

MONTHLY

# FACTLY

EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR

# PRELIMS

OCTOBER 2018

ForumIAS

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**POLITICAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES****Questions/Notes****1. Demand for Gorkhaland:**

News: Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) claimed that the Centre agreed for a tripartite meeting to discuss various political issues concerning the Gurkhas, including the demand for a separate State of Gorkhaland.



*Gorkhaland in northern West Bengal*

**Facts:**

- Gorkhaland consists of the hill districts of Darjeeling and Kalimpong and the Dooars region of West Bengal state.
- The demand for Gorkhaland is a sub-nationalist movement.
- It demands a separate state for Nepali speaking Indian citizens (called gorkhas) within India.

**History of the Movement:**

- In 1780, Gorkhas captured Sikkim and most parts of north eastern states including Darjeeling. After ruling for 35 years, Gorkhas surrendered the territory to the British under the Treaty of Sugauli.

**Steps taken by the Government:**

- Under a Tripartite Agreement (1988) between the Center, Government of Bengal and Gorkha National Liberation Front, an autonomous Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council was set up for the social, economic, educational, and cultural development of the people residing in the hilly areas of Darjeeling District.
- In 2012 Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) was created under another tripartite agreement between Center, State and the Gorkha Mukti Morcha. It replaced the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill council but lacked the legislative powers like the earlier Council.

**2. RBI v/s Government:**

**News:** The tussle between the RBI and the government culminated in the center invoking section 7 of the RBI Act, 1934 for the first time in Indian history.

**Facts:**

- Section 7 deals with the management of the RBI and enables the government to issue directions to the Central Bank, as considered necessary in “public interest”, after consultation with the RBI Governor.
- It states that subject to any such directions, the general superintendence, direction of affairs and business of the Bank shall be entrusted to a Central Board of Directors.
- Invocation of this section will impact the independence and autonomy of the Central Bank.
- Government of India will appoint the Central Board of Directors, for a period of 4 years.
- The board will consist of 21 members:
  - Official Directors: Governor of the RBI and not more than 4 deputy governors as full time members
  - Non-Official Directors: ten directors from various fields and two government officials, all nominated by the government
  - Others: four Directors each from four local Boards (one for each region)

**3. Sabki Yojana, Sabka Vikas:**

**News:** The Central government on 2<sup>nd</sup> October launched the Gram Panchayat Development Plan campaign, Sabki Yojana, Sabka Vikas.

**Facts:**

- During the campaign structured Gram Sabha Meeting will be held for encouraging people's involvement in preparing Gram Panchayat Development Plans (GPDP) for the period 2019-20.
- It aimed at encouraging grassroot level participation.
- Special efforts have been made to ensure maximum participation of vulnerable sections of society like SC/ST/Women etc.
- It was jointly organised by Ministry of Panchayati Raj and Ministry of Rural Development.
- It involved a thorough audit of the work completed in the past few

**Questions/Notes**

## Questions/Notes

years.

- It concluded on 31st December 2018 that Gram Panchayats were mandated to display the source of the funds collected, their annual spending along with future development initiatives.

**Other facts:**

- GPDP is an annual plan of each panchayat, wherein villagers would decide the areas where the funds need to be spent.
- Scope of the GPDP covers human development, civic services, economic development, status of vulnerable communities, disaster vulnerability assessment etc.

**4. Live streaming of SC proceedings:**

**News:** SC has approved live streaming of the court proceedings and has directed the center to frame rules accordingly.

**Facts:**

- Live streaming of court proceedings forms a part of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973.
- It will encourage the principle of open court, and will serve as an instrument of accountability and transparency.
- It will uphold the right to justice under the Article 21 of the constitution by increasing access to justice.
- The court has directed the center to frame rules in this regard, balancing the dignity of the litigants and rights of the public.

**Guidelines submitted by the Attorney General in this regard:**

- Only cases of constitutional and national importance argued for final verdict before the constitutional bench should be live streamed as a pilot project.
- The discretion of the court to grant or refuse to grant permission for live streaming should be guided by:
  - Unanimous consent of the parties involved
  - Sensitivity of the matter of the case
  - Any other reason considered necessary in the larger interest of delivering justice
- To provide for transcribing facilities and archive the audio-visual record of the proceedings to litigants or other interested persons who were unable to witness the hearing.

**Other facts:**

- Countries such as Canada, Australia, UK, New Zealand and jurisdictions such as International Criminal Court (ICC) and European Commission of Human Rights permit varying degrees of recordings of court proceedings.

**5. International Year of Millets:**

News: Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has agreed to India's proposal and has decided to celebrate 2023 as the International year of Millets.

**Facts:**

- India celebrated 2018 as the National Year of Millets to raise awareness about these small seeded, hardy, nutritious and drought-resistant grains.
- India is the largest producer of millets in the world.
- Millets belong to the Gramineae/Poaceae family of monocotyledon flowering plants known as grasses.
- These can be used as food as well as fodder.
- They are also referred to as nutria-millets or nutria-cereals due to their high nutritional value.

**Other facts:**

- FAO is a specialized agency of the UN, which leads international efforts to defeat hunger across the world.
- It was established in 1945 and its headquarters are at Rome, Italy.

**6. CBI conundrum:**

News: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) joint director was appointed as the interim director, while the Director Alok Verma and Special Director Rakesh Asthana were sent on leave, due to alleged corruption charges pitted against each other.

**Facts:**

- SC stepped in when Alok Verma challenged his forcible and arbitrary leave, on the grounds of the Section 4(B) of the Delhi Special Power Establishment Act.
- SC restrained the interim director from making any major decisions confining him to conduct only the routine functions of the CBI.

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**Other facts:**

- CBI is a premier agency of investigation in India, operating under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievance and Pensions.
- The Central Bureau of Investigation traces its origin to the Special Police Establishment (SPE) which was set up in 1941 by the Government of India. The functions of the SPE then were to investigate cases of bribery and corruption in transactions with the War & Supply Deptt. of India during World War II.
- The CBI draws its power from the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act.
- The Home Ministry, through a resolution, set up the agency in April 1963.
- It is headed by a Director, and its office is located in the CGO complex, New Delhi.
- Motto of the agency is: Industry, Impartiality, Integrity
- A high level committee under the Lokpal and Lokayuktas Act 2013, consisting of Prime Minister (as chairperson), Leader of Opposition and Chief Justice of India appoints the Director of CBI for a term of two years.

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## INTERNATIONAL ISSUES

## Questions/Notes

**1. Currency Swap agreement between India and Japan:**

**News:** In the 13<sup>th</sup> Indo-Japan annual bilateral summit, the two countries have entered into a currency swap agreement of \$75 billion.

**Facts:**

- Currency swap is a mechanism where one country exchanges its national currency for that of the other country's currency or even for a third country's currency.
- India under this agreement can acquire \$75 billion worth of yen or dollar from Japan in exchange of rupees.
- The exchange has to be reversed after an agreed period in the agreement.
- This agreement is entered into between the central banks of the countries. The terms of the swap and its cost are also included and the exchange rate is typically fixed for the transaction.
- The borrowing bank pays interest on the use of funds.

**2. African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA):**

**News:** Members of the African Union gathered at Kigali, Rwanda in March 2018 to sign the proposed free trade agreement to kickstart the African Continent Free Trade Area.

**Facts:**

- AfCFTA will be the biggest free trade agreement in the world after WTO was formed.
- It is the flagship project of Agenda 2063 of the African Union.
- It will be a continent wide free trade agreement among the African Union Nations who sign the agreement, creating one African market.
- 44 out of 55 members of the African Union initially signed the proposal at Kigali, Rwanda.
- The proposal will come into force only after ratification by 22 of the signatory states.
- The UN Economic Commission for Africa estimates that the FTA will boost intra-Africa trade by 52% by 2022.

**3. International Solar Alliance (ISA):**

**News:** The First assembly of ISA was inaugurated at Vigyan Bhawan, New

Delhi.

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### Facts:

- The Indian government advocated “one world, one sun, and one grid” concept to encourage the use of solar energy in place of conventional sources.
- Same event also marked the 2<sup>nd</sup> Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) renewable energy ministerial meeting and 2nd Global RE-Invest (Renewable energy investors’ meet and expo).
- 21 member countries of IORA adopted the Delhi Declaration on renewable energy in the Indian Ocean, which calls for collaboration among the IORA nations as well as collaboration between IORA member states and the members of ISA to meet the growing demand of renewable energy in the Indian Ocean.
- The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), Government of India organised the 2nd Global RE-INVEST India-ISA Partnership Renewable Energy Investors Meet & Expo in October 2018 at the India Expo Centre, Greater Noida, National Capital Region of Delhi.

### Other facts:

- India and France launched ISA in the Paris Climate Change Conference 2015.
- It is an intergovernmental organization with member countries rich in solar resource, lying between the tropics.
- Its headquarter is located at Gwal Pahari, Gurugram, Haryana, India.
- It has now decided to extend the membership of the alliance, to all UN member states.
- The Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), formerly known as the Indian Ocean Rim Initiative and Indian Ocean Rim Association for Regional Cooperation, is an international organisation consisting of coastal states bordering the Indian Ocean.
- IORA was founded in 1995, with headquarters at Ebene, Mauritius.
- There are 21 members of the IORA, namely Indonesia, Bangladesh, Singapore, Malaysia, India, Iran, Oman, Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, South Africa, Australia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Madagascar, UAE, Yemen, Somalia, Seychelles and Comoros.
- The 2nd Global RE-INVEST built upon the success of RE-INVEST 2015, to explore strategies for development and deployment of renewables.

**4. Asia-Europe meeting:**

**News:** 12<sup>th</sup> Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM12) was held in Brussels, Belgium.

**Facts:**

- Theme: Europe and Asia: Global Partners for Global Change.
- It was organised by the European Union.
- It is an intergovernmental process established in 1996, aimed at initiating a dialogue process between 51 Asian and European countries and two institutional partners-EU and ASEAN.
- The dialogue is aimed at strengthening relationship between the two regions in areas of trade and investment, connectivity, sustainable development and security challenges, and spread peace, respect and equality.

