MONTHLY

# FACTLY

EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR

# PRELIMS

## SEPTEMBER 2018

**Forum IAS**

# ForumIAS

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## POLITICAL AND NATIONAL ISSUES:

**1. SC upholds the Constitutional validity of Aadhaar:**

**News:** Sc upholds Constitutional validity of Aadhaar in the backdrop of concerns over Right to Privacy of the individuals, state surveillance and misuse of personal data.

**Facts:**

Important points in the SC verdict:

- Aadhaar Act passes the Triple Test laid down in the Puttaswamy Judgement i.e. i) existence of a law ii) a legitimate state interest and iii) test of proportionality.
- It struck down Regulation 27(1) and ordered that the Authentication logs should be deleted in 6 months rather than 5 years previously, as required under regulation 27(1).
- SC held that mandatory linking of Aadhaar with all Financial Instruments was unconstitutional.
- It upheld the decision of the speaker to pass Aadhaar bill as a Money bill.
- Section 47 is declared null, earlier under this section only UIDAI could fil complaints on data breaches but now citizens can file complaint in case of data theft, directly.
- Aadhaar can now be used only by the government and not by private parties.
- The bench strikes down National Security exception under the Section 33(2) and gives the citizen opportunity to be heard before any disclosure of information under Section 33(1).

**2. Indian Medical Council (Amendment) Ordinance,2018**

**News:** The Indian Medical Council(Amendment) Ordinance 2018 dissolved the Medical council of India and replaced it with Board of Governors for a temporary period.

**Facts:**

- The Ordinance amends Indian Medical Council Act,1956.
- Supersession of the MCI for a period of one year.
- Till the National Medical Commission Bill is passed the Board of Governors will exercise the powers of MCI.
- Board of Governors will have 7 members including the chairman of the Board to be selected by the Central government. It will include persons of eminence in medical education, appointed by the central government.

Various committees that suggested scrapping of the MCI:

- Ranjit Roy Chaudhury committee,2015
- Lodha panel,2016
- Arvind Panagariya committee

**3. Draft charter of patients' rights:**

**News:** The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the draft Charter on Patients' Rights which aims to provide proper healthcare to patients by the Clinical establishments

**Facts:**

- The draft has been prepared by the National Human Rights Commission(NHRC).
- Patients under this Charter will have the Right to:
    - Emergency medical care
    - Informed consent
    - Non-discrimination
    - Choose alternative treatment options
    - Seek second opinion

Patient's responsibilities:

- To provide all the required information to the doctor
- Respect the dignity of the doctor and hospital staff

**4. Draft rule for E-pharmacies:**

**News:** Union Ministry of Health has released the draft rules for the E-pharmacies to regulate the online market of drugs and to make authentic drugs available for the customers.

**Facts:**

Draft Rules

- E-pharmacies will have to apply for a licence through form 18AA in the online portal of the Central Licensing Authority. The licence would cost Rs. 50,000 and would be valid for 3 years.
- E-pharmacies will have to register with the Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation(CDSO).
- They have to be licenced by any one state government to sell drugs online throughout the country.
- They can sell medicines only against prescription.
- The draft bans the sale of tranquillisers, psychotropic drugs, narcotics, habit forming drugs and Schedule X drugs
- No E-pharmacy is allowed to advertise any drug.
- They have to deliver the drugs within the time limit mentioned to the customer.
- Regular inspections will be conducted every two years of the premises of operation of the e-pharmacy by a team authorised by the central or state licensing authority.

- Buyer can complain to State drugs controller for substandard drugs and seek relief under Consumer Protection Act,1986 and the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.
- Patient data is to be protecting and cannot be shared with anyone except with the government if required.
- A 24/7 helpline is to be made available.
- The portals of the e-pharmacy company is to be located in India only.

## 5. All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA):

**News:** The Minister of AYUSH laid the foundation stone for the second phase of All India Institute of Ayurveda (AIIA).

**Facts:**

- Its aims to bring in synergy between traditional wisdom of Ayurveda and modern diagnostics tools and technology.
- Its vision is to be an outstanding centre of excellence for Ayurveda tertiary health care and set highest standards of education, research and patient care through Ayurveda for the benefit of humanity.
- It is an autonomous institute under the Ministry of AYUSH.
- Modelled along AIIMS.
- The hospital is NABH (National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare providers) accredited.

Other Facts:

- Ministry of AYUSH published an 'Ayurveda standard guideline' to standardize medicines and treatments in ayurveda.
- The Pharmacopoeia Commission of Indian medicine is working for the standardization of medicines.
- The first Ayurveda Day was celebrated on Oct 17, 2017.

## 6. End discrimination against Leprosy:

**News:** SC has issued directions to the center and the state to end discrimination against Leprosy patients.

**Facts:**

Directions:

- Formulate a community based rehabilitation scheme.
- BPL cards to avail ration under the Antyodaya Anna yojana Scheme.
- Create awareness about National Leprosy Eradication Programme (NLEP) and regarding free of cost treatment of leprosy.
- Replace frightening images of leprosy patients in the awareness programmes with more positive images of cured people.

- The medical staff in private and govt. hospitals to be sensitised to ensure that leprosy patients do not face discrimination
- That hospitals shall not refuse treatment and to administer the first injection under the Multi-Drug Therapy.
- Centre to consider framing separate rules for granting disability certificate to leprosy patients for availing reservation benefits.
- Rehabilitation of persons who are suffering or have suffered from leprosy.
- Private and public schools do not discriminate against children hailing from leprosy affected families. Attempt should be made to provide them with free education

Other facts:

- The Central government recently notified the Personal Laws(Amendment) act,2019 in order to end leprosy as a ground for divorce or separation from the spouse.

## 7. Criminalization of Politics:

**News:** SC in Public Interest Foundation Case issued directions aimed at decriminalising politics.

**Facts:**

- Parliament must make a law to bar persons charged with "heinous and grievous" crimes from contesting elections and to remove leaders charged with such crimes.
- Candidates to disclose to the ECI in block letters, information about the criminal cases pending against them.
- Criminal antecedents of a candidate must be widely publicized by both the candidate and the political party. It must be aired thrice after the filling of nomination papers.

Various committees related to Criminalization of Politics:

- Santhanam committee 1963
- Vohra committee 1993
- Padmanabhaiah committee 2000

## 8. Reservations in promotions:

News: The constitutional bench removed the need to collect quantifiable data (as mandated in the Nagraj case,2006) for the grant of quota in promotions in the government jobs to SCs and STs.

