era oil storage facility in the town, with the aim of developing it into a regional petroleum hub.
- The proposed solar power plant is in line with Soorya Bala Sangramaya (Battle for Solar Energy), an initiative that President Sirisena launched last year to add

220MW of solar power to Sri Lanka's energy grid by 2020.

- Currently Sri Lanka relies heavily on thermal sources that meet 70% of country's energy needs.

AGRICULTURE

1. Farm think tank's formula to redress agriculture distress

Context:

- Ongoing farmers agitation in many States.

In news:

- The Indian Council of Food and Agriculture (ICFA), an agriculture think tank, has suggested to the Centre to consider its seven-point formula to redress farmers' distress across the country.

Some of the major recommendations includes:

- Assuring a decent income for the farmers was vital, and, therefore, the recommendations of the National Commission on Farmers (Swaminathan Commission) on the minimum support prices (MSP) for crops must be fixed at levels of at least 50% more than the weighted average cost of production.
- Establishing easily accessible procurement centres.
- Opening of domestic and international markets for free trade: which could help farmers in realising better profit prospects.
- Operating futures markets across all farm produce: another effective strategy to offset the uncertainties associated with price fluctuations of agricultural commodities. Futures contract route helped farmers decide on trade for a standing crop at a future date at a price agreed before the harvest.
- Establishing a national network of Panchayat level rural growth centres that would create village-level agri-businesses and connect farmers with institutions, banks, technologies and markets.

2. How does the monsoon affect the economy?

In News:

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD): India's annual monsoon rainfall is expected to be 98% of the long-period average (LPA), up from 96% projected earlier, raising prospects of higher farm output and economic growth.

Why are monsoon rains important for India?

- The monsoon is the lifeblood for India's farm-dependent \$2 trillion economy, as at least half the farmlands are rain-fed.
- The country gets about 70% of annual rainfall in the June-September monsoon season, making it crucial for an estimated 263 million farmers.
- About 800 million people live in villages and depend on agriculture, which accounts for about 15% of India's gross domestic product (GDP) and a failed monsoon can have a rippling effect on the country's growth and economy.

- Whereas, a normal to above-normal and well-distributed monsoon boosts farm output and farmers' income, thereby increasing the demand for consumer and automotive products in rural markets.

What happens in case of a poor monsoon?

- The monsoon has a direct impact on the country's agricultural GDP. The planting of key kharif, or summer, crops like rice, sugar cane, pulses and oilseeds begins with the arrival of monsoon rains in June.
- Summer crops account for almost half of India's food output and a delayed or poor monsoon means supply issues and acceleration in food inflation, a key metric which influences Reserve Bank of India's decision on interest rates.
- A deficit monsoon could also lead to a drought-like situation, thereby affecting the rural household incomes, consumption and economic growth.
- A poor monsoon not only leads to weak demand for fast-moving consumer goods, two-wheelers, tractors and rural housing sectors but also increases the imports of essential food staples and forces the government to take measures like farm loan waivers, thereby putting pressure on finances. Whereas a normal monsoon results in a good harvest, which in turn lifts rural incomes and boosts spending on consumer goods. It also has a positive impact on hydro power projects.

3. The best of times, the worst of times

Context:

- The ongoing farmers' agitation has taken on a shockingly violent form.
- Discussion has revolved around an apparent paradox: why are farmers rioting after a bumper crop?

Immediate and other factors leading to this crisis:

- **Demonetisation:** Demonetisation squeezed so much liquidity out of the system that traders did not have requisite cash to buy the farmers' produce.
- Farmers also feel that persisting with imports, even after clear signs of a bumper harvest, further depressed prices.
- FCI procurement focusses only on rice and wheat.

Problems with Indian agriculture:

- We are still stuck with the so-called Green Revolution of the 1970s.
- This was primarily a rice and wheat revolution.
- It completely neglected two-thirds of Indian agriculture and crops grown and eaten by the poorest people of our country — pulses and millets.
- Also, over the years, it has caused a deep crisis of sustainability, economic and ecological.

- Large-scale use of chemical fertilisers and pesticides has had an extremely adverse impact on our soil and water.
- Deep drilling by tubewells to grow these water-intensive crops has happened without keeping in mind India's unique hydrogeology, where nearly two-thirds of our land is underlain by hard rock formations which have very low rates of natural recharge.

Subsequent problems:

- There is now a serious water crisis, with both water tables and water quality falling rapidly.
- Arsenic, fluoride, mercury, even uranium have entered in drinking water, creating serious health issues.
- To get the same increase in production, farmers have to apply more and more fertilisers and pesticides over time which raises costs of cultivation, without a proportionate increase in production.

Way forwards:

- First- We need transition to a more ecologically resilient agriculture (becomes more urgent in the context of climate change).
- Second- We must radically reform the management of both surface and groundwater.
- Third- We require continued diversification to other forms of livelihood, such as livestock and fisheries, which are among the fastest-growing segments of the rural economy.
- We must also shift focus away from water-intensive rice and wheat.
- This means radical changes in the way we grow these crops (seed, water and input regimes) but also much greater encouragement to millets and pulses, which are nutritionally far superior alternatives in a country beset with the diabetes epidemic.
- The best way would be to include millets and pulses in the massive anganwadi and mid-day meal programmes.
- Fourth- Investments in agro-processing infrastructure are urgently required that would enable farmers to move up the value chain.
- Fifth- we need to ensure access to credit and crop insurance, especially to our 85% small and marginal farmers.
- Sixth- We need strong Farmer Producer Organisations, to overcome massive handicaps faced by isolated farmers and enable them to really benefit from market participation.

Results:

- More production at less costs: As farmers reduce their dependence on synthetic fertilisers and pesticides, they slowly emerge from the ecological vicious cycle and are also able to dramatically reduce their costs of cultivation, without compromising on production.
- Water availability: This will ensure that the water in our irrigation commands reaches the farmers for whom it

is meant and groundwater is managed sustainably in a way that ensures that no one is deprived of their right to water for life.

4. Cabinet clears 5% interest subvention for crop loans

In News:

- The Union Cabinet has approved the extension of the interest subvention scheme for farmers to 2017-18.
- Short-term crop loans up to ₹3 lakh will receive a subvention of 5% to all prompt payee farmers, effectively reducing the rate for farmers to 4%.
- **Implementing agency:** the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and the Reserve Bank of India.
- Farmers unable to repay the short-term crop loans on time will receive an interest subvention of 2%.
- Under the scheme, the government will also provide an interest subvention of 2% for small and marginal farmers who would have to borrow at 9% for the post-harvest storage of their produce for loans up to 6 months.
- A 2% subvention will also be provided to banks in the case of farmers affected by natural calamities for the first year on the restructured amount.
- Background information: The scheme was started in 2006-07, under which farmers are eligible for interest subvention of 2% for crop loans of up to ₹3 lakh.
- Scheme objective: The objective of the scheme is to make available at ground level, agricultural credit for short-term crop loans at an affordable rate to give a boost to agricultural productivity and production in the country.

Basic information:

Meaning of Interest Subvention:

- "Interest subvention" simply means a subsidy offered on interest rates. The word "subvention" simply means subsidy.
- In the context of India, interest subvention is mostly in the matter of government lending schemes to promote a particular industry sector. The subsidy helps the loan borrower in not having to pay the total interest amount on a loan amount. Therefore, the government pays part of the interest amount for the borrower, thereby lessening the borrower's overall repayment burden.

5. Are farm loan waivers really so bad?

Context:

- There has been a rising trend of farm loan waivers in country in recent times and after UP, Maharashtra and Punjab, Karnataka has also announced waivers for few categories of farmers.

What do farm loan waivers leads to?

- Farm loan waiver undermines an honest credit culture, it impacts credit discipline, it blunts incentives for future borrowers to repay

- Waivers engender moral hazard.
- It also entails at the end of the day, transfer from taxpayers to borrowers.
- On account of this, overall government borrowing goes up and yields on government bonds also are impacted.
- It can also lead to the crowding out of private borrowers as higher government borrowing can lead to an increase in cost of borrowing for others.

Present demands and reasons behind them:

- The present demands are an outcome of the fact that the government is willing to provide for "acts of God", not for "acts of state".
- The policy framework for farm loans has a provision that when the Centre declares a drought, farm loans in officially designated "affected districts" are rolled over, initially for a year, up to a maximum of three years.
- Farmers' problems in 2016-17 are almost entirely the outcome of demonetisation: there was no clear geographical demarcation, and there has been no rolling over of loans.

What if farm loans are not waived?

- Agricultural loans by banks in India are compulsorily insured by the Agricultural Insurance Company of India (AIC).
- Its liabilities are back-stopped by the Centre through budgetary support.
- Even if loans aren't waived, there is no loss to banks
- In situations of widespread and acute farmer distress leading to substantial defaults, the Centre will have to step in and provide funds.
- The difference is that waivers are borne by states, and defaults are borne by the Centre.

How this all started?

- To improve farmer livelihoods and check food inflation, our agricultural strategy has been based upon persuading farmers to move away from traditional subsistence agriculture towards more commercial operations.
- This entails farmers investing much more and taking higher risks.

Economic consequences:

- Traditional farm finance sources like moneylenders can neither provide the requisite volume of funds nor do they allow enough margins to make risk-taking worthwhile.
- Forcing farmers back to moneylenders will retard diversification, thereby increasing the risk of accelerating food inflation.

The 'sub-sovereign' dilemma:

- At the heart of this problem are constitutional provisions.

- Health of the banks is the Centre's concern while the health of the farmers is that of the states (Center, state and concurrent lists).
- This division of responsibility is asymmetric in that if states protect the interest of farmers, they also protect banks; while the Centre can protect banks without concern for farmers.

Possible solutions:

- The Centre and states need to work together to evolve a farm loan model which protects both farmers and banks without bringing politics into it.
- This is the essence of "cooperative federalism".

ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND ECOLOGY

PARIS ACCORD

1. China vows to stick to Paris pact

Context:

- Washington planning to pull out of the Paris climate agreement.

In news:

- China reiterated its position to continue to implement promises made to the Paris Agreement, to move towards the 2030 goal step by step steadfastly.
- Russia's reaction: The withdrawal of key players from the Paris climate deal would "complicate" implementation of the pact.

2. Donald Trump goes rogue, pulls US out of 'partial to India, China' climate deal

In News:

- The country's 45th President, businessman entrepreneur Donald Trump, announced: "Washington is pulling out of the widely-acclaimed climate change accord".

Reasons give:

- Solemn duty to protect America and its people.
- Accord favored China and India.
- Complaints against India, falsely saying New Delhi was demanding "billions and billions and billions" of foreign aid to conform to the deal, and claiming that the accord will allow India to double coal production by 2020.
- Trump said the US will seek to negotiate its way back or negotiate a new climate deal that is "fair" to America
- The US, under President Obama, had stitched together the deal with great difficulty after convincing a majority of the 198 nations, including long-term holdouts such as China and India.

Key Fact:

- China is currently the world's largest CO₂ emitter, having overtaken America in the past decade.
- The US historically is the world's biggest polluter, riding on a century of mass consumption and servicing of everything from large homes to large vehicles.
- In 2015, the US released 5.1 million kilotons of CO₂, accounting for a sixth of global emissions and more than that of 28 EU countries combined.
- In comparison, India, with four times the US population, accounted for 2 million tons of CO₂.
- Paris Agreement on Climate Change: The Paris Agreement on Climate Change is aimed at cutting emissions and keeping global temperatures from rising more than 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

3. India to stand by Paris deal

In News:

- India would stand by its Paris climate treaty commitments, notwithstanding the pull out by the Donald Trump administration, which blamed India and China as the two beneficiaries of an "unfair" climate deal.
- India's eight-point climate action plan to reduce carbon emission intensity by one-third and generate 40% of total electricity from non-fossil fuel sources is financially self-sufficient at the moment.

Intended nationally determined contribution (INDC)

- In October 2016, in the run-up to the Paris summit, India released its intended nationally determined contribution (INDC), a set of voluntary targets to clean up the environment.
- Lowering carbon emission growth rate by 33-35% by resorting to a clean and efficient energy system
- Improving energy efficiency.
- Developing climate resilient urban centres.
- Promoting waste to energy conversion.
- Establishing smart and green transport network.
- Reducing the pollution load and expanding canopy cover.

4. India rejects Trump's allegations on Paris pact

Context:

- U.S. President Donald Trump's allegation: India joined the Paris climate agreement for a large financial incentive.

In news:

- India rejected the allegations as unreal and did not join the agreement for any kind of financial greed.
- India signed the agreement for protection of climate. Worship of forests, worship of rivers, worship of mountains continue even now in India. These actions are part of India's ethos that are five thousand years old. These are all heritage of India.
- India will continue to remain in the Paris agreement framework, whether the U.S. continues in it or not.

5. Earth is on the brink of a sixth mass extinction putting animals at 'unprecedented' extinction risk in the next 50 years, experts warn

Context:

- Experts predictions: Earth is now on the brink of its sixth mass extinction and human activity is to blame.

In news:

- Researchers around the world examined the current and future threats to biodiversity, and found that

- Nearly a quarter of mammal species are at risk of extinction, along with 13 percent of birds.
- Human activities are driving the sixth mass extinction in the history of life on Earth
- Ever-expanding human population and exploding demand for food, water and living space, will place animals at 'unprecedented' extinction risk in the next 50 years.
- The highest level of threat are more than 360 species of large mammals in Africa, Asia and South America -- the most biodiverse regions of the world

What needs to be done?

- Safeguarding Earth's precious creatures amid such pressures will require the expansion and better management of conservation areas, the authors argued.
- The ultimate drivers of hunting and poaching must be addressed, for example, by providing people with alternative livelihoods or sources of protein.
- Agricultural yields -- the crop produced per available hectare of land -- must be increased through measures that include protecting soil fertility, and using more pest- and drought-resistant seeds.
- Drastic change to human diets and farming methods could provide 'healthy diets' for 10 billion people by 2060, while also preserving liveable habitats for most remaining species.

6. Survey puts Nilgiri tahr population at 1,420

In News:

- The first ever State wide population estimation of Nilgiri tahrs conducted by the Kerala Forests and Wildlife Department, using the bounded count method, has put the total population of the endangered species at 1,420, which include 664 at the Eravikulam National Park in Munnar.
- **Endangered:** The Nilgiri tahr being confined to a narrow belt of higher elevation areas in a restricted geographical region and with specialised habitat requirement is all more threatened.

Facts Round up:

- Nilgiri tahr: The Nilgiri tahr known locally as the Nilgiri ibex or simply ibex, is endemic to the Nilgiri Hills and the southern portion of the Western Ghats in the states of Tamil Nadu and Kerala in southern India. It is the state animal of Tamil Nadu.

7. India's biodiversity riches grow by 499 species

In News:

- New species discovered last year: 313 species of animal and 186 of plants.
- Most of the new species of animals were from the four biological hotspots of the country -- the Himalayas, the northeast, the Western Ghats and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- India is one of the 17 megadiversity countries and it has about 6.42 per cent of the global fauna.

- The geographical distribution of the new plant species reveals that most discoveries were made in the Western Ghats (17%), followed by the Eastern Himalayas (15%), the Western Himalayas (13%), the Eastern Ghats (12%) and the west coast (8%).

8. IMD predicts more rain this monsoon

In News:

- Indian Meteorological Department prediction of rain this year: 'normal' and around 98% of the Long Period Average (LPA).
- Rains in July and August, the most important monsoon months for the kharif crops, would be 96% and 99% respectively.

El Nino is weaker than anticipated:

- The El Nino -- characterised by surface waters of the equatorial Pacific warming up by more than half a degree -- is known to dry up monsoon rain every six out of 10 years.
- A positive Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) is said to buffer the impact of El Nino and contribute to better rains. (The IOD is a swing in surface temperatures that turns the western Indian Ocean alternately warmer and then colder than the eastern part of the ocean.)

New model: dynamical model

- In April, the IMD shifted to using a new monsoon forecast system, called a dynamical model that works by supercomputers simulating the weather and extrapolating it.

Private weather forecaster Skymet:

- Below normal forecast at 95% (with an error margin of +/-5%) of the LPA.
- Rainfall for July stood at 94%, while for August it was 93% of the historical average.

9. 115 endangered vultures sighted on a tree in Dudhwa national park

In News:

- In a rare sighting, 115 vultures were spotted atop a tree in the Dudhwa National Park.
- Vultures are listed as 'critically endangered' in the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s red list.
- Gyps bengalensis, also called the white-rumped vulture, is an indigenous bird of the Terai region and can be seen at several places of the park.
- The Himalayan griffon is another vulture species, which migrates from the Himalayas during this period in search of food.

Basic Information:

- Dudhwa National Park.
- The Dudhwa National Park is a national park in the Terai of Uttar Pradesh, India
- It is located on the Indo-Nepal border in the Lakhimpur Kheri District, and has buffer of reserved forest areas on the northern and southern sides.

- It represents one of the few remaining examples of a highly diverse and productive Terai ecosystem, supporting a large number of endangered species, obligate species of tall wet grasslands and species of restricted distribution.
- Dudhwa National Park is a stronghold of the barasingha. Around half of the world's barasinghas are present in Dudhwa National Park. The barasingha (*Rucervus duvaucelii* syn. *Cervus duvaucelii*), also called swamp deer, is a deer species distributed in the Indian subcontinent. Populations in northern and central India are fragmented, and two isolated populations occur in southwestern Nepal. It is extinct in Pakistan and in Bangladesh.

10. Rhododendrons of eastern Himalayas under threat

In News:

- North-eastern States in India are home to 97% of the Rhododendron species and sub-species in the country.
- New Threat: indiscriminate felling and loss of habitat in the north-eastern States has left many of these beautiful flowering plants vulnerable to extinction.
- Epiphytic species, which grow on other trees or plants, of rhododendrons with limited population are most vulnerable due to loss of the host trees.
- In high altitude areas of Arunachal Pradesh, rhododendrons are routinely cut for firewood by local people, forest fires in the dry seasons in Manipur and Nagaland were threatening the survival of many species.
- The endemic *R. wattii* from Dzukou hills of Manipur and Nagaland is one of the most critically endangered species in India, with only a few adult trees remaining in their natural habitat.

Key fact:

- Rhododendron (rose tree in Greek) —18 species endemic to India.
- The publication, Rhododendron of North East India: A Pictorial Handbook by scientists Ashiho A. Mao, Sudhansu Sekhar Dash and Paramjit Singh (no need to remember the names) points out that studies and records suggest that there are 132 taxa (80 species, 25 sub species and 27 varieties) of Rhododendron found in India, of which 129 are found in the north-eastern India alone.
- Only three taxa — Rhododendron arboretum nilagiricum found in south India and Rhododendron collettianum and Rhododendron rawatti from the western Himalayas are not found in the north-east.
- Arunachal Pradesh is home to the highest number with 119 taxa (74 species, 21 sub species and 24 varieties) of the Rhododendron. The small State of Sikkim is home to 42 taxa (25 species, 11 sub-species and six varieties) while 10 taxa are found in Manipur, four in Mizoram and 11 in Nagaland.
- **Geographical factors:** cold, moist slopes and deep valleys of the eastern Himalayas form a conducive

habitat for the luxuriant growth of Rhododendron species. Nowhere in the world, are such unique geographical and ecological formations found. This is the primary reason for such a diversity of Rhododendron available in the region.

- The two famous Rhododendron sanctuaries in the Sikkim State are Barsey Rhododendron Sanctuary in the West district, covering an area of 104 sq.km and Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary in Yumthang valley of North district with an area of 43 sq.km.
- Rhododendrons are used in local medicines against colds, coughs and chronic bronchitis and diarrhoea.

11. Ray of hope for Thar's endangered wildlife

In News:

- New "rescue wards" in the far-flung rural areas of Jodhpur, Rajasthan: These will provide quick treatment to animals injured in road accidents, dog bites and fights.
- This is an attempt to reduce mortality of endangered wildlife in Thar desert.

Key Fact:

- With an average of nearly 1,000 injuries a year, the wildlife in Thar desert has witnessed 60% mortality because of lack of transport to the main rescue centre at the Jodhpur zoo. This has led to the depletion of wildlife, mainly chinkaras (Indian gazelles).
- Setting up of new rescue wards has given much-needed support to the Bishnoi community of western Rajasthan, which has been in the forefront of wildlife conservation. Bishnois risk their lives to save gazelles from poachers and transport injured animals to Jodhpur.

12. What's up with Bosphorus?

In News:

- There has been a sudden change in the colour—usually blue waters of the to a milky turquoise, of the Bosphorus Strait that divides the continents of Europe and Asia in Turkey's largest city Istanbul.