**Other facts:**

- The first summit was held at Bangkok, Thailand.
- India joined the forum in 2008.
- ASEM Summit is held every two years, alternatively in Asia and Europe.
- The 11<sup>th</sup> summit took place in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia in 2016.
- ASEM day is celebrated every year in 1<sup>st</sup> March to promote connectivity and partnership between Asia and Europe.

**5. US announced its withdrawal from the INF treaty:**

**News:** US announced its withdrawal from the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty, on account of Russia's non-compliance.

**Facts:**

- Russia developed intermediate range cruise missile, called 9M729 or SSC-8, with which it can launch a nuclear strike on NATO countries at a very short notice.

**Other facts:**

- INF is a cold war treaty signed in December 1987 between the two superpowers.
- The treaty prohibits US and Russia from possessing, producing or test flying ground-launched cruise and ballistic missiles of the range 500-5500-km and to produce or possess launchers for such missiles.
- It also covers all land-based missiles, including those carrying nuclear

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warheads.

- The treaty does not cover air launched or sea launched weapons.

### 6. International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC):

**News:** 19<sup>th</sup> annual Bilateral Summit between India and Russia in New Delhi focused on increasing trade connectivity between the two nations, calling for the development of the INSTC.



*INSTC-a comparatively shorter route to Central Asian and European Markets*

#### Facts:

- It is a 7200-km long multi-modal network of land and sea routes (road, rail and ship) for moving freight between India, Iran, Oman, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Syria, Turkey, Belarus and Bulgaria.
- Its major objective is to improve trade connectivity between countries.
- It will make Indian goods more competitive in other countries as it will reduce the time and cost of transportation.
- It will increase the trade between India and resource rich Russia.

#### Other facts:

- It will complement the Ashgabat Agreement for international transport and transit corridor to facilitate goods transportation between Central Asia and Persian Gulf.
- Ashgabat Agreement was signed between India, Oman, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.

### 7. India elected to the UNHRC:

**News:** UN General Assembly elected India to the UNHRC with the highest

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number of votes.

**Facts:**

- India got 188 votes in the Asia Pacific category, highest votes among all candidates.
- India has previously been elected to Geneva based Human Rights Council in 2011-14 and 2014-17 (two consecutive terms).
- The new members will serve a three-year term from 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2019.

**Other facts:**

- UNHRC is a specialized agency of the UN to protect and promote Human Rights across the world.
- It was set up in 2006, in the place of UN Commission on Human Rights.
- Members are not allowed to hold a seat for more than two consecutive 3-year terms.

**8. CAPAM Awards:**

**News:** Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) awards were announced.

**Facts:**

- Under the Innovation Category, project Unnayan Banka of Bihar bagged the award. It was launched to provide quality education for all and use of technology for continuous monitoring of the education system.
- Under the Innovation in Public Service Management Category, Karnataka's Rashtriya e-market Services Private Limited (ReMS) was awarded for its efforts to modernize the agricultural market in the state. It is recognized as the "Karnataka model" by the government of India.

**Other facts:**

- CAPAM is a non-profit organization representing an international network of over 50 countries of the Commonwealth.
- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievance, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievance and Pensions is an institutional member of CAPAM.

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**9. Wing Loong II:**

**News:** China has decided to sell 48 advanced armed drones, called the Wing Loong II to Pakistan.

**Facts:**

- It is an improved version of Wing Loong I unmanned aerial vehicle.
- It is manufactured by Chengdu Aircraft Industry Group.
- It is a Medium altitude, long endurance drone.
- These drones are capable of combat as well as surveillance functions.
- It can carry bombs as well as up to 12 air-to-surface missiles.
- A mobile ground station remotely controls this UAV.

**Questions/Notes**

**GOVERNMENT SCHEMES:****Questions/Notes****1. IMPRESS (Impactful Policy Research in Social Sciences):**

**News:** The government launched scheme IMPRESS to promote social science research in higher education in India.

**Facts:**

- It aims to identify and fund research proposal in social sciences with maximum societal and governance impact.
- It is open for all social science researchers from universities (center/state), private institutions and ICSSR funded/recognized institutes.
- Indian Council for Social Science Research (ICSSR) is the implementing agency for the scheme.

**The domains identified under IMPRESS are:**

- State and Democracy
- Urban Transformation
- Media, Culture and Society
- Employment Skills and Rural Transformation
- Governance, Innovation and Public Policy
- Agriculture and Rural Development
- Health and Environment
- Science and Education
- Social Media and Technology
- Politics, Law and Economics

**2. Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC):**

**News:** Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration is a government scheme launched to boost joint research with global universities from 28 countries and to gain expertise to solve national problems.

**Facts:**

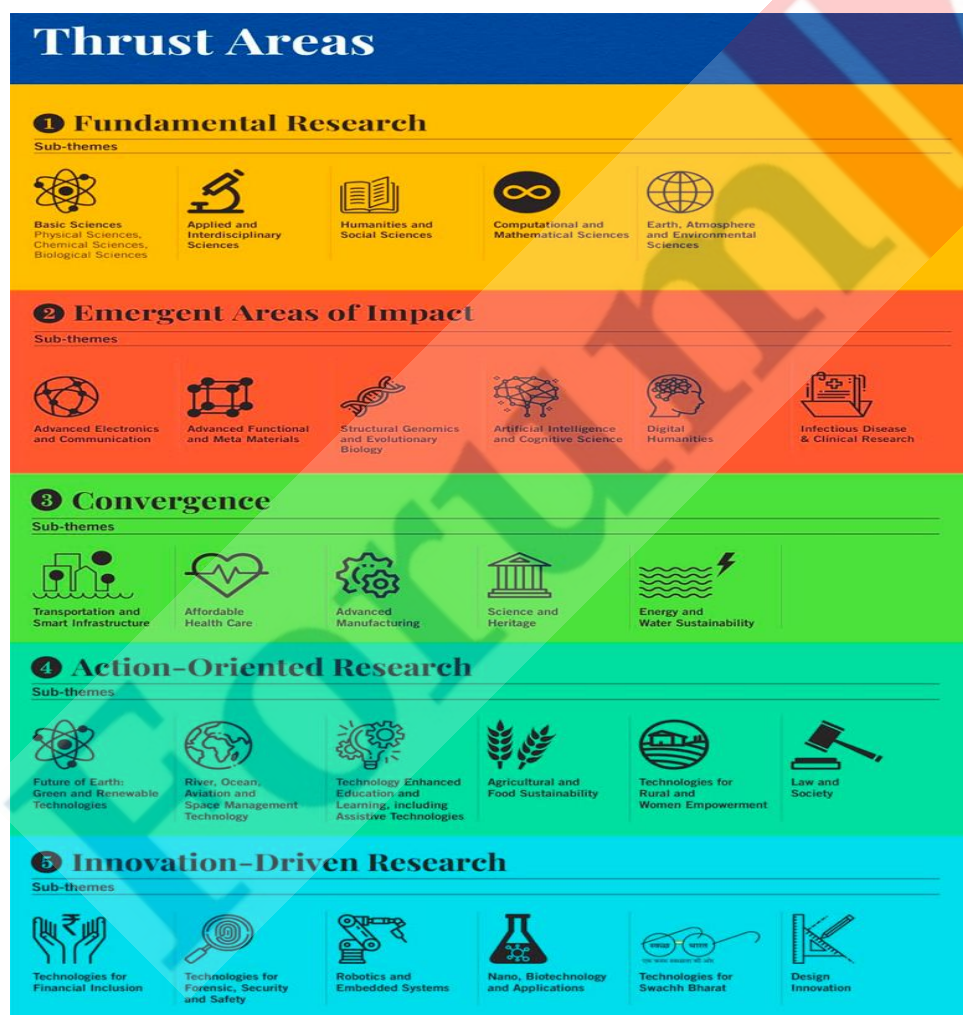
- It is aimed at boosting research in India's higher educational institutions.
- All top 100 Indian institutions in the National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) will be eligible for this scheme, and top100 to top 200 foreign institutions of global institutional ranking from the 28

countries will be eligible.

- A set of nodal institutions from India has been identified for each foreign country to help, handhold and coordinate the alliance between the two parties for research and academics.
- IIT Kharagpur has been recognized as the National Coordinating Institution for the scheme.

#### Other facts:

- NIRF is an annual ranking system, which ranks India's higher educational institution on the basis of the quality of research in these institutes.
- This ranking is undertaken by the Ministry of Human Resource and Development.



*Thrust areas of SPARC*

#### Questions/Notes

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS****Questions/Notes****1. National Council for Vocational Training and Education (NCVET):**

**News:** The Cabinet approved the merger of the National Council for Vocational Training and National Skill Development Agency into National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET).

**Facts:**

- It will regulate and establish minimum standards for the functioning of entities engaged in vocational training and education.
- It will give recognition to awarding bodies, assessment bodies and skill related information providers.
- It will provide approval to the qualifications given by the awarding bodies and Sector Skill Councils.
- Indirect regulation of vocational training institutes via the awarding and assessment agencies.
- It will conduct research and help in information dissemination.
- It will act as a grievance redressal body.

**2. Udyam Abhilasha:**

**News:** Small Industries Bank of India (SIDBI) has organized a national level entrepreneurship awareness campaign called Udyam Abhilasha.

**Facts:**

- It is aimed at promoting entrepreneurship in the 115 aspirational districts identified by the NITI Aayog.
- It will create a cadre of 800 trainers who will train youth in these districts through digital medium, to take up entrepreneurship.
- The focus will be on women aspirants to encourage women entrepreneurship.
- The campaign will also assist interested aspirants to avail bank loans for setting up their own enterprise.
- SIDBI has partnered with CSC, e-governance Services India limited, set up by the Ministry of Electronics and IT for implementing the campaign.
- CSC Village Level Entrepreneurs (VLEs) will act as role models as well as guides for the aspirants in business strategies.