**Facts:**

- SC in the Indra Sawhney case did not allow reservations in promotions and consequential seniority.

- Later in the Nagraj verdict 2006, court upheld the Constitutional validity of the reservations in promotions but on conditions that the state must provide:
  - Quantifiable data on the backwardness of SCs and STs
  - Facts about their inadequate representation in the cadre
  - The overall administrative efficiency

Current verdict's highlights:

- Court held that Nagraj case puts unnecessary condition of collecting quantifiable data on backwardness in granting quota, it is contrary to the Indra Sawhney verdict 1992.
- The bench made no changes in the other two conditions of adequacy of representation and overall efficiency.

**9. National Digital Communication Policy:**

**News:** The Union Cabinet approved National Digital Communications Policy and re-designated Telecom Commission of India as the Digital Communications Commission.



**NATIONAL DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS POLICY-2018**

Provisioning of Broadband for All

Creating 4 Million additional jobs in the Digital Communications sector

Enhancing the contribution of the Digital Communications sector to 8% of India's GDP

Propelling India to the Top 50 Nations in the ICT Development Index

Enhancing India's contribution to Global Value Chains

Ensuring Digital Sovereignty

LAW CHRONICLES

**Facts:**

- The policy aims to ensure broadband for all.
- Connect India aims to provide universal broadband connectivity at 50 Mbps to every citizen, 1 Gbps connectivity to all Gram Panchayats by 2020 and 10 Gbps by 2022 and ensure connectivity to all uncovered areas.
- Propel India aims to attract investments of USD 100 billion in the Digital Communications Sector, train one million manpower for building New Age Skill, expand IoT ecosystem to 5 billion connected devices and create globally recognised IPRs in India.
- Secure India aims to establish a comprehensive data protection regime for digital communications that safeguards the privacy, autonomy and choice of individuals, facilitate India's effective participation in the global digital economy, enforce accountability to assure citizens of safe and secure digital

communications infrastructure and services and ensure that Net Neutrality is upheld

## 10. RBI's Internal Ombudsman (Scheme 2018):

News: The scheme is aimed at strengthening the grievance redressal mechanism of banks and to ensure that customer complaints are resolved at the bank level itself.

**Facts:**

- RBI has asked all the public sector banks and select private, foreign banks with 10 or more banking outlets to appoint an independent internal ombudsman to review the complaints that were fully or partly rejected by the respective banks.
- This new post will not report to the bank's CEO but to the customer service committee of the bank.
- Regional Rural Banks are exempted from appointing an ombudsman.
- The Ombudsman should have a fixed tenure of 3-5 years and cannot be removed without the prior approval of the RBI.
- The implementation of the scheme will be monitored by RBI as well as by bank's internal audit mechanism.

## 11. MHRD Innovation Cell (MIC):

News: HRD Ministry launched Innovation Cell at AICTE.

**Facts:**

- Innovation cell has undertaken many initiatives like implementing programs like Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation (ARIIA), Smart India Hackathon (SIH)-2019, etc.
- To foster a culture of innovation at all higher educational institutions.
- Innovation Cell would be headed by a scientist and comprise of one senior ministry official and young professionals.

## 12. National Award for Teachers:

**News:** On the occasion of teachers' day, vice president awarded the National Award for Teachers to 45 teachers across India.

**Facts:**

- It gives public recognition to meritorious and regular teachers and heads of schools working in recognised primary, middle, high and higher secondary schools.
- The award consists of a silver medal, certificate and 50,000 award money.

Other facts:

Guidelines for the selection of teachers for National Teacher Award 2017 were revised as follows:

- No minimum years of service is required as a prerequisite.
- Teachers can directly nominate themselves.
- For the first time online entries were invited.
- Final selection to be done by an Independent Jury at the national level headed by retired secretary, Department of School Education and Literacy, HRD Ministry.

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## INTERNATIONAL ISSUES:

**1. Mobilize Your City Programme:**

**News:** India and France recently signed an implementation agreement on Mobilize Your City Programme.

**Facts:**

- The Programme was launched in CoP21 Paris Summit in December 2015.
- It is an International Initiative in the field of sustainable Urban Transportation.
- It aims to achieve SDG 11(make cities more inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable) and SDG13 (on climate action).
- Under this programme assistance would be provided to prepare a National Urban Mobility Plan and Investment Programme (NUMPs) and Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMPs) at national and local level.

**Other facts:**

- In India pilot projects will be initiated in three cities -Nagpur, Kochi and Ahmedabad.
- Urban Mobility Plans developed at the local level will help reduce GHGs emission from urban transport and help India at the National level to improve sustainable transport policy.
- These cities will receive funds from EU through the French Funding agency(AFD) for investment and technical assistance.

**2. China-Maldives Friendship Bridge:**

**News:** First ever cross sea bridge (Sinamale Bridge) in Maldives is now open to public.

**Facts:**

- It is a 2.2-km long bridge.
- It connects Male and Hulhule island of Maldives.
- Chinese grants and loans funded the construction of this bridge in Maldives.

**3. Early Harvest Package for RCEP:**

**News:** Members of Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) have finalised an Early Harvest Package aimed at concluding RCEP negotiations by this year end.

**Facts:**

- An Early Harvest Scheme (EHS) is an agreement between two states (or regional trading blocs) which liberalizes tariffs on certain goods preceding the conclusion of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA).
- RCEP is an FTA between the 10 ASEAN countries and its 6 FTA partners-India, China, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and South Korea.
- It was envisioned during the 2014 ASEAN summit at Cambodia.

**Other facts:**

- India has made her reservations against an Early Harvest Package. According to India all the 3 pillars of negotiations can be implemented only as a package and not one at a time.

**4. Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT):**

**News:** UN Secretary General has appealed to 8 nations including India and the U.S to ratify CTBT.

**Facts:**

- CTBT is a multilateral treaty banning all nuclear explosions (air, water, land and even underground explosions) for both military and civilian purposes.
- It was negotiated during the Conference on Disarmament at Geneva in 1996 by UNGA.
- The treaty enters into force only when all countries with nuclear technology capacity (China, Egypt, India, Iran, Israel, North Korea and the United States) ratify it.
- The treaty establishes a Central Test Ban Treaty Organization(CTBTO) at Vienna to implement the provisions of the treaty.

**Other facts:**

- Establishing Nuclear Weapon Free Zone(NWFZ) is a regional approach to strengthen global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms.
- Treaty on the prohibition of Nuclear Weapons,2017 is the first legally binding international agreement that prohibits state parties from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, acquiring, possessing or stockpiling nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosives.

