

MONTHLY

# FACTLY

EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR

# PRELIMS

APRIL 2018

ForumIAS

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## Current Issues


### (April 2018)

### POLITY AND GOVERNANCE

#### 1. Procedure to remove the Chief Justice of India

##### **Constitution**

Article 124(4) of the Constitution lays down the procedure for removal of a judge of the Supreme Court, including the CJI, who can be impeached on grounds of “misbehaviour or incapacity”.



### HOW IS A JUDGE REMOVED?

- 1** Notice for removal can be presented in both Houses of Parliament. In Lok Sabha, it has to be signed by at least 100 MPs. In Rajya Sabha, a minimum 50 MPs have to sign it
- 2** If motion is admitted, a 3-member panel is set up to probe allegations. The panel must include an SC judge, a Chief Justice of any high court, and a distinguished jurist, to be nominated by the Speaker/Vice-President
- 3** The panel submits its report to the Speaker/Vice-President, and it is shared with the other House. If the report establishes “misbehaviour” or “incapacity” then both Houses need to pass an ‘address to the President’ that the judge be removed
- 4** The ‘address’ has to be passed by 2/3rds of the members present and voting in each House, and the number should be more than the halfway mark for each House
- 5** Once passed by both, the President can remove the judge through a Prez Order

**PAST CASES** | Removal cases have previously been initiated against 6 judges, though never against a CJI. None of the judges was formally ousted, though two – P D Dinakaran and Soumitra Sen – resigned before they could be removed | **Details, P 14**

#### CHARGES AGAINST CJI IN PETITION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Oppn questions manner in which Justice Misra dealt with bribery allegations in the Prasad Education Trust case</li> <li>➤ Alleges “ante-dating” of a note regarding a petition in the same case</li> <li>➤ Alleges that CJI had acquired a plot of land as</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an advocate by giving a false affidavit</li> <li>➤ Claims “abuse of exercise of power” with CJI allocating “sensitive matters to particular benches by misusing his authority... with likely intent to influence outcome”   <b>Details, P 14</b></li> </ul>
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#### 2. Protected Area Permit regime

- The Union Home Ministry has decided to relax the six-decade-old Protected Area Permit regime from Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur for five years with effect from April 1



- Under the Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958, all areas falling between the Inner line and the International Border of some states have been declared as protected areas.
- The protected areas currently include whole of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim, besides parts of Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Jammu and Kashmir. Some parts of Sikkim fall under the protected area regime while others under the restricted area.

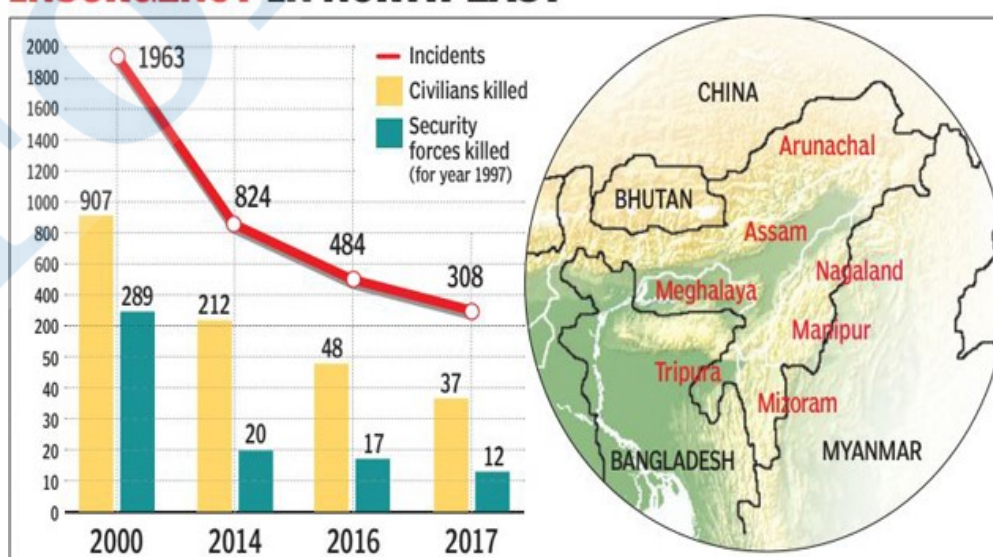


(P.S – Mark the states which comes under Protected Areas Permit Regime)

### 3. AFSPA lifted in Meghalaya

- The Centre has removed the AFSPA from Meghalaya, from April 1 onwards.

### INSURGENCY IN NORTH-EAST



- AFSPA gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in “disturbed areas”. They have the authority to prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area, can use force or even open fire after giving due warning if they feel a person is in contravention of the law. If reasonable suspicion exists, the army can also arrest a person without a warrant; enter or search a premises without a warrant; and ban the possession of firearms.
- A disturbed area is one which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA. An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- The Central Government or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.

#### **4. National Commission for Minorities (NCM)**

- The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) has decided to approach the government for granting it Constitutional status to protect the rights of minority communities more effectively.
- The Union Government set up the National Commission for Minorities (NCM) under the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.
- Six religious communities, viz; Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Zoroastrians (Parsis) and Jains have been notified in Gazette of India as minority communities by the Union Government all over India. Original notification of 1993 was for five religious communities Sikhs, Buddhists, Parsis, Christians and Muslims.
- Composition: The Commission shall consist of a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson and five Members to be nominated by the Central Government from amongst persons of eminence, ability and integrity; provided that five Members including the Chairperson shall be from amongst the minority communities.

#### **5. Fugitive Economic Offenders Ordinance 2018**

- The Union Cabinet has approved the Finance Ministry’s proposal of promulgating the Fugitive Economic Offenders Ordinance, 2018 which will empower authorities to attach and confiscate properties and assets of economic offenders like loan defaulters who flee the country.

#### **6. Island Development Agency (IDA)**

- The IDA was set up on June 1, 2017 following Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s review meeting for the development of islands. The meetings of the agency are chaired by the Union Home Minister.

- Members of the IDA include cabinet secretary, home secretary, secretary (environment, forests and climate change), secretary (tourism) and secretary (tribal welfare).

### **7. Zonal Councils**

- Zonal councils have been established by the Parliament to promote interstate cooperation and coordination.
- They are statutory bodies established under the States Reorganisation Act 1956 and not constitutional bodies. They are only deliberative and advisory bodies.

### **8. Scheduled areas**

- The Union Cabinet has given approval to the declaration of Scheduled Areas in respect of Rajasthan under Fifth Schedule to the Constitution of India.
- As per the Fifth Schedule {Article 244(1)} to the Constitution of India, the expression 'Scheduled Areas' means 'such areas as the President may by order declare to be Scheduled Areas'.
- Alternation of boundaries: In accordance with the provisions of paragraph 6(2) of the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution, the President may at any time by order increase the area of any Scheduled Area in a State after consultation with the Governor of that State; rescind, in relation to any State or States, any order or orders made under this paragraph, and in consultation with the Governor of the State concerned, make fresh orders redefining the areas which are to be Scheduled Areas.
- The current fifth scheduled areas are in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha and Rajasthan.

### **9. Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)**

- To counter corruption and speed up decision- making in military procurement, the government of India in 2001 decided to set up an integrated DAC. It is headed by the Defence Minister.
- The DAC is responsible to give policy guidelines to acquisitions, based on long-term procurement plans. It also clears all acquisitions, which includes both imported and those produced indigenously or under a foreign license.

### **10. National Safety Council**

- National Safety Council is a premier, non-profit, self-financing and tripartite apex body at the national level in India.