Other facts:	Questions/Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Transformation of Aspirational Districts programme aims to transform the chosen 115 districts, with at least one district in each state (except Goa).</li> <li>SIDBI was set up in 1990 under the Act of Indian Parliament to act as a principal financial institution for promotion, financing and development of the MSMEs.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>3. Agricultural Census:</b></p> <p>News: The Ministry of Agriculture released the 10<sup>th</sup> Agricultural Census 2015-16.</p>	
<p><b>Facts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The first census was conducted in 1970-71.</li> <li>It is conducted every 5 years by the NSSO, in three phases.</li> <li>The basic unit of data collection is operational land holding.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Other facts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Operational holding is defined as the land used wholly or partly for agricultural production and is operated as 1 unit operated by one person in terms of ownership.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>4. Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY):</b></p>	
<p><b>News:</b> The government modified the guidelines of the PMFBY.</p>	
<p><b>Facts:</b></p> <p>New major provisions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provision of Penalties/ Incentives for States, Insurance Companies (ICs) and Banks for delays in settlement claims beyond the prescribed cut-off date.</li> <li>Detailed SOP for Performance evaluation of ICs and their de-empanelment</li> <li>Inclusion of Perennial horticultural crops (on pilot basis) under the ambit of PMFBY.</li> <li>Inclusion of hailstorms in post-harvest losses, besides unseasonal and cyclonic rainfalls</li> <li>Inclusion of cloud burst and natural fire in localized calamities in addition to hailstorm, landslide, and inundation.</li> <li>Add on coverage for crop loss due to attack of wild animals on pilot</li> </ul>	

## Questions/Notes

basis.

- Mandatory capturing of Aadhaar number, this would help in de-duplication.
- Definition of Major Crops, Unseasonal rainfall and Inundation incorporated for clarity and proper coverage.
- More time to insured farmer to intimate individual claims – 72 hours (instead of 48 hours) through any stakeholders and directly on portal.
- Rationalization of premium release process.
- Broad Activity wise seasonality discipline containing defined timelines for all major activities to streamline the process of coverage, submission of yield data and early settlement of claims.

*Note: readers must look into the provisions of the original PMFBY*

### 5. Rural haats under Gramin Agricultural Markets (GrAM) Scheme:

**News:** The Center has identified rural haats for modernization and development of infrastructure under the GrAM in the first phase.

#### Facts:

- The aim under GrAM is to modernize the infrastructure of 22,000 rural haats over 2-3 years.
- The rural haats identified in the first phase are from 5 states: Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Telangana and Tamil Nadu.

#### Other facts:

- Under GrAM the physical infrastructure of the rural haats will be improved through MNREGA and other government schemes.
- The road linkages to the rural haats will be strengthened under the PMGSY.
- GrAMs will be linked to the e-NAM.
- It will also be outside the APMC Act regulation.

### 6. Bali Fintech Agenda:

**News:** The IMF and the World Bank launched the Bali Fintech Agenda.

#### Facts:

- The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank jointly released a paper intended to guide policymakers around the world to help them handle the rise of financial technology — commonly known as fintech.
- It outlines 12 considerations that the IMF, the World Bank and

governments can keep in mind when designing policies and regulations that can maximize the benefits of fintech while keeping financial systems sound.

- FinTech refers to the new technology that can be used to improve the delivery of financial services.

### 7. Nobel prize in Economics:

**News:** Nobel Prize in Economics 2018 was awarded to William D. Nordhaus and Paul M. Romer.

#### Facts:

- It is also known as the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences.
- William D. Nordhaus was awarded "for integrating climate change into long-run macroeconomic analysis"
- Paul M. Romer was awarded "for integrating technological innovations into long-run macroeconomic analysis".
- This year's nobel prize in economics was awarded to economic theories with direct political and practical implications.

### 8. Global Competitiveness Index (4.0):

**News:** World Economic Forum released the index under its Global Competitiveness Report 2018.

#### Facts:

- It assess a country's productivity around 12 main drivers.
- The index is topped by US, followed by Singapore and Germany.
- India was ranked 58th out of 140 economies, with a score of 62.0
- Among the BRICS countries China topped with 28th rank and a score of 72.6

#### Other facts:

- BRICS is the acronym coined for an association of five major emerging national economies: Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.
- Originally the first four were grouped as "BRIC", before the induction of South Africa in 2010.

### 9. Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund:

**News:** CCEA approved the creation of special Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund.

Facts:	Questions/Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The fund will be a combination of money raised from the nodal loaning agencies, beneficiaries' contributions and budgetary support by the Government of India.</li> <li>NABARD, National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC) and all scheduled banks have been recognized as the nodal loaning agencies.</li> <li>The fund will finance the states, UTs, cooperatives, individuals, and entrepreneurs who are willing to invest in the fisheries sector.</li> </ul>	
<b>10. Draft Policy on Mariculture:</b>	
<b>News:</b> Draft Policy on Mariculture has been formulated to ensure food and nutritional security of the nation.	
<b>Facts:</b>	
<b>Features</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Development of mariculture zones by demarcating special areas in the sea- called the Mariculture Development Area.</li> <li>Use of satellite remote sensing data and GIS for demarcation of Mariculture Zones.</li> <li>The policy allows for the farming of exotic and genetically modified species after risk assessment and monitoring.</li> <li>It seeks to provide additional livelihood options for the coastal communities.</li> <li>It will initiate innovative schemes to tackle the seed and feed scarcity.</li> <li>The policy has made provisions for the leasing of water bodies, to ensure the security of the mariculture enterprises.</li> </ul>	
<b>11. UN Investment Promotion Award:</b>	
<b>News:</b> Invest India has been awarded the UN Investment Promotion Award.	
<b>Facts:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is annual award, organised since 2002 by the UNCTAD to honor investment promotion agencies.</li> <li>Invest India, Department of Industrial policy and Promotion, is India's investment promotion and facilitation agency.</li> <li>It received the award for efforts in supporting a global wind turbine company to establish its blade manufacturing unit in India while committing to train local staff and produce 1 GW of renewable energy.</li> </ul>	

**Other facts:**

- The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) was established in 1964 as a permanent intergovernmental body.
- UNCTAD is the part of the United Nations Secretariat dealing with trade, investment, and development issues.

**12. Another Deal Replacing NAFTA:**

**News:** United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) is expected to replace the current North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

**Facts:**

- The new deal is intended to last for 16 years.
- It will be reviewed every 6 years.

**Other facts:**

- The North American Free Trade Agreement is an agreement signed by Canada, Mexico, and the United States, creating a trilateral trade bloc in North America.
- The agreement came into force on January 1, 1994.

**13. IL&FS crisis:**

**News:** The government sacked the board of the Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services, which defaulted on its loan repayments.

**Facts:**

- A new board was appointed to boost investor sentiments and confidence.
- It is headed by banker Uday Kotak.
- A probe was initiated into the company's books by the serious Fraud Investigations Office (SFIO).

**Note:** Please refer the Current Affairs Mains Class notes

**14. Global Skills Park:**

**News:** India and ADB have signed an agreement to establish the country's first Global Skills Park in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh.

**Facts:**

- It will engage with International Technical and Vocational Education

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<p>and Training (TVET) to create a better skilled workforce.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• TVETs will bring in global best practices and impart advanced job ready skills and training of international standards.</li> </ul> <p><b>15. Closing Skills Gap in India:</b></p> <p><b>News:</b> A task force for Closing Skills Gap in India had been launched in collaboration with World Economic Forum (WEF).</p> <p><b>Facts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This initiative forms part of WEF's Center for New Economy and Society.</li> <li>• It will develop an action plan to make India's workforce ready for future jobs.</li> <li>• India is second such country, after South Africa to establish such a country level task force in collaboration with WEF.</li> </ul> <p><b>16. Centre for Fourth Industrial Revolution:</b></p> <p><b>News:</b> World Economic Forum announced a center for fourth Industrial revolution in India.</p> <p><b>Facts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is aimed at bringing together governments and business leaders to develop emerging technologies together.</li> <li>• The center would be based in Maharashtra.</li> <li>• The first three project areas selected are: Blockchain, drones, artificial intelligence.</li> <li>• NITI Aayog will coordinate the partnership on behalf of the government, and the work of the centre.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Questions/Notes</b></p>
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**SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS****Questions/Notes****1. National Women Farmer's Day:**

**News:** The Ministry of Agriculture and Farmer's Welfare declared UN's International Rural Women's Day (October 15) as Rashtriya Mahila Kisan Diwas in 2016, to highlight their contribution for the economic development of the nation.

**Facts:**

- According to Oxfam India, women are responsible for about 60-80% of food and 90% of dairy production of the country.
- According to Census 2011, almost 86% of women farmers are devoid of their land property right.
- The lack of land title prevents women farmers from having access to credit, resources, extension services, decision making, employment and benefits that are commensurate to their labor.

**2. TAG (Teen Age Girls) Report:**

**News:** Nandi foundation, an NGO, released a report on teenage girls.

**Facts:**

- It is the first of its kind, in the country.
- It includes teenage girls in the age group: 13 to 19 years.
- The report findings have been used to develop an index called the TAG index.

**Tag Index:**

- It is based on the performance of each state with respect to the status of teenage girls.
- Kerala and Mizoram are the top two states in the Index.
- Mumbai, Kolkata, Bengaluru are the top three cities.
- Uttar Pradesh is the worst performing state as per the TAG index.

**3. Global Hunger Index 2018:**

**News:** India has been ranked 103 out of 119 countries on the Global Hunger Index.

**Facts:**

- In terms of hunger, India is a "serious" category country.

## Questions/Notes

- India has dropped three places compared to its 2017 ranking (100 out of 119 countries).
- The Index indicates improvement on three indicators: Undernourished people, Child mortality rate, Child stunting.
- India's performance in terms of child wasting has worsened.

**Other facts:**

- The index is a comprehensive tool to measure and track hunger at global, regional and national level.
- GHI has 3 dimensions (inadequate food supply, child mortality and child undernutrition) and 4 indicators (undernourishment, under five mortality rate, wasting and stunting) across which hunger is measured.
- Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide annually releases the Index.
- The International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was also involved in releasing the Index until this year.
- This year's report analyses the dynamic between hunger and forced migration.

**4. Non-Communicable Diseases:**

**News:** 73<sup>rd</sup> UNGA adopted a declaration titled "Time to Deliver: Accelerating our response to address NDCs for health and well-being of the present and future generations".