Reason:

- Scientists attribute the change in color to a surge in a species of plankton across the Black Sea.
- Surge in numbers of the micro-organism *Emiliania huxleyi*, also known as Ehux.

Emiliania huxleyi

- One of the most successful life-forms on the planet, *Emiliania huxleyi* is a single-celled organism visible only under a microscope.
- Its astonishing adaptability enables it to thrive in waters from the equator to the sub-Arctic.
- *Emiliania huxleyi* is a species of coccolithophore (phytoplankton).
- This particular organism is plated with white calcium carbonate and, when present in large numbers, tend to turn the water a milky sheen.

The Bosphorus

- The Bosphorus is a narrow, natural strait and an internationally significant waterway located in northwestern Turkey.
- It forms part of the continental boundary between Europe and Asia, and separates Asian Turkey from European Turkey.
- The world's narrowest strait used for international navigation, the Bosphorus connects the Black Sea with the Sea of Marmara, and, by extension via the Dardanelles, the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas.
- Together with the Dardanelles, the Bosphorus forms the Turkish Straits.

13. A law, this time for Antarctica

Context:

- Preparing for a populous future in which Antarctica — the world's only continent without countries and citizens — may see more tourists, over-exploited fisheries, disputes and crime.
- India is drafting a dedicated Antarctica policy and a law that will likely be tabled in the winter session of Parliament.

In news:

- Ministry of Earth Sciences officials tasked with drafting the law said that India, being among the countries that have acceded to the Antarctica Treaty, is expected to have a clear policy on the consequences of its activities in the region.

India and Antarctica:

- India is expanding its infrastructure development in Antarctica.
- The government is rebuilding its station, Maitri, to make it bigger and last for at least 30 years.
- Dakshin Gangotri, the first Indian base established in 1984, has weakened and become just a supply base.
- Bharati is an Antarctic research station commissioned by India. It is India's third Antarctic research facility and one of two active Indian research stations, alongside Maitri. India has demarcated an area beside Larsemann Hills at 69°S, 76°E for construction. Bharati's research mandate focuses on oceanographic studies and the phenomenon of continental breakup. It also facilitates research to refine the current understanding of the Indian subcontinent's geological history.
- The National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research—a research and development body functioning under the Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India—controls the Indian Antarctic program. The NCAOR and the Department of Ocean Development select the members for India's Antarctic expeditions.

Antarctica Treaty

- **Objective:** The treaty is framed to ensure 'in the interests of all mankind that Antarctica shall continue forever to be used exclusively for peaceful purposes

and shall not become the scene or object of international discord.'

- To this end it prohibits military activity, except in support of science; prohibits nuclear explosions and the disposal of nuclear waste; promotes scientific research and the exchange of data; and holds all territorial claims in abeyance.

Added conventions to the treaty:

- Conservation of Antarctic Seals (1972).
- Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (1980).

14. At 399 ppm, India matches the world in atmospheric carbon dioxide level

In News:

- The first-ever picture of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration over India shows that it is way above the safety mark and in line with what has been observed in other parts of the world.
- Since the 1950s, scientists have been measuring the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere at observatories such as Mauna Loa in Hawaii and since the 1990s, using satellite images.

Beyond 350 molecules

- For every million gas molecules in the atmosphere, anything beyond 350 carbon dioxide molecules, is considered unsafe.
- These concentrations are likely to trap enough heat to trigger extreme climate events the world over and it would become progressively harder, and costlier, to suck out the excessive CO₂.
- In 2015, the global average was 400 ppm, according to reports from Mauna Loa.

Levels in India:

- In India, that year, according to a report published in the latest issue of Current Science, the average CO₂ level was 399 parts per million (ppm).
- Cape Rama, a coastal station in Goa, where CO₂ levels have been monitored for over a decade, the level shot up to 408 ppm.
- The findings, based on readings from the Orbiting Carbon Observatory-2 (OCO-2) — a NASA satellite to monitor the environment — reveal that pockets of Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh saw CO₂ concentrations hover much higher between 405 ppm and 410 ppm.
- Southern India and the western coast saw concentrations between 395 ppm and 400 ppm while the central and northern regions registered between 400 and 405 ppm.
- **Multiple causes:** lack of a CO₂ sink, point sources like forest fires or biomass burning or an urban source, and gaseous transport from neighbouring regions based on prevailing weather conditions.
- **Fact:** Generally CO₂ levels increase slightly during winter due to reduced vegetation.

15. Extreme rainfall and disease outbreaks

In News:

- rocketed, with 2016 being the hottest year since records were systematically maintained from 1880.
- Last year was about 1.1°C warmer than pre-industrial levels. The 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, hopes to keep the global temperature increase, by the turn of the century, well below 2°C.
- Were CO₂ levels to rise at present rates, concentrations could touch 500 ppm within 50 years and warm the earth by an unsustainable 3°C.
- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) says the country is on an average 0.6° Celsius warmer than a century ago. Summer temperatures across India, according to the IMD, were “above normal” and the summer months of March-May last year were 1.36°C higher than the historical average.
- Disease outbreak: The elevated carbon dioxide levels were also linked to increasing instances of extreme rainfall and are likely to cause disease outbreaks. IMD is working on a system to issue 15-day warnings on the likelihood of a malaria or chikungunya outbreak, over different regions.

16. Tiger numbers swell in Karnataka Census shows Bandipur and Nagarhole have the most cats in south India

Context:

- Karnataka is graceful to secure its position as the “Tiger State of India” with key reserves indicating intensification in the tiger population as per the annual census finalized recently.

About the Issue

- The latest population estimate strengthens Bandipur and Nagarhole sites as having the highest tiger statistics in south India and can be ranked among the top three or four national parks in the country along with Jim Corbett, Kanha and Kaziranga.
- The general rise in tiger population is credited to widespread fortification of national parks for decades, paired with high prey density.

Facts for Prelims

The State has five tiger reserves

1. Bandipur
2. Nagarhole
3. Bhadra
4. Anshi Dandeli
5. BRT Tiger Reserve

Identification methods employed: The unique stripes through the camera trap method adopted for intensive monitoring of the source population.

17. Purveyor of plastic Study finds river Ganga is the world's second biggest carrier of plastic waste

Context:

Every year 1.15 and 2.41 million tonnes of plastic waste make their way into the sea via riverine systems, massively impacting marine life.

Issue with respect to India

- Ganga is the world's second largest riverine donor to plastic pollution in the oceans, sacking 1,20,000 tonnes annually.
- Yangtze in China transports 3,30,000 tonnes.
- An average Indian breeds moderately little 'mismanaged plastic' (3.2 kg/year) competed with the rest of the world (17 kg/year per person), “with half a billion people living within the Ganges catchment, the overall burden on the river is very huge.
- Utmost top contaminating rivers round the world are detected in Asia, accounting for 86% of the global annual input of plastic debris.

SOCIETAL ISSUES

1. Rajasthan leads in child marriages

In news:

- Research conducted by Young Lives in coordination with the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) has revealed that Rajasthan has reported the highest incidence of child marriages.

Key data:

- Based on 2011 census, 2.5% of marriages of minor girls were reported in Rajasthan.
- Rajasthan also topped in the percentage (4.69%) of boys marrying below the legal age of 21 years.
- According to the Census study, 12.9% of girls got married in the age of 10-17 years and 43.6% between 18-20 years. However, only 4.9% of boys got married in the 10-17 years age group and 11.2 % in the 18-below 21 age group.

Urban –Rural Divide:

- The decline in rural India, between 2001 and 2011 Census, was marginally higher than in the whole of the country.
- Incidence of child marriage among girls increased substantially in urban India from 1.78% in 2001 to 2.45% in 2011.

2. Forum set up to resist child marriage UNICEF to support initiative of 33 boys and girls to prevent untimely marriages in Odisha

Where it can be used ?

- Role of NGOs and World institutions(like UNICEF) in governance and addressing social issues.

What's in news ?

- Children who have resisted parental and societal pressure to get married before the legal age have joined hands to bring an end to the regressive practice in Odisha.
- As many as 33 boys and girls recently formed the 'Odisha Child Marriage Resistance Forum' and resolved to prevent untimely marriages and spread awareness among parents. Despite modern times and a massive awareness programme, child marriages continue to take place in Odisha.
- As per an analysis by Census Directorate, Odisha, prevalence of child marriage still exists in society.

3. Three new sites recognised as biodiversity hotspots in Goa

In news:

- BirdLife International, a conservation organisation, has recognised three new sites in Goa as hotspots for protection.

- The sites- Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary, Navelim Wetlands and Netravali Wildlife Sanctuary, have been added to their list of "Important Bird and Biodiversity Areas".
- Goa at present has four recognised biodiversity areas: Bhagwan Mahavir Wildlife Sanctuary and Mollem National Park, Carambolim Wetlands, Cotigao Wildlife Sanctuary and Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary.
- Declaring a site as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area does not ensure that the site gets legal protection or becomes inaccessible to people. Instead BirdLife International encourages national and State governments to recognise the areas as sites of vital importance for conservation of wildlife and to empower local community-based conservation initiatives.

BirdLife International:

- BirdLife International (formerly the International Council for Bird Preservation) is a global partnership of conservation organisations that strives to conserve birds, their habitats and global biodiversity, working with people towards sustainability in the use of natural resources. It is the world's largest partnership of conservation organisations, with over 120 partner organisations.
- Headquarters: Cambridge, United Kingdom.
- BirdLife International is the official Red List authority for birds, for the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

1. LIGO makes third gravitational wave detection

In news:

- The Laser Interferometer Gravitational-Wave Observatory (LIGO) detectors in the U.S. have detected yet another merger of two black holes.
- This signal marks the third confirmed detection of gravitational waves coming from a binary black hole merger.
- It is of great interest to the scientific community that the black holes, having masses nearly 31 times and 19 times the sun's. Until the first detection of gravitational waves by LIGO in 2015 (GW150914) it was not known that such massive black holes could exist.

New findings: How black holes might have been formed?

- The detection has revealed not merely a black hole merger, but also the alignment of the spins of the black holes.
- The spins of the individual black holes making up the merger are probably not aligned along the same direction. This supports the theory which says that black holes form independently in a star cluster, then sink to the centre of the cluster and eventually merge.
- The new observations yields support to Einstein's General Theory of Relativity. According to this theory, gravitational waves, unlike light waves, will not disperse as they travel through space. This too has been confirmed by the analysis of the presently detected signal.

Drawbacks:

- One drawback of having just the two detectors at Hanford, Washington and Livingston, Louisiana tuned to detect gravitational waves is that they cannot accurately figure out where in the sky the signal is coming from.

Contribution by Indians:

- The study had a major Indian contribution and the LIGO-India facility, which is making immense progress will join the club in 2024.
- India's ASTROSAT mission did a related sensitive search for short duration x-ray flashes associated with the event and did not detect any.

2. India's polar ship still a long way off

In news:

- India's plans to acquire a ₹ 1,000-crore polar research vehicle (PRV) — a ship that can cut through ice sheets and glaciers — may see fresh delays.
- **Earlier attempts:** Early 2015, Spanish ship-building company was roped in, the contract fell through, primarily due to escalated costs.
- Indian ship companies are not experienced in building PRVs.

- There are very few companies in the world with such expertise.

Why do we need a PRV?

- The ship is expected to be central to India's ambitions in the Arctic and Antarctica.
- India has announced plans to rebuild Maitri, its research station in Antarctica, and make it impervious to its harsh environment for at least 25 years.

Basic Information:

- PRV's are also known as 'ice-breaker,' it can cut through a 1.5-metre thick wall of ice.
- It has a lifespan of 30 years.

3. ISRO abuzz over heavy-lift rocket launch on June 5

In news:

- ISRO is all set to launch its indigenous built GSLV-Mark III on June 5.
- A bid to breach a heavy-lift rocket club (U.S., Russia, Europe, China and Japan) that can put four-tonne satellites into space.

Advantages:

- Indian communication satellites can be lofted into space from within the country.
- It will also improve ISRO's ability to reach heavier satellites to both — the higher geostationary transfer orbit or GTO of 36,000 km; and to low-Earth orbit or LEO of up to 800 km.
- Lowers the cost of putting spacecraft to orbit.

4. India successfully fires heaviest launch vehicle

In news:

- India joined a select group of nations having their own indigenous cryogenic engine technology, when the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched its heaviest launch vehicle, GSLV MkIII-D1, and placed the country's heaviest satellite till date, GSAT-19, into a precise orbit.

GSAT-19:

- Communication satellite.
- Orbit: Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).
- The satellite weighs 3,136 kg.
- This successful launch will enable India to launch 4-tonne class satellites from India.

5. Communication satellite GSAT-17 launched from French Guiana

In news:

- GSAT-17, the country's newly launched communication satellite, will soon join the fleet of 17 working Indian communication satellites in space and augment their overall capacity to some extent.

- Launching station: space port of Kourou in French Guiana.
- GSAT-17 was sent up as the second passenger on the European booster, Ariane-5 ECA VA-238.
- **Operational areas:** for broadcasting, telecommunication and VSAT services, carries over 40 transponders. It also has equipment to aid meteorology forecasts and search and rescue operations across the sub-continent.

6. India gets a sharper eye in the sky

In news:

- Cartosat-2E, is the third Indian remote sensing (IRS) or earth observation satellite that can send 60-cm resolution pictures from an orbit 500 km above the earth.
- It will provide useful space-based data for town planners, creators of urban infrastructure, for agriculture and project monitoring, and for decision makers in Smart City and AMRUTH projects.
- Cartosat-2E is the sixth and last of the second generation cartography themed series, which started in 2007 with Cartosat-2 and includes Cartosat-2A, 2B, 2C and 2D.

7. The neutrino opportunity

Context:

- India's wait to join the elite club of countries undertaking neutrino research suffered a procedural delay.
- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) suspended the environmental clearance (EC) granted to the India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO).
- It was ordered it to file a fresh application for clearance.

INO project

- The proposed INO project primarily aims to study atmospheric neutrinos in a 1,300-m deep cavern in the Bodi West Hills in Theni district, Tamil Nadu.
- If completed, the INO would house the largest magnet in the world.
- It will be four times more massive than the European Organization for Nuclear Research, CERN's Compact Muon Solenoid (CMS) detector's magnet.

Neutrinos

- Neutrinos are tiny particles
- They are almost massless.
- They travel at near light speeds.
- They are born from violent astrophysical events such as exploding stars and gamma ray bursts.
- Therefore, they are abundant in the universe, and can move as easily through matter as we move through air.
- They are notoriously difficult to track down.
- If you hold your hand towards the sunlight for one second, about a billion neutrinos from the sun will pass through it.

- This is because they are the by-products of nuclear fusion in the sun.
- Aim of the INO project: It aims to use to understand some of the unsolved mysteries of the universe.

Setback of delayed project

- The suspension of INO's environmental clearance is a setback.
- The scientific community hopes these procedural lapses will be addressed in an earnest and time-bound manner.
- The NGT's March 2017 order further delays the start of the project
- Now the earliest conceivable completion date is projected as 2022.
- The INO will fall further behind other facilities including China's Jiangmen Underground Neutrino Observatory (JUNO), expected to open in 2019.

Criticism of INO Project

- The explosives used in construction are a threat to the highly sensitive ecology of the Western Ghats.
- The relevant radiation safety studies for carrying out the long baseline neutrino experiment in the second phase of INO have not been done.
- There are further allegations that neutrinos are radioactive particles.
- The INO will double up the storage of nuclear waste.

The better side of the story

- The proposed excavation is planned to be carried out by a controlled blast, limiting the impact of vibrations with the help of computer simulations.
- Additionally, building the INO involves constructing an underground lab accessed by a 2 km-long horizontal access tunnel, resembling a road tunnel.
- Such tunnels have been built extensively in India and the relevant studies show that the environmental impact (mainly dust and noise in the initial phase) have been managed.
- For those who argue that Rs. 1,500 crore is a waste of money, it might be instructive to look back at the enormous achievements 20th century has brought in on the pillars of relativity and quantum mechanics.

Neutrino Factory

- In the second phase, the INO project initially had planned to be set up as a far detector for the Neutrino Factory.
- It is a proposed particle accelerator.
- The radiation from the neutrino beam alone on an average would be one in 100 millionth of the natural radiation, which is negligible.

Long history of research

- In the 1960s and 1970s, a group of scientists led by the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research detected some unusual experimental observations.

- They were the Kolar events in the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) in Karnataka.
- Half a century later these events remain as science fiction, yet to be explained and unraveled.
- From the 1980s, neutrino enthusiasts discussed the possibility of a neutrino observatory located in India.
- In 2002, a document was presented to the Department of Atomic Energy which laid out an ambitious plan to establish the INO.
- On January 5, 2015, the Union cabinet gave its approval to establish the INO at an estimated cost of Rs. 1,500 crore, the most expensive basic science project in India.

8. **Nano Particles to treat eye infection**

Context:

- Scientists at the Hyderabad-based CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CSIR-CCMB) have developed a novel way to treat fungal keratitis.

What is Keratitis?

- Keratitis is the inflammation of the eye.
- It starts with redness and itching and might eventually lead to blindness.

Cause of infection.

- Keratitis can be caused by both bacteria and fungi.
- Fungi attach themselves to the cornea and release enzymes that break down the corneal proteins for their nutritional requirements.
- In the process the cornea also gets inflamed.

What are the effects of this disease?

- Corneal damage causes wound and scar formation leading to severe visual impairment.
- It is estimated that about 30% of keratitis cases in India lead to blindness.
- Treating keratitis infection is a challenge because it is difficult to maintain a therapeutic dose at the corneal surface for long periods as blinking and tear formation washes off the drug.

How does nanoparticle technique work?

- Certain antibodies get attached to the outer surface of the nanoparticles.
- It anchors the nanoparticles to the corneal surface.
- The infected cornea expresses a set of receptors (TLR4) when infection sets in.
- The team has used antibodies to these receptors to anchor the nanoparticles to the cornea.
- In case of severe infection, more receptors are expressed on the cornea and more nanoparticles get bound to the receptors.
- Since they are bound, the residence time in the eye is long.
- Neither blinking nor tear formation washes off the nanoparticles.

9. **Harnessing the solar spectrum**

In news:

- New study and new approach: Using different parts of sunlight's spectrum to produce crops, generate electricity, collect heat and purify water could provide food, energy and water resources for the world's growing population.
- The concept works by separating and harvesting the three specific segments of the solar spectrum that are best suited to facilitate the production of food, energy and clean water.
- In current practices, much of this spectrum is wasted because all of the sunlight falling on a given spot is used for one purpose: agriculture, energy production or water purification. A typical photovoltaic panel, when installed on farmland, casts a shadow and dramatically reduces plant growth and crop yield from the shadowed area.
- The new approach would instead use the same land mass for all three purposes simultaneously through innovative technologies that split the spectrum into three segments and efficiently harvest sunlight.
- The proposed photovoltaic designs transmit photons responsible for plant growth while reflecting remaining photons in the solar spectrum to specially designed solar cells that can help generate electricity and collect heat for energy recovery and water purification.

10. **What ails the Navigation Indian Constellation?**

In News:

- The clocks on the first satellite, IRNSS-1A had failed in June 2016, affecting the accuracy of the "GPS".
- ISRO is trying to rectify this problem.

What is NavIC?

- Navigation Indian Constellation (NavIC) is an independent Indian satellite-based positioning system for critical national applications.
- NavIC consists of a constellation of seven satellites, three of which are in a geostationary orbit and four in a geosynchronous.
- Its purpose is to provide 'reliable position, navigation and timing services over India and neighbourhood'.
- **According to ISRO, the applications of IRNSS are:** terrestrial, aerial and marine navigation, vehicle tracking and fleet management, terrestrial navigation for hikers and travellers, disaster management, integration with mobile phones, mapping and geodetic data capture and visual and voice navigation for drivers

What's the problem?

- NavIC relies on rubidium clocks as navigation requires the most accurate clocks.
- This January, the ISRO confirmed that the clocks on the first satellite, IRNSS-1A had failed in June 2016.
- Though six of the satellites are working fine, the one

faulty one means the “GPS” isn’t working as accurately as it ought to be.

Future Prospects:

- Rubidium clocks were the previous standard in accurate clocks and most organisations, that need precise time estimates, need cesium clocks.
- Future clocks on such satellites, each with a lifespan of 10 years, will host such clocks.

11. X-ray space telescope launched

In news:

- China launched its first X-ray space telescope to study black holes, pulsars and gamma-ray bursts.
- The Hard X-ray Modulation Telescope (HXMT) has been named Insight.