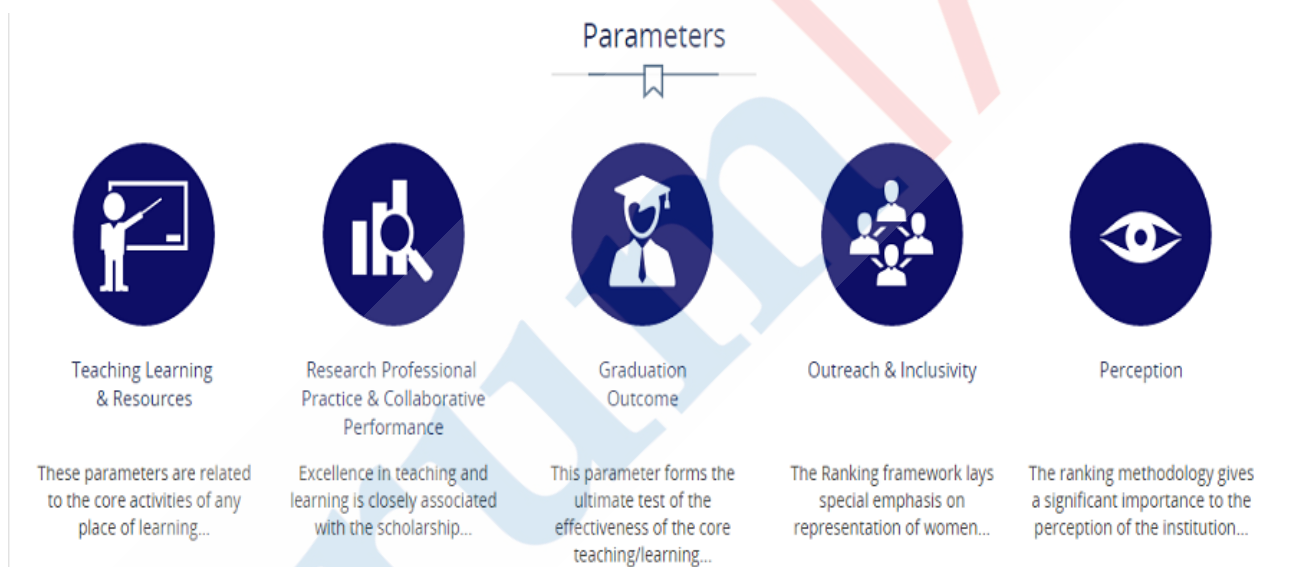


- It is an autonomous body, which was set up by the Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment in 1966 to generate, develop and sustain a voluntary movement on Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) at the national level.
- It was registered as a Society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 and subsequently, as a Public Trust under the Bombay Public Trust Act, 1950.

## **GOVT SCHEMES AND PROGRAMMES**

### **11. HRD Ministry releases NIRF Rankings**

The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) outlines a methodology to rank institutions across the country.



- The 2018 rankings include nine different categories-overall, universities, engineering, colleges, management, pharmacy, medical, architecture, and law. Out of which sections like medical, architecture and law have been introduced this year.

### **12. Van Dhan Scheme**

- The scheme aims at economic development of tribals involved in collection of Minor Food Produces (MFPs) by helping them in optimum utilization of natural resources and provide them sustainable livelihood.



**Van Dhan Scheme**

**Empowering Tribal Communities Through Value Addition**

**Features of the Scheme:**

- 10 SHGs\* of 30 tribal gatherers is constituted
- To be trained and provided with working capital
- SHGs will market their products within and across states
- To form clusters to aggregate their stock and link with facility of primary processing in Van Dhan Vikas Kendras
- Involvement of big corporates under PPP\*\* model

\*Self Help Groups \*\*Public Private Partnership

- TRIFED
- TRIFED is an apex organisation at National Level and functioning under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs.
- TRIFED is serving the interests of Tribals, who are engaged in collection of NTFP and making of Tribal Art & Handicraft Products for their livelihood so as to ensure better remunerative price for their products as well as for the socio-economic betterment through Self Help Groups, Empanelled NGOs, State level Tribal Development Corporations, Forest Development Corporations for undertaking marketing development of the tribal products.

### **13. Atal New India Challenge**

The Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) of the NITI Aayog announced to launch the Atal New India Challenges.

- Under the Atal New India Challenge AIM will invite prospective innovators/MSMEs/start-ups to design market-ready products, using cutting edge technologies or prototypes across 17 identified focus areas.
- The programme is open to Indian companies registered under the Companies Act 1956/2013, primarily a Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) as defined in the MSMED Act, 2006.

### **Monthly Factly for Prelims by ForumIAS**

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- It is also open to Start-Ups, as defined by the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Government or private R&D organizations, academic institutions, academicians, or even individual innovators are encouraged to apply, provided they partner with entities with appropriate manufacturing capabilities.
- Applicants showing capability, intent, and potential to productize technologies will be awarded grants up to Rs. One crore.
- This grant support will be supplemented by mentoring, hand holding, incubating and other support as needed at various stages of commercialisation. While generating wider deployment.

#### **14. Fast track task Force**

- The fast track task Force, a body under Ministry of Electronics and IT, has set target to achieve around 500 million mobile phone productions in India by 2019, with value estimated to be around USD 46 billion.
- Department of Electronics and Information Technology (DeitY) formed a Fast Track Task Force to re-establish growth in the country's mobile handset and component manufacturing eco-system.
- It has members from industry and government.
- It promotes large-scale manufacturing/assembling activity to achieve production of 500 million units by 2019. This can create additional employment opportunities for 1.5 million approximately.
- The task force has to create a roadmap to align technology, demand, standards and regulations for enhancing the competitiveness of domestic manufacturing across the supply chain for manufacturing mobile phone.

#### **15. National Register of Citizens (NRC)**

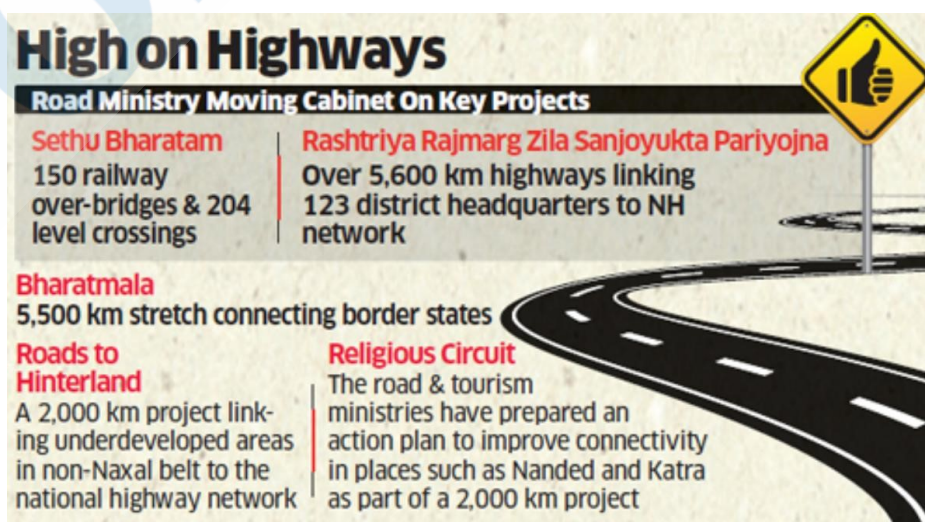
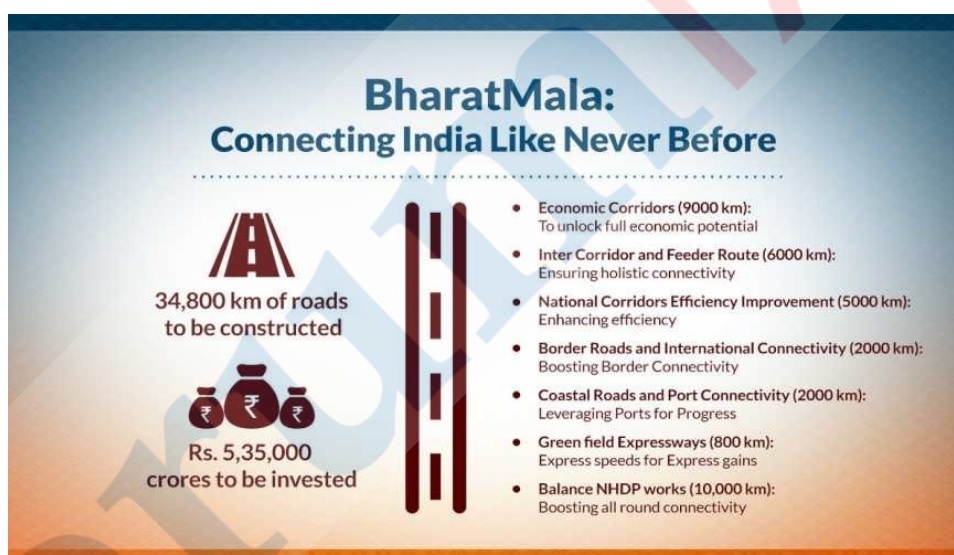
- The verification of citizenship documents of 29 lakh married women, mostly migrant Muslims, for the Supreme Court-monitored exercise to update the 1951 National Register of Citizens (NRC) has begun in Assam.
- The NRC was introduced to identify illegal immigrants from Bangladesh and recognise the Indian citizens in Assam. It was first prepared in 1951 and Assam is the only state having this arrangement.
- Under NRC, immigrants who have documents proving that they entered Assam before 1971 will be considered Indian citizens and others have to show that they their ascendants have lived in Assam even before 1971.
- The NRC will be updated as per the provisions of The Citizenship Act, 1955 and The Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003.