**Facts:**

- WHO defines NDCS as chronic diseases, which results from genetic, physiological, environmental and behavioral factors.
- The four major NCDs are: cardiovascular diseases, cancers, respiratory diseases and diabetes.
- NDCs are a cause of 60% deaths in India.
- India's Health Ministry has received the UN Inter Agency Task Force Award for its outstanding contribution towards NDCs related to SDG targets.
- The central government launched National Programme for the Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) for intervention up to district level under the National Health Mission.
- A flexi pool of funds has been created for NDCs.
- NITI Aayog has suggested PPP model to rope in private hospitals in

treating NDCs.

## Questions/Notes

### 5. Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV):

**News:** A Sexual harassment incident at KGBV drew the nation's attention towards the school's administration.

#### Facts:

- KGBV comes under the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA).
- It aims at providing residential elementary education to girls of STs, SCs, and other backward classes, Minority community girls and girls of BPL families.

### 6. Swachh Bharat Abhiyan (Urban):

**News:** Swachh Bharat Abhiyan completed 4 years on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 2018.

#### Facts:

- SBA (U) is a component of the Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, under the Ministry of Urban Development.
- The mission aimed at providing sanitation and household toilet facilities in statutory towns.

#### Other facts:

- Swachh Bharat Survey or Swachh Survekshan is commissioned by the Ministry of Urban Affairs and conducted by the Quality Council of India(QCI).
- Indore emerged as the cleanest city followed by Bhopal and Chandigarh.

### 7. Time Bank for the Elderly:

**News:** An expert panel on the elderly at the NHRC recommended that India should adopt the Swiss model of Time Bank.

#### Facts:

- A time bank is where people deposit time instead of money.
- A person who volunteers to help an elderly, earns the number of hours he serves him and deposits those hours in the time bank.
- When the volunteer himself gets old he can use his hours saved in the time bank and ask for a volunteer to assist him.

**8. Gateway for SEARN:**

**News:** An information sharing platform- Gateway for SEARN (South East Asia Regulatory Network) has been launched by the Union Health Ministry at the 2nd World Conference on Access to Medical Products: Achieving the SDGs 2030.

**Facts:**

- The platform was developed by Center for the Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC).
- The platform includes all the WHO South East Asia region member countries and enables them to access high quality medical products and enhance information sharing, collaboration and convergence on medical product regulatory pricing for procuring cost effective products.
- India is a permanent member of the steering group that leads the network.

**9. International Day for Girl Child:**

**News:** The International Day for Girl Child is celebrated annually on the 11th of October.

**Facts:**

- It was launched by the UNGA in 2012.
- It aims at bringing about girl empowerment and fulfillment of their Human Rights.
- It also highlights the challenges faced by girl children world over with respect to education, equality, child marriage, sexual health, gender based violence etc.
- Theme 2018: 'With Her: A Skilled Girl Force'

**10. World Habitat Day (WHD):**

**News:** 1st October 2018 was celebrated as the World Habitat Day by the UN.

**Facts:**

- Since 1985, every year the first Monday of October is designated as the World Habitat Day by UN.
- The focus of WHD 2018 is to address the challenge of Municipal Solid Waste.
- Thus the theme 2018 was: 'Municipal Solid Waste Management' and

**Questions/Notes**

the slogan used was: Waste-wise Cities.

## Questions/Notes

### 11. POCSO Act:

**News:** The Central Government has declared that a victim of child sexual abuse can register a complaint at any age.

#### Facts:

- Section 19 of the POCSO Act does not specify any time limit for reporting the crime of child sexual abuse, whereas the CrPC lays down different time limits for the crimes that carry punishment upto three years.
- Thus the government rectifies this anomaly enabling victims to report the crime at any age, even though the POCSO e-Box.

#### Other facts:

- POCSO e-box is a complaint management system that operates online for reporting sexual offences against children.
- It can be accessed through the website of National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights.

### 12. First Regional Conference on Women in Detention and Access to Justice:

**News:** The Bureau of Police Research and Development organised the first ever Regional Conference on Women in Detention and Access to Justice.

#### Facts:

- It was organised at Shimla.
- The conference was attended by all stakeholders- prison officials, NGOs, representatives from Universities, health professionals, social workers and counsellors working in the field of correctional administration and rehabilitation of prisoners.
- The objective of the conference was to provide a platform to the prison personnel to share the operational and administrative issues with the experts and identify the best practises and standards used worldwide.

#### Other facts:

- The Bureau of Police Research and Development, was set up in 1970 with the objective of the modernisation of police forces.
- Ministry of Home Affairs is its parent agency.

**13. WHO's first Global Conference on Air pollution and Health:**

**News:** The first Global Conference on Air Pollution and Health was held at the WHO's headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland.

**Facts:**

- The conference was held in collaboration with UN Environment, United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), World Meteorological Organization (WMO), Clean Air Coalition to reduce short-lived climate pollutants (CCAC) and United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE).
- Theme of the conference: 'Improving Air Quality, Combating Climate Change: Saving Lives'.
- Target: to reduce global deaths from air pollution by two-third by 2030.
- The 'Geneva Action Agenda to Combat Air Pollution' was proposed at this conference.
- It launched a report titled "Air pollution and Child Health: Prescribing Clean Air".
- The report examines the toll of ambient and household air pollution on child's health, especially in low and middle income countries.

**14. SC's verdict on the Use of Firecrackers:**

**News:** The SC struck a balance between the interest of the firecracker industry and right to public health by removing the Blanket ban on the use of firecrackers.

**Facts:**

- Only green and improved crackers through licensed trader, can be used during festivities.
- The time for bursting crackers was reduced to two hours (8pm to 10pm).
- There is a half an hour slot for bursting crackers on Christmas and New year's eve.
- The judgement banned online sale of crackers.
- Court urged the center and states to permit community bursting in pre designated areas.
- The court banned the manufacture, sale and use of joined crackers (laris).
- It rejected the argument that bursting cracker is an essential practise under Article 25 of the constitution.

**Questions/Notes**

## Questions/Notes

- It banned the use of certain toxic chemicals in manufacture of crackers, such as lithium, barium, arsenic, antimony, lead, mercury etc.
- It entrusted Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization (PESO) to test and check the presence of banned chemicals and suspend the licence of the violators of the law.

**15. Swasth Bharat Yatra:**

**News:** The government had launched a pan India cycle rally-Swasth Bharat Yatra- to sensitize people to eat safe and healthy food and combat adulteration.

**Facts:**

- The rally was launched by the central government on the World Food Day (16 October).
- The campaign was led by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).
- It propagated the message- “Eat Right India” and compelled the manufacturers to produce only safe and healthy food products.

**16. Swachh SurvekshanGramin Awards 2018:**

**News:** The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation had carried out Swachh Survekshan Gramin 2018 in all districts on the basis of quantitative and qualitative sanitation practises.

**Facts:**

- The survekshan was conducted by an independent agency.
- Top 3 states: 1) Haryana, 2) Gujarat and 3) Maharashtra.
- Top 3 districts: 1) Satara, Maharashtra; 2) Rewari, Haryana; 3) Peddapalli, Telangana.
- States with maximum citizen participation 1) Uttar Pradesh 2) Gujarat 3) Maharashtra
- Districts with maximum citizens’ participation 1) Nashik, Maharashtra 2) Solapur, Maharashtra 3) Chittorgarh, Rajasthan

**17. QS Rankings:**

**News:** IIT, Bombay has topped the first ever QS ranking for Indian Institutes of Higher Education.

Facts:	Questions/Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), is a British company specialised in education sector.</li><li>• Indian university rankings are the second country specific rankings conducted by QS, after China.</li><li>• It has ranked country's top 75 institutions.</li></ul> <p><b>18. Astana Declaration:</b></p> <p><b>News:</b> The global conference on Primary Health Care by the UNICEF and the WHO has adopted the Astana Declaration in Kazakhstan.</p> <p><b>Facts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All the members of the UN including India have signed the agreement.</li><li>• The declaration aims to strengthen the global commitment to primary healthcare system.</li><li>• It reinforces the 1978 Declaration of Alma-Ata, the first declaration that identified primary health care as the important key to attain overall health and well-being.</li></ul>	

## SECURITY AND DEFENCE

## Questions/Notes

## 1. Military Exercises:

<b>Military exercise name</b>	<b>Related facts</b>
Druzhba-III	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pakistan-Russia joint military exercise</li> <li>• The exercise began in 2016</li> <li>• Druzba in Russian Means Friendship</li> <li>• Druzba III was held at Kybher-Pakhtunkhwa's Nowshera district, Pakistan</li> </ul>
Iron Magic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amphibious exercise between US and UAE</li> </ul>
JIMEX 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of marine exercise between India and Japan</li> <li>• Held at Visakhapatnam, India</li> <li>• Started in 2012</li> <li>• Last edition was held at Chennai, India.</li> <li>• It comprises of a harbour phase and sea phase for four days each.</li> </ul>
CORPAT 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 32<sup>nd</sup> edition of coordinated patrol between the navies of India-Indonesia</li> <li>• Held at Belawan, Indonesia</li> </ul>
Dharma Guardian 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First ever Joint Military Exercise between India-Japan</li> <li>• To train and coordinate on the threats in urban warfare scenario</li> </ul>
Sahyog HOP TAC 2018	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1<sup>st</sup> joint exercise between Indian and Vietnamese Coast Guards</li> <li>• Held at Chennai, on the Bay of Bengal Coast</li> <li>• Aimed at improving coordination in areas of preventing environmental pollution, anti-piracy and mock drill of rescuing the crew of a hijacked oil tanker.</li> </ul>

IBSAMAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>6<sup>th</sup> edition of multi-national marine exercise between Indian, Brazilian and South African navies</li> <li>Held at Simons town, South Africa</li> <li>Initiated in the year 2006</li> <li>IBSAMAR V was held in Goa, India</li> </ul>
Cope India	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bilateral India-US air exercise, first conducted in 2004</li> <li>Cope India air exercise is all set to become a trilateral exercise including Japan</li> </ul>

## Questions/Notes

**2. S-400**

News: S-400 deal was a major breakthrough in the 19<sup>th</sup> India-Russia annual bilateral summit despite US sanctions under Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA).

**Facts:**

- Russian built S-400 Triumph (known as SA-21 Growler by NATO) is world's most dangerous long-range surface-to-air missile defence system.
- It can be deployed in five minutes and is capable of firing three types of missiles to create a layered defense system.