12. 'Photosynthesis can save hearts'

In news:

- Stanford University scientists have found that using blue-green algae and light to trigger photosynthesis inside the heart could help treat cardiac disease, the top cause of death globally.
- Researchers injected a type of bacteria into the hearts of anaesthetised rats with cardiac disease. Using light to trigger photosynthesis, they were able to increase the flow of oxygen and improve heart function.
- In nature, humans exhale carbon dioxide and plants convert it back to oxygen. During a heart attack, the muscle is still trying to pump. There's carbon dioxide but no oxygen.
- **Cardiac ischemia:** Myocardial ischemia occurs when blood flow to your heart is reduced, preventing it from receiving enough oxygen. The reduced blood flow is usually the result of a partial or complete blockage of your heart's arteries.
- The researchers plan to investigate how to apply this concept to humans and how to deliver a light source to the human heart. They are also examining the potential of using artificial chloroplasts to eliminate the need for bacteria.

13. NASA finds 10 Earth-sized exoplanets

Context:

- NASA revealed new rocky, Earth-sized planets.
- These could potentially have liquid water and support life.

The Kepler mission

- The Kepler mission team released a survey of 219 potential exoplanets.
- These planets are outside of our solar system.
- They had been detected by the space observatory launched in 2009 to scan the Milky Way galaxy.

Location of these exoplanets:

- Ten of the new discoveries were orbiting their suns.
- Their orbit is at a distance similar to the Earth's orbit

around the sun.

- This is the habitable zone that could potentially have liquid water and sustain life.

Habitable zones

- Kepler has already discovered 4,034 potential exoplanets.
- 2,335 of these have been confirmed by other telescopes as actual planets.
- The 10 new Earth-size planets bring the total to 50 that exist in habitable zones around the galaxy.
- The telescope detects the presence of planets by registering minuscule drops in a star's brightness.

Basic Information:

Kepler Mission

- Kepler is a space observatory launched by NASA to discover Earth-size planets orbiting other stars.
- Named after astronomer Johannes Kepler.
- It was launched into an Earth-trailing heliocentric orbit.
- Kepler is part of NASA's Discovery Program of relatively low-cost, focused primary science missions.
- The scientific objective of Kepler is to explore the structure and diversity of planetary systems.

This spacecraft observes:

- To determine how many Earth-size and larger planets there are in or near the habitable zone (often called “Goldilocks planets”).
- To determine the range of size and shape of the orbits of these planets.
- To estimate how many planets there are in multiple-star systems.
- To determine the range of orbit size, brightness, size, mass and density of short-period giant planets.
- To identify additional members of each discovered planetary system using other techniques.
- Determine the properties of those stars that harbor planetary systems.

14. PSLV will lock heavy weight Cartosat-2 into orbit today

In news:

- The Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) is all set for the launch of the Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle carrying the Cartosat-2 series satellite, along with 30 co-passenger satellites.
- It will be the 17th flight of the four-stage PSLV in the XL (extended) version with strap-on motors.
- The rocket weighing 320 tons at lift-off uses solid propellant for the first and third stage and the strap-ons, while the second and fourth stage use liquid propellant.

- **Key feature:** the second highest number of satellites to be launched by ISRO using a single rocket. In February this year, the PSLV-C37 mission launched 104 satellites into orbit, in a milestone achievement.
- Satellites from 14 countries- Austria, Belgium, Chile, the Czech republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, United Kingdom and the U.S.

15. ISRO plans complex manoeuvres

In news:

What is this complex manoeuvring technique?

- Technique involves series of shutting down and reignition of rocket engine in space.
- The engines in the fourth stage will be reignited three times, in a bid to master the technique that will enable ISRO to inject satellites into different orbits in a single launch.
- Once the last satellite has been separated from the rocket at a height of 520 km, the fourth stage of the rocket (PS4) comprising two liquid propellant engines will be shut down and reignited three times.
- **Advantages:** The multiple reignition of the on board engines will validate the technique and provide ISRO with the mission flexibility to inject satellites into three different orbits in a single flight to reduce the launch cost and save time.
- **Different orbits:**
- PSLV, is capable of launching satellites into different types of orbits like Sun Synchronous Polar Orbit (SSPO), Low Earth Orbit (LEO) and Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit (GTO).

16. ISRO puts 31 satellites in space

In news:

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched 31 satellites — 29 of them belonging to foreign countries — on board the PSLV-C38 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre.

Satellites carried:

- Cartosat-2 series satellite, the main payload, weighing 712 kg.
- NIUSAT, an Indian university/academic institute satellite from Noorul Islam University, Kanyakumari
- The other 29 nano satellites belonged to 14 nations — Austria, Belgium, Chile, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, the U.K., and the U.S.

Cartosat-2 series satellite:

- The Cartosat-2 is a remote sensing satellite, and is the sixth in the series.
- It will be used for cartographic applications, coastal land use and regulation, road network monitoring, water distribution, creation of land use maps, Land Information Systems (LIS) and Geographical Information System (GIS) applications.

Milestone achievement:

- With the launch of the PSLV-C38, ISRO now had the confidence to put a number of satellites into different orbits- Geo Synchronous, Sun Synchronous orbit or low inclination orbit, carrying multiple satellites, in a single mission.

17. Air pollutants on solar panel cut power generation by 17%

In news:

- **Study:** published in the journal Environmental science and Technology letters, based on the samples collected from multiple solar panels located at IIT, Gandhinagar.

Highlights:

- Particulate matter- dust, black carbon and organic carbon from bio-mass burning and fossil fuel-deposited on the solar panel and present in the ambient air is responsible for about 17% reduction in solar power generation.
- **Key fact:** The centre has set an ambitious renewable energy target of 175GW by 2022.
- Dust and non dust particulate matter deposited on the solar panels and present in the air prevent shortwave solar radiation from reaching the panels, thereby reducing energy production.
- Man made particles: organic carbon, black carbon and ions produced from sources linked to human activity has higher influence on reducing solar energy production compared to the natural dusts.
- Man-made particles are also small and sticky, making them much more difficult to clean off.
- Efficient emission control measure is required to maximize solar energy generation.

18. Painless patch could replace flu jab: Study

In news:

- Vaccines delivered via a disposable patch; this could possibly eliminate the requirement for needle and syringe flu injections in the near future.
- The patches are equipped with micro needles-long enough to penetrate the skin —embedded in each patch dissolves within minutes when exposed to moisture from the body.
- The new technology can be self-administered and stored without refrigeration (remains stable even at 40 degree Celsius), making it significantly cheaper than the traditional ones.
- Adhesive holds the patch close to the skin while vaccine is released and can be peeled away after 20 minutes and discarded.

19. ISRO may use semi-cryogenic engine for heavy lift rockets It hopes to complete engine development by 2019

Context:

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has grown to the challenging of subsystems in the enlargement of a semi-cryogenic engine for rockets with heftier payload capability.

About the system

- The testing facilities at the ISRO Propulsion Complex are being amplified for the engine being advanced by the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre here under a project designated SCE 200.
- The semi-cryogenic engine uses a blend of liquid oxygen (LOX) and refined kerosene (Isrosene) as propellants.
- Replacement of the liquid core (L110) engine (GSLV Mark 3) with the SCE-200 will boost the payload capacity of the rocket from four to six tonnes.
- **Objective:** To power the future heavy lift launch vehicles and reusable launch vehicles as well as human spaceflight missions.

HEALTH ISSUES

1. India has 31% of world's poor kids: report

In news:

- Highlights of survey-Global Multidimensional Poverty Index [MPI], 2017' by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI).
- OPHI is an economic research centre at the Oxford University, led by Professor Sabina Alkire, and the study is based on a survey conducted among 103 countries.
- About 31% of the world's "multidimensionally poor" children live in India.

Multidimensionally poor child:

- A "multidimensionally poor" child is one who lacks at least one-third of ten indicators, grouped into three dimensions of poverty: health, education and standard of living.
- The health dimension comprises indicators such as nutrition, child mortality, and education.
- Under standard of living are indicators such as access to cooking fuel, improved sanitation, safe drinking water, electricity, flooring, and asset ownership.
- In terms of the number of such multidimensionally poor children as a proportion of the total population, India stood 37th among 103 countries.
- Out of India's 217 million (21.7 crore) children, 49.9% were multidimensionally poor.
- More than 528 million (52.8 crore) Indians are poor, which is more people than all the poor people living in Sub-Saharan Africa combined.
- The average percentage of deprivation in terms of the 10 MPI categories was highest in Sub-Saharan Africa. Sub-Saharan Africa was followed by the region described as the Arab States (53%). South Asia occupied the third spot, with children deprived in 49% of the MPI indicators.

What needs to be done?

- The global Sustainable Development Goal needs to be given due attention.
- Serious efforts to be made to achieve Goal 1 of SDG: the eradication of poverty in all its forms and dimensions.

2. Only PSUs may be let to make Oxytocin

In news:

- The Drug Controller will soon restrict manufacturing of controversial hormone drug Oxytocin to public sector undertakings (PSUs).
- Oxytocin at present is banned in the retail markets after it was found that indiscriminate use of Oxytocin in milch animals and by farmers was causing irreversible hormone damage.

- Controversial usage: The drug is used by dairy owners and farmers to boost milk production and make vegetables look bigger and fresher.
- Oxytocin is a hormone known to trigger a wide variety of physical and psychological effects and is commonly used to facilitate childbirth.

3. Child-friendly HIV drug gets govt. nod

In news:

- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) has registered the child-friendly HIV drug in oral pellet form (lopinavir/ritonavir (LPV/r)).
- The pellets, which come in capsules and are dosed by weight, can be sprinkled (but not stirred or crushed) over a small amount of soft food. For infants — who must be able to swallow them — the pellets can be added to a spoonful of breast milk or put on the infant's tongue.

Paediatric HIV a 'neglected disease':

- Lack of child-friendly HIV formulations.
- Large treatment gap between adults and children.
- Oral pellet form is a boon to HIV community since National AIDS Control Programme (NACO), had been struggling to source quality assured paediatric formulations of the drug.
- India ran out of Lopinavir syrup, a child-friendly HIV drug, in March after Cipla — the sole manufacturer of the drug — stopped production consequent to non-payment by the Health Ministry. The drug's adult version has to be swallowed whole and thus cannot be administered to infants and young children.

4. WHO revises antibiotics protocol

Context:

- Increasing trends of antibiotic resistance diseases.

In news:

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has divided the drugs into three categories — access, watch and reserve — specifying which are to be used for common ailments and which are to be kept for complicated diseases.

Categories and its usage:

- **Access:** Commonly used antibiotics. Treatment for a wide range of common infections. This includes amoxicillin, a widely-used antibiotic to treat infections such as pneumonia.
- **Watch:** Second line of antibiotics. Ciprofloxacin, used to treat cystitis (a type of urinary tract infection) and upper respiratory tract infections (like bacterial sinusitis and bacterial bronchitis).
- **Reserve:** potent drugs, the last line of defense. Colistin and some cephalosporins that should be considered

last-resort options, and used only in the most severe circumstances when all other alternatives have failed, such as for life-threatening infections due to multidrug-resistant bacteria.

Increasing trends of antibiotic resistance diseases:

- **Reason:** antibiotic resistance stems from how we are using — and misusing — medicines
- The new WHO list should help health system planners and prescribers ensure that people who need antibiotics have access to them, and ensure they get the right one, so that the problem of resistance doesn't get worse.

5. India has second highest number of obese children in world: Study

In news:

- "A disturbing global public health crisis," according to a study published in The New England Journal of Medicine:
- India has the second highest (14.4 million kids) number of obese children in the world after China.
- Diseases associated with obese: cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, and other life-threatening conditions.

Trend around the world:

- Over two billion children and adults suffer from health problems related to being obese, and an increasing number die from these conditions.
- In 2015, excess weight affected 2.2 billion children and adults worldwide, or 30% of all people.
- Among the 20 most populous countries, the highest level of obesity among kids and young adults was in the US at nearly 13%; Egypt topped the list for adult obesity at about 35%. Lowest rates were in Bangladesh and Vietnam, respectively, at 1%. China with 15.3 million and India with 14.4 million had the highest numbers of obese children; the US with 79.4 million and China with 57.3 million had the highest numbers of obese adults in 2015.

6. U.S. issues Zika advisory in India

Context:

- Last month, World Health Organisation (WHO) has categorized India as a site of active transmission of the Zika virus.
- WHO placed India under a 'Category-2' country for Zika risk. A Category-2, the second highest on a four-point scale and that also includes 2015 Zika-hotspot Brazil, indicates that the virus is being actively transmitted within the country. Until April, India was a Category-4 country.

In news:

- The United States sent out an advisory, informing its citizens in India about the number of confirmed Zika infections in India.

Zika virus:

- Zika virus is a mosquito-borne flavivirus that was first identified in Uganda in 1947 in monkeys through a network that monitored yellow fever.
- It was later identified in humans in 1952 in Uganda and the United Republic of Tanzania.
- **Signs and Symptoms:** The incubation period (the time from exposure to symptoms) of Zika virus disease is not clear, but is likely to be a few days. The symptoms are similar to other arbovirus infections such as dengue, and include fever, skin rashes, conjunctivitis, muscle and joint pain, malaise, and headache. These symptoms are usually mild and last for 2-7 days.
- **Complications of Zika virus disease:** Based on a systematic review of the literature up to 30 May 2016, WHO has concluded that Zika virus infection during pregnancy is a cause of congenital brain abnormalities, including microcephaly; and that Zika virus is a trigger of Guillain-Barré syndrome. Intense efforts are continuing to investigate the link between Zika virus and a range of neurological disorders, within a rigorous research framework.
- **Transmission:** Zika virus is primarily transmitted to people through the bite of an infected mosquito from the Aedes genus, mainly Aedes aegypti in tropical regions. Aedes mosquitoes usually bite during the day, peaking during early morning and late afternoon/evening. This is the same mosquito that transmits dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever. Sexual transmission of Zika virus is also possible. Other modes of transmission such as blood transfusion are being investigated.

7. Bad for health

Context:

- A notice issued by a health ministry expert committee in the first week of June signals the government's intention to usher major change in India's pharmaceutical sector.
- It invites comments from stakeholders about replacing widely-used animal parts-based gelatin capsules with those derived from cellulose.
- In 2015, the scientific committee which advises the Drug Controller General of India (DGCI) gave an in-principle approval to the shift to cellulose-based capsules.
- **Current situation:** Currently, 98 per cent of the Indian pharmaceutical industry uses animal parts-based capsules.

What government wants?

- Government has been pitching for "vegetarian capsules" for the past two years.
- But there is little medical or commercial reasoning behind this proposal.

What this could lead to?

- A switch over to cellulose-based capsules could jeopardise the government's recent initiatives to

make medicines accessible to all.

Difference in opinions:

- In an e-mail last year to the joint secretary, health ministry, the DGCI pitched for “vegetable capsules for vegetarian society”.
- The DGCI’s vegetarian fetish found support from the Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Gandhi.
- She argued, “In a country where there are millions of people, this hurts religious sentiments and many people avoid medicines that are in a capsule form”.
- The Drug Technical Advisory Board, health ministry’s premier advisory agency, had dismissed Gandhi’s representation on the grounds that: “Unlike food, drugs are not taken as choice but are prescribed by doctors to save lives and marking them as vegetarian or non-vegetarian is not desirable”.
- The health ministry has overruled this reasoning.

Concerns/opinions of industry:

- They have argued that the gelatin capsules have been in use all over the world for more than 180 years.
- They also questioned viability of cellulose-based capsules.
- Various industry associations cited the huge economic cost of the switch, which may also impact accessibility of medicines.
- The cost of raw material required to make cellulose capsules is approximately four times that of gelatin and the manufacturing cost of cellulose-based capsules approximately three times the cost of gelatin capsules.

8. World drug report stresses drug-terror link

Context:

- A World Drug Report is released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.
- It reiterates the important role drugs play in funding organised crime and stresses the link between drugs and terror.

In news:

- Terrorists and non-state armed groups are profiting from the drug trade.
- By some estimates, up to 85% of opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan is in territory under influence of the Taliban.
- However, evidence on the organised crime-terrorism nexus remains patchy at best.

ISIS and Drugs

- The Report refers to media reports to talk about claims that the Islamic State and other armed groups in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic produce and consume captagon tablet.
- Captagon tablet is typically amphetamine mixed with caffeine.

- The group operates in an area likely to be a manufacturing hub.

Drugs in West Africa

- Boko Haram has helped drug traffickers smuggle heroin and cocaine across West Africa, says the report.
- Some evidence suggests that Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb has been involved in cannabis and cocaine trafficking, or protecting traffickers.
- The report estimated that in 2015 about a quarter of a billion people used drugs.

Basic Information:

World drug report:

- The World Drug Report is a United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime annual publication.
- It analyzes market trends, compiling detailed statistics on drug markets.
- Using data, it helps draw conclusions about drugs as an issue needing intervention by government agencies around the world.
- To celebrate 20 years since its inception, the World Drug Report 2017 presented a new five-booklet format.

ART AND CULTURE

1. Lakhs witness Puri rath yatra Chariots were towed from Shree Jagannath Temple to the Mausima Temple

In news:

- Three decorated chariots of Lord Balabhadra, Lord Jagannath and Devi Subhadra were tugged along the Grand Road in front of the 12th century temple as lakhs of devotees converged for the annual rath yatra here on Sunday.

Ahmedabad event:

- The 140th rath yatra of Lord Jagannath began in Ahmedabad amid tight security as lakhs of devotees flocked the 15-km journey route to catch a glimpse of the deity.

BILATERAL RELATIONS

INDIA-U.S

1. Raja Mandala: India, US, and an East-of-Suez moment

Context:

- The Article is about Indo-US relations.
- And upcoming (first) face to face meet of Narendra Modi and Donald Trump.

Issues that can be discussed by the two leaders

- America's view of supporting a larger Indian role in securing the Subcontinent and the Indian Ocean.
- The shared interest of India and US in an Eurasian balance of power.

India's Concerns

- America looked at partnering India to sustain US primacy in the Indo-Pacific.
- Delhi acknowledged American primacy, but was afraid of becoming a "junior" partner.
- India is concerned that US strategic indulgence towards Pakistan and China may make US an unreliable partner (of India).
- As a result, the hype about India-US security cooperation never really lived up to its potential.

Trump's Views on Security

- Trump thinks the US is doing too much (while Modi thinks India could do a lot more) on the security front.
- Trump does not think that America is forever obliged to defend its friendly nations at any cost (like Japan and Germany).
- He wants the allies to spend more on building their own national defence capabilities or financially compensate America for its heavy lifting.

India's History of Providing security to the world

- Until now, India has been hesitant to take on a regional security role beyond the Subcontinent.
- After independence, there was the opportunity of India working with Britain for a regional order under the rubric of the Commonwealth (under 'east of the Suez').
- But Nehru was unwilling to back a Commonwealth military framework.
- Two decades later, when Britain ended its security commitments "east of the Suez", India didn't have the political will or material resources to consider regional security leadership.
- The US, which replaced Britain as the dominant power in the Indian Ocean in the 1970s, may now be headed to its own "east of Suez" moment.

2. Red carpet welcome awaits Modi

Context:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first meeting with President Donald Trump on 26th June.

In news:

- Mr. Modi will be the first foreign dignitary who will be hosted by Mr. Trump for a White House dinner. (Mr. Trump hosted Chinese President Xi Jinping and Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe for state dinners at his private golf resort Mar-a-Lago in Florida.)

Prime focus areas:

- **Defence cooperation-** The Obama administration had designated India as a 'major defence partner', an undefined term.
- Cooperation in energy- particularly natural gas.
- Anti-terrorism cooperation.
- Willingness to increase information sharing, data sharing, access to data bases, regarding terrorist activities.
- **Nod to drone request** Indian request for 22 unarmed Guardian drones would be cleared during the visit.
- **U.S Concerns:** seek for stronger IPR protection in India and lowering trade barriers.

3. Indo-U.S. statement focusses on fight against terrorism

Context:

- Visit of Indian Prime Minister to U.S.

In news:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump jointly declared that bilateral ties between India and the U.S. would continue to grow, seeking to dispel notions that the latter's election to the White House on a nationalist agenda might have a negative impact on the relationship.
- Mr. Modi invited the President's daughter Ivanka to lead the U.S. delegation to the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) which India will host later this year.

Important announcement made:

- Fight against terrorism as a cornerstone of mutual cooperation between the countries.
- Continuing the course on strategic convergence in Asia Pacific, increasing defence trade partnership and added energy as a new thrust area of cooperation.
- Sale of Guardian drones, Apache attack helicopters, and C-17 aircraft, defence orders by India for American companies will be nearly \$19 billion.

About Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES):

- The summit will promote economic growth, inclusion and opportunities among entrepreneurs from across the world, with a special focus on emerging nations from Africa and Asia. The GES is a personal initiative of US President Barack Obama to bring entrepreneurs from across the globe on one platform.