**5. Terrorist Travel Initiative:**

**News:** U.S and Morocco together launched Terrorist Travel Initiative under the auspices of Global Counter Terrorism Forum(GCTF).

**Facts:**

- It reinforces Resolution 2396 of the UNSC which aims to curb travel of terrorists.
- Currently, Advanced Passenger Information(API), Passenger Name Record(PNR) and biometrics are used to prevent terrorists from traveling under the Resolution 2396.
- The new Initiative will bring in effective counterterrorism watchlisting and strategic tools.

**Other facts:**

- GCTF is an international forum consisting of 29 countries and the European Union.

- It was launched in 2011.
- It is co-chaired by Netherlands and Morocco.
- The mission of GCTF is to reduce the vulnerability of people to terrorism worldwide by preventing, combating and prosecuting terrorist acts and countering investment and recruitment to terrorist outfits.

**6. UNWTO Global Summit:**

**News:** The 7th UNWTO Global Summit on Urban Tourism was held in Seoul, South Korea.

**Facts:**

- Theme of the Summit: A 2030 Vision for Urban Tourism
- Combating the challenges of growing tourism and its impact on urban destinations were discussed.

**Other facts:**

- UNWTO is a U.N agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable, and universally accessible tourism.
- Its headquartered at Madrid, Spain.
- It encourages implementation of Global Code of Ethics for Tourism to maximize the socio-economic impact of tourism and to minimize its negative impacts.

**7. International Ayurveda Congress:**

**News:** 4th International Ayurveda Congress was held in Leiden, Netherlands.

**Facts:**

- The theme of the summit was "traditional natural remedies from India and Europe"
- These international congresses are held regularly, at least once in two years.
- It was organised by The International Maharishi Ayurveda Foundation, Netherlands, All India Ayurvedic Congress, New Delhi and The International Academy of Ayurveda, Pune.
- It aims at establishing Ayurveda as an ancient, scientific and holistic healthcare system, which would lead to a disease free world.
- The congress would focus on promotion and propagation of Ayurveda in Netherlands and its neighboring countries of Europe.

**8. Saudi Arabia set to join CPEC:**

**News:** Saudi Arabia is set to join a multimillion dollar project China-Pakistan Economic Cooperation (CPEC), as a third Economic partner. This is to help Pakistan recover from its indebtedness with China.

**Facts:**

- CPEC is a 62 billion USD trade and transit project which focuses on road and energy infrastructure.
- It links Kashgar in the restive region of Xinjiang in China's North-West to Pakistan's Gwadar port in the Baluchistan Province.
- The project passes through the Gilgit-Baltistan region of the disputed territory (PoK) between India and Pakistan.

**9. Referendum on greater autonomy to Catalonia:**

**News:** The Spanish PM has proposed a referendum on whether Catalonia should be given greater autonomy.

**Facts:**

- Spain's north-eastern part is referred to as Catalonia.
- The 2017 referendum was declared illegal by the Spanish government.
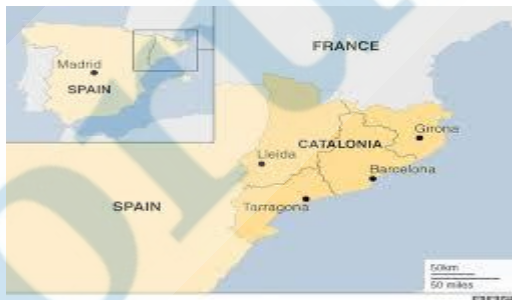


**10. World Summit on Accreditation(WOSA):**

**News:** 4th World Summit on Accreditation(WOSA) was held in Delhi.

**Facts:**

- Theme of the summit: Challenges and Opportunities in Outcome based Accreditation
- It is organised biennially by the National Board of Accreditation(NBA).
- It provides a platform for stakeholders to share their knowledge and information on accreditation.

**Other facts:**

- NBA is an autonomous Board under the Ministry of Human Resource and Development with the mandate of providing quality assurance to higher educational institutions in India.
- NBA has been accorded Permanent Signatory Status of Washington Accord since June, 2014.
- It has adopted internationally implemented outcome based assessment and accreditation.

**11.World Maritime Day 2018:**

**News:** UN celebrated World Maritime Day through its agency (International Maritime Organization) to recognize the contribution of international shipping to the world economy.

**Facts:**

- The theme of the World Maritime Day 2018 was IMO70: Our Heritage-Better Shipping for a Better Future.
- It is celebrated on the last Thursday of September every year.

**Other facts:**

- International Maritime Organization(IMO) is an UN agency responsible for safety of shipping and prevention at atmospheric and marine pollution by ships.
- It has its headquarters at London.
- India is a member of IMO since 1959.

# GOVERNMENT SCHEMES:

## 1. Kayakalp Scheme:

**News:** National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Health service providers (NABH) has decided to assess the healthcare facilities in Private Sector along the parameters set for the Kayakalp Scheme.

**Facts:**

- The Kayakalp scheme was launched by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in 2015 to felicitate Public Health Centers for maintaining high standards of sanitation and hygiene.
- It is an initiative under Swachata hi Sewa cleanliness and sanitation campaign.

**Other facts:**

- NABH (established in 2006) is a constituent Board of the Quality Council of India Certification to establish and operate accreditation programme for healthcare organisations.

## 2. Nikshay 2.0

**News:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched Nikshay 2.0.

**Facts:**

- It is a web based application of the RNTCP.
- It is an upgraded version of the earlier application.
- It was developed jointly by the Central TB Division and National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- Nikshay Aushadhi portal is a web portal for the management of Anti TB drugs and other commodities under RNTC.

**Other facts:**

- Revised National TB Control Programme(RNTCP) was launched in 1997.
- It is based on the DOTS (Directly Observed Treatment-Short Course) strategy as recommended by WHO.

## 3. Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA):

**News:** HRD Ministry launched Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements (ARIIA).

**Facts:**

- It will rank educational institutions annually as per their innovation output based on global parameters.
- It focusses on 5 main parameters.
- It was formally launched on 15th October on the birth anniversary of former president of India Dr. A.P.J Abdul Kalam and the first ranking list will be released on the 28th February 2019(National Science Day).

**Other facts:**

- National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) of the HRD ministry is also an annual ranking of Higher Educational institutions but it is based on Research as opposed to Innovation in ARIIA.