## 16. Bharatmala Programme

In order to keep up the pace to implement ambitious Bharatmala Programme, the NHAI is planning to award 3,000-odd km of projects in the next couple of months of the new fiscal.

- Bharatmala Project is the second largest highways construction project in the country since NHDP, under which almost 50,000 km of highway roads were targeted across the country.
- Bharatmala will look to improve connectivity particularly on economic corridors, border areas and far flung areas with an aim of quicker movement of cargo and boosting exports.
- The National Highways Authority of India was constituted by an act of Parliament, the National Highways Authority of India Act, 1988. It is responsible for the development, maintenance and management of National Highways entrusted to it and for matters connected or incidental thereto. The Authority was operationalised in Feb, 1995.



**17. SC/ST Atrocities Act****‘DILUTION’ OF SC/ST ACT**

**WHAT'S THE ACT?** The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act 1989. It is meant to speed action on complaints of violence against Dalits.

**WHAT SC HAD SAID?** On March 20, it heard a private petition and said the law was being misused. It banned arrests under the Act without prior nod from officials. It also held that a court can grant anticipatory bail in case of false complaints

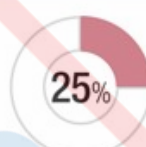
**WHAT HAPPENS NOW?** Centre filed a review petition on Monday, but SC did not grant urgent hearing. As per SC rules, review petition is decided by judges after it's circulated among those who give the order under review.

**THE DALIT ANGER** Dalits have accused successive govts of failing to protect them



of 1.45L cases involving Dalits awaiting trial by 2016-end

1/10th of cases brought by Dalits in 2016 found false



share of Dalits in India's 1.3 bn population

- The Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act is popularly known as POA, the SC/ST Act, the Prevention of Atrocities Act, or simply the Atrocities Act.
- The SC/ST Act was enacted on September 9, 1989. The rules for the Act were notified on March 31, 1995.
- The SC/ST Act lists 22 offences relating to various patterns or behaviours inflicting criminal offences and breaking the self-respect and esteem of the scheduled castes and tribes community. This includes denial of economic, democratic and social rights, discrimination, exploitation and abuse of the legal process.
- According to the SC/ST Act, the protection is provided from social disabilities such as denial of access to certain places and to use customary passage, personal atrocities like forceful drinking or eating of inedible food sexual exploitation, injury etc, atrocities affecting properties, malicious prosecution, political disabilities and economic exploitation.
- For speedy trial, Section 14 of the SC/ST Act provides for a Court of Session to be a Special Court to try offences under this Act in each district.
- The prime objective of the SC/ST Act is to deliver justice to marginalised through proactive efforts, giving them a life of dignity, self-esteem and a life without fear, violence or suppression from the dominant castes



### **18. National Company Law Tribunal**

- National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) is a quasi-judicial body that will govern the companies in India. It was established under the Companies Act, 2013 and is a successor body of the Company Law Board.
- Powers: NCLT will have the same powers as assigned to the erstwhile Company Law Board (which are mostly related to dealing with oppression and mismanagement), Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR)(revival of sick companies) and powers related to winding up of companies (which was available only with the High Courts).

### **19. Competition Commission of India**

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for rightsizing the Competition Commission of India (CCI) from One Chairperson and Six Members (totalling seven) to One Chairperson and Three Members (totalling four).

- The Competition Commission of India (CCI) was established under the Competition Act, 2002 for the administration, implementation and enforcement of the Act, and was duly constituted in March 2009. Chairman and members are appointed by the central government.
- The objectives of the Commission are
- To prevent practices having adverse effect on competition.
- To promote and sustain competition in markets.
- To protect the interests of consumers.
- To ensure freedom of trade.

### **20. UTTAM APP for Coal Quality Monitoring**

- UTTAM stands for – Unlocking Transparency by Third Party Assessment of Mined Coal.
- The Ministry of Coal and Coal India Limited (CIL) has developed the App.

## UTTAM APP FOR COAL QUALITY MONITORING



### Salient features UTTAM



## 21. National Commission for Safai Karamcharis

A new website and a mobile app has been launched for the 'National Commission for Safai Karamcharis'.

- National Commission for Safai Karamcharis is an Indian statutory body was established through National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993. It aims to promote and safeguard the interests and rights of Safai Karamcharis.
- The National Commission for Safai Karamcharis seeks to study, evaluate and monitor the implementation of various schemes for Safai Karamcharis as an autonomous organisation and also to provide redressal of their grievances.

## 22. FSSAI introduces Project Dhoop

In order to address rising incidence of Vitamin 'D' Deficiencies (VDD), particularly amongst the young people, FSSAI has launched a unique initiative, 'Project Dhoop' in association with NCERT, NDMC and North MCD Schools.

### **About FSSAI:**

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) has been established under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 which consolidates various acts & orders that have hitherto handled food related issues in various Ministries and Departments.
- It was created for laying down science based standards for articles of food and to regulate their manufacture, storage, distribution, sale and import to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food for human consumption.

- Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is the Administrative Ministry for the implementation of FSSAI.

### About Project Dhoop:

- Project Dhoop urges schools to shift their morning assembly to noon time, mainly between 11am and 1pm to ensure maximum absorption of Vitamin D in students through natural sunlight.

## 23. Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY)

Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana is an elaborated component of Soil Health Management (SHM) of major project National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA).

Implementation:

- Under PKVY Organic farming is promoted through the adoption of the organic village by cluster approach and PGS certification.
- Fifty or more farmers will form a cluster having 50-acre land to take up the organic farming under the scheme.



(The above Picture is dated 2017)

## 24. 11th World Hindi Conference

- The 11th World Hindi Conference (WHC) is being organized in August 2018 in Mauritius by the Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India in association with the Government of Mauritius.
- The event, held once in three years, is dedicated to Hindi language. It sees participation from Hindi scholars, writers and laureates from different parts of the world who contribute to the language.

**25. e-FRRO scheme**

The government has launched the web-based application 'e-FRRO' (e-Foreigners Regional Registration Office) which aims to provide efficient visa related services online to foreigners visiting India.

**26. Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY)**

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana aims to provide LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) connections to poor households.
- Who is eligible? Under the scheme, an adult woman member of a below poverty line family identified through the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) is given a deposit-free LPG connection with financial assistance of Rs 1,600 per connection by the Centre.
- Identification of households: Eligible households will be identified in consultation with state governments and Union territories. The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.

**Some of the objectives of the scheme are:**

- Empowering women and protecting their health.
- Reducing the serious health hazards associated with cooking based on fossil fuel.
- Reducing the number of deaths in India due to unclean cooking fuel.
- Preventing young children from significant number of acute respiratory illnesses caused due to indoor air pollution by burning the fossil fuel.

**27. Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB)**

India's downstream oil and gas regulator Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) is set to take up the role of the market regulator for the natural gas sector, when the planned natural gas trading hub comes into being, much on the lines of the capital markets regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

- The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) was constituted under The Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board Act, 2006.
- The Act provide for the establishment of Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board to protect the interests of consumers and entities engaged in specified activities relating to petroleum, petroleum products and natural gas and to promote competitive markets and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto.

**28. Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal**

Central Government recently handed over reference of Mahanadi Water Disputes Tribunal under Section 5 (1) of the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act (ISRWD), 1956 to Chairman of the tribunal and Supreme Court Judge, Justice A M Khanwilkar.

- The tribunal will be formed according to the provisions of the Inter-State River Water Disputes (ISRWD), 1956.
- The Mahanadi River flows through the states of Chhattisgarh and Odisha.
- The major tributaries of Mahanadi are Seonath, Jonk, Hasdo, Mand, Ib, Ong, Tel.

## **29. Atal Tinkering Labs**

- With a vision to 'Cultivate one Million children in India as Neoteric Innovators', Atal Innovation Mission is establishing Atal Tinkering Laboratories (ATLs) in schools across India.
- Objective: The objective of this scheme is to foster curiosity, creativity and imagination in young minds; and inculcate skills such as design mindset, computational thinking, adaptive learning, physical computing etc.
- Financial Support: AIM will provide grant-in-aid that includes a one-time establishment cost of Rs. 10 lakh and operational expenses of Rs. 10 lakh for a maximum period of 5 years to each ATL.
- Eligibility: Schools (minimum Grade VI – X) managed by Government, local body or private trusts/society can set up ATL.
- Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) endeavours to promote a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship
- The Atal Innovation Mission shall have two core functions:
- Entrepreneurship promotion through Self-Employment and Talent Utilization, wherein innovators would be supported and mentored to become successful entrepreneurs.
- Innovation promotion: to provide a platform where innovative ideas are generated.