**Other facts:**

- THAAD (Terminal High Altitude Area Defense System) is a similar missile defense system developed by US. It is an anti-ballistic missile

defense system designed to shoot down short-, medium-, and intermediate-range ballistic missiles in their terminal phase by intercepting with a hit-to-kill approach.

- CAATSA is a United States federal law which imposes sanctions against adversaries of US viz. Russia, North Korea and Iran. In particular, it was enacted to punish Russia by sanctioning countries engaging in business transactions with Russian Defence Sector, to prevent revenue flows to the Russian government.

### 3. Reconstitution of Strategic Policy Group (SPG):

**News:** The government through a notification, reconstituted the Strategic Policy Group (SPG).

#### Facts:

- It was set up in 1999 to make policy recommendations to the National Security Council (NSC).
- It is mandated to publish National Defense Review charting out India's long term and short-term security threats and matters for consideration of NSC.
- The Cabinet Secretary headed the SPG earlier.

#### Salient features of the notification:

- National Security Advisor replaces Cabinet Secretary as the Chairperson of SPG.
- Other members will include Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, Cabinet Secretary, three services chief, RBI Governor, secretaries of External Affairs, Home, Defense, Finance, Defense Production, Department of Revenue, Atomic Energy, Space and National Security Council Secretariat, Scientific Advisor to Defense Minister, Secretary (R) in Cabinet Secretariat and the IB chief.
- The new mandate of the Cabinet Secretary is to coordinate the implementation of the SPG decisions by the Union and the states.

#### Other facts:

- NSC is the top executive body of India, which advises the PM on national security and strategic matters.
- It was established in 1988.
- It has a three tier organizational structure including SPG, National Security Advisory Board and National Security Council Secretariat.

**4. Missile Prahaar:**

News: India successfully test fired missile Prahaar off the Odisha Coast.



Specifications	
Length	7.3 meters
Diameter	0.42 meter
Warhead	200 kg
Propellant	Solid
Operational range	150 km
Speed	Mach 2.03 (2160 km/h)
Launch platform	8 x 8 Tata Transporter Erector Launcher

**Facts:**

- It is a surface-to-surface short-range tactical ballistic missile developed by DRDO.
- Its strike range is 150-km.
- It can carry a warhead up to 200 kg.
- It uses solid propellant and travels at a speed of Mach 2.03 (2160 km/h).

**5. ADMM and ADMM-plus meeting:**

**News:** 12th ASEAN Defence Minister Meeting and 5th ADMM-plus was held in October, Singapore.

**Facts:**

- This is the second time that Singapore has chaired ADMM and its first time in case of ADMM-plus.

**Other facts:**

- The ADMM is the highest defence consultative and cooperative mechanism in ASEAN.
- The Inaugural meeting of the ADMM was held in Kuala Lumpur on 9 May 2006.
- All ASEAN Member States, namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore,

**Questions/Notes**

Thailand, and Viet Nam are members of the ADMM.

- The ADMM aims to promote mutual trust and confidence through greater understanding of defence and security challenges as well as enhancement of transparency and openness.
- The ADMM-Plus is a platform for ASEAN and its eight Dialogue Partners to strengthen security and defence cooperation for peace, stability, and development in the region.
- The Inaugural ADMM-Plus was convened in Ha Noi, Viet Nam, on 12 October 2010.
- The ADMM-Plus countries include ten ASEAN Member States and eight Plus countries, namely Australia, China, India, Japan, New Zealand, ROK, Russian Federation and the United States.

## Questions/Notes

## ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY

## Questions/Notes

**1. IPCC's Special Report:**

**News:** The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change released a special report titled 'Global Warming of 1.5 degree celsius'.

**Facts:**

- It is the first special report in the series of IPCC VI assessment cycle.
- An IPCC special report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels and related global greenhouse gas emissions, and seeks for strengthening the global response to the threat of climate change, sustainable development, and efforts to eradicate poverty.

**Other facts:**

- IPCC was established by UNEP and World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in 1988.
- IPCC is a UN body with 195 member states, for assessing the science behind the Climate Change phenomenon.
- The body does no research on its own but analyzes the research done by other agencies.

**2. Ocean Cleanup Project:**

**News:** Ocean Cleanup Project was launched in the Pacific Ocean for cleaning up the plastic debris.

**Facts:**

- The project's aim is to clean the Great Garbage Patch in the Pacific Ocean which is found between the Hawaiian Islands and California.
- Every year marine plastic gets trapped into ocean gyres and slowly breakdown into microplastics, which is harmful for marine and human life.

**Other factors:**

- Ocean Cleanup is a not for profit organization based in the Netherlands, which develops advanced technologies to get rid of the plastic debris.
- Microplastics and microbeads are less than 1 mm plastic pieces found in cosmetics and personal care products.

**Other projects for Ocean cleanup:**

- Blue Flag Beach Certificate Standards: The Copenhagen based Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE) sets cleanliness standards for the beach and consequently give certificates to environmental friendly and clean beaches.  
Chandrabhaga beach on the Konark coast, Odisha was first in Asia to get the Blue flag certification.
- #CleanSeas campaign: Launched by the UN environment to eliminate all major sources of plastic litter, micro plastic in cosmetics and eliminate wasteful usage single use plastic by 2022.
- The Honolulu Strategy: A comprehensive framework and collaborative effort to reduce negative impacts of marine debris worldwide.

**3. India's 1st Soil Moisture Map:**

**News:** India Meteorological Department (IMD) launched India's first soil moisture forecast.

**Facts:**

- It is a joint exercise between IIT Gandhinagar and the IMD.
- It gives soil moisture forecast with 7 and 30-days lead-time.
- Experimental Forecasts Land Surface Products have been developed using Variable Infiltration Capacity model that takes into consideration soil, land use, vegetation and land cover to forecast the soil moisture level.

**Key findings:**

- Deficit soil conditions likely in Gujarat, Bihar, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu and Southern Andhra Pradesh.
- Soil moisture conditions to be normal or surplus in western U.P, Bundelkhand and Chhattisgarh.

**4. Eurasian Otter:**

**News:** Scientists confirmed photographic and genetic presence of the Eurasian otter in Western Ghats.

**Facts:**

- They are carnivorous animals.
- They adapt to a variety of habitats from marine waters to freshwater.
- Its status in the IUCN Red List is Near Threatened and it finds a place

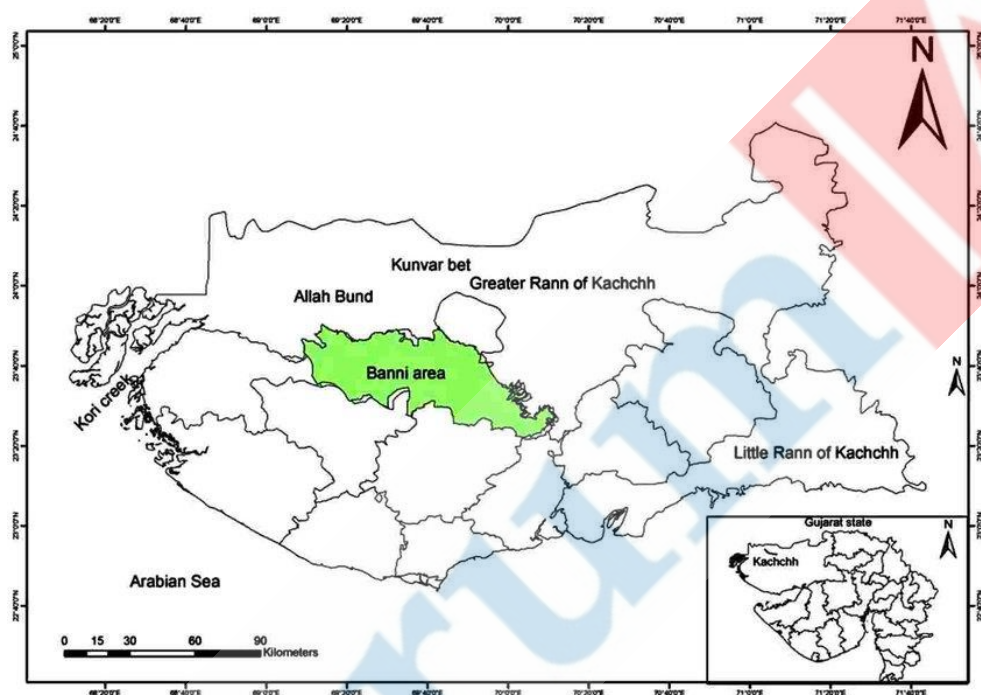
**Questions/Notes**

in the Schedule II of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.

- India houses 3 out of the 13 known species of otter:
  - Eurasian otter (*Lutra lutra*)
  - Smooth coated otter (*Lutra perspicillata*)
  - Small-clawed otter (*Aonyx cinereus*)
- Eurasian otter has been historically recorded in India (Coorg of Karnataka and the Nilgiris and Palani hills of Tamil Nadu).

## 5. Banni Grassland

**News:** The Maldhari Tribe was forced to migrate out of the Banni grasslands due to water scarcity.



Map showing the Banni Grassland Area in the Kutch district of Gujarat

### Facts:

- Banni grassland (near the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat) is the largest natural grassland in the Indian subcontinent known for scarce rainfall and drought conditions.
- The land is made out of ocean clay and thus has an element of salt in it.

### Other facts:

- There are 22 communities living in this area, called Maldhari pastoralists.
- 'Mal' means animal stock and 'dhari' means the keeper of the livestock.

## Questions/Notes

## Questions/Notes

- ChhariDhand is a legally protected conservation area. 'Chhari' means salt and 'Dhand' means shallow wetland.
- Both Banni grasslands and ChhariDhand together form most important bird areas in the desert ecosystem.

**6. Demarcation of ESZs in the Western Ghats:**

**News:** Center has released a draft notification earmarking the Eco-Sensitive Areas (ESAs) in Western Ghats.

**Facts:**

- The Center in 2010 began the process of demarcating ESAs in the Western Ghats by constituting the MadhavGadgil committee, followed by the K. Kasturirangan High-Level Working Group.
- It is the 4th such draft recognising 37% of the area of Western Ghats as ESAs.
- The process was delayed because of the opposition of the states- Karnataka, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.
- NGT has directed the MoEFCC to finalise the notification within 6 months of its issuance, without any alteration in the draft.