**4.Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana (PMJDY):**

**News:** The government decided to make PMJDY as an open-ended scheme (that is, it will continue indefinitely).

**Facts:**

- Under the revised rules, the overdraft facility has been doubled from 5000 rupees to 10,000 rupees.
- There will be no conditions attached for an overdraft upto Rs.2000.
- Also the maximum age-limit for availing the overdraft facility has been increased from 60 to 65 years of age.
- Accidental insurance cover for the new RuPay card holders (account created after August 28,2018) has been raised from Rs.1 lakh to Rs.2 lakh.

*Note: refer to PMJDY a financial inclusion scheme launched by the Government of India.*

**5. Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan (PMAASHA):**

**News:** The Union Cabinet approved a new Umbrella Scheme "Pradhan Mantri Annadata Aay Sanrakshan Abhiyan' (PM-AASHA).

**Facts:**

- The Scheme is aimed at ensuring remunerative prices to the farmers for their produce as announced in the Union Budget for 2018.

Provisions of the Scheme

- Under the scheme, states can choose one of the following for procurement in case prices fall below MSP-
  - o Price Support Scheme(PSS)
  - o Price Deficiency Payment Scheme(PDPS)
  - o Private Procurement Stockist Scheme(PPSS)
- PSS to continue for pulses and copra, with central agencies like NAFED and FCI to procure food grains whenever prices fall below MSP.
- Private sector procurement will be on pilot basis, where the selected private agencies will procure commodities at MSP, instead of the government.
- Only in case of oilseeds, state will be allowed to choose between Price Support Scheme and Private Procurement.

**6. Swadhar Greh Scheme:**

**News:** Ministry of Women and Child Development inaugurated widow homes (with the capacity for 1000 women), known as Krishna Kutir at Vrindavan, Uttar Pradesh under Swadhar Greh Scheme.

**Facts:**

- The scheme was launched in 2007 by the Ministry of Women and Child Development to rehabilitate women in distress.
- Under the scheme funds are released to the implementing agencies, mostly NGOs.
- Beneficiaries under the Scheme are-
  - o Widows
  - o Survivors of Natural Disasters
  - o Prisoners released from jails
  - o Victims of sexual and domestic violence.

**7. Rail Heritage Digitisation Project:**

**News:** The Ministry of Railways has launched the Rail Heritage Digitisation Project in collaboration with Google.

**Facts:**

- The project aims to showcase country's rail heritage to national and international audience in an online storytelling platform.

**8. Swadesh Darshan Scheme**

News: Swadesh Darshan Scheme gets its first Tribal Circuit connecting 13 tourist sites in Chhattisgarh.

**Facts:**

- The scheme is implemented by the Ministry of Tourism.
- It aims to develop thematic circuits in the country.

**9. Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana:**

**News:** The Employees' State Insurance Corporation(ESIC) launched Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana scheme.

**Facts:**

- It covers people insured under the Employees' State Insurance Act 1948.
- The scheme aims at disbursing cash relief directly into the bank accounts in case of unemployment while they search for new engagements.
- The cash relief amounts to 25% of their 90 days' earrings.

**Other facts:**

- Employees' State Insurance is a self-financing social security scheme for Indian workers.

- This fund was established in 1952 under the ESI Act 1948.

- It is managed by ESIC, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

**10. #LooReview campaign:**

**News:** The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has partnered with Google to launch #LooReviw Campaign under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban.

**Facts:**

- Objective: to increase the awareness and ease of locating public toilets across India.

- The campaign encourages Local Guides in India to rate and review public toilets on google maps.

- Currently more than 30,000 public toilets under the name SBM toilets across 500+cities are live on Google Maps.

**11. Sputum Sample Transportation project:**

**News:** Sputum Sample Transportation Project was recently piloted in Delhi.

**Facts:**

- It uses the network of Department of Posts for timely transportation of sputum for diagnosis of TB.

# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENTS:

## 1. Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI):

**News**: UNDP and OPHI (Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative) together released the MPI 2018.

**Facts:**

- The MPI is an international measure of poverty used in over 100 developing countries.
- It uses 3 dimensions of poverty and 10 indicators as follows:
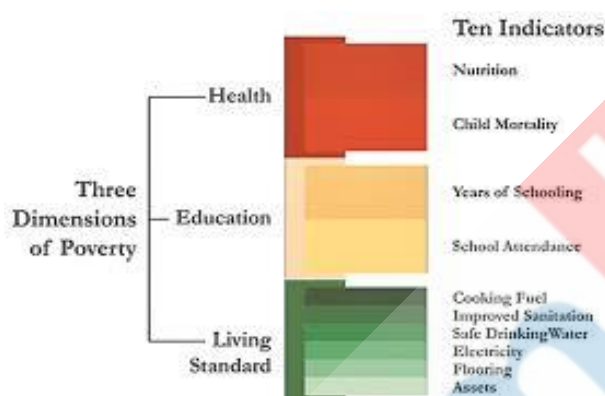


- A person is identified as multidimensionally poor, if he/she is deprived of at least one-third of the dimensions.
- It has been published as a part of the Human Development Report of the UNDP since 2010.
- 5 out of 10 indicators in MPI 2018 was different compared to the original MPI. These changed indicators include: nutrition, child mortality, years of schooling, housing and assets.

## 2. Ease of Living Index:

**News:** The Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs published the Ease of Living Index for 111 Indian cities.

**Facts:**

- Pune is the best city to live in India according to the index.
- The Index includes cities under the Smart City Mission, capital cities and cities with population more than 1 million.
- The index undertakes a 360-degree assessment under 4 Pillars-Institutional, Social, Economic and Physical.
- Top 10 liveable cities in the Index: Pune, Navi Mumbai, Greater Mumbai, Tirupati, Chandigarh, Thane, Raipur, Indore, Vijayawada and Bhopal.

- Andhra Pradesh topped the Ease of Living rankings among the states under the Atal Mission for the Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation(AMRUT), followed by Odisha and Madhya Pradesh.

## 3. India Post Payment bank (IPPB):

**News:** The India Post Payment Bank was launched recently.

**Facts:**

- It aims to offer doorstep banking to customers and enhance Financial Inclusion.

Features of IPPB

- It will work as a public sector company under the Department of Post with 100% government equity.
- It will be governed by the RBI.
- The pilot project for IPPB was started in Jaipur and Ranchi.
- It will offer a limited range of financial products such as: savings and current account, money transfer, DBT, bill and utility payments, enterprise and merchant payments.
- It can accept deposits only upto 1 lakh rupees per customer.
- It cannot issue loans, credit cards or ATM debit cards. Instead it can provide QR Code-based biometric card.
- It will provide doorstep banking facility at a minimum charge and for minimum transaction of 10,000 rupees.