## **30. Study in India programme**

- With an aim to provide students across the world an opportunity to study in Indian educational institutions, the Union HRD Ministry has launched "Study in India" programme.

### **About**

- The "Study in India" is an innovative initiative to attract students from countries in South Asia, South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa to come and experience the very best of academic learning from the top institutions in India.
- Key features: Under the programme, meritorious students would also be provided with fee waiver and scholarship. The Institute concerned will bear the expenditure on the fee waiver based on cross-subsidisation or through its existing funding. One of the objectives for the programme is to improve global ranking for Indian educational institutes.



### **31. Gram Swaraj Abhiyan**

The campaign, undertaken under the name of “Sabka Sath, Sabka Gaon, Sabka Vikas”, is to promote social harmony, spread awareness about pro-poor initiatives of government, reach out to poor households to enrol them as also to obtain their feedback on various welfare programmes.

- As a special endeavour during the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, saturation of eligible households/persons would be made under seven flagship pro-poor programmes in 21,058 identified villages.
- The programmes covered are Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana, Saubhagya, Ujala scheme, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Mission Indradhanush.

### **32. e-Vidhan project**

- e-Vidhan is a mission mode project to digitize and make the functioning of State Legislatures in India paperless.
- It is a part of the broader Digital India Programme of the Government and is likely to contribute to the cleanliness & environment by reducing the use of papers to a great extent.
- The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs is the Nodal Ministry for the project.

### **33. Innovate in India for Inclusiveness Project**

India has signed a loan agreement with World Bank for US\$ 125 million for “Innovate in India for Inclusiveness Project”.

#### **About the project:**

- The project seeks to nurture indigenous innovation, foster local product development and accelerate commercialization process by bridging critical skill and infrastructure gaps to promote affordable and innovative healthcare products generation for inclusive development and increasing competitiveness in India.
- The project would support consortia of public, private, and the academic institutions to overcome the key market failures currently holding back the development of an innovative biopharmaceutical and medical devices industry in India.

### **34. Tramadol drug misuse**

- The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has raised concerns about the abuse and trafficking of Tramadol, a pain killer and suggested that the availability of Tramadol be substantially reduced in order to track its movement in the market.

- It is proposed to bring Tramadol, a painkiller, under the ambit of the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.
- The National Policy on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances is based on the Directive Principles, contained in Article 47 of the Indian Constitution, which direct the State to endeavour to bring about prohibition of the consumption, except for medicinal purposes, of intoxicating drugs injurious to health.

### **35. National Biopharma Mission**

- The National Biopharma Mission is being implemented by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) – a Public Sector Undertaking of Department of Biotechnology (DBT).
- It aims to make India a hub for design and development of novel, affordable and effective biopharmaceutical products such as vaccines, biologics and medical devices for combating public health concerns.
- The programme will specifically focus on the development of new vaccines, bio-therapeutics, diagnostics and medical devices to better address the rising burden of diseases in the country.
- It will also bring isolated centres of excellence together, enhance regional capabilities and strengthen the current bio-clusters network in terms of capacities as well as quantity and quality of output.
- This would strengthen translational capability of academic researchers; empower bio-entrepreneurs and SMEs by decreasing the cost and risk during early stages of product development and also elevate the innovation quotient of the industry.

### **36. Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0**

Human Resource Development Ministry has launched Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0.

#### **About**

- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Human Resources Development, with the intention to enrich Rural India.
- It aims to leverage the knowledge base and resources of the Premier Institutions of the country to bring in transformational change in rural developmental process.
- It also aims to create a vibrant relationship between the society and the higher educational institutes, with the latter providing the knowledge and technology support to improve the livelihoods in rural areas and to upgrade the capabilities of both the public and private organisations in the society.
- Under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0, the institutions have been selected on a Challenge Mode and the scheme has been extended to 750 reputed Higher Educational Institutes (both public and private) of the country.

- Also, scope for providing Subject Expert Groups and Regional Coordinating Institutes to handhold and guide the participating institutions has been strengthened.

### **37. National Bamboo Mission**

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National Bamboo Mission (NBM) under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA) during remaining period of Fourteenth Finance Commission (2018-19 & 2019-20).

#### **The restructured NBM strives to:**

- To increase the area under bamboo plantation in non forest Government and private lands to supplement farm income and contribute towards resilience to climate change.
- To improve post-harvest management through establishment of innovative primary processing units, treatment and seasoning plants, primary treatment and seasoning plants, preservation technologies and market infrastructure.
- To promote product development at micro, small and medium levels and feed bigger industry.
- To rejuvenate the under developed bamboo industry in India.
- To promote skill development, capacity building, awareness generation for development of bamboo sector.

### **38. Swadesh Darshan Scheme:**

The Tourism Ministry had launched 'Swadesh Darshan' scheme with an objective to develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country. These tourist circuits will be developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner.

#### **Features of Swadesh Darshan Scheme:**

- The scheme is 100% centrally funded for the project components undertaken for public funding.
- To leverage the voluntary funding available for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and corporate sector.
- Funding of individual project will vary from state to state and will be finalised on the basis of detailed project reports prepared by PMC (Programme Management Consultant).
- A National Steering Committee (NSC) will be constituted with Minister in charge of M/O Tourism as Chairman, to steer the mission objectives and vision of the scheme.
- A Mission Directorate headed by the Member Secretary, NSC as a nodal officer will help in identification of projects in consultation with the States/ UTs governments and other stake holders.

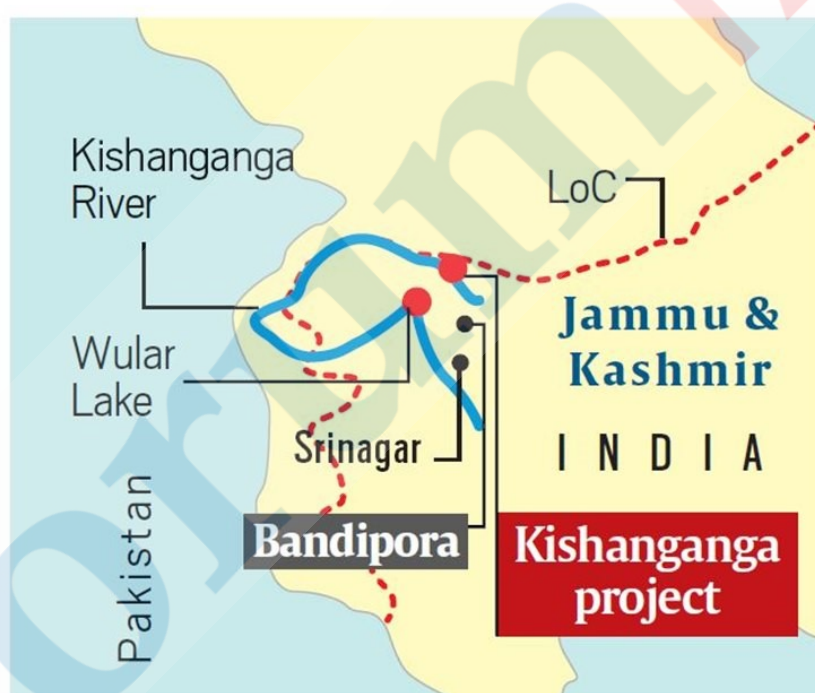
- PMC will be a national level consultant to be appointed by the Mission Directorate.

## **INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS**

### **39. Meeting of Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) between India and Pakistan held in New Delhi**

- PIC mandated to establish and maintain cooperative arrangements for the implementation of the treaty.
- According to the Indus Water Treaty, control over the water flowing in three "eastern" rivers of India — the Beas, the Ravi and the Sutlej was given to India, while control over the water flowing in three "western" rivers of India — the Indus, the Chenab and the Jhelum to Pakistan.

### **40. Kishanganga project**



- Pakistan has informed the World Bank about India's completing of the Kishanganga hydropower project during the bank's "pause" period and has urged it to "recognise its responsibility" under the Indus Waters Treaty.
- The Kishanganga Hydroelectric Plant is an \$864 million dam which is part of a run-of-the-river hydroelectric scheme that is designed to divert water from the Kishanganga River to a power plant in the Jhelum River basin.

- The Ratle Hydroelectric Plant is a run-of-the-river hydroelectric power station currently under construction on the Chenab River, downstream of the village of Ratle in Doda district of the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir.