**Other facts:**

- ESAs are areas notified by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, under the Environment (Protection) Act 1986 to protect it from industrial pollution and unregulated development.
- National Green Tribunal (NGT) is a statutory body under the National Green Tribunal Act 2010, to handle the expeditious disposal of the cases pertaining to environmental issues.

**7. Global Soil Biodiversity Atlas:**

**News:** The Global Soil Biodiversity Atlas placed India among the list of countries facing high levels of risk in terms of soil biodiversity.

**Facts:**

- It was prepared by the World Wide Fund for Nature.
- It is published as a part of the Living Planet Report 2018.

**Other facts:**

- The Living Planet Report 2018 is published by World Wide Fund for Nature, every two years.

- The World Wide Fund for Nature is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1961, working in the field of the wilderness preservation, and the reduction of human impact on the environment.

**Other facts:**

- The Living Planet Report 2018 is published by World Wildlife Fund for Nature, every two years.
- The World Wide Fund for Nature is an international non-governmental organization founded in 1961, working in the field of the wilderness preservation, and the reduction of human impact on the environment.

**8. Flow Specifications of River Ganga:**

**News:** The National Mission for Clean Ganga has laid down the flow specifications for Ganga for ecological benefits.

**Facts:**

- Central Water Commission (CWC) has been authorised to collect relevant data on the implementation of the norms and to submit quarterly reports to the NMCG.
- The flow norms are applicable to all existing projects, under construction and future projects.
- The mini and micro projects, which do not alter the flow characteristics, are exempted from compliance.
- The existing projects need to show compliance within a 3-year period.

**Other facts:**

- CWC established in 1963 under the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.

**9. STAPCOR-2018:**

**News:** The International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (STAPCOR-2018) took place in Bangaram island of Lakshadweep.

**Facts:**

- Theme: Reef for Life
- STAPCOR was founded in 1998 when the bleaching of corals was observed internationally due to global warming, climate change and El-Nino effect.
- Since 1998, the conference has been taking place every 10 years.

**Other facts:**

- 2018 has been declared as the 3rd Decadal International Year of Reefs.
- An international Atoll Research Center for scientific research on corals will be established at Lakshadweep island.

**10. CORSIA:**

**News:** The DGCA issued draft guidelines for the implementation of Carbon Offsetting and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation for the aeroplane operators on International routes.

**Facts:**

- CORSIA is an International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) resolution to address the problem of Carbon Dioxide emissions from international aviation from 2021-2035.
- Humanitarian, Medical and Fire fighting flights are exempted under CORSIA.

**Other facts:**

- The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations.
- It codifies the principles and techniques of international air navigation and fosters the planning and development of international air transport to ensure safe and orderly growth.

**11. India's maiden Dolphin Research Centre:**

**News:** India's National Dolphin Research Centre (NDRC) will soon be a reality.

**Facts:**

- Along with being India's first, it will also be Asia's first dolphin research centre.
- It is likely to be set up near banks of Ganga river in the premises of Patna University.
- Its aim is to improve research and conservation efforts for the endangered mammal.

**Other facts:**

- R.K Sinha, the dolphin man of india is renowned for his research on gangetic dolphins.
- Gangetic Dolphin is the National Aquatic animal of India.

**Questions/Notes**

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- The Vikramshila Gangetic Dolphin Sanctuary, is India's only Dolphin Sanctuary in the Bhagalpur district of Bihar.
- It is one of the four freshwater dolphin species in the world. They are generally found in turbulent waters and are indicators of a healthy river ecosystem.
- The other three species are found in Amazon, Yangtze river and Indus river.
- This species is found in India, Bangladesh and Nepal.
- It is a completely blind mammal, which navigates using echoes.
- It is under the endangered category of the IUCN Red List and is placed in the schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.
- Assam's Guwahati became the first city in the country to have its own city animal with the district administration declaring the Gangetic river dolphin as its mascot.

**12. Prakriti:**

**News:** Recently, an MoU was signed between Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, Dehradun (ICFRE) and the Navodaya and Kendriya Vidyalayas to launch the programme Prakriti.

**Facts:**

- It is a programme with the objective to promote awareness about forests and environment to stimulate interest among the students.
- It is an initiative to stir a student led people's movement for the conservation of forest and environment.

**Other facts:**

- ICFRE, an autonomous council under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.

**13. Fall Armyworm (FAW) Pest:**

**News:** The Fall Armyworm pest has been reported in India in the maize fields of Karnataka and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Maharashtra and Gujarat.

**Facts:**

- FAW is scientifically called Spodopterafrugiperda.
- It is a polyphagous pest i.e. it can feed on many foods.
- It has been spotted in the Americas for several decades and has now

entered even Africa.

- It has two genetically identified Strains:
  - M-strain primarily attacks Maize, sorghum and cotton.
  - R-strain primarily attacks Rice, millets, alfalfa, bermuda grass etc.

#### 14. Amur Falcon:

**News:** Umru village on Assam-Meghalaya border and Doyang lake in Pangti village, Nagaland are stopovers of Amur Falcons-world's longest travelling raptor (20,000 km a year)

#### Facts:

- These birds breed in the south western parts of Siberia and northern China, then migrate across India, over the Arabian sea right up to southern Africa (Somalia, Kenya and South Africa).
- In October every year these birds flock to northeast India.

#### Other facts:

- Amur Falcons are in the least concerned category of the IUCN red list.
- They eat winged termites and insects that destroy crops, thus helping the farmers.

#### 15. Green Crackers:

**News:** CSIR and its associated labs have recently developed Green Crackers which are less polluting and eco-friendly firecrackers.

#### Facts:

- These crackers have a unique property of releasing water vapour or air as a dust suppressant.
- They are 15-20% cheaper than conventional crackers.
- They match the sound performance of conventional crackers.
- These crackers have been named as:
  - SWAS: safe water releaser
  - SAFAL: safe minimal aluminium
  - STAR: safe thermite cracker

#### 16. Sovereign Blue Bond:

**News:** Recently, Republic of Seychelles launched the world's first sovereign blue bond.

### Questions/Notes

Facts:	Questions/Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The bond has been developed by the World Bank and Global Environment Facility (GEF) under the World Bank's SWIOFish project (South West Indian Ocean Fisheries governance and shared growth programme).</li><li>• Blue bonds are debt instruments used by the governments to raise capital for marine and ocean based projects that have a positive impact on the environment and the economy.</li><li>• They have been inspired by the concept of Green Bonds.</li></ul> <p><b>Other Facts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A green bond is a bond specifically earmarked to be used for climate and environmental projects.</li></ul>	

## SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## Questions/Notes

**1. Necessity of Two Time Zones in India:**

**News:** National Physical Laboratory published an article demanding two time zones.

**Facts:**

- Benefits of two time zones in India
  - Energy saving
  - Ecological and environmental benefits
  - Enhance people's productivity
  - Health benefits due to proper leisure time and sleep
- Since 1947 India is following the IST for the whole country, i.e. India follows a single time zone based on the longitude passing through 82 degree 30 minutes East.
- There is a spread of approximately 30 degrees between the westernmost and easternmost point of India, resulting in a 2-hours gap in time.
- Pre independent India had two time zones Calcutta time in the East and Bombay time in the West, abandoned in 1948 and 1955 respectively.
- The British colonialists introduced "chaibagaan time" or "bagaan time", a time schedule observed by tea planters of Assam, which was one hour ahead of IST.

**Other facts:**

- Time Zone: A time zone is a region on the globe that observes a uniform standard time for legal, commercial, and social purposes.
- Countries with multiple time zones: France: 12, United States of America: 11, Russia: 11, United Kingdom: 9.
- National Physical Laboratory: It was established in 1947, to maintain standards of SI units in India and to calibrate the national standards of weights and measures.
- Its parent agency is Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and it is headquartered at New Delhi.

**2. Nobel Prizes 2018:****Questions/Notes**

<b>Physics</b>	<b>Chemistry</b>	<b>Medicine</b>
<p>The Nobel Prize in Physics 2018 was awarded “for groundbreaking inventions in the field of laser physics” with one half to Arthur Ashkin “for the optical tweezers and their application to biological systems”.</p> <p>The other half was jointly awarded to Gérard Mourou and Donna Strickland “for their method of generating high-intensity, ultra-short optical pulses”.</p>	<p>The Nobel Prize in Chemistry 2018 was awarded with one half to Frances H. Arnold “for the directed evolution of enzymes”.</p> <p>The other half was jointly awarded to George P. Smith and Sir Gregory P. Winter “for the phage display of peptides and antibodies.”</p>	<p>The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine 2018 was awarded to James P. Allison and Tasuku Honjo “for their discovery of cancer therapy by inhibition of negative immune regulation.”</p> <p>The Laureates have shown how different strategies for inhibiting the brakes on the immune system can be used in the treatment of cancer.</p> <p>Their discoveries are a landmark in our fight against cancer.</p>

**Other facts:**

- The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences confers Nobel prize for Physics, Chemistry and Economics.
- The Karolinska Institute confers the nobel for Physiology/Medicine.

**3. Parker Solar Probe:**

News: It was recently made to fly past Venus intentionally in order to slow it down by avoiding the gravitational pull of the sun.

**Facts:**

- It is a robotic spacecraft launched by NASA in 2018.
- It's the first mission to directly fly into sun's atmosphere called Corona.
- It will probe the outer corona and measure the electric and magnetic fields and help predicting solar flares that can hamper satellite

functioning, endanger the astronauts in ISS and dismantle the power grids on Earth.

**Other facts:**

- This is the only time the spacecraft will have its thermal protection system — made of a 4.5-inch-thick carbon composite that will reach temperatures of 2,500 F while at the Sun — attached until just before launch.
- The Sun's atmosphere has three layers: the photosphere, the chromosphere, and the corona.
- Photosphere is visible surface of the earth, and the outer atmosphere of the sun comprises of the chromosphere and corona.

**4. New Horizons probe:**

**News:** Recently the spacecraft crossed Kuiper belt Object- Ultima Thule on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2019.