Other payment banks in operation:

- Airtel payments bank Ltd.
- Paytm Payments bank Ltd.
- Fino Payments Bank Ltd.

## 4. Dairy Processing and Infrastructure and Development Fund (DIDF):

**News:** The CCEA has approved setting up of DIDF for upgradation of the dairy processing plants and improving their efficiency.

**Facts:**

- The project will be implemented by National Dairy Development Board(NDDB)and National Dairy Development Corporation(NCDC)
- The Fund will provide loans to the borrowers at 6.5% per annum with a repayment period of 10 years.
- Under the Fund 8,004 crore rupees' loan will be provided by NABARD and the rest will be contributions by end borrowers, NDDB, NCDC and by Ministry of Agriculture.

**Other facts:**

- Operation Flood was a project under the National Dairy Development Board launched in 1970 which ushered in White Revolution in the country. It transformed India from a milk deficient country to a milk surplus one.

## 5. Real Estate Investment Trust (REIT):

**News:** India's first and Asia's largest REIT has been filed by the Blackstone Group along with the Embassy Office Parks.

**Facts:**

- REITs are listed entities which owns, operates and manages buildings/properties for generating income. These entities work like Mutual Funds.
- It will be bound by the norms of SEBI and RERA 2016.
- Under RERA
  - Projects developed by REITs must be registered under RERA.
  - 70% of the funds raised must be deposited in a separate account.
  - 70%of the money from the buyers should be used specifically for the development of the project only.
- Under SEBI:
  - REITs must distribute at least 90%of their income to investors on half yearly basis.
  - Minimum investment amount set for investors is 2,00,000 rupees.

## 6. Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN):

**News:** GSTN was recently converted into a 100% government entity, to secure the tax based information of the Indian tax payers.

**Facts:**

- The GSTN is a not for profit company under the Company Act, 2013.
- It was formed to provide IT infrastructure and services to the Central and State governments, tax payers and other stakeholders.
- The 100% government ownership will be equally distributed among the center (50%) and the states (50%).
- The composition of the GSTN board will also be changed. It will now comprise of 11 directors (1 chairman,1 CEO,3 directors of the center,3 directors from the state and 3 independent directors).

## 7. Bank Consolidation:

**News:** Bank of Baroda, Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank shall be amalgamated to form India's third largest Bank.

**Facts:**

Steps towards Bank Consolidation

- Narasimham committee in 1991 recommended restructuring of the Indian banks with only 3-4 banks with global footprint.
- PJ Nayak committee in 2014 recommended merging some banks.
- In 2017 SBI was merged with its Five Associate Banks and later BharatiyaMahila Bank was also merged into SBI.
- Government constituted the Alternate Mechanism Panel headed by Finance Minister to look into the proposals of merger by the Public sector Banks.

**Other facts:**

Difference between Merger and Amalgamation

- Merger is where many identities are merged into one already existing identity. Here one company acquires other companies.
- In Amalgamation two entities come together to form a third entity.

Recent Banking reforms:

- Bank Board Bureau, an autonomous body to help recommend heads of the PSBs and help banks raise capital.
- Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code
- Recapitalisation of the banks
- Prompt Corrective Action(PCA) of the RBI
- Sunil Mehta committee to look into faster resolution of stressed assets (it suggested the five pronged strategy: Project Sashakt).
- EASE (Enhanced Access and Service Excellence)

**8. Payments Regulator:**

**News:** The draft Payment and Settlement System bill 2018 has been submitted by an inter-ministerial committee headed by Subhash Chandra Garg.

**Facts:**

Features of the bill

- It seeks to consolidate all laws relating to payments.
- It proposes to set up an Independent Payments Regulatory Board.
- The bill seeks to change the PRB's composition and recommends that the chairperson be appointed by the government in consultation with the RBI, as opposed to the current system where RBI governor is the ex-officio chairperson.
- It redefines the role of RBI as an infrastructure provider.

**Other facts:**

- Currently Payment and Settlement Systems Act 2007, regulates and supervises the payment systems in India.
- It empowers the RBI to act as the oversight authority.

- The Act establishes a Statutory Board (Board for Regulation and Supervision of Payment and Settlement Systems 2007) which is the highest policy decision making body with respect to payment systems.
- The Department of Payment and Settlement System of the RBI serves as the Secretariat of the Board and executes its directions.

# SOCIAL DEVELOPMENTS

**1. SC verdict on Sabarimala case:**

**News:** SC's verdict grants women of all ages, the right to enter the premises of Sabarimala temple, Kerala.

**Facts:**

- Supreme Court in Indian Young Lawyers' Association v/s State of Kerala declared Rule 3(b) of Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Act,1965 to be ultra vires of the constitution.
- Rule 3(b) of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Rules 1965, which states that "Women who are not by custom and usage allowed to enter a place of public worship shall not be entitled to enter or offer worship in any place of public worship".
- It violates women's constitutional rights-
    - o Article 14- Right to equality
    - o Article 15-Right against discrimination
    - o Article 17-Right against Untouchability
    - o Article 21-Right to Life and Personal Liberty

Other facts:

- Lord Ayyappa is the chief deity at the Sabarimala Temple.
- He is revered as the Naishtika Brahmachari (celibate).
- Makaravilakku, is an annual festival celebrated at the Sabarimala temple on Makar Sankranti.

**2. Decriminalisation of Section 377 of the IPC:**

**News:** SC in Navtej Johar v/s Union of India case, declared Parts of Section 377 unconstitutional, thus decriminalising homosexuality.

**Facts:**

- Section 377 is a victorian era law, according to which whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of the nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be imprisoned for life or imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years and shall be liable to fine.
- Section 377 does not penalize sexual identity but prohibits sexual acts against the order of nature.
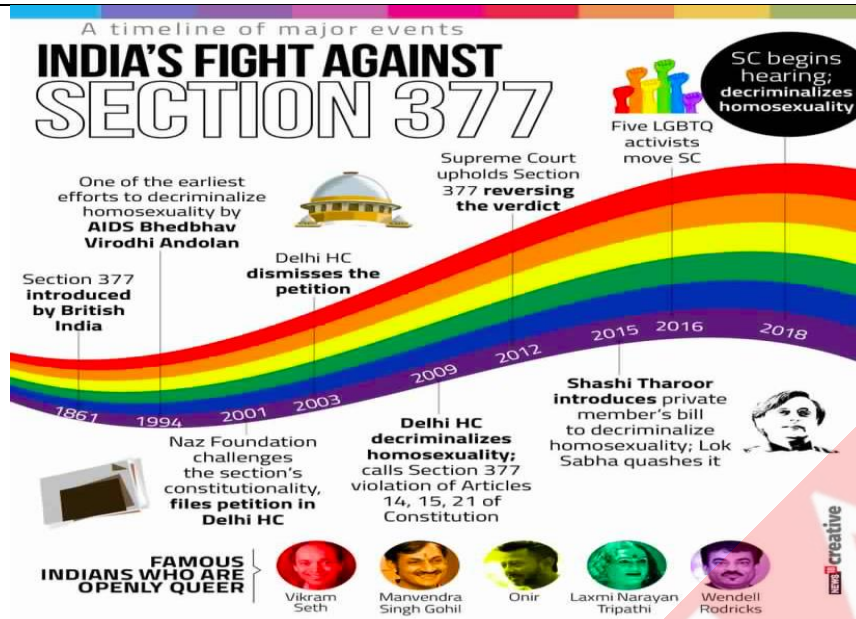
Verdict of the Apex court:

- Section 377 violates fundamental rights of the individuals, these are
    - Article 14-Right to Equality
    - Article 15-Right against Discrimination
    - Article 19-Freedom of Speech and Expression
    - Article 21-Right to Life and Personal LIberty (including Right to Privacy)
- Section 377 remains applicable in cases of
    - Non-consensual carnal intercourse with adults
    - All acts of carnal intercourse with minors
    - Acts of bestiality

**3. SC struck down law on Adultery:**

**News:** SC struck down Section 497 of the IPC, according to which Adultery is a punishable offence.

**Facts:**

- Section 497 states that if a man has sexual intercourse with a married woman without her husband's consent, he is punishable by law. The man could be imprisoned for five years or more and even pay a fine.

**ADULTERY CAN TAKE YOU TO COURT, NOT TO JAIL**

**What's struck down:** Section 497 of Indian Penal code that said: "Whoever has sexual intercourse with a person who is... the wife of another man, without the consent...of that man, such sexual intercourse not amounting to the offence of rape, is guilty of the offence of adultery"

**The problem:** It treated woman as victim of the offence and as 'property' of her husband. It was not an offence if a man had sexual intercourse with a woman after getting her husband's consent

**After the judgment:** Adultery can be a ground for divorce but it's no more a criminal offence attracting up to 5 years' jail term

**Govt's problem:** Centre in its affidavit before the apex court had said that it would be against the sanctity of marriage to dilute the offence of adultery

**Keep in mind:** Though adultery per se is no longer a crime, if any aggrieved spouse commits suicide because of partner's adultery, it could be treated as an abetment to suicide—a crime

Making adultery a crime is retrograde and would mean punishing unhappy people... any law which dents **individual dignity and equity of women** in a civilised society invites the wrath of the Constitution
—CJI Dipak Misra

Ostensibly, society has **two sets of standards of morality** for judging sexual behaviour. One set for its female members and another for males... A society which perceives women as pure and an embodiment of virtue has no qualms of subjecting them to virulent attack: to rape, honour killings, sex-determination and infanticide
—Justice D Y Chandrachud

**Verdict:**

- The law stands unconstitutional as it violates Article 21 (Right to Life and Personal Liberty) and Article 14(Right to Equality).
- Adultery alone cannot be a criminal offence, until it involves abetment to suicide (Section 306 of the IPC).
- Equality should be the guiding principle in the Institution of Marriage.
- Verdict also struck down Section 198(1) and 198(2) of the CrPC which enables the husband of the woman to put charges of adultery against the man involved with his wife.

**4. National Database on Sexual Offenders (NDSO):**

**News:** India's Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Women and Child Development, recently launched National Database on Sexual Offenders(NDSO) becoming the 9th country to have such a database.

**Facts:**

Features

- The database is to be maintained by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).
- It will contain the record of persons 18 years and above, convicted for rape, gangrape, under POCSO and for eve-teasing from 2005 onwards.
- The database will contain following details of the convicted person
  - o Name and aliases
  - o Address of the convict
  - o Photograph
  - o PAN and Aadhaar details
  - o Criminal history
  - o Fingerprint and Palmprint
- The database can be accessed by to the Law Enforcement agencies only.

- The appeals against a conviction will have to be updated by state prisons.
- It will also keep track of all the released convicts who have moved from one place to another.

**Other facts:**

- Other countries with similar databases: United States, U.K, Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, South Africa, Trinidad and Tobago.
- United States is the only country who has made the database open to public.

**5. Ayushman Bharat- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana:**

**News:** Prime Minister launched the world's largest state funded Health Insurance Scheme- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) at Ranchi, Jharkhand.

**Facts:**

- Ayushman Bharat Programme has two Components-Health and Wellness centre and National Health Protection Scheme.
- PMJAY was launched under the National Health Protection Scheme.

Features of PMJAY:

- Beneficiaries will be identified according to the Socio Economic Caste Census data and also include the families active under the Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana.
- There is neither a cap on the family size or age nor restrictions on pre-existing conditions.
- PMJAY is nationally portable once fully operational.
- The beneficiaries will not need special card, aadhaar card will suffice.
- Implementation agency of the scheme will be the National Health Agency (NHA).
- Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission Council will be formed along the lines of GST council for cooperative federalism. It will be headed by the Union Health and Family Welfare Minister.
    - States will enjoy enough flexibility in terms of package, procedures and scheme design.
    - States will have option to choose from the Trust based model and Insurance Company based model.
    - Center and state contribution will be in the ratio of 60:40.
- An IT platform will be made operational in collaboration with the NITI Aayog for cashless, paperless transactions under the scheme.
- NHA's information security policy and data privacy policy will be in place to secure the beneficiary's personal data.
- Pradhan Mantri Arogya Mitra (PMAM) will form the cadre of frontline service providers. They will act as the primary point of facilitation to provide the benefits under the scheme.

**6. Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA):**

**News:** Ministry of Human Resource Development decided to end the boycott and join PISA formally in the 2021 assessment.

**Facts:**

- PISA is an international assessment which measures functional skills (reading, mathematics, science, literacy and innovative subjects such as money literacy and collaborative problem solving) of 15-year-old students every 3 years.
- It is conducted by OECD, and was first conducted in 2000.
- India first participated in PISA in the year 2009 (where Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu were assessed), where it was ranked poorly at 72nd position out of 74 countries.
- India will join back in the 2021 assessment and will request OECD to assess Chandigarh in 2021.

**Other facts:**

- OECD is an intergovernmental organisation which aims to promote policies for the economic and social well-being of the people around the world.
- It was founded in 1960 by 18 European countries along with the U.S and Canada.
- It has 36 member countries and India is not a member of OECD.