## **41. Walong tri-junction**

- Indian troops have increased their patrolling at a tri-junction of India, China and Myanmar to prevent a repeat of a Doklam-like standoff.
- The tri-junction is located around 50 km from Walong, India's easternmost town in Arunachal Pradesh, near the Tibet region. It is situated on the bank of Lohit River.



## **42. Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)**

Second lead-up Conference to 3rd Annual Meeting of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) on 'Enhancing Port and Coastal Infrastructure' is being held at Visakhapatnam.

- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank with a mission to improve social and economic outcomes in Asia and beyond.
- It is headquartered in Beijing.
- It commenced operations in January 2016 and has now grown to 84 approved members from around the world.
- By investing in sustainable infrastructure and other productive sectors today, it aims to connect people, services and markets that over time will impact the lives of billions and build a better future.



### **43. Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)**

The world's chemical watchdog is meeting after a British laboratory said it had not proved that Russia manufactured a deadly nerve agent used to poison a former Russian spy.

- The OPCW is an independent, autonomous international organisation with a working relationship with the United Nations.
- The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons is the implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), which entered into force in 1997.
- As of today OPCW has 192 Member States, who are working together to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.
- The organisation was awarded the 2013 Nobel Peace Prize “for its extensive efforts to eliminate chemical weapons”.

### **44. UN Disarmament Commission**

- The United Nations Disarmament Commission (UNDC) is a deliberative body and a subsidiary organ of the UN General Assembly which is mandated to consider and make recommendations on various disarmament related issues and to follow up the relevant decisions and recommendations of the special sessions devoted to disarmament held so far.

### **45. International Energy Forum**

India is hosting the 16th International Energy Forum (IEF) Ministerial Meeting in New Delhi.

- The International Energy Forum (IEF) is an inter-governmental arrangement set up in 1991. It is based in Riyadh.
- Functions: It serves as a neutral facilitator of informal, open, informed and continuing global energy dialogue among its members comprising of energy producing and energy consuming states, including transit countries.
- Members: There are 72 member countries of IEF, including India, covering all six continents, which are signatories to the Charter of the IEF. Its membership accounts for 90% of global supply and demand for oil and gas.

### **46. Regional 3R Forum**

- In 2009, the Regional 3R Forum in Asia was established at Japan's proposal as a platform for broad cooperation on promotion of the 3Rs – reduce, reuse and recycle – in Asia. After the fourth forum, the name was changed to Regional 3R Forum in Asia and the Pacific.
- Members: Members include central governments, international agencies, aid agencies, private sector entities, research bodies, NGOs and other relevant parties.

#### **47. Equatorial Guinea**

- Context: President of India is visiting Equatorial Guinea. This is the first time ever that a head of state from India is visiting Equatorial Guinea.
- Equatorial Guinea is a small country on the west coast of Africa.

#### **48. India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway**

- The 1,000 km India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway will run from Moreh in Manipur to Mae Sot in Thailand via Myanmar.



#### **49. Asian premium**

- India is planning to coordinate with China and other Asian countries to voice against the “Asian Premium” being charged by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)
- Asian Premium is the extra charge being collected by OPEC countries from Asian countries when selling oil. The premium is determined in large part by the official selling prices (OSPs) set by Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait, which supply about 15 percent of the world’s crude among them. They set differential prices against benchmarks on a monthly basis, adjusting them to account for regional variations.

##### **OPEC:**

- The Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) is a permanent, intergovernmental Organization, created at the Baghdad Conference in September 1960, by Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Venezuela.
- Currently, the Organization has a total of 14 Member Countries.
- OPEC had its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, in the first five years of its existence. This was moved to Vienna, Austria, on September 1, 1965.
- OPEC’s objective is to co-ordinate and unify petroleum policies among Member Countries, in order to secure fair and stable prices for petroleum producers; an

efficient, economic and regular supply of petroleum to consuming nations; and a fair return on capital to those investing in the industry.

### **50. Weisbaden conference**

- Wiesbaden Conference 2018 was recently held in India.
- The Wiesbaden Process was initiated by the Government of Germany in 2012 to strengthen the implementation of UNSC 1540 through Government-Industry partnerships.

### **UN Security Council Resolution 1540:**

- The UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) establishes legally binding obligations on all States to adopt and enforce appropriate and effective measures to prevent the proliferation to non-State actors of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their delivery systems. It requires, therefore that States implement appropriate and effective measures to prevent non-state actors such as terrorists, from obtaining access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

### **51. Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO)**

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, also known as the Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic, and military organisation which was founded in 2001 in Shanghai by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan.
- New members: India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members in June 2017 in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- The SCO counts four observer states, namely the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, the Republic of Belarus, the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Mongolia.

### **52. World Press Freedom Index**

- Published every year since 2002 by Reporters Without Borders (RSF), the World Press Freedom Index is an important advocacy tool based on the principle of emulation between states.
- The Index ranks 180 countries according to the level of freedom available to journalists.

### **Press Freedom Index 2018- Highlights:**

- In this year's index, Norway is first for the second year running, followed — as it was last year — by Sweden.

- India has dropped from rank 136 last year to rank 138 this year. India fared poorly on indicators such as hate speeches, attacks on journalists on social media, trolling them and targeting their reputation.
- SAARC nations: Afghanistan (118), Bhutan (94), Nepal (106), the Maldives (120), and Sri Lanka (131), all performed better than India; with Pakistan (139) and Bangladesh (146) performing worse.
- North Korea continues to rank last.

### **53. Peace Mission 2018**

- It is a multi-nation counter-terror exercise that will take place under the framework of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. The main aim of the exercise will be to enhance counter-terror cooperation among the eight SCO member countries.
- Peace Mission exercises are held once in two years. This year's exercises will be the 10th edition. The last time, it was held in 2016 in Kyrgyzstan.

### **54. Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1980**

- The Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction or Hague Abduction Convention is a multilateral treaty developed by the Hague Conference on Private International Law (HCCH) that provides an expeditious method to return a child internationally abducted by a parent from one member country to another.
- The Convention was concluded 25 October 1980 and entered into force between the signatories on 1 December 1983. The Convention was drafted to ensure the prompt return of children who have been abducted from their country of habitual residence or wrongfully retained in a contracting state not their country of habitual residence
- The Convention applies only to children under the age of 16

### **55. India wins six elections in UNECOSOC bodies.**

- The United Nations Economic and Social is one of the six principal organs of the United Nations, responsible for coordinating the economic, social, and related work of 15 UN specialized agencies, their functional commissions and five regional commissions.
- ECOSOC serves as the central forum for discussing international economic and social issues and formulating policy recommendations addressed to member states and the United Nations system

**ECONOMY****56. National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)**

The government's National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) is in talks with private equity firm Everstone Group for a tie-up to manage its Green Growth Equity Fund (GGEF).

**About GGEF:**

- The Green Growth Equity Fund will be the second investment platform to be set up by NIIF.
- GGEF, which will invest in renewable energy assets, is a joint venture between NIIF and the UK government.
- GGEF would be managed by a third-party investment manager, selected by NIIF Limited and the UK government through an efficient and robust screening and selection process.

**About NIIF:**

- NIIF was set up in 2015 as an investment vehicle for funding commercially viable Greenfield, brownfield and stalled projects in the infrastructure sector.
- NIIF will invest in areas such as energy, transportation, housing, water, waste management and other infrastructure-related sectors in India.
- The corpus of the fund is proposed to be around Rs40,000 crore, with the government investing 49% and the rest to be raised from third-party investors such as sovereign wealth funds, insurance and pension funds, endowments etc.
- NIIF's strategy includes anchoring equity, quasi-equity and debt funds in partnership with investors targeting investments across the relevant sectors in India.

**57. Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework**

- Eleven public sector banks have been brought under the central bank's Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework with an aim to check NPAs.
- PCA norms allow the regulator to place certain restrictions such as halting branch expansion and stopping dividend payment. It can even cap a bank's lending limit to one entity or sector. Other corrective actions that can be imposed on banks include special audit, restructuring operations and activation of recovery plan. Banks' promoters can be asked to bring in new management, too. The RBI can also supersede the bank's board, under PCA.