**Facts:**

- With this it sets a record of being the most distant object visited by a spacecraft.
- New Horizons probe is NASA's interplanetary space probe launched under its New Frontiers Programme.
- It was launched in January 2006 to travel to Pluto and Kuiper Belt. It is the first spacecraft to travel up to Pluto.

**Other facts:**

- Kuiper Belt: It is the zone beyond the Giants planets called the third zone. New Horizon is the first mission to probe into the third zone.
- The Kuiper belt, occasionally called the Edgeworth–Kuiper belt, is a circumstellar disc in the outer Solar System, extending from the orbit of Neptune to approximately 50 AU from the Sun.
- It is wider and massive than the asteroid belt (a circumstellar belt between Mars and Jupiter).
- (486958) 2014 MU<sub>69</sub>: Nicknamed as Ultima Thule, is a trans-Neptunian object located in the Kuiper Belt. It is a contact binary 31 km long, composed of two joined bodies.

**Questions/Notes**

**5. Hubble telescope:**

**News:** The Hubble telescope went into the “safe mode” after one of its gyroscopes failed.

**Facts:**

- NASA’s Hubble telescope is world's first space-based optical telescope, which was launched into low earth orbit in 1990, and is still in operation.
- NASA named it after American astronomer Edwin P. Hubble
- It is the largest and the most versatile telescope till date.

**Questions/Notes****6. NASA’s Chandra X-Ray Observatory:**

**News:** This observatory has entered a safe mode due to technical malfunction.

**Facts:**

- It is a Space observatory launched by NASA in 1999, launched on STS-93.
- Chandra is one of the great observatories, along with the Hubble space telescope, Compton Gamma Ray Observatory and the Spitzer Space telescope.
- It is named after Indian-American astrophysicist and Nobel laureate Subrahmanyan Chandrasekhar.
- It was earlier known as the Advanced X-ray Astrophysics Facility.
- It is sensitive to X-rays and is specially designed to detect X-ray emission from very hot regions of the Universe.

**7. NASA’s Dawn Spacecraft:**

**News:** The Dawn Spacecraft ran out of fuel recently.

**Facts:**

- Dawn Mission is the first mission to orbit around a Dwarf planet and the first to orbit two bodies in the main asteroid belt.
- It is NASA’s retired space probe. It was launched in 2007 to study two protoplanets in the asteroid belt- Vesta and Ceres.
- It was retired on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018, and is currently in an uncontrolled orbit around its second target-Ceres.

**8. Bepi Colombo Mission:**

**News:** It is Europe's first mission to Mercury, which took off in 2018 and will reach there in 2025.

**Facts:**

- It is a joint mission between European Space Agency (ESA) and Japanese Aerospace Exploration Agency (JAXA), under the ESA leadership.
- The mission comprises of two spacecrafts: Mercury Planetary Orbiter and Mercury Magnetospheric Orbiter.
- The mission will focus on finding out the possibility of presence of water on Mercury.

**Other facts:**

- Mercury is solar system's smallest planet and the least explored.
- It is closest to the sun, with the surface temperature varying from 450-180 degree Celsius.

**Other missions to Mercury:**

- NASA's Mariner 10
- US Space Agency's Messenger

**9. Polio Virus:**

**News:** Ministry of Health and Family Affairs ordered an enquiry into type-2 poliovirus contamination of the vials used for immunization in U.P, Maharashtra, Telangana.

**Facts:**

- Poliomyelitis (polio) is a highly infectious viral disease.
- Children are more prone to this disease.
- The virus is transmitted from person to person mainly through the faecal-oral route.
- Polio can only be prevented through immunization.

**Other facts:**

- There are 3 types of poliovirus strains: P1, P2, P3.
- In 2014 India was poliovirus free by eradicating P1 and P3.
- September 2015, type 2 was also declared eliminated, officially.
- Types of polio vaccine:

**Questions/Notes**

## Questions/Notes

- Inactivated polio vaccine (IPV): produced from wild type poliovirus strain that have been killed using formalin. It is an injectable vaccine.
- Oral Polio vaccine (OPV): this is weakened poliovirus, which activates the immune system to develop antibodies. The vaccine is safe, but sometimes results in vaccine derived poliovirus (VDPV).

**10. WHO TB Report:**

**News:** World Health Organization in collaboration with UN's first high-level meeting on TB released World TB Report 2018.

**Facts:**

- TB is a communicable disease, caused by bacteria called bacillus *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*.
- It is both pulmonary (affects the lungs) and extrapulmonary (affects areas other than lungs) in nature.
- Drug resistant TB is a rising concern where the bacteria are increasingly becoming resistant to the antibiotics. There are three types of drug resistant TB:

<b>Multidrug resistant TB (MDR)</b>	<b>Extensively Drug resistant TB (XDR)</b>	<b>Total drug resistant TB (TDR-TB)</b>
It doesn't respond to the first line of drugs-isoniazid and rifampicin.	Here the bacteria are at least resistant to 4 anti-TB drugs.	Bacteria are resistant to all the first line as well as second line TB drugs.

**Other facts:**

- Moscow Declaration (2017): It is the outcome of the first global ministerial conference on ending TB, held in 2017.

**11. China's Artificial Moon Project:**

**News:** China has planned to launch an artificial moon over the city of Chengdu, in Sichuan Province by 2020.

**Facts:**

- It aims to provide an alternative means of street lighting and save electricity.
- It will consist of a mirror orbiting Chengdu at an altitude of 500-km,

## Questions/Notes

which will reflect sun's light at night.

- It is expected to illuminate an area of 10-80-km.

**Other facts:**

- China is not the first country to have an Artificial Moon. Russian scientist in Project Znamya or Banner used giant mirrors to reflect light from the space.

**12. Train 18 (T18):**

**News:** Indian Railways' first engine-less train made its inaugural trial run.

**Facts:**

- The maximum train speed is up to 180 kmph (semi high speed train), and is referred to as the successor of Shatabdi Express.
- It has been christened as the Vande Bharat Express.
- It is fully air conditioned, manufactured by Integral Coach Factory, Chennai.
- It is a 100% Made in India project.
- It is driven by self-propulsion module without a separate locomotive.
- It employs regenerative braking system.
- It made its maiden journey from Delhi to Varanasi.

**13. AskDishaChatbot:**

**News:** The Indian Railways Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) launched Ask Disha Chatbot for improving customer service for passengers.

**Facts:**

- It is an artificial intelligence powered chatbot.
- IRCTC becomes the first and the only government corporation in India to launch a chat enabled helpdesk service.
- IRCTC and CoRover Private Limited have jointly developed it.
- It will be functional in several regional languages, and will be voice enabled.
- It will soon be integrated with the IRCTC android app.

**Other facts:**

- CoRover Private Ltd. is a Bengaluru based startup that develops AI and machine learning based chatbots pertaining to travel and tourism.
- Chat bot is a combination of a chat and robot. It is based on AI which

conducts text or audio conversations like humans.

## Questions/Notes

### 14. Gaganyaan:

**News:** A MoU has been signed between ISRO and Russian space agency ROSCOSMOS on joint activities in the field of Human Spaceflight Programme-Gaganyaan.

#### Facts:

- Russia has offered a ride to an Indian astronaut to the International Space Station (ISS) for a short training mission in 2022.
- If successful, India will be the 4<sup>th</sup> nation after US, China and Russia to send a human in space.

#### Other facts:

- Gaganyaan, India's first human Spaceflight Programme is scheduled for completion by 2022.
- GSLV Mk-III will be used for launch of Gaganyaan.
- The mission will send three-member crew for a period of 5-7 days.
- The spacecraft will be placed in low earth orbit at 300-400 km.

### 15. Acinetobacter Junii:

**News:** Researchers from University of Delhi (DU) and Indian Institute of Technology (BHU) successfully degraded toluene into a less toxic byproducts by using a bacteria called Acinetobacter Junii.

#### Facts:

- The degradation was by the way of general aerobic degradation.
- Toluene is a petrochemical waste released without treatment from refineries, paint, rubber etc.
- It has adverse impact on health of aquatic life and genotoxic and carcinogenic effect on human health.

### 16. Digi Yatra

**News:** Digi Yatra platform has been created by Ministry of Civil Aviation to create a digitally unified experience for air travellers.

#### Facts:

- It plans to bring together the entire aviation industry, to result into a seamless and paperless service experience.

The platform is built on 4 key pillars:	Questions/Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Connected Passengers</li> <li>• Connected Airports</li> <li>• Connected Flying</li> <li>• Connected Systems</li> </ul> <p><b>17. India International Science Festival (IISF):</b></p> <p><b>News:</b> The Ministry of Science and Technology, Ministry of Earth Sciences and Vijnana Bharati jointly conducted the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of India International Science Festival in Lucknow.</p> <p><b>Facts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is aimed at collectively working towards “Vigyan se Vikas”, for the making of the new India.</li> <li>• The theme of the festival was Science for Transformation.</li> <li>• It brings together students, researchers, innovators and general public to celebrate science achievements.</li> <li>• It encourages young minds in the field of science and to come up with innovative ideas to overcome the problems faced by our country in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.</li> </ul> <p><b>Other facts:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The 1<sup>st</sup> IISF was held at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), New Delhi 2015.</li> </ul>	

**MISCELLANEOUS****Questions/Notes****1. Global Geopark Network Status:**

**News:** Lonar Lake in Maharashtra and St. Mary's Island and Malpe beach in coastal Karnataka are the Geological Survey of India's (GSI) candidates for UNESCO Global Geopark Network status.

**Facts:**

- The Global Geoparks Network is a UNESCO assisted network established in 1998.
- It is a legally constituted not for profit organization, whose membership is mandatory for being a part of UNESCO Global Geoparks.
- UNESCO Global Geoparks are unified, single geographical units where sites of international geological significance are holistically managed.
- A UNESCO Global Geopark is given this designation for a period of four years after which the functioning and quality of each UNESCO Global Geopark is thoroughly re-examined during a revalidation process.
- There are 140 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 38 countries.
- None of the India's Geo-heritage sites are included in the UNESCO Geopark network.
- An aspiring Global Geopark must have a dedicated website, a corporate identity, comprehensive management plan, protection plan, finance and partnerships for it to be accepted.