4. Faster entry for Indians**In News:**

- India recently signed International Expedited Traveler Initiative Programme with the United States. Also called as Global Entry Programme, this scheme will allow expedited entry into the US to low-risk travellers from India, with India making a formal entry into an American initiative.
- The move would facilitate closer business and educational ties between the citizens of India and the U.S.

What is Global Entry Programme?

- Global Entry is a US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) program that allows speedy clearance for low-risk travellers upon their arrival in US.
- The travellers are pre-approved for the programme after a rigorous background check. In-person interviews are also taken to check the 'low-risk' status of the applicants before the enrollment. Apart from this, the travellers may further be questioned when they enter the United States in case the need arises.

Which countries are members of this programme?

- Apart from India, citizens of Colombia, United Kingdom, Germany, Panama, Singapore are eligible to become members of this programme. South Korea and Mexican nationals are also included under Global Entry Programme. Canadian residents can apply for enrollment under this through their membership in NEXUS programme.

What is the benefit of this programme?

- The biggest advantage of getting enrolled in this programme is that you will no longer have to stand in the long queues for immigration.
- On landing at the selected airports in the United States, the approved applicants can make their way ahead through automatic kiosks instead of standing in the immigration lines.
- Apart from no processing lines, there is also an advantage of reduced wait time and no paperwork.

INDIA-MEXICO**1. Mexico, India to hold disarmament meet****In news:**

- India and Mexico have agreed to hold an important conference on regional and global disarmament.
- The meeting would be headed by the Joint Secretary of the disarmament division of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) from the Indian side. It was taken up during the seventh meeting of the Mexico-India Joint Commission (JCM) and the fourth round of Foreign Office Consultations held on June 23 in Mexico City.

Background information:

- The special disarmament meeting is likely to build on the time-tested India-Mexico collaboration on disarmament starting from the 1980s when both countries led the Group of Six, an anti-proliferation group of six countries that tried to contain cold war nuclear rivalry between the U.S. and the USSR.

INDIA-SCO**1. India to join SCO in Astana****Context:**

- Full membership the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) granted to India.

In news:

- SCO has broadly two legs of cooperation.
- Cooperation in the field of trade, banking, connectivity, energy
- Cooperation in the fight against terrorism under Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS). Under the framework of the SCO, an annual counter-terror exercise is hosted by a member country.
- India is willing to join hands with Pakistan and China to combat terrorism.
- Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be visiting to Astana, Kazakhstan, where India will be admitted as a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

India's commitment after joining SCO:

- India should coordinate with member countries both on the trade front in the SCO headquarters in Beijing and at the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS) based in Tashkent.
- Cooperation was part of the obligation of membership.

Basic Information:**Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS)**

- The Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure (RATS), headquartered in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, is a permanent organ of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) which serves to promote

cooperation of member states against the three evils of terrorism, separatism and extremism. The Head of RATS is elected to a three-year term. Each member state also sends a permanent representative to RATS.

2. India, Pakistan become full members of SCO

In News:

- India became a full member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), ending an administrative process that began two years ago.
- India-SCO cooperation will give India a new direction and strength to the fight against terrorism.
- Background information: India and Pakistan were admitted as observers in 2005 and began the administrative process of joining the organization, which began in Shanghai, in 2015.

Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)

- SCO is a Eurasian economic, political and military organisation.
- Its aim is jointly preserving and safeguarding regional peace, security and stability and also establishing a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.
- Headquarters: Beijing, China.
- Established: 2001 in Shanghai by the leaders 6 countries viz. China, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- It is an outcome of The Shanghai Five grouping established in 1996 by Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.
- SCO's first enlargement was in 2001 with addition of Uzbekistan and second enlargement was in July 2015 with addition of 2 new members India and Pakistan.
- Presently, it has four observers Afghanistan, Belarus, Iran and Mongolia.

INDIA-CHINA

1. Modi to meet Xi to repair bilateral ties

In News:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi to meet Chinese President Xi Jinping in Astana, Kazakhstan on the sidelines of a major security summit.
- Meeting is crucial for India:
- India is keen on membership of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the plenary session of which is being held in Geneva on June 19.
- June 30 deadline for the U.N. Security Council committee to designate Masood Azhar a terrorist. China has been blocking both.

2. India, China hold talks for strengthening strategic partnership

In News:

- Minister of state for external affairs VK Singh met foreign minister Wang Yi on the sidelines of the BRICS foreign ministers' meeting.
- India said it looks forward to strengthen its strategic partnership and mutual dialogue with China as the two sides held talks here amid differences over a host of issues including the \$50 billion CPEC and India's NSG membership bid.
- BRICS foreign ministers' meeting being held to finalise the agenda for this year's BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) summit to be held in September in China's Xiamen city.
- During the foreign ministers' meet, China is expected to outline the agenda for this year's BRICS summit which included efforts to seek common ground against terrorism.

3. China protests against 'incursion'

Context:

- China confirmed that it had suspended the entry of Indian pilgrims undertaking the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra and lodged a formal protest with New Delhi, following an alleged cross-border incursion by Indian troops.

In news:

- Chinese Defence Ministry said in a statement that the occurrence at the frontier was "seriously endangering the peace and stability of the border areas."

Incident took place:

- Doka La region along the Sikkim-Bhutan-Tibet tri-junction.
- Face-offs between Indian and Chinese troops in this area are rare in recent years.

Chinese Foreign Ministry view:

- The area where the border incident took place is undisputed, as it has been delineated and endorsed in the past.
- The Sino-Indian border of Sikkim has been delineated by the 1890 Sino-British Treaty on Tibetan Customs. After the independence of India, the Indian government has confirmed this in writing several times, acknowledging that there is no objection to the border between the two sides.
- **Indian Defence Ministry view:** Indian troops recently crossed the border in an attempt to block a road construction in Donglang (Doklam) area by the Chinese.

INDIA- MAURITIUS

1. MoU moots ties with Mauritius Parliament

In news:

- India and Mauritius signed a pact to institutionalize cooperation between the parliaments of the two countries.
- **Key point:** the relations between the two countries are based on centuries of cultural, linguistic, social and spiritual links that transcend extraneous considerations.

INDIA- BHUTAN -CHINA

1. PLA constructing road in disputed territory: Bhutan

Context:

- India-China-Bhutan tri-junction road.

In news:

- **Chinese:** road is being constructed in the indisputable part of its own territory.
- **Bhutanese:** Road construction by the Chinese army is a "a progression" towards camp of the Royal Bhutan Army at Zom Perli and it is being constructed in the disputed area.
- China and Bhutan have held 24 rounds of talks, with the latest one held in August 2016, to discuss the disputed part of the border. As per the talks held the two sides had committed to maintain peace along the border and refrain from unilateral action to change the status quo.
- Chinese Ministry of Foreign affairs: the current impasse with India, including the area of Donglang (Dok La) is a part of Chinese territory since ancient times and it does not belong neither to India nor to Bhutan. The boundary between China and Bhutan has not been delimited and no third party should interfere in this matter.

2. Army, PLA in a tug of war over Doklam Plateau

In News:Doklam Plateau:

- The Doklam Plateau, north of the tri-junction between Sikkim, Bhutan and Tibet by Indian claim, is not just a disputed area, but has huge strategic significance for both India and China.
- Wedged between Bhutan, India and China are few areas of dispute — together accounting for just over 750 square kilometres.
- Among the disputed areas is Doklam (also called Donglang in China), which is just about 90 square kilometres where the present dispute is taking pace.

Strategic significance:

- Chinese to reach the China-Bhutan border posts, Doklam provides an easy way to construct their road, and they have been trying to do so and India has consistently objected to it.
- Not very far from Doklam is the strategically important Chumbi Valley in the Tibetan region, to which Chinese are now planning to expand their rail connectivity.
- **Bigger buffer:** according to India perspective, Doklam acts as a bigger buffer to its sensitive Chicken's Neck, or the Siliguri Corridor, which is an extremely narrow stretch of land that connects the north-eastern region to the rest of India. From the Chumbi Valley it is just a little over 100 kilometres away.

Skirmish between India and China

- Bunkers destroyed: Chinese are believed to have destroyed temporary bunkers of the Indian Army.
- Indian Army is accused of objecting to a road construction by the Chinese side on the disputed area. There was also an incident of jostling among the soldiers of the two sides.

INDIA-MYANMAR

1. Panel to study free movement along Myanmar border

In news:

- **India-Myanmar:** a friendly country, India shares unfenced borders and unhindered movement of people across the border.
- India and Myanmar share an unfenced border of 1,643 km.
- The Union Home Ministry has constituted a committee headed by Rina Mitra, Special Secretary-Internal Security, to examine methods to curb the misuse of free movement along the Myanmar border.
- This is the second time a committee is being constituted to study the free movement across the Myanmar border.

Free movement and threat to national security:

- Free movement regime is being misused by militants and trans-border criminals who smuggle weapons, contraband goods and fake Indian currency notes. Taking advantage of the free-movement regime, occasionally they enter India, commit crimes and escape to their relatively safer hideouts.

R.N. Ravi committee Report

- In 2015, a high-level committee report submitted by Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) chief R.N. Ravi suggested changing the “misnomer” related to “free border movement” and asked the government to replicate the model prevalent in villages and areas along the Bangladesh border.
- The report has suggested dedicated crossing points in border villages, where policemen would be made in charge of regulating the movement of people.

2. India may ask Myanmar to end ceasefire with NSCN(K)**In News:**

- India may ask Myanmar to revoke its ceasefire pact with the National Socialist Council of Nagaland-Khaplang (NSCN-K) when Home Secretary Rajiv Mehrishi visits Naypyidaw next month.
- **Background information:** The NSCN-K was banned by India in 2015 for various attacks against its security forces.
- During earlier bilateral meetings, India had handed over a list of over 20 insurgent camps operating in Myanmar, a few kilometres from the Indian border. The Myanmar Army has denied the existence of any insurgent camps on its territory.
- The NSCN-K has a ceasefire agreement with Myanmar. Govt of India to request the neighboring country to revoke the agreement and hand over its leaders to India. Not only NSCN-K, other insurgent groups are also operating their camps from Myanmar. The insurgent groups have formed a network on both sides of the border, to smuggle arms and form the backbone of anti-India activities
- **Panel constituted:** On June 12, at a meeting in Aizawl, Home Minister Rajnath Singh constituted a committee to examine various methods to curb the misuse of free movement along the Myanmar border, and said that “it was being misused by militants and trans-border criminals who occasionally entered India, committed crimes and escaped to their relatively safer hideouts.”
- **Key fact:** India and Myanmar share an unfenced border of 1,643 km adjoining Arunachal Pradesh (520 km), Nagaland (215 km), Manipur (398 km) and Mizoram (510 km) and permit a ‘free movement’ regime up to 16 km across the border.

INDIA-AFGHANISTAN**1. Indo-Afghan air cargo plane to fly over Pak.****In news:**

- India and Afghanistan will operationalise a dedicated air cargo link over Pakistan in the next couple of days.
- **Aim:** help increase bilateral trade which was hampered by their troubled ties with Pakistan.
- Pakistan disallows Indian goods along the road route.
- The road link between the two countries passes through Pakistan, which allows only Afghanistan to send a limited amount of goods to India.

INDIA-PAKISTAN**1. ICJ rejected India's request to delay Jadhav's case, says Pakistan.****Context:**

- Kulbhushan Jadhav's case- Jadhav, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court in April.

In news:

- Pakistan claimed that the International Court of Justice (ICJ) rejected India's request to delay proceedings of Kulbhushan Jadhav's case until December.
- Pakistan through its consulate in Netherlands came to know that the ICJ had ordered India to submit a response by September 13.

What ICJ is supposed to do?

- The ICJ is supposed to conclude whether or not Jadhav can receive consular access, for which a time period of two to three months is more than enough to file a response.

Previously:

- In a hearing of the case on May 18, a 10-member bench at the The Hague-based ICJ restrained Pakistan from executing Jadhav.
- India moved the ICJ against the death penalty on May 8. The next day, the global court stayed the sentence as a provisional measure.
- **Pakistan stance:** Its security forces arrested him from its restive Balochistan province on March 3 last year after he reportedly entered from Iran.
- **India's stance:** India maintains that he was kidnapped from Iran where he had business interests after retiring from the Navy.

2. Kulbhushan Jadhav files mercy petition before Pakistan Army Chief**Context:**

- Kulbhushan Jadhav case.
- Jadhav had been sentenced to death by a military court in April this year for espionage and terrorism.

- International Court of Justice in May halted the execution on India's appeal.
- Jadhav had earlier filed an appeal to the Military Appellate Court, which was rejected.

In news:

- The Pakistan army announced that Indian national Kulbhushan Jadhav, awaiting death sentence in its country, has filed a mercy petition before its chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa.
- In a statement, the ISPR (Inter service press release) has claimed that Jadhav has admitted to his involvement in espionage, terrorist and subversive activities in Pakistan and expressed remorse at the resultant loss of many precious innocent lives and extensive damage to property due to his actions.
- The statement also claimed that Jadhav is seeking forgiveness for his actions and he has requested the Chief of Army Staff to spare his life on compassionate grounds.

Options available:

- Under the law he is eligible to appeal for clemency to the Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and if rejected, subsequently to the Pakistan President.

3. India flags U.S. military aid to Pakistan

In News:

- India has once again raised the issue of continued American military assistance to Pakistan and sought an end to cross-border terrorism.
- India pointed out that Pakistan diverts U.S. military aid to target India.

U.S. drones for India

- The U.S. has cleared the sale of 22 drones to India.
- The deal being termed as a "game changer" ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit here for his meeting with President Donald Trump. The deal is estimated at about \$3 billion.

INDIA-FRANCE

1. India, France to join hands on Paris pact Leaders of the two countries also vow to unite to boost maritime security and fight against terrorism

In news:

- India and France to cooperate for the usage of the milestone Paris atmosphere assent and battle the test postured by psychological warfare.
- India was resolved to "go well beyond" the Paris arrangement to ensure atmosphere for who and what is to come.
- Indian Prime Minister said Paris atmosphere bargain mirrors "our obligation towards securing the mother Earth and our normal assets. For us, this (security of condition) is an article of confidence."

Shared legacy

- Paris atmosphere understanding is a mutual heritage of the world.
- Fear based oppression is one of the greatest difficulties the world is confronting today. We can't see the risk of environmental change however we can see the awful impacts of fear based oppression
- India and France to cooperate in barrier participation, oceanic security and battling fear based oppression on the Internet.

INDIA- NETHERLANDS

1. Netherlands backs UNSC, NSG bids

In news:

- **Key point:** The Netherlands backed India's early entry into the NSG and other multilateral export control regimes, and supported the country's bid for a permanent UN Security Council seat.

INDIA- PORTUGAL

1. India and Portugal Sign A Historical agreement to promote Cooperation in The Field of Archives

In news:

- A Protocol of Cooperation was signed between the National Archives of India and the Minister of Culture of the Portuguese Republic in the field of archives in Lisbon, Portugal.
- Under this agreement, the Torre do Tombo (National Archives of Portugal) handed over to the National Archives of India digital copies of 62 volumes of the collection known as 'Moncoes do Reino' (Monsoon correspondence).
- These volumes were originally part of over 456 volumes that cover the period from 1568 to 1914 and form the largest of all record collections in the Goa State Archives.
- The collection consists of direct correspondence from Lisbon to Goa and is important primary source for the study of the Portuguese expansion in Asia, their trade rivalries with the Arabs and European powers and their relations with neighbourings Kings in South Asia and East Asia.

INDIA--SPAIN

1. India, Spain call for 'zero tolerance' to terrorism

In news:

- India and Spain stressed that there should be "zero tolerance" to terrorism and called on the international community to end "selective or partial" approaches in combating the menace which posed the gravest threat to international peace and stability.
- Agreements signed: transfer of sentenced persons and visa waiver for holders of diplomatic passports.
- Five MoUs were signed between the two countries on cooperation in organ transplantation, cybersecurity, renewable energy, civil aviation and one between India's Foreign Service Institute and Diplomatic Academy.

INDIA-SWITZERLAND

1. Swiss support India's NSG bid

In news:

- Switzerland, the incoming chair of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), will support application for India's membership, but has left the door open for Pakistan to join as well.
- 'Grossi process': The "Grossi process" mandates the former NSG chairperson and diplomat Rafael Grossi to build a consensus among all 48 countries of the NSG, many of which resisted India's membership bid at the Seoul plenary session in 2016, unless the country signs the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Basic Information:

- The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is a group of nuclear supplier countries that seeks to contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons through the implementation of two sets of Guidelines for nuclear exports and nuclear-related exports.
- The NSG Guidelines also contain the so-called "Non-Proliferation Principle," adopted in 1994, whereby a supplier, notwithstanding other provisions in the NSG Guidelines, authorises a transfer only when satisfied that the transfer would not contribute to the proliferation of nuclear weapons. The Non-Proliferation Principle seeks to cover the rare but important cases where adherence to the NPT or to a Nuclear Weapon Free Zone Treaty may not by itself be a guarantee that a State will consistently share the objectives of the Treaty or that it will remain in compliance with its Treaty obligations.
- The NSG Guidelines are consistent with, and complement, the various international, legally binding instruments in the field of nuclear non-proliferation. These include the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America (Treaty of Tlatelolco), the South Pacific Nuclear-Free-Zone Treaty

(Treaty of Rarotonga), the African Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Pelindaba), the Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone (Treaty of Bangkok), and the Central Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty (Treaty of Semipalatinsk).

- The NSG Guidelines are implemented by each Participating Government (PG) in accordance with its national laws and practices. Decisions on export applications are taken at the national level in accordance with national export licensing requirements.

2. Swiss ratify pact on information sharing

Context:

- Switzerland ratified automatic exchange of financial account information (AEOI) with India.
- AEOI is a global convention for automatic information exchange on tax matters. AEOI facilitates immediate sharing of details on suspected black.
- The first set of data should be exchanged in 2019.

AEOI:

- The new global standard on Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) reduces the possibility for tax evasion. It provides for the exchange of non-resident financial account information with the tax authorities in the account holders' country of residence. Participating jurisdictions that implement AEOI send and receive pre-agreed information each year, without having to send a specific request.
- AEOI will enable the discovery of formerly undetected tax evasion. It will enable governments to recover tax revenue lost to non-compliant taxpayers, and will further strengthen international efforts to increase transparency, cooperation, and accountability among financial institutions and tax administrations. Additionally, AEOI will generate secondary benefits by increasing voluntary disclosures of concealed assets and by encouraging taxpayers to report all relevant information.

INDIA-RUSSIA

1. India, Russia ink nuclear plant pact

In news:

- India and Russia's new agreement.
- Setting up of two more units of a nuclear power plant in Tamil Nadu: Kudankulam 5 and 6 reactor units.
- Defence cooperation agreement.
- 'Indra-2017': first tri-Services exercises
- Start joint manufacture of frigates, adding to the co-production of Kamov-226 military helicopters.

2. Text of the Speech of Defence Minister at TECHNOPROM- 2017 in Russia

Key Point:

- Defence Minister Arun Jaitley has urged Russian defence companies to set up local joint ventures with Indian firms to produce spares and components for use by the Indian military as well as for exports.

TECHNOPROM:

- Technoprom is an international business platform devoted to the issues of forming the sixth technological mode based on the active development of science, technologies, and engineering, international and inter-regional integration.
- The focus this year on breakthrough technologies in the scientific, technological and innovative fields has established this event as a key forum for insights and business opportunities into leading technological products and technologies.

Relationship with Russia a key priority:

- India and Russia are celebrating the 70th Anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations. For India, relations with Russia are a key foreign policy priority. Russia is been a trusted and time-tested partner.
- India-Russia Strategic Partnership in 2000 covers areas like defence and security cooperation, trade and economic partnership, science and technology linkages and cultural exchanges.
- Area of military technical cooperation: relationship escalated from just being buyer-seller relationship to one involving joint research, development and production of advanced defence systems.
- Example:** The Brahmos Missile System and the licensed production of advanced Sukhoi 30 aircraft in India are recent highlights of our bilateral cooperation

Government of India initiatives:

- Under Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP) of 2016, a new category of acquisition called 'Buy (IDDM)' has been introduced. In this first preference would be given to the equipments, which are designed, developed and manufactured within the country. This will encourage Indian companies to invest in R&D and technology.

Liberalised license norms:

- For manufacturing of parts, components, sub-systems, production equipments and testing equipments, no license is required from the Government.
- For the items for which license is required, the initial validity has been increased from 3 years to 15 years.

INDIA-QATAR

1. India to weather Qatar storm now

Context:

- Isolation by Qatar by the Gulf countries.