### **58. Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)**

- The Reserve Bank has tightened reporting norms for the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS)
- Under LRS, all resident individuals can freely remit \$250,000 overseas every financial year for a permissible set of current or capital account transactions.
- Permitted: Remittances are permitted for overseas education, travel, medical treatment and purchase of shares and property, apart from maintenance of relatives living abroad, gifting and donations. Individuals can also open, maintain and hold foreign currency accounts with overseas banks for carrying out transactions.
- Not permitted: However, the rules do not allow remittances for trading on the foreign exchange markets, margin or margin calls to overseas exchanges and counterparties and the purchase of Foreign Currency Convertible Bonds issued by Indian companies abroad

### **59. Sovereign Gold Bond scheme**

The government of India has announced that the first tranche of Sovereign Gold Bond scheme for the current year 2018-19 will shortly be opened for subscription.

#### **About the Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme:**

- The sovereign gold bond was introduced by the Government in 2015. While the Government introduced these bonds to help reduce India's over dependence on gold imports, the move was also aimed at changing the habits of Indians from saving in physical form of gold to a paper form with Sovereign backing.

### **60. FAME scheme**

The government has decided to extend the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid) and Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme by six months until 30 September 2018, or till the time the second phase of the scheme is approved by it.

#### **About**

- What is it? With an aim to promote eco-friendly vehicles, the government had launched the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India (FAME-India) scheme in 2015.
- Aim: The FAME India Scheme is aimed at incentivising all vehicle segments, including two-wheelers, three wheeler auto, passenger four-wheeler vehicle, light commercial vehicles and buses. The scheme covers hybrid and electric technologies like a strong hybrid, plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicles.
- Facts: FAME India – Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric vehicles in India – is a part of the National Electric Mobility Mission Plan. The

scheme envisages Rs 795 crore supports in the first two fiscals. It is being administered by the Heavy Industries Ministry.

### **61. India's forex reserves touch 424.8 Billion dollars**

- The components of India's FOREX Reserves include foreign currency assets (FCAs), Gold Reserves, Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) and RBI's Reserve position with International Monetary Fund (IMF).

### **62. Bank Boards Bureau**

The Union Finance Ministry has reconstituted Banks Board Bureau (BBB) and appointed former bureaucrat Bhanu Pratap Sharma as its chairman.

- The bureau was set up as an autonomous body. It will have three ex-officio members and three expert members, in addition to the Chairman.
- Important functions performed by the Bureau:
- Recommend appointments to leadership positions and boards in PSBs and advise them on ways to raise funds and how to go ahead with mergers and acquisitions.
- Constantly engage with the boards of all 22 public sector banks to formulate appropriate strategies for their growth and development.
- Search and select heads of public sector banks and help them develop differentiated strategies of capital raising plans to innovative financial methods and instruments.
- Be responsible for selection of non-executive chairman and non-official directors on the boards.
- Steer strategy discussion on consolidation based on the requirement.

## **SECURITY AND DEFENCE**

### **63. Coastal security exercise "Sagar Kavach" was recently held in Goa.**

- The exercise is conducted half yearly with an objective to check coastal security mechanism and validate standard operating procedures.
- The organisations participating in the exercise are Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, Coastal Police, Police Special Branch, Intelligence Bureau, Customs, Department of Port, Department of Fisheries, Director General of Lighthouses and light ships and Fishing Community.

### **64. HARIMAU SHAKTI 2018**

- As part of ongoing Indo-Malaysian defence cooperation, a joint training exercise HARIMAU SHAKTI is being conducted in Malaysia.

**65. Bhabha Kavach**

It is an armour panel developed by BARC which gives personal protection against bullets of different threat levels.

- Bhabha Kavach made up of BARC Nano-Sheets are lighter in weight with reduced trauma level with respect to the existing jackets.
- The jacket is made using extremely hard boron carbide ceramics that is hot-pressed with carbon nano-tubes and composite polymer.

**NAG missile and the system**

- The NAG missile is a third generation anti-tank guided missile, which has top attack capabilities that can effectively engage and destroy all known enemy tanks during day and night.
- The system includes a third generation Anti-Tank Guided Missile, the NAG, along with the Missile Carrier Vehicle (NAMICA).

**ECOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENT****66. Char Dham project**

- The project involves developing and widening 900-km of national highways connecting the holy Hindu pilgrimage sites of; Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri at an estimated cost of Rs.12,000 crores.

**67. Rushikulya**

- In a rare occurrence, olive ridley turtles have turned up for mass nesting for the second time at Rushikulya rookery on Odisha coast.

- The Rushikulya coast, in Ganjam district of Odisha, is considered to be a major nesting site in the world and lakhs of olive ridleys come here every year to lay eggs.

#### **About Olive Ridley turtles:**

- Also known as the Pacific ridley sea turtle, Olive turtles are a medium-sized species of sea turtle found in warm and tropical waters, primarily in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.
- They are best known for their behavior of synchronized nesting in mass numbers.
- The olive ridley is classified as Vulnerable according to the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN), and is listed in Appendix I of CITES.
- The Convention on Migratory Species and the Inter-American Convention for the Protection and Conservation of Sea Turtles have also provided olive ridleys with protection, leading to increased conservation and management for this marine turtle.

### **68. Coastal Regulation Zone**

The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has framed a new draft Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 2018.

- Coastal Regulation Zone or CRZ is a coastal land up to 500m from the High Tide Line and a range of 100m along banks of creeks, estuaries, backwaters and rivers subject to tidal fluctuations is CRZ. According to Coastal Regulation Zone notifications, it is divided into 4 zones:
- CRZ I – It refers to the ecologically sensitive areas, essential in maintaining ecosystem of the coast. These lie between the HTL and LTL. Only exploration of natural gas and extraction of salt is permitted.
- CRZ II – These areas form up to the shoreline of the coast. Authorized structures are not allowed to be constructed in this zone.
- CRZ III – This includes rural and urban localities. Only certain activities relating to agriculture and public utilities allowed here.
- CRZ IV – This includes the aquatic area up to the territorial limit (12 nautical miles). Fishing and allied activities permitted in this zone. Solid waste can be let off in this zone.

### **69. Ramsar tag likely for Sunderbans**

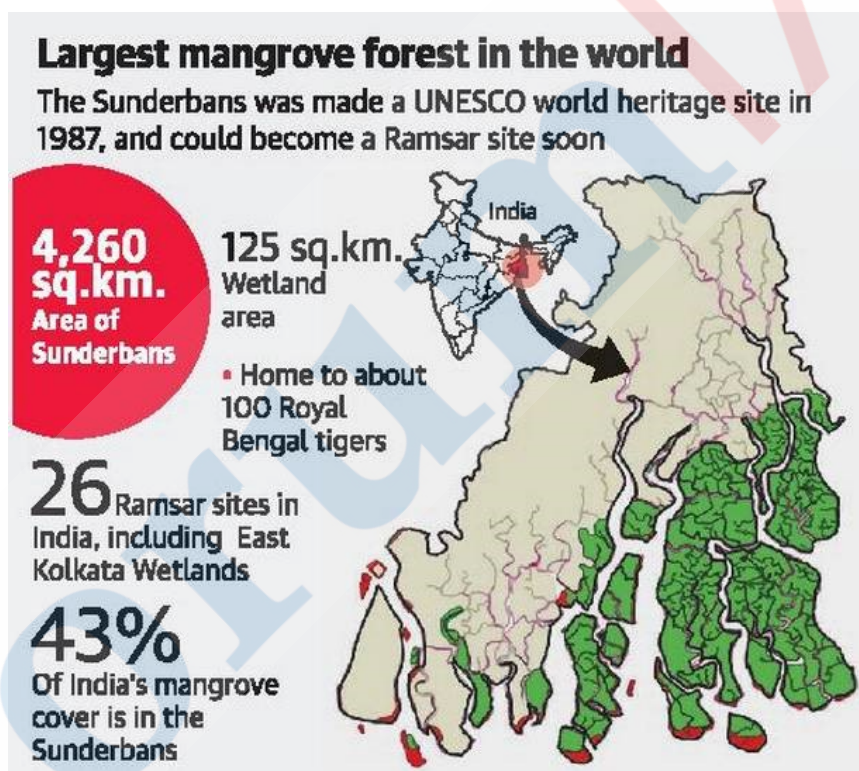
The West Bengal government has given its approval to the State Forest Department to apply for recognition of Sunderban Reserve Forest under the Ramsar Convention.



- The Indian Sunderbans, with 2,114 sq. km. of mangrove forests, comprise almost 43% of the mangrove cover in the country according to a 2017 Forest Survey of India report. Other than the forests, home to about 100 Royal Bengal tigers, the creeks and river systems of the Sunderbans are also part of the reserve forest.