**7. HIV/AIDS Act 2017:**

**News:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has issued a notification for the enforcement of the HIV/AIDS Act, 2017, which provides legal recourse to protect the rights and interests of people suffering from HIV/AIDS.

**Facts:**

- The act prohibits discrimination against person living with HIV in matters of employment, education, shelter, healthcare and insurance. (HIV testing as a prerequisite for employment or education or healthcare is prohibited)
- Prohibits people from publishing or advocating hatred against HIV positive people and the persons living with them. There would be a jail sentence of 3 months upto two years and fine upto one lakh rupees.
- No HIV positive person can be subjected to medical intervention without prior consent, including pregnant women.
- Only centers, laboratories and blood banks which comply with the guidelines can conduct test for the HIV positive.
- No HIV positive can be compelled to disclose his HIV status except court orders. And the establishment having such information should adopt data protection measures.
- Act prohibits the isolation of HIV positive people.
- Every HIV positive person shall take measures to prevent virus transmission.

- The act makes Anti-Retroviral treatment a legal right and adopts test and treat policy.
- The act safeguards the property rights of the HIV positive persons and ensures that every HIV positive person below 18 years of age has the right to stay in a shared household and enjoy the facilities of the household.
- Every state has to appoint one or more Ombudsmen to inquire into the violations of the provisions of the act.

## 8. Restoring the Dowry Harassment Law:

**News:** SC has reversed the earlier verdict and restored the provision of immediate arrest under the Section 498A of the IPC.

**Facts:**

- Under the Section 498A of the IPC if a husband or relative of the husband subjects the woman to cruelty, then he or his relatives shall be punishable with imprisonment upto three years and shall be liable to fine.

Old verdict:

- SC ordered that established Family Welfare Committees at the District level give confirmation to the genuinity of the case, to prevent the misuse of the Section.
- Police powers under this verdict were reduced as no arrest or FIR registration was allowed before the committee's confirmation.

New verdict:

- Panels such as the Family Welfare Committee were declared as unconstitutional and not recognised under the CrPC.
- It restored police power of FIR registration and immediate action.
- The offence remains a cognizable and a non-bailable offence.

## 9. Human Development Index:

**News:** Human Development Index released by the UNDP has ranked India 130 out of 189 countries.

**Facts:**

- Leading countries: Norway, Switzerland, Australia, Ireland and Germany.
- Countries with poor scores: Niger, Central African Republic, South Sudan, Chad and Burundi.
- India's HDI value 2017 is 0.64 (medium Human Development category).
- India's HDI value is well above the South Asian average of 0.63
- India performs better than Bangladesh (136) and Pakistan (150) in South Asia.
- South Asia experienced the fastest HDI growth among the developing regions.

**Other facts:**

- UNDP is an UN agency; it also measures the Gender Inequality Index.

- HDI is calculated on the basis of three dimensions:
    - Standard of living depending upon the per capita Gross National Income.
    - Health measured in terms of Life Expectancy at birth.
    - And education levels calculated as mean years of education for adults and expected years of schooling for children.

## 10. Human Capital Ranking:

**News:** India is ranked 158 among 195 countries in the Human Capital Ranking published in the medical Journal-Lancet.

**Facts:**

- The study has been conducted by the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME).
- It measured Human Capital for the period 1990-2016.
- Four parameters used in the study
    - Life Expectancy
    - Functional Health
    - Years of Schooling
    - Learning
- Scale: highest score is 45 and lowest being 0.

**Other facts:**

- India has an improvement of four points from 162 in 1990.
- India (158) is placed behind Sudan (157).
- Pakistan and Bangladesh are behind India whereas Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Sri Lanka are ahead of India.
- First place is held by Finland followed by Iceland, Denmark and Netherlands.
- Niger, South Sudan and Chad are ranked the lowest.
- Turkey showed most dramatic increase between 1990 to 2016.

## 11. MOVE:

**News:** MOVE-India's first ever Global Mobility Summit was organised by NITI Aayog, in New Delhi.

**Facts:**

- It was to serve as a platform for all the stakeholders across sectors to meet and revolutionize transport.
- NITI Aayog released a Report-Transforming India's Mobility: A Perspective, it provides a framework to deal with pollution and congestion.
- The framework has three important things:

| Objectives | Pillars to achieve the objectives | Enablers |
|---|---|---|
| • 3C's:<br>  o Clean transport<br>  o Convenient transport<br>  o Congestion free transport | • Connect Bharat: that demands Safe, Adequate and Holistic Infrastructure (SAHI)<br>• Promote seamless transportation<br>• Adopt green technologies<br>• Optimize travel footprint | • Skills and employment<br>• Intelligent transport system<br>• Public awareness<br>• Governance<br>• financing |

Other facts:

- NITI Aayog has launched a Mobility Pitch competition "Pitch to MOVE" to provide budding entrepreneurs of India a unique opportunity to pitch their business ideas to industry leaders and venture capitalist to raise funds.
- NITI Aayog flagged off a cycle rally "MOVE Cyclathon" to spread the message of clean mobility among Indian public and promote cleaner, accessible modes of transport.
- As a precursor to MOVE, a Conference on e-mobility in Indian Railways was organised by the Ministry of Railways through Institute of Railways Electrical Engineers, in association with NITI Aayog.

**12. Swayangsiddha Initiative:**

**News:** A scheme rolled out by the West Bengal government to combat Human Trafficking.

**Facts:**

- Swayangsiddha means self-reliance.
- Scheme will be executed by West Bengal police.
- Two pronged strategy:
    - o Awareness building at the grassroot level.
    - o Encouraging youth and students to act against traffickers and child marriage in rural India.

**13. Sexual Assault Evidence Collection Kits (SAECK):**

**News:** Police stations across India will be equipped with SAECK to carry out investigation into sexual assault cases.

**Facts:**

- It is an initiative under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

- This Rape Investigation Kit will assist in medico-legal investigation and in gathering evidence during sexual assault.
- It enables collection of blood and semen samples.

**14. Live in couples can adopt children:**

**News:** CARA has once again allowed Live-in couple to adopt children from and within India.

**Facts:**

- Applications from prospective parents will be assessed on case-by case basis.
- CARA (Child Adoption Regulatory Authority) is a nodal agency for the adoption of Indian children.
- It regulates intra and inter country adoption of Indian children.
- It is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Women and Child Development.

**15. International Day of Sign Languages:**

**News:** The International Day of Sign Languages was celebrated by the Indian Sign Language Research and Training Centre (ISLRTC) on 23 September.