**Other facts:**

<b><i>Lonar Lake, Maharashtra</i></b>	<b><i>St. Mary's Island and Maple Beach in Karnataka</i></b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is world's oldest Meteoric crater.</li> <li>• It is the only meteoric crater formed in basalt rock.</li> <li>• It is a salt-water lake.</li> <li>• It became national geo heritage site in 1979.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St. Mary's Islands, also known as Coconut Island, are a set of four small islands in the Arabian sea off the coast of Maple in Udupi, Karnataka, India.</li> <li>• It is hexagonal mosaic of basaltic rocks.</li> <li>• It was declared a national geo heritage in 1975.</li> </ul>

**2. Vishwa Shanti Ahimsa Sammelan:**

**News:** Vishwa Shanti Ahimsa Sammelan 2018 took place at the Mangi-Tungi in Satana Taluka, Nashik, Maharashtra.

**Facts:**

- Mangi-Tungi are two hills in the Sahyadris.
- The hills hold a lot of significance for Jain sect, as 990 million Digambar Jains are believed to have attained salvation on these hills. Therefore, the area is also called “Siddha Kshetra”.
- There are 10 cave temples of Jains located on the hills.
- Mangi-Tungi is site of 108 feet tall Statue of Rishabhdev (Adi-nath). It is the tallest monolithic Jain statue in the world built in 2016, surpassing the 57 feet tall Bahubali statue at Shravanabelagola at Karnataka.

**Other facts:**

- Rishabhdev is considered as the first Jain Tirthankara (spiritual leader).
- His symbol is the Bull.
- He is considered as the founder of Ikshvaku dynasty.

**3. 75th anniversary of Azad Hind Government:**

**News:** The government on 21<sup>st</sup> October celebrated the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the provisional Azad Hind government in Singapore, by hoisting a National Flag at the Red Fort.

**Facts:**

- Subhash Chandra Bose established it in 1943, and he was also the Head of the State of the provisional Indian Government in exile.
- The role of Azad Hind Fauj (INA) has remained exemplary in India's freedom struggle.

**Other facts:**

- Mohan Singh first conceived INA in Malaya.
- It comprised of the prisoners of War of the British Indian Army captured by the Japanese in Singapore, Malaysia and other Southeast Asian countries during WWII.
- The main task of forming INA was done by Rash Behari Bose, which was later reconstituted by Subhash Chandra Bose.

**Questions/Notes**

- Ina's women regiment was called the Rani of Jhansi Regiment.

#### 4. Sir Chhotu Ram

**News:** PM unveiled the statue of Sir Chhotu Ram in Rohtak, Haryana.

**Facts:**

- He founded the Jat Sabha, followed by the Jat Gazette in 1915.
- He became a member of the INC in 1916.
- He launched the Zamindaran party in 1920, which later came to be known as the Unionist Party.
- He also became the Revenue Minister in the coalition Government formed in 1936.

**Other facts:**

- Sir Chhotu Ram conceived the Bhakra Dam Project.
- He was an agrarian reformer, for which the peasantry gave him the titles Deenbandhu and Rahbar-e-Azam.
- The British also honored him with knighthood in 1937.

#### 5. Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony:

**News:** The 2014, 2015 and 2016 Tagore Award for Cultural Harmony was awarded to Manipuri dancer RajkumarSinghajit Singh, Bangladeshi cultural organization Chhayanaout and Ram. V. Sutar, one of the greatest Indian sculptors, respectively.

**Facts:**

- This award was instituted by the government to India to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Gurudev (Rabindranath Tagore).
- The award is open to all irrespective of their nationality, race, language, caste, creed and sex.
- The award consists of an amount of 1 crore rupees, a citation in a scroll, a plaque as well as an exquisite traditional handicraft item.
- The first recipient of this award was Pt. Ravi Shankar, Indian Sitar Maestro in 2012, followed by Zubin Mehta in 2013.

#### 6. Seoul Peace Prize 2018:

**News:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi becomes the first Indian to receive the Seoul Peace Prize.

Facts:	Questions/Notes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The prize was established in 1990, to commemorate the 24<sup>th</sup> Olympic games held at Seoul, South Korea.</li> <li>It is awarded biennially to individuals who contribute to world peace, harmony of mankind and reconciliation between states.</li> </ul>	
<b>7. Future Policy Gold Award:</b>	
<b>News:</b> Sikkim received FAO's Future Policy Gold Award for becoming the world's first totally organic agricultural award.	
<b>Facts:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is the first award which celebrates policies rather than people at the international level.</li> </ul>	
<b>Other facts:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) is an UN agency established in 1945, aimed at encouraging international efforts to defeat hunger.</li> <li>It has its headquarters at Rome, Italy.</li> </ul>	
<b>8. Nobel Peace Prize:</b>	
<b>News:</b> The Nobel Peace Prize for the year 2018 was awarded to Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad for their efforts to end the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and conflict.	
<b>Facts:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mukwege is a Congolese doctor, known as the Miracle doctor for having treated victims of sexual violence.</li> <li>His work has also been a subject to an acclaimed film titled: "The Man Who Mends Women".</li> <li>Nadia Murad is a Yazidi girl awarded for her fight for Human Rights.</li> <li>She was a victim of sexual violence and abuse by the ISIS army.</li> <li>In 2016, she became the UN's first goodwill ambassador for the Dignity of Survivors of Human Trafficking.</li> <li>Her autobiography is titled "The Last Girl".</li> </ul>	
<b>Other facts:</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It was established by the will of Swedish industrialist, inventor, and armaments manufacturer Alfred Nobel.</li> <li>The prize was first given in 1901, since then it is awarded every year on</li> </ul>	

## Questions/Notes

10th December at the Oslo City Hall.

- The recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize is selected by the Norwegian Nobel Committee, a five-member committee appointed by the Parliament of Norway.

### 9. India for Humanity:

**News:** The Ministry of External Affairs launched India for Humanity Initiative to commemorate 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

#### Facts:

- The initiative features a year long series of artificial limb fitment camp around the world.
- The ministry has collaborated with the Bhagwan Mahaveer Viklang Sahayata Samiti (BMVSS) to execute the initiative.

#### Other facts:

- BMVSS, founded in 1975 is better known by its trademark limb called the Jaipur Foot.

### 10. GI Tags:

**News:** Alphonso mango and Shahi litchi gets the GI Tag.

#### Facts:

- Alphonso Mango: The king of mangoes, better known as Hapus in Maharashtra has been registered as Geographical Indication (GI).
- It is grown in Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Thane, Raigad and Palghar districts of Maharashtra.
- Other GIs of Maharashtra: Solapuri Chaddar, Solapur Terry Towel, Nagpur orange, Mahabaleshwar strawberry, Paithani saree, Warli Painting, Nagpur Grapes, Puneri Pagdi.
- Shahi litchi: Famous for its sweet, juicy flavour and aroma is mostly grown in Muzaffarpur, Bihar.
- The GI Tag is in the name of Litchi Growers Association of Bihar.
- Other GIs of Bihar: Bhagalpuri silk, Madhubani Painting, Sujini embroidery, Katrani rice, Jardalu Mango and Magahi paan.

#### Other Facts:

- A geographical indication is a name or sign used on products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin.

- It is governed by WTO's TRIPs agreement.
- The recently launched tagline for GI in India is "Invaluable Treasures of Incredible India".

### 11. Migingo Island:

**News:** Ugandan security forces foiled an attempt by the Kenyan authorities from hoisting a flag on the disputed Migingo Island.

**Facts:**

- Migingo is a 2,000-square-metre island, in Lake Victoria.
- The island was the center of a low-level territorial dispute between Kenya and Uganda, over who owns the valuable fishing waters.
- The water surrounding the island is rich in Nile perch (a variety of fish).

## Questions/Notes

## OCTOBER POINTLY

## Questions/Notes

**1. MOONMOON:** It is moon of the moon, that is, it orbits around another moon. It is also known as sub moon or grand moon.

**2. Global Financial Stability Report:** It is a semi-annual report by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which assess the stability of global financial markets. The latest report is titled-A Decade after Global Financial Crisis: Are we Safer?

**3. Operation Samudra Maitri:** It is an operation launched by India to provide naval and air assistance to the survivors of earthquake and consequent Tsunami in Central Sulawesi province of Indonesia.



*Location of central sulawesi province on the Indonesian map*

**4. ONEER:** It is a trade name of a Drinking Water Disinfection System developed by CSIR and Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (IITR), Lucknow.

**5. IBUKI-2:** It is a greenhouse gas observation satellite launched by Japan. It gathers data on carbon dioxide, methane, carbon monoxide and PM2.5

**6. ISSA Good Practice Award, 2018:** The Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) has been awarded the ISSA Good Practice Award, 2018 at the Regional Social Security Forum for Asia and the Pacific.

**7. Sittwe Port:** It is a deepwater port constructed by India in 2016 at Sittwe,

capital of the Rakhine district of Myanmar, in the Bay of Bengal.

**8. Living Planet Report:** The Living Planet Report is being published every two years by the World Wide Fund for Nature since 1998.

**9. Bathukamma:** A colorful floral festival of Telangana, in which seasonal and medicinal flowers are arranged in concentric circles to resemble the shape of temple Gopuram.

**10. Hyperion proto-supercluster:** It is the largest and the earliest known galaxy proto supercluster discovered in the early universe phase.

**11. GEAR:** The Government E-payment Adoption Ranking (GEAR) is a global index released by The Economist Intelligence Unit to check how governments around the world are adopting digital payment modes.

**12. Tax Buoyancy:** Tax buoyancy is an indicator to measure efficiency and responsiveness of revenue mobilization in response to growth in the Gross domestic product.

**13. Insurance penetration:** Insurance Penetration is measured as the ratio of premium underwritten in a particular year to the GDP.

**14. Insurance density:** It is calculated as the ratio of total insurance premiums to whole population of a given country.

**15. Nirman Kusuma Programme:** It is a programme launched by the Odisha government to provide financial assistance to the children of construction workers for their education in Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs).

**16. NCR RASTA and Yatri RASTA:** The North Central Railways (NCR) launched two mobile apps, NCR RASTA (Railway assets Summarized Tracking Application) and Yatri RASTA (Railway Approach to station tracking application) for employees and passengers, respectively, for tracking assets and stations.

## Questions/Notes