### Ramsar convention:

- The Convention on Wetlands, called the Ramsar Convention, is an inter-governmental treaty that provides the framework for national action and international cooperation for the conservation and wise use of wetlands and their resources.
- Adopted in 1971 in Ramsar, an Iranian city, the Convention came into force in 1975. Since then, almost 90% of UN member states have acceded to become “Contracting Parties”.
- There are currently 26 sites in India recognised as Ramsar wetland sites of international importance, including the East Kolkata Wetlands also in West Bengal.



### 70. United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

A four-day Asia Pacific Regional Workshop of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), jointly hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) and UNCCD Secretariat, to build the capacity of the Asia-Pacific Region to monitor and report on land degradation, was recently held in New Delhi.

- The United Nations to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) is the sole legally binding international agreement linking environment and development to sustainable land management.

### **Monthly Factly for Prelims by ForumIAS**

- It is the only convention stemming from a direct recommendation of the Rio Conference's Agenda 21.
- The Convention addresses specifically the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the drylands, where some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples can be found.
- Its 197 Parties aim, through partnerships, to implement the Convention and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. The end goal is to protect land from over-use and drought, so it can continue to provide food, water and energy.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the nodal Ministry for this Convention.

## **SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

### **71. India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO)**

- The Primary aims of the INO are the following:
- Research to study the properties of neutrinos which are the second most abundant particles in the Universe. They are elementary particles, like electrons, but not part of atoms.
- Study of matter effects through electric charge identification, that may lead to the determination of the unknown sign of one of the mass differences.
- Study of charge-conjugation and charge parity (CP) violation in the leptonic sector as well as possible charge-conjugation, parity, time-reversal (CPT) violation studies.
- Study of Kolar events, possible identification of very-high energy neutrinos and multi-muon events.

### **72. Remove Debris system**

- RemoveDebris system, a UK-led experiment to tackle space junk is set to head into orbit. The system is going to the International Space Station where astronauts are expected to set the experiment running in late May.
- RemoveDebris is an EU (European Union) research project to develop and fly a low cost in-orbit demonstrator mission that aims to de-risk and verify technologies needed for future ADR (Active Debris Removal) missions.
- RemoveDebris is aimed at performing key ADR technology demonstrations (e.g., capture, deorbiting) representative of an operational scenario during a low-cost mission using novel key technologies for ADR. The project is based on and aimed at contributing to global/European ADR roadmaps.

### **73. Point Nemo**

- Point Nemo, or “ocean point of inaccessibility,” is a region in the South Pacific that is the loneliest place on the planet. It is used as a graveyard for controlled re-entries and a place where space junk can be dropped safely.

### **74. Advanced Supersonic Parachute Inflation Research Experiment (ASPIRE)**

- A supersonic parachute that will help NASA missions to land on Mars, was successfully launched into the sky during a key test designed to mimic the conditions of entering the red planet. The Advanced Supersonic Parachute Inflation Research Experiment (ASPIRE) was launched aboard a sounding rocket from NASA's Wallops Flight Facility in the US.

### **75. Delhi becomes first city to roll-out Euro VI fuel**

- The major difference in standards between the existing BS-IV and the new BS-VI auto fuel norms is the presence of sulphur.
- The newly introduced fuel is estimated to reduce the amount of sulphur released by 80 per cent, from 50 parts per million to 10 ppm. As per the analysts, the emission of NOx (nitrogen oxides) from diesel cars is also expected to reduce by nearly 70 per cent and 25 per cent from cars with petrol engines.

### **76. Fimbristylis agasthyamalaensis**

- Researchers have reported the discovery of a new plant species from the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot. Classified as edge, the grass-like plant has been named Fimbristylis agasthyamalaensis, after the locality from which it was found.

### **77. Newly discovered antibiotic class, Odilorhabdins**

- Called odilorhabdins, or ODLs, the antibiotics are produced by symbiotic bacteria found in soil-dwelling nematode worms that colonise insects for food.
- The bacteria help to kill the insect, and secrete the antibiotic to keep competing bacteria away

### **78. Parker Solar Probe**

- Parker Solar Probe, which is humanity's first mission to the Sun, has begun final preparations for its launch in July. After launch, it will orbit directly through the solar atmosphere – the corona – closer to the surface than any human-made object has ever gone.
- NASA's historic Parker Solar Probe mission will revolutionize our understanding of the sun, where changing conditions can propagate out into the solar system, affecting Earth and other worlds.

### **79. Phosphorus pentoxide**

The government has imposed anti-dumping duty on import of Phosphorus pentoxide from China to protect the domestic manufacturers from cheap shipments.

- Phosphorus Pentoxide is used as a powerful desiccant and dehydrating agent and is a useful building block and reagent in the chemical industry.

### **80. Drugs Technical Advisory Board**

- The Union Health Ministry has banned over-the-counter sale of around 14 creams containing steroids and antibiotics under the Schedule H category by making amendments to certain Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.
- The move comes in the wake of dermatologists' complaints that pharmaceutical companies were selling steroid-based creams and ointments without medical guidance.

### **81. Schedule H drugs**

Schedule H is a class of prescription drugs listed under Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 which governs manufacture and sale of all drugs in India. These drugs cannot be purchased over counter without the prescription of a doctor

- The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO) under Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India is the National Regulatory Authority (NRA) of India.
- Under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, CDSCO is responsible for approval of New Drugs, Conduct of Clinical Trials, laying down the standards for Drugs, control over the quality of imported Drugs in the country and coordination of the activities of State Drug Control Organizations by providing expert advice with a view of bring about the uniformity in the enforcement of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

### **82. IIT-Delhi launches first 5G radio labs**

- In an effort to establish India as a key global player in the standardisation, research and development and manufacturing of 5G equipment, a Massive MIMO radio laboratory has been set up at IIT Delhi.
- Multiple-input multiple-output, or MIMO, is a radio communications technology or RF technology that is being mentioned and used in many new technologies these days.
- Wi-Fi, LTE; Long Term Evolution, and many other radio, wireless and RF technologies are using the new MIMO wireless technology to provide increased link capacity and spectral efficiency combined with improved link reliability using what were previously seen as interference paths.



- Benefits: It will help curb the emittance of radiation harmful to our health and also will allow less radio interference for better communication.

### **83. IRNSS-1I**

- The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched the IRNSS-1I satellite through its PSLV-C41. It was the 20th flight of PSLV-XL version. This satellite will transmit signals for the accurate determination of position, navigation and time.
- Like all other IRNSS satellites, IRNSS-1I will also carry two payloads – navigation payload and ranging payload – the former to transmit signals for determining position, velocity and time and the latter for determining the frequency range of the satellite.
- IRNSS stands for Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System. It is a set of satellites which together can provide India a regional positioning system similar to the GPS. According to the ISRO website, the system is designed to give position accuracy better than 20 metres to users in its primary coverage area. It can also service regions extending up to 1500 km around India's boundary. NavIC is the operational name for the IRNSS.

### **84. NAAMES Mission**

In a first, NASA is conducting a study of the world's largest phytoplankton bloom in the North Atlantic, named the North Atlantic Aerosols and Marine Ecosystems Study (NAAMES) mission, to see how the tiny sea critters influence the climate in every season.

- The North Atlantic Aerosols and Marine Ecosystems Study (NAAMES) is an interdisciplinary investigation resolving key processes controlling marine ecosystems and aerosols that are essential to our understanding of Earth system function and future change.
- NAAMES is funded by the NASA Earth Venture Suborbital Program and is the first EV-S mission focused on studying the coupled ocean ecosystem and atmosphere.
- NAAMES consists of four, combined ship and aircraft field campaigns that are each aligned to a specific event in the annual plankton lifecycle.

### **85. Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS)**

- The Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) is a NASA mission that will look for planets orbiting the brightest stars in Earth's sky.

### **86. Earth BioGenome Project**

- Scientists have proposed Earth BioGenome project, a massive project to sequence, catalog and analyze the genomes of all eukaryotic species on the planet.

- Eukaryotes include all organisms except bacteria and archaea. It includes plants, animals, fungi and other organisms whose cells have a nucleus that houses their chromosomal DNA. There are an estimated 10-15 million eukaryotic species on Earth.