In News:

- Political ties in the region

Background information:

- Qatar is a part of the Islamic Military Alliance, as well as part of the Saudi coalition taking part in the Yemen intervention.
- Qatar challenges the Saudi monarchy as well as the regimes in many countries in the Gulf.
- Qatari Emir Al-Thani's tie with Iran is the major trigger.
- There has been an increased call from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA), as well as UAE, Bahrain and other countries for Qatar to proclaim which side it is on.
- India has traditionally stayed out of the "Shi'a-Sunni", "Arab-Persian" or "Wahabbi-Salafi" divides, and maintained good ties with all.
- Present scenario:** fragmenting West Asia will require even more deft diplomacy from India's side to keep these ties untouched by the tensions.

Trade and manpower

- India sources more than half of its energy import needs from countries in the Persian Gulf.
- Six million Indians live and work in West Asia and they sent home about \$63 billion last year.
- Energy imports may not be affected immediately, unless the Gulf countries follow through with sanctions. However, as in the case of Yemen, Libya, Lebanon and other countries, any tensions in the region have an immediate impact on thousands of Indian workers.
- Cooperation in fighting terror: The KSA and the UAE are important partners for India on counter-terrorism cooperation and intelligence sharing.
- Air travel :** the Saudi coalition has decided to cancel Qatar Airways flights to their countries. This will affect Indian passengers who hoped to use Doha as a hub to get to other destinations in the Gulf.

2. Resolve Qatar crisis via constructive talks: India

Context:

- Recent decision by Saudi Arabia and some other countries to break diplomatic relations with Qatar.
- Background information:** Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the UAE and Bahrain announced that they were cutting diplomatic ties and closing all connectivity links with Qatar, accusing it of supporting terrorism.

In news:

- India asked countries in the Gulf region to resolve the Qatar crisis through constructive dialogue, well-established international principles of mutual respect, sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.
- GCC countries and India: over eight million Indian expatriates living and working in these countries, India is having vital stakes in the regional peace and stability.

ties, there are no direct flights between the capitals of the countries.

- **Key fact:** Israel is one of India's largest arms suppliers. In April, India signed a \$2 billion deal with an Israeli firm for advanced medium- range surface-to-air missiles (MRSAMs), the biggest such deal for the Israeli industry.

INDIA- ISRAEL

1. India, Israel set to expand defence ties

In news:

- Israel has emerged as one of the largest and trusted suppliers of defence equipment to the Indian armed forces.
- Israel is well entrenched in the areas of Unmanned Aerial Vehicles, air defence systems, special forces equipment and electronic warfare equipment.

Deal for Spike Anti-Tank Guided Missiles:

- Two countries are close to concluding a deal.
- The purchase of Spike missiles was approved by the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) in October 2014, but negotiations on the contract ran into trouble over cost and technology transfer. The Rs 3,200-crore deal includes 8,000-plus missiles, 300-plus launchers and technology transfer.
- The deal is likely to expand as the Army intends to equip its 382 infantry battalions and 44 mechanised regiments with new missiles.

2. Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu to visit India later this year

In News:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Israel next week will be reciprocated by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later this year.
- 2017 year marks the celebration of 25th year of full relations between India and Israel.
- July 4- 6: PM Modi's visit to Israel-
- The visit will see the partnership being upgraded to a "Strategic Partnership" on issues like water, agriculture, science and technology, and space.
- The leaders are expected to sign MoUs to upgrade ties in more than 30 areas, including cybersecurity, agriculture, tourism, health, connectivity, education, Ganga rejuvenation and "attracting Bollywood".
- Both sides will also commit \$40 million to an Industrial Research & Development fund to encourage applied scientific research, using Israeli innovation and Indian expertise.
- Issues regarding air connectivity between India and Israel would be taken up during the visit. Despite close

WORLD AFFAIRS

INDIA AND WORLD POLITICS

1. India pulls out of Shangri La dialogue, Defence Minister Arun Jaitley caught up with work

In News:

- India will once again go unrepresented at a senior level at the prominent Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD), the annual security forum in Singapore that brings together defence ministers, top military officers and experts from the Asia-Pacific region as well as others like the US and Europe.
- "Busy schedule" of Arun Jaitley, who handles both the finance and defence portfolios, did not permit him to attend the three-day security forum this weekend.

Criticism:

- India does not give adequate importance to military diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region, especially since SLD is a "Track-1" security forum that allows world leaders to discuss and fashion policy.

2. India becomes 71st country to ratify United Nations TIR Convention

Context:

- India has become the 71st country to ratify the United Nations TIR Convention.
- This will boost trade and regional integration across South Asia and beyond.
- The step will also fast-track the region's potential to become a strategic trade hub.

What is TIR?

- TIR is the global standard for goods customs transit managed and developed by IRU.
- IRU is the world road transport organization.
- China was the last TIR contracting party who acceded to the Convention on July 6, 2016.
- The TIR system has been facilitating trade and international road transport for over 60 years.
- It allows customs-sealed vehicles and freight containers to transit countries, without border checks.

Advantages of joining TIR

- Accession to the TIR Convention is part of India's multi-modal transport strategy.
- It aims to integrate the economy with global and regional production networks through better connectivity.
- TIR will help India to integrate with Myanmar and Thailand as well as Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal.

- It will also enable India to move cargo along the International North-South Transport Corridor via Chabahar port in Iran.
- This will make it easier to access land-locked Afghanistan and the energy-rich Eurasian region.

Financial benefits

- According to a study in the UNESCAP region, it is estimated that implementing TIR could generate economic benefits ranging from 0.14 to 1.31% of national GDP.
- Adopting TIR in selected UNESCAP (United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific) countries including India will save USD 35 billion in transit costs over five years.

Basic Information

UN TIR Convention:

- The Convention on International Transport of Goods Under Cover of TIR Carnets (TIR Convention) is a multilateral treaty that was concluded at Geneva on 14 November 1975.
- It was to simplify and harmonise the administrative formalities of international road transport.
- TIR stands for 'Transports Internationaux Routiers' or 'International Road Transports'.
- The conventions were adopted under the auspices of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).
- The TIR Convention establishes an international customs transit system with maximum facility to move goods:
- In sealed vehicles or containers;
- From a customs office of departure in one country to a customs office of destination in another country;
- Without requiring extensive and time-consuming border checks at intermediate borders;
- Providing customs authorities with the required security and guarantee.
- The TIR system not only covers customs transit by road but a combination is possible with other modes of transport (e.g., rail, inland waterway, and even maritime transport), as long as at least one part of the total transport is made by road.

3. Frustration again for India at NSG meet

Context:

- The annual plenary meeting of the Nuclear Suppliers Group in the Swiss capital of Berne on June 22 and 23 ended without agreeing on India's case for a membership.

In news:

- The 48 member states agreed to convene another meeting on the subject of non-signatories to the Non Proliferation Treaty, such as India and Pakistan, in another five months.
- **Berne meeting:** The NSG had discussions on the issue of 'Technical, Legal and Political Aspects of the Participation of non-NPT States in the NSG'.

India's Special relation with NSG:

- NSG group granted nuclear waiver to India in 2008 to conduct nuclear business.
- The NSG said the Berne plenary had "continued to consider all aspects of the implementation of the 2008 Statement on Civil Nuclear Cooperation with India and discussed the NSG relationship with India".
- The "technical, legal and political aspects" phrase in the NSG statement is part of a process decided on in 2016, when India and Pakistan had both formally applied for membership to build criteria for admitting non-NPT members.
- India would prefer to see a "case-by-case" basis membership process employed, given it has an impeccable record on nuclear transparency compared to Pakistan, which is accused of nuclear smuggling.

4. Nepal, China ink mega hydropower agreement**In News:**

- Nepal has signed an agreement with a Chinese company to build 1,200 megawatt Budhi-Gandaki hydroelectric project (the largest hydroelectric plant).
- Nepal suffers from a chronic energy shortage. Water-rich Nepal has a mountain river system that could make it an energy-producing powerhouse, but instead it imports much of its electricity from neighbouring India.
- Demand for electricity has long outstripped supply in Nepal due to chronic under-investment and inefficiencies in the power network. The result has been crippling for domestic industry and deterred foreign investment.

5. \$1 mn fund to bolster BRICS media**Context:**

- Inaugural session of the BRICS Media Forum in the Chinese capital, Cai Mingzhao.

In news:

- The Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) grouping has signalled its intent to expand its footprint in the global media space.
- President of Xinhua News Agency and executive president of the BRICS Media Forum, announced that the news agency will invest \$1 million for boosting media cooperation in the five-nation grouping.
- The BRICS media forum is the result of a joint initiative by Xinhua News Agency, Brazil's CMA Group, Russia's Sputnik News Agency and Radio, The Hindu group of publications from India, and South Africa's

Independent Media.

- The plan will promote six objectives, including "balanced reporting".

6. 'Saudi, UAE seek to isolate Qatar'**In News:**

- The Arab world's strongest powers cut ties with Qatar. Saudi Arabia, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain cut relations with Qatar in a coordinated move. Yemen, Libya's eastern-based government and the Maldives joined in later.
- **Reasons:** Alleged support for Islamists- the Muslim Brotherhood, ISIS (Islamic State) and al-Qaeda and Iran.
- **Aircraft banned:** Saudi Arabia and Bahrain's civil aviation bodies banned Qatari planes from landing in the kingdom's airports and banned them from crossing their airspace.

Key Fact:

- Qatar meets almost a third of global LNG demand. The fuel is used largely for power generation.
- India is the second biggest buyer of Qatari LNG, according to energy consultancy Wood Mackenzie, after Japan.
- Qatar is also a major exporter of condensate, an ultra-light form of crude oil, as well as liquefied petroleum gas (LPG), with most supplies of the two fuels going to Japan and South Korea under long term supply contracts.

7. Qatar says Saudi-led demands not 'reasonable'**Context:**

- Ongoing tussle between Gulf Countries and Qatar.

In news:

- Saudi Arabia has imposed a 13-point list of demands to be fulfilled by Qatar, in order to remove the embargos which were imposed.

Some of the demands are:

- They require Doha to join Riyadh and its allies in outlawing the Muslim Brotherhood, which it has long supported.
- They also require it to close Iran's embassy and a base on its territory operated by its ally Turkey, as well as to shut Al-Jazeera television.
- Qatar is also required to end all contacts with opposition groups in the four countries -- Bahrain, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Qatar response:

- This blockade is not aimed at fighting terrorism but at impinging on Qatar's sovereignty and interfering in its foreign policy.

INTERNAL SECURITY AND DEFENSE

1. Scorpene submarines to join Navy without AIP modules

Context:

- The last two Scorpene submarines to be rolled out of the manufacturing line without the Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system.
- Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) system: This system is meant to extend the reach of the conventional diesel-electric submarines.
- Manufacturers: Two of the six Scorpene submarines are being manufactured by Mazgaon Docks Limited (MDL) in Mumbai.

What is AIP module?

- The AIP module is being developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO).
- The module enables conventional submarines to stay remain underwater for a longer duration.
- It greatly increases the submarines stealth characteristics

Option available:

- The only option of installing the AIP system is during the refit of the submarine. This is six years after induction.

Basic Information:

- Scorpene submarine.
- The Scorpène-class submarines are a class of diesel-electric attack submarines.
- They are jointly developed by the French Direction des Constructions Navales (DCN) and the Spanish company Navantia, and now by DCNS
- It features diesel propulsion and an additional air-independent propulsion (AIP).

2. First indigenously built floating dock launched

In News:

- The Indian Navy's first indigenously built Floating Dock (FDN-2), developed by Larsen & Toubro Ltd. (L&T), was launched at L&T's shipyard in Kattupalli.
- The Floating Dock is 185 metres long and 40 metres wide and will enable docking of all kinds of vessels, including Naval ships and submarines (excepting aircraft carriers and tankers) of up to 8,000 tonnes displacement, with draughts of up to seven metres, during both day and night.
- FDN-2 will be based in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and will enhance the Navy's technical repair infrastructure.

3. Not much impact of ransomware attack on India, says govt.

Context:

- Petya global ransomware spread to India.

In news:

- Govt is closely monitoring the situation and there has been no large scale impact on India yet.

Petya:

- The Petya ransomware not only encrypts the file, but it locks the entire disk, making it basically unusable until the infection is removed.
- Petya also overwrites and encrypts the aster boot record.
- The ransomware waits for up to 60minutes post infection to initiate a system reboot, post which a ransom message is displayed.
- It shuts down the system and asks for a ransom of \$300 in bitcoins on rebbooting.
- The Pety/ Notpetya ransomware is the second major global ransomware since WannaCry hit over 3,00,000 computers worldwide.
- It uses Eternal Blue exploit as one of the means to propagate itself.

Experts warning:

- Bigger damage this time due to Petya as it is much more "professional attempt"
- WannaCry's damage was quickly minimized due to "sloppy coding".

Country's impacted:

- Ukraine seems to be the most impacted by ransomware.
- Other countries- Russia, UK, US and India.

Measures for protection:

- Make sure Microsoft Windows and all third party software's are updated.
- Don't open attachment in unsolicited e-mails.
- Never click on a URL contained in an unsolicited e-mail, even if the link seems benign.
- Maintain updated anti-virus software on all system.
- Ensure the web browser is secured enough with appropriate content controls.
- Individuals or organizations are not encouraged to pay the ransom as this does not ensure files will be released. Report such instance of fraud to CERT-In (Computer Emergency Response team- India) and Law enforcement agencies.

4. India worst hit in APAC by Petya: Symantec.

In news:

- India has been the worst hit country in the Asia Pacific region and the seventh most impacted nation worldwide by the Petya ransomware, according to cybersecurity service provider Symantec.
- As per findings by Symantec, Ukraine was worst hit by the ransomware, followed by the U.S., Russia, France, the U.K., Germany, India China and Japan.

How Petya is inserted into networks?

- MEDoc, a tax and accounting software package, is used for the initial insertion of Petya into corporate networks. MEDoc is widely used in Ukraine, indicating that organizations in that country were the primary target.
- After gaining an initial foothold, Petya uses a variety of methods to spread across corporate networks.

Petya ransomware:

- The Petya ransomware was the second big scale cyberattack after WannaCry in May.
- The Petya ransomware not only encrypts files, it locks the entire disk, making it basically unusable until the infection is removed.
- It shuts down the system after the infection and asks for ransom of \$300 in bitcoins on rebooting.

5. Strategic Partnership model takes effect

In news:

- Strategic Partnership (SP) policy which intends to promote Indian private sector participation in defence manufacturing, formally came into effect.

Strategic Partnership (SP) policy:

- The SP model is being implemented to enable participation of private Indian firms in 'Make in India' in defence.
- The SP is expected to play the role of a system integrator by building an extensive ecosystem comprising development partners, specialised vendors and suppliers.
- Various selection and evaluation criteria have been stipulated for short-listing the SP.
- SPs will be identified primarily based on their experience and competence in integration of multi-disciplinary functional system of systems, engineering and manufacturing.
- Of the four segments under SP, two are for the Navy: submarines and utility helicopters. The others are single-engine fighter aircraft for the Indian Air Force and armoured vehicles for the Army.

6. Prithvi-II missile successfully test-fires

In news:

- India successfully test-fired its indigenously developed nuclear-capable Prithvi-II missile from a test range in Odisha.

Features:

- Surface-to-surface missile.
- Strike range of 350 km.
- Capable of carrying 500 kg to 1,000 kg of warheads.
- Thrust by liquid propulsion twin engines.
- It uses advanced inertial guidance system with manoeuvring trajectory to hit its target with precision and accuracy.
- Inducted into Indian armed forces in 2003, the nine-metre tall, single-stage liquid-fuelled Prithvi II is the first missile to have been developed by the DRDO under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme.

Basic Information:

- Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme:
- The Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme (IGMDP) was an Indian Ministry of Defence programme for the research and development of the comprehensive range of missiles.
- The programme was managed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Ordnance Factories Board in partnership with other Indian government political organisations.
- The project started in 1982–83 with popular political support from the successive governments and bestowed under the leadership of Abdul Kalam who oversaw its ending in 2008 after these strategic missiles were successfully developed.
- The last major missile developed under the programme was the Agni 3 intermediate-range ballistic missile which was successfully tested its first test on July 9th, 2007.
- On 8 January 2008, the DRDO formally announced the successful completion of the IGMDP.
- It added that the strategic integrated guided missile programme was completed with its design objectives achieved since most of the missiles in the programme had been developed and inducted by the Indian armed forces.

7. Army to induct 18 Dhanush artillery guns this year

In news:

- The first regiment of 18 Dhanush artillery guns, the indigenously upgraded variant of the Swedish Bofors guns, is scheduled to be inducted into the Army by the end of the year.

Features:

- Dhanush is an upgraded version, based on the original design of the Swedish 155-mm Bofors howitzers, which India procured in the mid-1980s.
- It is a 155-mm, 45-calibre gun with a maximum range of 40 km in salvo mode, compared to the 39-calibre, 27-km range of the original guns.

8. DRDO successfully test fires third generation anti-tank 'Nag' missile in Rajasthan

In news:

- The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test fired the anti-tank missile "Nag".
- The Nag missile is a third generation "fire and forget" anti-tank missile.
- It is equipped with highly advanced Imaging Infrared Radar (IRR) seeker and has integrated avionics technology in its arsenal.
- This integrated avionics technology is possessed by very few countries.

Basic Information:

- Nag is a third generation "fire-and-forget" anti-tank missile developed in India.
- It is one of five missile systems developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) under the Integrated Guided Missile Development Program (IGMDP).

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Odisha may give lessons in disaster preparedness

In News:

- Odisha, the country's disaster prone state is credited with pioneering works in the field of disaster management.
- Odisha may impart lessons on cyclone preparedness to 14 Pacific island nations that are hit by tropical cyclones at regular intervals.
- Odisha has also adopted a "Mission Zero Casualty" policy for all disasters.

Management practices

- 1999 super cyclone: 10,000 people lost their life.
- Odisha then on wards has continuously added to its manpower and infrastructure needed for disaster preparedness.

Practice:

- Micro-level preparedness: When a cyclone is forecast to hit the Odisha coast, emphasis is laid on micro-level preparedness, besides macro-planning.
- Even at the village level, disaster machinery prepare a list of pregnant women and the differently-abled people. This helps in evacuations and handling of emergency situations at hospitals.
- Odisha has been training the local communities on how to deal with disasters.
- The Odisha Disaster Rapid Action Force (ODRAF) has been in the forefront of rescue activities during disasters in other States. The State has so far raised 10 units of ODRAF and 10 more units will be deployed soon. About 400 multipurpose cyclone and flood shelters have been constructed and 400 more shelter buildings are set to be built. The Red Cross also built 65 cyclone shelters.

2. IMD to give malaria, chikungunya alerts

In news:

- The India Meteorological Department (IMD) is working on a forecasting system to give 15-day warnings on the likelihood of a malaria or chikungunya outbreak, over different regions.

3. Indian Delegation at 2017 BIO International Convention

In news:

- The Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO) BIO 2017 is being held in the San Diego Convention Centre, San Diego from 19th June to 22nd June, 2017.

About BIO International Convention:

- The BIO International Convention is the largest global event for the biotechnology industry and attracts the biggest names in biotech, offers key networking and partnering opportunities, and provides insights and

inspiration on the major trends affecting the industry.

- The event features keynotes and sessions from key policymakers, scientists, CEOs, and celebrities.
- The Convention also features the BIO Business Forum (One-on-One Partnering), hundreds of sessions covering biotech trends, policy issues and technological innovations, and the world's largest biotechnology exhibition - the BIO Exhibition.
- The first BIO International Convention was held in 1993 and attracted approximately 1,400 attendees.

About Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO):

- The BIO International Convention is hosted by the Biotechnology Innovation Organization (BIO). BIO represents more than 1,100 biotechnology companies, academic institutions, state biotechnology centers and related organizations across the United States and in more than 30 other nations.
- BIO members are involved in the research and development of innovative healthcare, agricultural, industrial and environmental biotechnology products.
- The BIO International Convention helps BIO fulfill its mission to help grow the global biotech industry.