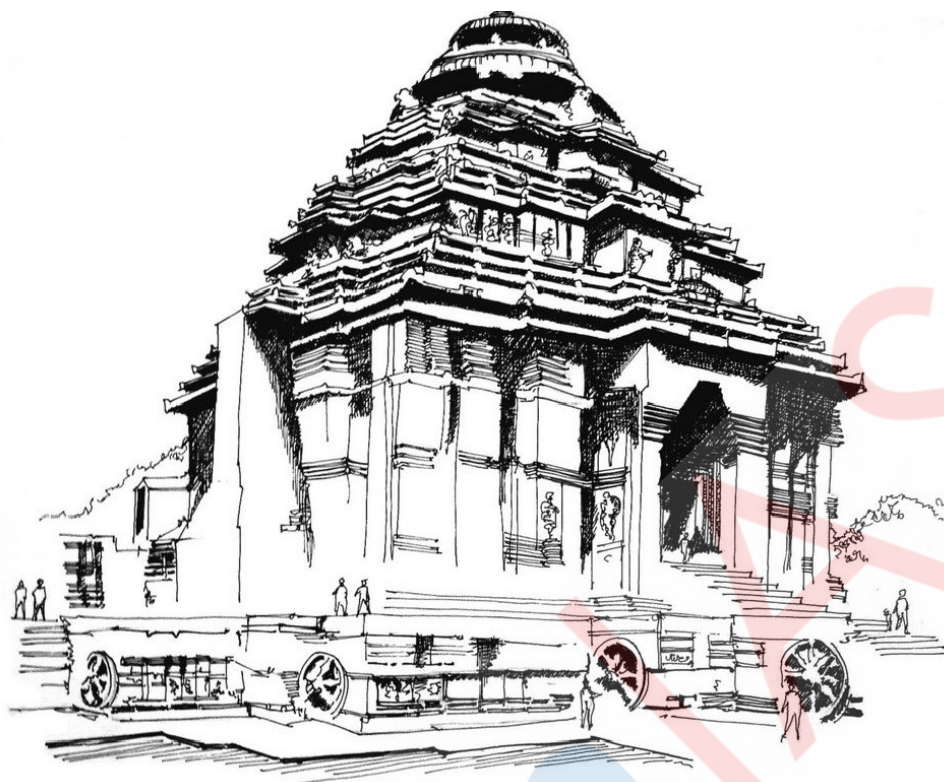
### **87. ESA's space observatory Gaia**

Gaia is an ambitious mission to chart a three-dimensional map of our Galaxy, the Milky Way, in the process revealing the composition, formation and evolution of the Galaxy.

## **ART AND CULTURE**

### **88. Konark Temple**

- An aesthetically designed interpretation centre with world-class facilities that showcases the unique architectural features of Kalingan era was recently inaugurated at Sun Temple, Konark. The Indian Oil Foundation has developed the interpretation centre and the tourist facilitation centre at a cost of Rs. 45 crore.
- Built in the 13th century, the Konark temple was conceived as a gigantic chariot of the Sun God, with 12 pairs of exquisitely ornamented wheels pulled by seven horses.
- It was built by King Narasimhadeva I, the great ruler of Ganga dynasty.
- The temple is included in UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1984 for its architectural greatness and also for the sophistication and abundance of sculptural work.
- The temple is perfect blend of Kalinga architecture, heritage, exotic beach and salient natural beauty.
- It is protected under the National Framework of India by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act (1958) and its Rules (1959).
- The Konark is the third link of Odisha's Golden Triangle. The first link is Jagannath Puri and the second link is Bhubaneswar (Capital city of Odisha).
- This temple was also known as 'BLACK PAGODA' due to its dark color and used as a navigational landmark by ancient sailors to Odisha. Similarly, the Jagannath Temple in Puri was called the "White Pagoda".
- It remains a major pilgrimage site for Hindus, who gather here every year for the Chandrabhaga Mela around the month of February.



### **89. Kalamkari art**

A kalamkari art museum has been opened at Pedana in Andhra Pradesh.

#### **About**

- Kalamkari is an ancient style of hand painting done on cotton or silk fabric with a tamarind pen, using natural dyes.
- There are two identifiable styles of Kalamkari art in India – Srikalahasti style and Machilipatnam style. In the Machilipatnam style of Kalamkari, motifs are essentially printed with hand-carved traditional blocks with intricate detailing painted by hands.
- On the other hand, Srikalahasti style of painting draws inspiration from the Hindu mythology describing scenes from the epics and folklore. This style holds a strong religious connect because of its origin in the temples.

### **90. Adopt a Heritage Project**

- The ‘Adopt a Heritage Scheme’ of Ministry of Tourism was launched on World Tourism Day i.e. 27th September, 2017. This project is a key initiative of Ministry of Tourism in close collaboration with Ministry of Culture and Archeological Survey of India (ASI), to develop the heritage sites / monuments and making them tourist-friendly to enhance the tourism potential and their cultural importance in a planned and phased manner.

- Successful bidders selected for adopting heritage sites / monuments by the Oversight and Vision Committee shall be called as Monument Mitras.

### **91. National Culture Fund**

- National Culture Fund (NCF) was set up as a Trust under the Charitable Endowment Act, 1890 in November 1996 by the Government, with a view to mobilize extra resources through Public Private Partnerships.
- The National Culture Fund is managed and administered by a council headed by Hon'ble Culture Minister to decide the policies and an Executive Committee headed by Secretary, Culture to actualize those policies.
- The Fund aims at inviting the participation of the corporate sector, non-government organizations, private/public sector as well as individuals in the task of promoting, protecting and preserving India's cultural heritage.

### **92. World Heritage Site**

- As many as 6 monuments/historical sites in the North Eastern states have been identified tentatively for listing under World Heritage Site.
- Monuments/sites identified/placed under tentative list for listing under world heritage in the north eastern states are:
- Apatani Cultural Landscape, Arunachal Pradesh.
- Iconic Saree Weaving Clusters of India.
- Moidams – the Mound – Burial System of the Ahom Dynasty, Assam.
- Namdapha National Park, Arunachal Pradesh.
- River Island of Majuli in midstream of Brahmaputra River in Assam.
- Thembang Fortified Village, Arunachal Pradesh.

### **93. Walmiki and Malhar, two new languages discovered**

- The languages are categorised 'endangered' as the number of people speaking is small. These languages are spoken in Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. Only a few people living in the forest and hilly areas speak these languages.
- Walmiki is spoken in Koraput of Odisha and on the bordering districts of Andhra Pradesh. Walmiki is an isolate language i.e. it does not belong to a family of languages. The name of the language is also interesting and indicative because the speech community claims descent from the great Indian saint-poet Valmiki.
- Malhar is spoken in a remote and isolated hamlet which is almost 165 km from Bhubaneswar. The community consists of about 75 speakers including children. It belongs to the North Dravidian subgroup of the Dravidian family of languages and has close affinities with the other North Dravidian languages like Malto and Kurux spoken in West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar.



**94. Satyagraha se Swachhagraha” campaign**

- To commemorate the launch of Champaran Satyagraha over a century ago on 10<sup>th</sup> April, 1917, Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, in coordination with the Government of Bihar, is working to spread the message of Swachhata across the country by initiating the “Satyagraha se Swachhagraha” campaign.
- About the Champaran Satyagraha:
- It was undertaken in the erstwhile undivided Champaran district in northern Bihar. Mahatma Gandhi went there in April, 1917 on learning about the abuses suffered by the cultivators of the district, forced into growing indigo by British planters/estate owners.

**95. Silappathikaram**

- A rare dance panel of Nayak period and an inscribed pillar of Chola period have been found on an abandoned brick mound at Pathalapettai near Kiliyur in Tiruchi.
- Silappathikaram has references to such ritualistic performances by rural folks. It is one of the Five Great Epics of Tamil Literature according to later Tamil literary tradition. A poet-prince from Kodungallur near Kochi, referred to by the pseudonym Ilango Adigal, is credited with this work.

**96. Adilabad Dokra and Warangal Durries get GI tag****Adilabad Dokra:**

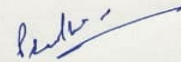
- It is an ancient metal craft that is popular in the state’s tribal regions.
- The uniqueness of this art form is that no two sculptures are the same, as they are not made out of a pre-designed cast.
- They use brass as their main material and an ancient casting technique called ‘cire Perdue’
- The craftsmen of this art form belong to the Woj community, commonly referred to as Wojaris or Ohjas in the rural areas of Telangana.

**Warangal durries:**

- In this style of durries, weavers create beautiful patterns and dye them using vegetable colours, which are washed in flowing water after the printing process.
- Warangal district became a renowned hub for weaving these rugs due to the availability of cotton, which is grown by farmers in the area.

I am Pratham Kaushik , AIR - 5 in CSE - 2017.  
Forum IAS has been a companion in my success  
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Dipin Damodaran Sir helped me in covering  
the vast current affairs in a short span of  
time . His precise and succinct coverage  
of current affairs right before main exam  
made my preparation inclusive.

I thank Dipin Sir for playing a huge role  
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for your extensive guidance.



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