ARTICLES IN NEWS

Article 19. Protection of certain rights regarding freedom of speech etc

All citizens shall have the right

- a. to freedom of speech and expression;
 - b. to assemble peaceably and without arms;
 - c. to form associations or unions;
 - d. to move freely throughout the territory of India;
 - e. to reside and settle in any part of the territory of India; and
 - f. omitted
 - g. to practise any profession, or to carry on any occupation, trade or business
1. Nothing in sub clause (a) of clause (1) shall affect the operation of any existing law, or prevent the State from making any law, in so far as such law imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said sub clause in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, the security of the State, friendly relations with foreign States, public order, decency or morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offence.
 2. Nothing in sub clause (b) of the said clause shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it imposes, or prevent the State from making any law imposing, in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India or public order, reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said sub clause.
 3. Nothing in sub clause (c) of the said clause shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it imposes, or prevent the State from making any law imposing, in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India or public order or morality, reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said sub clause.
 4. Nothing in sub clauses (d) and (e) of the said clause shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it imposes, or prevent the State from making any law imposing, reasonable restrictions on the exercise of any of the rights conferred by the said sub clauses either in the interests of the general public or for the protection of the interests of any Scheduled Tribe.
 5. Nothing in sub clause (g) of the said clause shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it imposes, or prevent the State from making any law imposing, in the interests of the general public, reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said sub clause, and, in particular, nothing in the said sub clause shall affect the operation of any existing law in so far as it relates to, or prevent the State from making any law relating to,
 - the professional or technical qualifications necessary for practising any profession or carrying on any

occupation, trade or business, or

- the carrying on by the State, or by a corporation owned or controlled by the State, of any trade, business, industry or service, whether to the exclusion, complete or partial, of citizens or otherwise.

Article 21.

Protection of life and personal liberty No person shall be deprived of his life or personal liberty except according to procedure established by law.

Article 25. Freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion

1. Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion.
2. Nothing in this article shall affect the operation of any existing law or prevent the State from making any law
 - a. regulating or restricting any economic, financial, political or other secular activity which may be associated with religious practice;
 - b. providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of Hindus

Explanation I: The wearing and carrying of kirpans shall be deemed to be included in the profession of the Sikh religion .

Explanation II: In sub clause (b) of clause reference to Hindus shall be construed as including a reference to persons professing the Sikh, Jaina or Buddhist religion, and the reference to Hindu religious institutions shall be construed accordingly.

Article 29. Protection of interests of minorities

1. Any section of the citizens residing in the territory of India or any part thereof having a distinct language, script or culture of its own shall have the right to conserve the same.
2. No citizen shall be denied admission into any educational institution maintained by the State or receiving aid out of State funds on grounds only of religion, race, caste, language or any of them.

Article 55. Manner of election of President

1. As far as practicable, there shall be uniformity in the scale of representation of the different States at the election of the President.
2. For the purpose of securing such uniformity among the States inter se as well as parity between the States as a whole and the Union, the number of votes which each elected member of Parliament and of the Legislative Assembly of each State is entitled to cast at such election shall be determined in the following manner:
 - a. every elected member of the Legislative Assembly of a State shall have as many votes as there are multiples of one thousand in the quotient obtained by dividing the population of the State by the total number of the elected members of the Assembly;
 - b. if, after taking the said multiples of one thousand, the remainder is not less than five hundred, then the vote of each member referred to in sub clause (a) shall be further increased by one;
 - c. each elected member of either House of Parliament shall have such number of votes as may be obtained by dividing the total number of votes assigned to the members of the Legislative Assemblies of the States under sub clause (a) and (b) by the total number of the elected members of both Houses of Parliament, fractions exceeding one half being counted as one and other fractions being disregarded.
3. The election of the President shall be held in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of the single transferable vote and the voting at such election shall be by secret ballot Explanation n this article, the expression population means the population ascertained at the last preceding census of which the relevant figures have been published: Provided that the reference in this Explanation to the last preceding census of which the relevant figures have been published shall, until the relevant figures for the first census taken after the year 2000 have been published, be construed as a reference to the 1971 census.

Article 66: Election of Vice-President

1. The Vice-President shall be elected by the members of an electoral college consisting of the members of both Houses of Parliament in accordance with the system of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote and the voting at such election shall be by secret ballot.
2. The Vice-President shall not be a member of either House of Parliament or of a House of the Legislature of any State, and if a member of either House of Parliament or of a House of the Legislature of any State be elected Vice-President, he shall be deemed to have vacated his seat in that House on the date on which he enters upon his office as Vice-President.

3. No person shall be eligible for election as Vice-President unless he –
 - a. is a citizen of India;
 - b. has completed the age of thirty-five years; and
 - c. is qualified for election as a member of the Council of States.
4. A person shall not be eligible for election as Vice-President if he holds any office of profit under the Government of India or the Government of any State or under any local or other authority subject to the control of any of the said Governments.
5. **Explanation:** For the purposes of this article, a person shall not be deemed to hold any office of profit by reason only that he is the President of Vice-President of the Union or the Governor of any State or is a Minister either for the Union or for any State.

Article 68: Time of holding election to fill vacancy in the office of Vice-President and the term of office of person elected to fill casual vacancy

1. An election to fill a vacancy caused by the expiration of the term of office of Vice-President shall be completed before the expiration of the term.
2. An election to fill a vacancy in the office of Vice-President occurring by reason of his death, resignation or removal, or otherwise shall be held as soon as possible after the occurrence of the vacancy, and the person elected to fill the vacancy shall, subject to the provisions of article 67, be entitled to hold office for the full term of five years from the date on which he enters upon his office.

105. Powers, privileges, etc of the Houses of Parliament and of the members and committees thereof

1. Subject to the provisions of this constitution and the rules and standing orders regulating the procedure of Parliament, there shall be freedom of speech in Parliament.
2. No member of Parliament shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in Parliament or any committee thereof, and no person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of either House of Parliament of any report, paper, votes or proceedings.
3. In other respects, the powers, privileges and immunities of each House of Parliament, and of the members and the committees of each House, shall be such as may from time to time be defined by Parliament by law, and, until so defined shall be those of that House and of its members and committees immediately before the coming into force of Section 15 of the Constitution (Forty fourth Amendment) Act 1978.
4. The provisions of clauses (1), (2) and (3) shall apply in relation to persons who by virtue of this constitution have the right to speak in, and otherwise to take part in the proceedings of, a House of Parliament or any committee thereof as they apply in relation to members of Parliament

194. Powers, privileges, etc, of the House of Legislatures and of the members and committees thereof

1. Subject to the provisions of this Constitution and to the rules and standing orders regulating the procedure of the Legislature, there shall be freedom of speech in the Legislature of every State.
2. No member of the Legislature of a State shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in the Legislature or any committee thereof, and no person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of a House of such a Legislature of any report, paper, votes or proceedings.
3. In other respects, the powers, privileges and immunities of a House of the Legislature of a State, and of the members and the committees of a House of such Legislature, shall be such as may from time to time be defined by the Legislature by law, and, until so defined, shall be those of that House and of its members and committees immediately before the coming into force of Section 26 of the Constitution forty fourth Amendment Act, 1978.
4. The provisions of clauses (1), (2) and (3) shall apply in relation to persons who by virtue of this Constitution have the right to speak in, and otherwise to take part in the proceedings of a House of the Legislature of a State or any committee thereof as they apply in relation to members of that Legislature.

SCHEMES IN NEWS

1. "Hunar Haat"

- Ministry of Minority Affairs
- It is being organized by the Minority Affairs Ministry to encourage, promote and provide national and international market to master artisans/craftsmen belonging to the Minority communities from across the country.
- "Hunar Haat" is being organized through National Minorities Development & Finance Corporation (NMDFC) under USTTAD (Upgrading the Skills & Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development) scheme of Ministry of Minority Affairs.

2. Mission organic value chain development for North Eastern Region

- A Sub-Mission under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA)
- **Aim:** The scheme aims at development of certified organic
- production in a value chain mode to link growers with consumers and to support the development of entire value chain starting from inputs, seeds, certification, to the creation of facilities for collection, aggregation, processing marketing and brand building initiative.

Objective:

- To develop crop commodity specific organic value chain and address gaps in organic crop production, wild crop harvesting, organic livestock management and processing handling and marketing of organic agricultural products through:
- Developing crop specific organic production clusters with necessary infrastructural, technical and financial support
- By facilitating partnerships between farmers and organic businesses: Local enterprises and / or Farmer Producer Companies based on back-to-back longterm trade relations with clients in domestic and export markets.
- By providing enabling environment for project initiatives and development programs with necessary support for organic value chain development and create market access.
- To empower producers with program ownership by organizing them into FIGs with the final aim to federate into farmer producer organizations/ companies.
- To replace conventional farming/subsistence farming system into local resource based, self sustainable, high value commercial organic enterprise
- Developing commodity specific commercial organic value chain under integrated and concentrated approach with end-to-end facilities for production, processing, storage and marketing.

- Development of organic parks/zones with facilities for collection, aggregation, value addition, processing, storage and market-linkages for specific commodities requiring capital intensive technology.
- Develop NER products as brands/labels through brand building and facilitating stronger marketing access under the ownership of growers organizations/ companies.
- Creating state specific lead agency (Organic Commodity Board or Organic Mission) for coordinating, monitoring, supporting and financing the development and operationalization of entire value chain.

3. 'DigiYatra' - A New Digital Experience for Air Travellers.

- Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- The 'DigiYatra' is an industry-led initiative co-ordinated by the Ministry in line with the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Digital India's vision to transform the nation into a digitally empowered society. This follows Air Sewa which brings together all the stakeholders on a common platform for handling customer grievances and disseminating real-time data.
- 'DigiYatra' initiative aims to bring together entire industry to develop a digital ecosystem that will deliver Indian customers a seamless, consistent and paperless service experience at every touch point of their journey.
- DigiYatra initiative envisages providing airline travellers in India, a pioneering 'digitally unified flying experience' across all stages of their journey. All aviation stakeholders – airlines, airport operators, security and immigration agencies, cab operators, retail establishment and others are working to devise digital standards which can enable seamless exchange of data and information.

4. President of India launches mobile app 'Selfie with Daughter'.

- Mobile Application 'Selfie with Daughter'
- This campaign was initially launched in Haryana.
- Selfie-with-Daughter has become a world-wide movement against female foeticide and sex selection.
- Basic Information: The 'Selfie with Daughter' campaign was started by Shri Sunil Jaglan in June 2015 in village Bibipur, Jind, Haryana. The aim of the campaign is to motivate society to feel proud to be parents of a girl child which will result in improving the child sex ratio.

5. 'National Mission on Cultural Mapping of India'.

Features of the scheme:

- Scheme is set to cover all blocks of the country, involving a total of 6.40 lakh villages over the span of next 3 years

- This Mission is part of the 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat' umbrella.
- Ministry of Culture launched it in the year of commemoration of the birth centenary of Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyay, who hailed from Mathura.
- The Cultural Mapping of India portal will serve as a repository/consolidated database of information about cultural assets and resources i.e. a cultural inventory at one place for essential planning, sustainable economic development and for preserving the scattered and near extinct art forms.

Key Point:

- The mission aims at converting the vast and widespread cultural canvas of India into an objective cultural map, designing a mechanism to fulfil the aspirations of the whole artist community of the nation and preserving the rich cultural heritage of this country in the form of a cultural repository of artists and art forms.
- Mission encompasses data mapping, demography building formalising the processes and bringing all the cultural activities under one web based umbrella for better results.
- The Mission also seeks to open a direct channel of communication of artists with the Government and peer to peer communication among artists for talent honing and handholding of each other.
- **Main vision:** no cultural talent or heritage should remain unattended and if it is talent, it should be nurtured and if it is a heritage, it should be conserved and used as an icon to learn.

6. Zero defect zero effect scheme

- It is a new initiative launched by the Narendra Modi led NDA government.
- The scheme is for MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises) Sector to increase the quality of products matching global standards.
- The main objective of ZED scheme is to reduce the bad effect of products on environment.
- Under the scheme, MSME sector is urged to make products improving the brand image of the country.

Benefits of ZED:

- Credible recognition of the industry for international customers seeking investment in India.
- Streamlined operations and lower costs.
- Superior quality, reduced rejection and higher revenues
- Increased environmental & social benefits
- Additional employment generation.

7. Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program

About and objectives:

- Revised National Tuberculosis Control Program (RNTCP) is the state-run tuberculosis (TB) control initiative of the Government of India.

- As per the National Strategic Plan 2012–17, the program has a vision of achieving a "TB free India", and aims to achieve Universal Access to TB control services.
- The program provides, various free of cost, quality tuberculosis diagnosis and treatment services across the country through the government health system.

Program strategy:

- The program initially adopted the WHO-DOTS strategy which consisted of the five components of strong political will and administrative commitment, diagnosis by quality assured sputum smear microscopy, uninterrupted supply of quality assured Short Course chemotherapy drugs, Directly Observed Treatment (DOT) and systematic monitoring and Accountability.
- The DOTS strategy achieved and sustained the target detection rate of 70% of all estimated cases and a cure rate of 85% in new cases and led to the decrease in incidence of TB in the country.
- With progress in achieving objectives outlined in the DOTS Strategy of the 11th Five year Plan, the program defined the new targets of Universal Access to TB care.
- Under the 12th Five Year Plan of Government of India as the National Strategic Plan for 2012–17. The plan hopes to achieve detection of at-least 90% the total estimated cases and a cure rate of 90% in new and 85% in re-treatment cases.

8. Kanyashree Prakalpa

Implemented by West Bengal government

- Kanyashree's core objectives are simple and focussed: it aims to ensure that girls stay in school and delay their marriages till at least age 18. Kanyashree's approach is also simple: it uses a social safety net mechanism that has shown a high degree of success in transforming the lives of children and adolescents in several countries in the world: Conditional Cash Transfers. The scheme has two cash transfer components:
- The first is an Annual Scholarship of Rs. 750/- to be paid annually to the girls in the age group 13 to 18 years (studying in Class VIII equivalent or above for every year that they remained in education, provided they are unmarried at the time.
- The second is a One-Time Grant of Rs. 25,000/-, to be paid after a girl turns 18, provided that she was engaged in an academic or occupational pursuit and was unmarried.
- The term 'education' encompasses secondary and higher secondary education, as well as the various vocational, technical and sports courses available for this age group. Given that children from socio-economically disadvantaged families are more vulnerable to child marriage, the scheme is open only to girls from families whose annual income is Rs. 1,20,000/- or less. For girls with special needs, orphans and girls in J. J. Homes the income criterion is waived. Girls with special needs, but in a class below class VIII, can also apply for the annual scholarship.

Objective:

- Kanyashree Prakalpa seeks to improve the status and wellbeing of girls, specifically those from socio-economically disadvantaged families through Conditional Cash Transfers by:
 - a. Incentivizing them to continue in education for a longer period of time, and complete secondary or higher secondary education, or equivalent in technical or vocational streams, thereby giving them a better footing in both the economic and social spheres.
 - b. Disincentivising marriage till at least the age of 18, the legal age of marriage, thereby reducing the risks of early pregnancies, associated risks of maternal and child mortality, and other debilitating health conditions, including those of malnutrition.
 - c. It was also decided that the Scheme should confer more than just monetary support; it should be a means of financial inclusion and a tool of empowerment for adolescent girls. The scheme's benefits are therefore paid directly to bank accounts in the girls' names, leaving the decision of utilization of the money in their hands.
 - d. To reinforce the positive impact of increased education and delayed marriages, the scheme also works to enhance the social power and self-esteem of girls through a targeted behaviour change communication strategy. The communication strategy not only builds awareness of the scheme, but includes adolescent-friendly approaches like events, competitions and Kanyashree clubs, and the endorsement of strong women figures as role models to promote social and psychological empowerment.
- As more and more girls remain in school, it is envisaged that they will use the opportunity to gain skills and knowledge that will help them become economically independent. Even if girls do get married soon after they turn 18, it is expected that their education and enhanced social and emotional development will give them a better foundation for in their adult lives. And over time, as entire generations of women enter marriages only after they have some degree of economic independence, it is expected that the practice of child marriage is completely eradicated, and women will attain their right to health, education and socio-economic equality.

TOPICS IN NEWS

The Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism

- The Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism is a proposed treaty which intends to criminalize all forms of international terrorism and deny terrorists, their financiers and supporters access to funds, arms, and safe havens. Currently, the negotiations are deadlocked mainly because of differences over the definition of terrorism.

Key Issues

- The negotiations of the Comprehensive Terrorism Convention are deadlocked because of differences over several controversial yet basic issues, including the definition of 'terrorism'.

For example:

What distinguishes a "terrorist organisation" from a 'liberation movement'?

- Are the activities of national armed forces excluded, even if they are perceived to commit acts of terrorism?
- If not, how much of this constitutes 'state terrorism'?"
- The definition of terrorism, which was on the negotiating table of the Comprehensive Convention since 2002 is as follows:
- Any person commits an offence within the meaning of this Convention if that person, by any means, unlawfully and intentionally, causes:
- Death or serious bodily injury to any person; or
- Serious damage to public or private property, including a place of public use, a State or government facility, a public transportation system, an infrastructure facility or the environment; or
- Damage to property, places, facilities, or systems referred to result in major economic loss,
- When the purpose of the conduct is to intimidate threat a population, or to compel a Government or an international organization to do or abstain from doing any act.
- Proposed Exceptions to resolve the deadlock: In order to resolve deadlock the coordinator of the negotiations, supported by most western delegations, proposed the following exceptions to address those issues:
- This convention will not affect other rights, obligations and responsibilities of States, peoples and individuals under international law especially for the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and international humanitarian law.
- This Convention will not govern the activities of armed forces during an armed conflict, as those terms are understood under international humanitarian law,

which are governed by that law.

- Even the activities undertaken by the military forces of a State in the exercise of their official duties, inasmuch as they are governed by other rules of international law, will be not governed by this Convention.
- The state members of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference proposed the following exceptions instead of western delegation:
- This convention will not govern the activities of the parties during an armed conflict, including in situations of foreign occupation, as those terms are understood under international humanitarian law, which are governed by that law.
- The activities undertaken by the military forces of a State in the exercise of their official duties, inasmuch as they are in conformity with international law, will be not governed by this Convention.
- India's stand: India has been advocating for early adoption of the CCIT and has called the global community India had called upon the worldwide community to promote the anti-terror legal framework and execute the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy in an integrated manner. India is of the view that comprehensiveness of the Global Counter Terrorism Strategy will not be concluded devoid of the conclusion of the CCIT which is at an important phase of discussion before the UN.

Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD)

- The IISS Asia Security Summit: The Shangri-La Dialogue (SLD) is a "Track One" inter-governmental security forum held annually by an independent think tank, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) which is attended by defense ministers, permanent heads of ministries and military chiefs of 28 Asia-Pacific states.
- The forum gets its name from the Shangri-La Hotel in Singapore where it has been held since 2002.
- The summit serves to cultivate a sense of community among the most important policymakers in the defence and security community in the region. While primarily an inter-governmental meeting, the summit is also attended by legislators, academic experts, distinguished journalists and business delegates.
- The participants have included Australia, Brunei, Burma(Myanmar), Cambodia, Canada, Chile, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, New Zealand, Pakistan, People's Republic of China, Philippines, Russia, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Sweden, Thailand, East Timor, United Kingdom, United States and Vietnam.

The Paris Agreement

- The Paris Agreement or Paris climate accord and Paris climate agreement, is an agreement within the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) dealing with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, adaptation and finance starting in the year 2020.

Main intention:

- Agreement to slow the process of global warming by making efforts to “hold the increase in the global average temperature to well below 2 degrees above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels”.
- Decision to limit the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by human activity to a level that can be naturally absorbed by trees, soils and oceans.
- Developed countries were also told to provide financial resources to help developing countries in dealing with climate change and for adaptation measures. As part of a review mechanism, developed countries were also asked to communicate every two years the “indicative” amount of money they would be able to raise over the next two years, and information on how much of it would come from public financial sources. In contrast, developing countries have only been “encouraged” to provide such information every two years on a voluntary basis.
- The language of the agreement was negotiated by representatives of 195 countries at the 21st Conference of the Parties of the UNFCCC in Paris and adopted by consensus on 12 December 2015.
- As of June 2017, 195 UNFCCC members have signed the agreement, 148 of which have ratified it.
- In the Paris Agreement, each country determines its own contribution it should make in order to mitigate global warming.
- There is no mechanism to force a country to set a specific target by a specific date.

PRELIMS WORTHY FACTUAL INFORMATION

- Punjab to join hand with UN Agency against Drugs. Punjab will soon sign an agreement with United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) for its war against drug addiction.
- Ms. Arundhati Roy became the first Indian Woman to win the Booker Prize in the year 1997 for her work: *The God of small things*.
- **Rutland Island:** The country's long-range missile test facility at South Andamans' Rutland Island has finally secured the clearance of the National Board of Wildlife, which has been held up since 2012.
- The Shangri-La Dialogue, funded and hosted by the Singapore government, is a unique "track-one" conference that defence ministers, officials and military chiefs of 28 Asia-Pacific countries, including China and the United States, attend each year.
- SIMBEX is an acronym for "Singapore-India Maritime Bilateral Exercises".
- Phenology is the study of periodic plant and animal life cycle events and how these are influenced by seasonal and interannual variations in climate, as well as habitat factors.

The National Physical Laboratory (NPL):

- NPL is part of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.
- NPL is the host of most accurate clock in India.
- NPL is the only agency in India authorized to maintain Indian Standard Time.

NASA's Orion spacecraft:

designed to take astronauts to deep space destinations such as the Moon and Mars.

Vanuatu:

- Officially the Republic of Vanuatu is a Pacific island nation located in the South Pacific Ocean. The archipelago, which is of volcanic origin, is some 1,750 kilometres (1,090 mi) east of northern Australia, 540 kilometres (340 mi) northeast of New Caledonia, east of New Guinea, southeast of the Solomon Islands, and west of Fiji.

Wassenaar Arrangement:

About:

- The Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies, commonly known as the Wassenaar Arrangement, is a multilateral export control regime (MECR) with 41 participating states
- The Wassenaar Arrangement was established to contribute to regional and international security and stability by promoting transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies, thus preventing

destabilizing accumulations.

- Participating States seek, through their national policies, to ensure that transfers of these items do not contribute to the development or enhancement of military capabilities which undermine these goals, and are not diverted to support such capabilities.
- Every six months member countries exchange information on deliveries of conventional arms to non-Wassenaar members that fall under eight broad weapons categories:

Control List:

- The list of restricted technologies is broken into two parts, the "List of Dual-Use Goods and Technologies" (also known as the Basic List) and the "Munitions List".
- The Basic List is composed of ten categories based on increasing levels of sophistication:
 1. Category 1 – Special Materials and Related Equipment
 2. Category 2 – Materials Processing
 3. Category 3 – Electronics
 4. Category 4 – Computers
 5. Category 5 – Part 1 – Telecommunications
 6. Category 5 – Part 2 – "Information Security"
 7. Category 6 – Sensors and "Lasers"
 8. Category 7 – Navigation and Avionics
 9. Category 8 – Marine
 10. Category 9 – Aerospace and Propulsion
- Basic List has two nested subsections—Sensitive and Very Sensitive. Items of the Very Sensitive List include materials for stealth technology—i.e., equipment that could be used for submarine detection, advanced radar, and jet engine technologies.
- The Munitions List has 22 categories, which are not labeled.

Admission requires states to:

- Be a producer or exporter of arms or sensitive industrial equipment
- Maintain non-proliferation policies and appropriate national policies, including adherence to:
- Non-proliferation policies, such as (where applicable) the Nuclear Suppliers Group, the Missile Technology Control Regime, and the Australia Group
- Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention and, where applicable, START I (including the Lisbon Protocol)
- Maintain fully effective export controls
- Admission of new members requires the consensus of

all members.

- The People's Republic of China and Israel are not members, but they have aligned their export controls with Wassenaar lists, and are significant arms exporters.
- **New amendment:** In December 2013, the list of export restricted technologies was amended to include internet-based surveillance systems. New technologies placed under the export control regime include "intrusion software"—software designed to defeat a computer or network's protective measures so as to extract data or information—as well as IP network surveillance systems.

Kovalam Beaches:

- Kovalam has three beaches separated by rocky outcroppings in its 17 km coastline, the three together form the famous crescent of the Kovalam beach.
- Lighthouse Beach: The southernmost beach, the Lighthouse Beach is the one most frequented by tourists, Lighthouse Beach got its name due to the old Vizhinjam Lighthouse located on a 35 meter high on top of the Kurumkal hillock.
- Hawah Beach: Eve's Beach, more commonly known as Hawa Beach, ranks second, in the early day, is a beehive of activities with fishermen setting out for sea. With a high rock promontory and a calm bay of blue waters, this beach paradise creates a unique aquarelle on moonlit nights.
- Samudra Beach: A large promontory separates this part from the southern side. Samudra Beach doesn't have tourists thronging there or hectic business. The local fishermen ply their trade on this part.
- The sands on the beaches in Kovalam are partially black in colour due to the presence of ilmenite and Monazite.

United Nations Public Service Award:

- The West Bengal government has received the highest award for Public Service, the United Nations Public Service Award, at a ceremony held at the World Forum, The Hague, on 23rd June, 2017.
- Bengal's 'Kanyashree Prakalpa' was chosen from amongst 552 competitive schemes from 62 countries while securing the first position.
- The UN in its praise for the Kanyashree states that this scheme works towards creating a supportive environment in which girls are encouraged to express their full potential and are free to become the architects of their own lives.
- In the category of reaching the poorest and most vulnerable through inclusive services and participation, the Hon'ble CM received a trophy and a certificate. 40 Lakh Kanyashree girls got benefitted from a specially created fund of nearly Rs. 3300 Crores, and the numbers are constantly increasing.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS

1. Apart from India, in which of the following two countries, Tamil is an official language?
 - A. Mauritius and Malaysia.
 - B. Malaysia and Indonesia.
 - C. Sri Lanka and Mauritius.
 - D. Sri Lanka and Singapore.
2. The Machia Biological Park is located in which state?
 - A. Rajasthan.
 - B. Sikkim.
 - C. Nagaland.
 - D. Manipur.
3. Bathymetry is related to which of the following studies?
 - A. Climatology.
 - B. Oceanography.
 - C. Economic Geography.
 - D. Astronomy.
4. Ramman is a religious festival and ritual theatre of ____?
 - A. Uttarkhand.
 - B. Uttar Pradesh.
 - C. West Bengal.
 - D. Madhya Pradesh.
5. Who among the following was known as Bengal's Greata Garbo?
 - A. Suchitra Sen.
 - B. Amaravati.
 - C. Kanan Devi.
 - D. Bharathi Shirodkor.
6. National Centre for Antarctic and Ocean Research (NCAOR) is under which ministry?
 - A. Ministry of science and technology
 - B. Ministry of Earth Sciences.
 - C. Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate change.
 - D. None of the above
7. The government of India confers awards to the Armed Forces both for services rendered during war as well as peace. Which of the following is awarded as Peace Time Gallantry Award?
 - A. Vir Chakra
 - B. Param Vir Chakra
 - C. Shaurya Chakra
 - D. Maha Vir Chakra
8. The Kala Ghoda Arts Festival is associated with which one of the following cities?
 - A. Kochi
 - B. Pune
 - C. Mumbai
 - D. Mysore
9. Which is the most abundant metal in the Earth's crust?
 - A. Aluminium
 - B. Nickel
 - C. Iron
 - D. Silicon
10. Mixed Cropping is the practice of
 - A. Growing two or more crops simultaneously on the same piece of land.
 - B. Growing crops and rearing livestock simultaneously
 - C. Growing different crops on a piece of land in a pre-planned succession.
 - D. Growing fodder crops along with livestock.
11. As per IUCN's RED DATA book Celebes crested macaque is
 - A. Critically endangered species
 - B. Vulnerable species
 - C. Least concerned species
 - D. None of the above
12. Consider the following statement with reference to Phytoid waste water treatment technology
 1. It involves a constructed wetland exclusively designed for the treatment of municipal, urban, agricultural and industrial wastewater.
 2. Technology developed by National Environmental Engineering Research Institute.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None of the above

13. Identify the correct statement with reference to Khurki system

- A. It is a irrigation system adopted in South Asia
- B. It is a system of land revenue adopted by Mughals
- C. It is a system used by the British planters to compel the farmers to sow indigo.
- D. None of the above

14. Nilgiri tahr is declared as the State animal of

- A. Tamil Nadu
- B. Kerala
- C. West Bengal
- D. Andhra Pradesh

15. Consider the following statement

1. The Nilgiri tahr is endemic to the Nilgiri Hills and the southern portion of the Western Ghats.
2. Nilgiri tahr has been classified as critically endangered species under IUCN's Red Data book.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

16. Which state government has launched "Mahaswayam portal" for job seekers and employers

- A. Maharashtra
- B. Uttar Pradesh
- C. Kerala
- D. Haryana

17. Lion-tailed macaque is found in __:

- A. Eastern Ghats.
- B. Western Ghats.
- C. East Himalayas.
- D. West Himalayas.

18. Which among the following temples does not belong to the Chola Empire?

- A. Brihadishwara.
- B. Koranganatha.
- C. Kailashanatha.
- D. Airavateshwar.

19. Which state government has recently declared Dailong village as biodiversity heritage site of the state?

- A. Arunachal Pradesh
- B. Mizoram
- C. Tripura
- D. Manipur

20. For removal of a Governor from office, the President seeks advice from __:

- A. Council of Ministers
- B. Supreme Court
- C. Chief Minister of the concerned state
- D. None of them

21. If you travel through the Himalayas, you are likely to see which of the following plants naturally growing there?

1. Oak
2. Rhododendron
3. Sandalwood

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 3 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 1, 2 and 3

22. Satipati Sampradaya is a tribal community of ____:

- A. Himachal Pradesh
- B. Gujarat
- C. Karnataka
- D. Odisha

23. Lichens, which are capable of initiating ecological succession even on a bare rock, are actually a symbiotic association of __:

- A. algae and bacteria
- B. algae and fungi
- C. bacteria and fungi
- D. fungi and mosses

- 24. What is the theme of 2017 World Environment Day (WED)?**
- A. Green Economy: Does it include you?
 - B. Raise Your Voice Not The Sea Level
 - C. Connecting People to Nature
 - D. Think.Eat.Save
- 25. Who among the following was propounder of the Madhyamika Philosophy?**
- A. Bhadrabahu
 - B. Parshwanath
 - C. Sheelbhadra
 - D. Nagarjuna
- 26. Which of the following is not a correct statement about UPSC?**
- A. UPSC submits its annual report to the President
 - B. UPSC Chairman can be removed by Central Government by order
 - C. Composition of UPSC is determined by President
 - D. All of the above are correct statements
- 27. The famous Nabakalebara festival belongs to which of the following states?**
- A. Rajasthan
 - B. Odisha
 - C. West Bengal
 - D. Bihar
- 28. The Coriolis force is maximum at ___?**
- A. Poles
 - B. Equator
 - C. Tropics
 - D. Mountain peaks
- 29. The Mukurthi National Park (MNP) is located in which state?**
- A. Tripura
 - B. Kerala
 - C. Tamil Nadu
 - D. Sikkim
- 30. The Gumti Wildlife Sanctuary is located in which state?**
- A. Sikkim
 - B. Tripura
 - C. Bihar
 - D. Uttar Pradesh
- 31. Which of the following were the main gases in the initial atmosphere of Protoearth?**
- A. Hydrogen and Helium
 - B. Nitrogen and Carbon Dioxide
 - C. Hydrogen and Nitrogen
 - D. Oxygen and Carbon dioxide
- 32. Which hormone is used as a medication to facilitate child birth?**
- A. Oxytocin
 - B. Oestrogen
 - C. Testosterone
 - D. Progesterone
- 33. Consider the following statement with reference to the mobile application "Selfie with Daughter" which was launched recently by President of India**
- 1. Campaign was initially launched in Haryana.
 - 2. It is a movement against female foeticide and sex selection.
- Select the correct answer using the code given below:
- A. Only 1
 - B. Only 2
 - C. Both 1 and 2
 - D. Neither 1 nor 2
- 34. What is Keratitis?**
- A. Inflammation of eyes caused due to fungus
 - B. Inflammation of eyes caused due to Bacteria
 - C. Both A and B
 - D. None of the above
- 35. Consider the following statement with reference to Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**
- 1. Headquarters of SCO is in China
 - 2. SCO is an outcome of The Shanghai Five grouping established in 1996 by Kazakhstan, China, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.
 - 3. Presently, it has three observers Afghanistan, Belarus, and Mongolia.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 3
- B. 1 and 2
- C. 1, 2 and 3
- D. Only 1

36. Jaduguda mine in Jharkhand is famous for _____?

- A. Uranium
- B. Iron
- C. Copper
- D. Bauxite

37. Which of the following nations is/are NOT members of OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries)?

- 1. Ecuador
- 2. Venezuela
- 3. Iran
- 4. Indonesia

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1, 2 and 3
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 3 only
- D. None of the above

38. Recently Health Ministry of Government of India, introduced new vaccine - Pneumococcal conjugate vaccine. This particular vaccine is used to treat

- A. Hib pneumonia.
- B. Pneumococcal pneumonia.
- C. Diarrhoea.
- D. Polio.

39. Which among the following vaccines come under Pentavalent vaccine

- A. Diphtheria, Pertussis or whooping cough, tetanus, Hepatitis B and Hib vaccines.
- B. diphtheria, Pertussis/whooping cough ,polio), Hepatitis B and Hib vaccines.
- C. diphtheria, Pertussis/whooping cough and tetanus), Hepatitis C and Hib vaccines.
- D. diphtheria, Pertussis/whooping cough and tetanus), Hepatitis A and Hib vaccines.

40. Consider the following statement with reference to Egyptian vultures, which was in news recently.

- 1. It is the largest among all the vultures.
- 2. It is an endangered species as per IUCN's Red data book.
- 3. It is also called as white scavengers

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. All are correct

41. Consider the following statements with reference to Belle-II experiment which was in news recently.

- 1. Belle-II is designed to study violations of the Standard Model of particle physics.
- 2. Belle-II experiment is being conducted at IISC ,Bangalore

Which of the statements given above is/are correct?

- A. 1 only.
- B. 2 only.
- C. Both 1 and 2.
- D. Neither 1 nor 2.

42. Among the following who are the Agaria Community?

- A. A traditional toddy tappers community of Andhra Pradesh
- B. A traditional fishing community of Maharashtra.
- C. A traditional silk-weaving community of Karnataka
- D. A traditional salt-pan workers community of Gujarat.

43. In which State is the Buddhist site Tabo Monastery located?

- A. Arunachal Pradesh
- B. Himachal Pradesh
- C. Sikkim
- D. Uttrakhand

44. Indira Gandhi Prize for Peace, Disarmament and Development for the year 2014 was awarded to

- A. NTPCL
- B. ISRO
- C. BHEL
- D. BEL.

45. Aedes aegypti transmits which among the following

- A. Dengue, chikungunya , yellow fever and HIV
- B. Dengue, chikungunya and yellow fever
- C. Dengue, chikungunya , yellow fever and Zika virus
- D. Dengue, chikungunya , yellow fever and H1N1

46. Consider the following statements

- 1. Irrawady Dolphin is an oceanic dolphin
- 2. IUCN has classified Irrawady Dolphin as Vulnerable in the Red Data List.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

47. Consider the following statements

- 1. Nilgai is the largest Indian Antelope
- 2. Nilgai is not indigenous to Indian Subcontinent.
- 3. IUCN has classified Nilgai as Vulnerable in the Red Data List

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1 only

48. Consider the following statements

- 1. MIKE stands for Monitoring of Illegal Killing of Emu.
- 2. MIKE comes under CITES.
- 3. MIKE was started in South Asia in the year 2013

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 3 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. 1 only

49. Which country to host 2017 Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)?

- A. Kazakhstan
- B. Uzbekistan
- C. Tajikistan
- D. Kyrgyzstan

50. Baburnama was written in which language?

- A. Para-Mongolic
- B. Chagatai Turkic
- C. Hijazi Arabic
- D. Bahrani Arabic

51. Consider the following statements

- 1. In Multidrug Resistant Tuberculosis, patients do not respond to second-line of drugs.
- 2. Drugs like Bedaquiline and Delamanid are not adequately available in India's national healthcare system.
- 3. India shoulders the highest TB burden in the world

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 and 2 only
- B. 2 and 3 only
- C. All are correct
- D. 1 and 3 only

52. Identify the correct Statement

- A. The Representation of the People Act bars political parties from receiving foreign funds.
- B. The Foreign Contribution Regulation Act bars political parties from receiving foreign funds.
- C. Both A and B
- D. Neither A nor B

53. The main aim of 'Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana' is

- A. Providing irrigation facilities for organic farming
- B. Promoting sprinkler-irrigation among agriculturists in water-scarce and hill regions
- C. Promoting the utilisation of renewable energy in irrigation-intensive regions
- D. Providing some means of protective irrigation to all agricultural farms in the country

54. Identify the correct statement with reference to "Fortification of foods"

- A. Fortification of food is a technique of adding key vitamins ,minerals and other nutrients to staple foods
- B. Fortification of food techniques main idea is to fight against malnourishment
- C. Both A and B.
- D. None of the above.

55. Consider the following statements

1. Bosphorus Strait that divides the continents of Asia and North America.
2. Bosphorus Strait is a man made strait.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2.

56. Consider the following statements

1. *Emiliana huxleyi* is a single-celled organism.
2. *Emiliana huxleyi* is plated with white calcium carbonate and, when present in large numbers, tend to turn the water a milky sheen.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

57. Global Burden of Disease report is published by

- A. U.N.H.R.C
- B. U.N.D.P
- C. W.H.O
- D. None of the above.

58. Ease of doing business report is published by

- A. World Bank
- B. IMF
- C. Asian Development Bank
- D. United Nations Organisation

59. Recently Lok Sabha passed the Motor Vehicles Amendment bill, the power to make such laws by Parliament, is under which list of constitution of India

- A. Union List
- B. State List
- C. Concurrent List
- D. None of the Above

60. Which of the following constitutes/constitute the Current Account?

1. Balance of trade
2. Foreign assets
3. Balance of invisibles

4. Special Drawing Right

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 and 3
- C. 1 and 3
- D. 1, 2 and 4

61. The balance of payments of a country is a systematic record of

- A. All import and export transactions of a country during a given period of time, normally a year.
- B. Goods exported from a country during a year.
- C. Economic transaction between the government of one country to another.
- D. Capital movements from one country to another.

62. Which of the following constitute Capital Account?

1. Foreign Loans
2. Foreign Direct Investment
3. Private Remittances
4. Portfolio Investment

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1, 2 and 3
- B. 1, 2 and 4
- C. 2, 3 and 4
- D. 1, 3 and 4

63. The Convention on International Transport of Goods cover custom transit by

- A. Road only.
- B. Rail only.
- C. Inland Water ways only.
- D. None of the above.

64. The Union Government has launched IDCF programme to reduce child deaths due to diarrhoea. What does "IDCF" stands for?

- A. Intensified Diarrhea Control Fortnight
- B. Intensive Diarrhea Control Fortnight
- C. Intensify Diarrhea Control Fortnight
- D. Intense Diarrhea Control Fortnight

65. Which country has topped the global remittance-receiving list of 2016, as per latest UN report "One Family at a Time"?

- A. China
- B. Philippines

- C. Malaysia
- D. India

66. The Tropic of Capricorn passes through which one of the following countries in African continent?

- A. Botswana
- B. Swaziland
- C. Zambia
- D. Zimbabwe

67. Section 139AA inserted in the Income Tax Act, which was in news recently deals with?

- A. Provision of Aadhaar being mandatory for getting a PAN.
- B. Provision of Aadhaar being mandatory for getting a GST number.
- C. Provision of Aadhaar being mandatory for getting IT rebates.
- D. None of the above

68. The first ever G20 Digital Ministerial Meeting on Digital Economy was held in which country?

- A. Japan
- B. India
- C. Russia
- D. Germany

69. Which State Government is planning to launch cheap food canteens called "Annapurna Bhojanalayas"?

- A. Haryana
- B. Manipur
- C. Uttar Pradesh
- D. Assam

70. Who composed the Bhakti song called "Abangas"?

- A. Kabir
- B. Sant Tukaram
- C. Sant Ravidas
- D. Guru Ramdas

71. The coast running from Karwar to Bulsar is called

- A. Malbar Coast
- B. Konkan Coast
- C. Kathiawar coast
- D. Coromandel coast

72. National Environmental Engineering Research Institute falls under

- A. Ministry of Environment and Forest
- B. Ministry of Science and Technology
- C. Ministry of Human Resource and Development
- D. None of the above

73. Zero defect zero effect scheme is associated with which sector

- A. Agriculture
- B. MSME (Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises)
- C. Heavy Industries
- D. Service sector

74. President of India is elected by

- A. Members of Parliament
- B. Elected members of Parliament
- C. Elected members of parliament along with the elected members of State legislative councils.
- D. None of the above

75. Consider the following statements with reference to The National Company Law Tribunal

1. NCLT is a quasi judicial body
2. NCLT is a constitutional organization
3. NCLT is a statutory organization.
4. The NCLT was established under the Companies Act 2013.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- A. 1 only
- B. 1,3 and 4 only
- C. 1,2 and 4 only
- D. None of the above

76. Often we see "Air Independent Propulsion" term in news, it is associated with

- A. Submarines
- B. Cruise missiles
- C. Helicopters
- D. Aircrafts.

77. Vanuatu , an island nation is located in

- A. North Pacific Ocean
- B. South Pacific Ocean
- C. North Atlantic Ocean
- D. Mediterranean sea

78. Consider the following statements

1. ICJ judges are appointed by UN General Assembly.
2. ICJ judges enjoy privileges and immunities equal to the head of a diplomatic mission.

Identify the incorrect statements

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

79. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has recently approved the membership of which of the following nations?

- A. Taiwan, Ukraine and Tonga
- B. Ukraine, Argentina and Japan
- C. Japan, Colombia and United States
- D. Argentina, Madagascar and Tonga

80. Sparkle in the toothpaste comes from?

- A. Fluoride.
- B. Mica.
- C. Calcium Silicate.
- D. Calcium Carbonate.

81. The term 'Goldilocks Zone' is often seen in the news in the context of

- A. The limits of habitable zone above the surface of the Earth
- B. Regions inside the Earth-like planets in outer space
- C. Search for the Earth-like planets in outer space
- D. Search for meteorites containing precious metals

82. Consider the following statement with reference to Wassenaar arrangement

1. China is a member of the arrangement
2. Recently in the year 2013, the list of export restricted technologies under the arrangement was amended to include internet-based surveillance systems

Choose the correct answer

- A. 1 Only
- B. 2 Only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

83. When a bill is referred to a joint sitting both the Houses of the Parliament, has to be passed by

- A. A simple majority of member present and voting
- B. Three-fourths majority of member present and voting
- C. Two-thirds majority of the House
- D. Absolute majority of the House

84. Which country has highest air pollution among all European Union (EU) countries?

- A. Poland
- B. France
- C. Greece
- D. Germany

85. Which among the following is the only breeding ground for Indian Skimmer, an endangered fresh water bird species?

- A. Chambal River
- B. Sunder bans
- C. Ganga-Yamuna basin
- D. Godavari Delta

86. Identify the correct statement with reference to Connshing syndrome

- A. Connshing syndrome is related to Hypertension
- B. Connshing syndrome is related to Hypotension.
- C. Connshing syndrome is linked to over production of stress hormone cortisol
- D. Both A and C.

87. Consider the following statements

1. Higher aerosol loading results in delayed but more rainfall over Central and Northern India.
2. Higher aerosol loading results in earlier but less rainfall over Central and Northern India.
3. Aerosol has no effect on the monsoon

Choose the correct answer

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. 2 and 3 only

88. Which of the following statements is/are correct?

1. There is a time limit of 30 days to file a Curative petition.
2. The Curative petition is circulated among three senior most judges.

Choose the correct answer

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None of the above

89. Lingaraja Temple is built on which architectural style

- A. Kalinga Architecture
- B. Dravida Architecture
- C. Nagara Architecture
- D. Vasera Architecture

90. Consider the following statement with reference to Swadesh Darshan Scheme

1. It is completely funded by Central government
2. Ministry of tourism is the implementing agency
3. It has two components – PRASAD and Swadeshi Darshan under its ambit.

Choose the correct answer

- A. Only 1
- B. Only 2
- C. 1 and 3
- D. All are correct

91. The city liveability Index which was in news recently is intended

- A. To measure the quality of life in 116 major cities including capital cities and those with population over one million.
- B. To measure the quality of life in 116 major cities including capital cities and those with population over five million.
- C. To measure the quality of life in 116 major cities including capital cities and those with population over ten million.
- D. None of the above

92. Consider the following statement with reference to Cartosat-2 series satellite, which was launched recently by ISRO

1. Cartosat-2 is a remote sensing satellite.
2. Cartosat-2 will be used for Land Information Systems (LIS) and Geographical Information System (GIS) applications.

3. Cartosat-2 is a weather forecasting satellite.

Choose the correct answer

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 3
- D. 1 and 2

93. Who among the following established the Bhil Seva Mandal in 1922?

- A. Narain Malhar
- B. Amritlal Vitthaladas Thakkar
- C. Jyotiba Phule
- D. Baba Amte

94. Which among the following temples of India is known as Black Pagoda?

- A. Sun Temple, Konark
- B. Brihadeeswara Temple, Tanjore
- C. Lord Jagannath Temple, Puri
- D. Meenakshi Temple, Madurai

95. The sands on the beaches in Kovalam are partially black in colour due to the presence of

- A. Ilmenite
- B. Monazite.
- C. Both A and B
- D. Neither A nor B

96. Hawah Beach is found in which state?

- A. Kerala
- B. Tamil Nadu
- C. Andhra Pradesh
- D. Goa

97. Which of the following parts of constitution explicitly mentions that India is a secular state?

- A. Preamble
- B. Fundamental Rights
- C. Directive Principles of state policy
- D. The Union

98. With reference to the State Legislative Council in India, which among the following statements is / are correct?

1. The Legislative Council is a continuing House & two-third of the members retire in two years.
2. Members of local bodies elect one-third of the total number of members of the legislative council
3. If a state legislative council is to be created or abolished, a resolution to that effect is to be first passed by the State legislature by a two-third majority

Choose the correct answer

- A. Only 1 & 2
- B. Only 2 & 3
- C. Only 1 & 3
- D. 1, 2 & 3

99. Where is the headquarters of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)?

- A. Paris
- B. Geneva
- C. Berlin
- D. New York.

100. Which city hosted the World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) Forum-2017?

- A. Paris
- B. New York
- C. Geneva
- D. Berlin.

101. What is the theme of the 2017 ASEAN Dengue Day (ADD)?

- A. One vision for dengue-free society
- B. ASEAN unity for a dengue-free community
- C. Dengue: Fight is necessary
- D. United fight against dengue.

102. What is the India's rank in the 2017 Global Innovation Index (GII)?

- A. 60th
- B. 36th
- C. 54th
- D. 75th

103. Consider the following statement with reference to Egyptian vultures, which was in news recently

1. It is the largest among all the vultures.
2. It is an endangered species as per IUCN's Red data book.
3. It is also called as white scavengers

Choose the correct answer

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 3 only
- C. 2 and 3 only
- D. All are correct

104. Consider the following statement with reference to a device Genexpert which was in news recently

1. Genexpert can run molecular test
2. It can diagnose TB and HIV infections
3. The device size is equivalent to that of a microwave oven

Choose the correct answer

- A. 1 only
- B. 1 and 2 only
- C. 1 and 3 only
- D. All are correct

105. Consider the following statement with reference to Global Entry Programme which was in news recently

1. India recently signed to join this programme.
2. This scheme will allow expedited entry into the US to all travellers from India

Choose the correct answer

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

106. Consider the following statement with reference to CERT-In which was in news recently

1. The Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) is an office within the Ministry of defense.
2. It is the nodal agency to deal with cyber security threats like hacking and phishing.

Choose the correct answer

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

107. Consider the following statement with reference to Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) which was in news recently

1. The GES is a personal initiative of US President Barack Obama to bring entrepreneurs from across the globe on one platform.
2. The 2017 Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) will be hosted by China.

Choose the correct answer

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. 1 and 2 only
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

108. Which one of the following is produced during the formation of photochemical smog

- A. Hydrocarbon
- B. Nitrogen oxide
- C. Ozone
- D. Methane

109. Dual Energy X-ray Absorptiometry (DEXA) is used to measure

- A. Spread of solid tumor
- B. Bone density
- C. Ulcerous growth in stomach
- D. Extent of brain hemorrhage

110. Global Dimming means

- A. Gradual increase of temperature of Ionosphere.
- B. Gradual loss of biodiversity hotspots
- C. Gradual reduction in the amount of global direct irradiance at the earth surface.
- D. Gradual increase in the melting of ice at the polar areas.

111. People suffering from "anorexia nervosa"

- A. develops Paralysis
- B. Show poor reflex
- C. Cannot speak properly
- D. Eat very little and fear gaining weight

112. The mandate of the scheme entitled 'Directly observed treatment, Short Course' (DOTS) launched by WHO is to ensure that

- A. Doctors treat patients with medicines for a short duration
- B. Doctors do not start treatment without a trial
- C. Patients complete their course of drug
- D. Patients voluntarily take vaccines.

113. Which one of the following is produced during the formation of photochemical smog

- A. Hydrocarbon
- B. Nitrogen oxide
- C. Ozone
- D. Methane

114. In the famous Puri Ratha Yatra festival, for which of the following gods, chariots will be drawn ?

- A. Lord Balabhadra
- B. Lord Jagannath
- C. Devi Subhadra
- D. All of the above

115. Consider the statements NISAR satellite:

1. NISAR is the world's most expensive earth-imaging satellite till date being jointly made by the NASA and the ISRO.
2. The satellite aims to study global environmental change and natural disasters.

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None

116. Which of the following is not a constitutional body ?

- A. Election Commission
- B. Finance Commission
- C. Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG)
- D. SEBI

117. Consider the gulf countries:

1. Kuwait
2. Qatar
3. Bahrain
4. UAE

Arrange the above countries in North-South Direction:

- A. 1-3-2-4
- B. 1-2-3-4
- C. 1-2-4-3
- D. 2-1-3-4

118. Consider the statements about UNICEF :

1. The United Nations Children's Fund is a United Nations (UN) programme headquartered in Washington D.C., that provides humanitarian and developmental assistance to children and mothers in developing countries.
2. It is a member of the United Nations Development Group

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. None

119. Which state government was recently awarded the United Nations Public Service Award?

- A. West Bengal
- B. Tamil Nadu
- C. Odisha
- D. Karnataka

120. Consider the following statements with reference to 'Kanyashree Prakalpa':

1. Scheme Incentivize girl child continue in education for a longer period of time, and complete secondary or higher secondary education, or equivalent in technical or vocational streams, thereby giving them a better footing in both the economic and social spheres.
2. Scheme helps in Disincentivising marriage till at least the age of 18

Which of the above statements is/are correct ?

- A. 1 only
- B. 2 only
- C. Both 1 and 2
- D. Neither 1 nor 2

121. The Dudhwa National Park is located in which state?

- A. Uttar Pradesh
- B. Madhya Pradesh
- C. Gujarat
- D. Rajasthan

122. The Sankosh river forms boundary between which of the following two states?

- A. Bihar and West Bengal
- B. Assam and Arunachal Pradesh
- C. Assam and West Bengal
- D. Bihar and Jharkhand

123. The Machia Biological Park is located in which state?

- A. Rajasthan
- B. Sikkim
- C. Nagaland
- D. Manipur.

ANSWER KEYS

Question No	Answer Keys
1.	D
2.	A
3.	B
4.	A
5.	A
6.	B
7.	C
8.	C
9.	A
10.	A
11.	A
12.	C
13.	C
14.	A
15.	A
16.	A
17.	B
18.	C
19.	D
20.	D
21.	D
22.	B
23.	B
24.	C
25.	D

Question No	Answer Keys
26.	B
27.	B
28.	A
29.	C
30.	B
31.	A
32.	A
33.	C
34.	C
35.	D
36.	A
37.	D
38.	B
39.	A
40.	C
41.	A
42.	D
43.	B
44.	B
45.	C
46.	C
47.	D
48.	C
49.	A
50.	B

Question No	Answer Keys
51.	B
52.	C
53.	D
54.	C
55.	D
56.	C
57.	D
58.	A
59.	C
60.	C
61.	A
62.	B
63.	D
64.	A
65.	D
66.	A
67.	A
68.	D
69.	C
70.	B
71.	B
72.	B
73.	B
74.	D
75.	B

Question No	Answer Keys
76.	A
77.	B
78.	A
79.	D
80.	B
81.	C
82.	B
83.	A
84.	A
85.	A
86.	D
87.	A
88.	B
89.	A
90.	D
91.	A
92.	D
93.	B
94.	A
95.	C
96.	A
97.	A
98.	B
99.	D
100.	C

Question No	Answer Keys
101.	D
102.	A
103.	C
104.	D
105.	A
106.	B
107.	A
108.	B
109.	B
110.	C
111.	D
112.	B
113.	B
114.	D
115.	C
116.	D
117.	A
118.	B
119.	A
120.	C
121.	A
122.	B
123.	A

INCREDIBLE RESULTS

— IAS 2016 —

8 Ranks
in Top 50

18 Ranks
in Top 100

215 Ranks
In The Final List



Rank 2
Anmol Sher
Singh Bedi



Rank 5
Abhilash
Mishra



Rank 12
Tejaswi
Rana



Rank 30
Prabhash
Kumar



Rank 32
Avdhesh
Meena



Ganga
Singh
Rank-33



Anu S
Rank-42



Surabhi
Gautam
Rank-50



Manuj
Jindal
Rank-53



Tanai
Sultania
Rank-63



Parikh
Mirant Jatin
Rank-67



Rohit
Vyas
Rank-69



Abhishek
Chourasiya
Rank-72



Rajarshi
Shah
Rank-81



Prateek
Jain
Rank-82



Nair Prajit
Prabhakaran
Rank-87



Sushil
Kumar
Rank-96



Devendra
Kumar
Rank-97



Swarn
Prabhat
Rank-105



Hirani
Adityavikram
Rank-113



Varun
Singla
Rank-114



Shaurya
suman
Rank-119



Nitish
Agarwal
Rank-122



Ann Mary
George
Rank-123



Anand
Shankar
Rank-127



Rishav
Kumar Jha
Rank-128



Prabhat
Ranjan Pathak
Rank-137



Akanksha
Rana
Rank-163



Padmini
Solanki
Rank-170



Amogh
Gopinath
Rank-171



Bindu
Madhav
Garikapati
Rank-172



Rahul
Gupta
Rank-182



Sagar
Bagmar
Rank-186



Abhay
Soni
Rank-188



Tare Anuj
Milind
Rank-189



Anurag
Jain
Rank-198



Arpit
Vijayvargiya
Rank-201



Deepak
Shukla
Rank-202



Videh
Khare
Rank-205



Akhil
Mahajan
Rank-213



Nitika
Pant
Rank-217



Tuhin
Sinha
Rank-219



Keshav
Kumar
Rank-222



Keshav
Kumar
Rank-230



mohit
Garg
Rank-238



Pansuria
Toral Pravinbhai
Rank-239



Odke Digvijay
Govind
Rank-247



Bogati
jagadeeswar
Rank-249



Abhishek
Surana
Rank-250



Pushkin
Jain
Rank-252



Amit
Verma
Rank-253



Shrey Vats
Rank-260



Suchismita
Kanungoe
Rank-261



Sri Hari Prasad
Gopishetty
Rank-268



Aditi Mor
Rank-277



Zade Parikshit
Sanjayrao
Rank-280



Prachi
Ailawadhi
Rank-290



Guru Prasad
Rank-299



Shashank
Shekhar Singh
Rank-306



Aaditya
Mishra
Rank-309



Amilineni
Bhargav Teja
Rank-314



Aman
Bishla
Rank-315



Arihant
Singhi
Rank-322



Mitika
Dahiya
Rank-325



Ashima
Mittal
Rank-328



Aastha
Suman
Rank-331



Ankur
Rank-341



Avneet
Punia
Rank-356



S Chitharanjan
Rank-357



Ranjan
Rajeev
Rank-358



Godhani
Aksharkumar P
Rank-365



Sumit
Balecha
Rank-368



Basuki Nath
Jha
Rank-378



Mayank
Mishra
Rank-379



Mrinal Prakash
Mishra
Rank-380



Kaustuva
Rank-381



Sambit
Mishra
Rank-385

OUR RESULTS IN THE PAST YEARS

IAS Result 2015

5 Ranks in Top 50 **14 Ranks in Top 100** **162 Ranks In The Final List**

 Rank 20 Vipin Garg	 Rank 24 Khumanthem Diana Devi	 Rank 25 Chandra Mohan Garg	 Rank 27 Pulkit Garg	 Rank 47 Anshul Agarwal
 Rank-51 Amit Yadav	 Rank-57 Abhishek Goyal	 Rank-66 Varsha Singh	 Rank-73 Vishal Singh	 Rank-74 Aneesh Dasgupta
 Rank-77 Ankur	 Rank-81 Anupam Mishra	 Rank-91 Rakesh Kumar	 Rank-95 Vishal Kumar	
 Rank-124 Bondar Siddeshwar Baliram	 Rank-128 Vinit Agrawal	 Rank-136 Yashika Mehta	 Rank-141 Rajat Saklecha	 Rank-142 Saurabh
 Rank-144 Arpit Jain	 Rank-148 Anjani Anjan	 Rank-150 Vemuri V L Ambarish	 Rank-151 Amit Tolani	
 Rank-152 Ravindra Goswami	 Rank-161 Anubhav Bharadwaj	 Rank-162 Rishav Kumar Jha	 Rank-167 S Asker Ali	 Rank-169 P Krishnakant
 Rank-171 Mani Lal Patidar	 Rank-176 Patel Ravindra Dahyabhai	 Rank-177 Ankur Aggarwal	 Rank-182 Hena Kumar Sukhna	






IAS Result 2014

6 Ranks in Top 50 **12 Ranks in Top 100** **83 Ranks Overall Selections**

 Rank 4 Vandana Rao	 Rank 5 Suharsha Bhagat	 Rank 16 Ananya Das	 Rank 23 Anil Dhameliya	 Rank 28 Kushaal Yadav	 Rank 39 Vivekanand T.S
---	---	---	---	--	---

IAS Result 2013

5 Ranks in Top 50 **62 Ranks in the final list**

 Rank 9 Divyanshu Jha	 Rank 12 Neha Jain	 Rank 23 Prabhav Joshi	 Rank 40 Gaurang Rath	 Rank 46 Udit Singh
---	--	--	--	---

Why Choose BYJU'S CLASSES?

Our USPs



Committed to providing the best faculty in the field coupled with services of eminent guest speakers/experts on relevant topics and interaction with renowned personalities and toppers.



Providing the best ever conducive atmosphere for overall growth of knowledge, skill and aptitude through classroom sessions, group study, discussion, deliberations and question sessions



Infusing the right skills in developing the analytical ability and aptitude required for giving their best.



Providing revised syllabi and latest study materials prepared after thoughtful research by distinguished analysts on the panel.



Organizing interactive sessions on previous year's question papers, modular full length test in the circumstances similar to the Civil Services Exam.



Organising Mock Interviews by panels of eminent and experienced IAS and IPS Officers.



Organizing All India Mock Tests catering to the maximum number of students Nation wide.



Interactions of enrolled aspirants with the Rankers of Civil Services Examination.

Our Advisory Board

S N Jha

(IAS Retd, Former
Chief Secretary, Bihar)

K J Alphons

(IAS Resigned)

C N S Nair

(IAS Retd, Former
Secretary to Govt of India)

SN Mukherjee

(Air Vice Marshal Retd.)

A K Puri

(IPS Retd, Former DGP,
Himachal Pradesh)

Arun Kumar Mago

(IAS Rtd, Former
Chief Secretary, Maharashtra)

B L Vohra

(IPS Retd, Former DGP,
Tripura)

B S Lamba Prasad

(IAS Retd, Former
Indian Envoy to UNO)

A K Rastogi

(IAS Retd, Former
Secretary to Govt Of India)

Vineet Ohri

(IRS Retd, Former Chief
Commissioner, Customs & Excise)

OFFICES

Bangalore
 Delhi-NCR
 Hyderabad
 Chennai
 Pune
 Kolkata
 Mysore
 Manipal
 Ahmedabad
 Chandigarh
 Kerala
 Mumbai

ABOUT BYJU'S

We are the largest Education Technology (Learning) company in India that is re-inventing the learning system for students with its cutting-edge "Learning App".

BYJU'S Learning App was launched last year and has witnessed extraordinary and impressive feat in revolutionizing the way we learn and today we have over 8 million students on its platform across the world. The Learning App is one of a kind that is designed using interactive simulations, watch-and-learn videos, rich animations, and enriched with content that gives conceptual clarity making learning contextual and visual, not just theoretical.



TAB



Classes



Prelims
Test Series



Mains
Test Series



Interview
Preparation



Dedicated
Mains Batch

Want to know more?

Call or WhatsApp

09980837187

Visit:

www.byjus.com

www.byjus.com/free-ias-prep

www.facebook.com/byjusclasses

AWARDS



ET 40 Under Forty
India's Hottest Business
Leaders Award (2016)



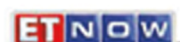
Vccircle
Awards
Education
Company Of
The Year 2016



Winner of
Super Brands
SuperStartUp 2017



Winner of Deloitte Technology Fast 50 India and
Top 500 Asia Award (2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016)



ET Now Education Excellence Award (2013)



Winner of
Established Education App of
the Year (2017)



Winner of Google Play's
"Best Self Improvement"
app in India 2016



Winner of ASSOCHAM
SMEs Excellence Award
for Start-up of the Year
2016



Winner of CNBC TV18
Young Turks of the year award



GMA Summit
Award 2016



Reimagine Education
Award 2016
Overall Ed Tech winner
Gold Award for Best
Educational App