**Facts:**

- Celebrated annually on this day as the World Federation of the Deaf (WFD) was established on this day 1956.
- Theme: With Sign languages, everyone is Included

**Other facts:**

- ISLRTC is an autonomous body under the Department for the Empowerment of the PwD, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.
- WFD is an international NGO based in Helsinki, Finland to promote Human Rights of the deaf people. It is a consultative body of the UN.

**16. Bharat ke Veer (Braveheart account):**

**News:** Union government has granted Trust status for the "Bharat ke Veer" portal.

**Facts:**

- It is now exempt from Income tax under Section 80(g) of the IT Act.
- Bharat ke Veer portal was launched by the Home Ministry in 2017.
- It facilitates online donations either directly to the families of the CAPF martyr or directs it towards the Bharat ke Veer corpus.
- Maximum coverage is ensured by imposing a cap of 15 lakh rupees on one account so that the excess can be directed to another Braveheart account.

**17. Indian State Level Disease Burden Initiative:**

**News:**

Indian State Level Disease Burden Initiative report was released.

**Facts:**

- The report is a joint initiative between Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), Institute of Health Metrics and Evaluation(IHME) in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family welfare.

**18. Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM)**

**News:** The National Technical Board on Nutrition has approved the first ever guidelines for Severe Acute Malnutrition.

**Facts:**

- The guidelines were approved by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

Guidelines:

- Anganwadi workers and ANMs have to identify severely wasted children and send them to nearest health facility.
- The remaining children will be under the community based management and will be given nutrition and health education.
- Government has revised the method for measuring wasting in children.
- SAM children must be fed freshly cooked food made up of locally available cereals and distributed by anganwadi centres.

**19. Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar:**

**News:** The Swachh Vidyalaya Puraskar were conferred by the Union HRD minister for the year 2017-18.

**Facts:**

- This award was instituted in 2016 by the Ministry of Human Resource and Development.
- Their objective is to honor schools that have done extremely well on water, sanitation and hygiene.
- The award was extended to private schools for the first time this year, apart from the government and government aided schools.

# SECURITY AND DEFENCE:

**1. Military exercises:**

| Nomenclature: | Facts: |
|---|---|
| • Exercise Aazind 2018 | • 3rd Joint Military Exercise between India and Kazakhstan army held in Otar, Kazakhstan. |
| ▢ Yudhabhyas 2018 | • 14th edition of India-U.S joint Military Combat Exercise held in Chaubattia,Uttarakhand. |
| ▢ Exercise Slinex 2018 | • 6th edition of bilateral Naval exercise between India and Sri Lanka in Trincomalee, Sri Lanka. |
| ▢ Nomadic Elephant 2018 | • Annual bilateral exercise between India and Mongolia |
| ▢ BIMSTEC MILEX 2018 | • First multilateral Military Field Exercise among the BIMSTEC countries |
| ▢ Exercise Aviaindra 2018 | • Bi-annual exercise between Indian and Russian air force since 2014 |
| ▢ Mount Everest Friendship Exercise | • Nepal-China Military Exercise focussing on the terrorism and disaster management training |
| ▢ Vostok 2018 | • Large scale Russian military exercise held throughout Siberia and the country's Far East.<br>• Russia invited China, Mongolia and NATO member Turkey to this exercise. |

**2. Mid-air refuelling of LCA Tejas:**

**News:** Indian Air Force was successful in mid-air refuelling of indigenously developed Light Combat Aircraft Tejas.

**Facts:**

- With this India joins the elite group of countries with air to air refuelling capacity.
- This will increase the aircraft's range, endurance and will do away with the need to stop at locations enroute.

**Other facts:**

- LCA Tejas is a single seat, multi role jet fighter.
- It is powered by a single engine.
- It is world's lightest and smallest supersonic aircraft.

- Designed, developed and manufactured by HAL (Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd.) as part of its LCA programme 1980s.
- Tejas has a range slightly higher than 400-km.
- It is mainly used for close air to ground operations.
- It is armoured with air-to air missiles, bombs and precision guided missiles.

## 3. Smart Border Fence:

**News:** Recently Union Home Minister inaugurated a pilot project of Smart Border Fencing under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System(CIBMS).

**Facts:**

- It is a technological solution devised for addressing the gaps in the border security issues in border states.
- Two pilot projects of 5-km each are installed at the Indo-Pak border in Jammu.
- This hi-tech surveillance system will create invisible electronic barrier on land, water, air and even underground.

**Other facts:**

- CIBMS is a system which integrates human resource, weapons and hi-tech surveillance for border security.
- Three main components of CIBMS are: New hi-tech surveillance devices, Satellite Communication network, Command and Control Center for a comprehensive picture of the security situation.
- Border Protection Grid: it is set up in Indian states bordering Bangladesh to strength Indo-Bangladesh border security.

## 4. ParakramParv:

**News:** A three-day (September 28-30) celebration to mark the second anniversary of the surgical strike carried out by the Indian army across LoC.

**Facts:**

This event showcased the courage, valour and the sacrifice of the armed forces.

## 5. Astra:

**News:** Indian Air Force successfully test fired indigenously developed beyond the visual range air-to-air missile Astra from Su-30mki.

**Facts:**

- Astra is an all-weather missile, developed by DRDO.
- It is India's first air-to-air missile.
- It has the capability to engage with targets at varying range-short term range of 20-km and long term range targets upto 80-km.

**6. VC 11184:**

**News:** Hindustan Shipyard Limited is ready to undertake sea trials of India's first missile tracking ship, currently referred to as VC 11184.

**Facts:**

- It has two objectives: tracking missiles using on board sensors and collecting electronic intelligence.
- With this India joins the elite club of other countries having such a vessel in their arsenal viz. United States, China, Russia and France.

# ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY:

## 1. Black carbon:

**News:** Recent findings of Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology (Dehradun) found that Black Carbon from the mediterranean countries reaching the sub-continent via the western disturbances is a leading cause of pollution and receding snowline in the Himalayas.

**Facts:**

- Black carbon are particles formed from incomplete combustion of the biomass and fossil fuel.
- Black Carbon has the tendency to absorb light and heat from its surroundings, thus contributing to warming.
- They are short-lived climate pollutants impacting climate, glacial regions, agriculture and human health.

**Other facts:**

- Brown carbon: originates primarily due to the combustion of organic biomass. It has similar effect as the black carbon, due to its light absorbing tendency.
- Blue carbon: carbon stored or sequestered in coastal landforms such as mangroves forests, meadows and intertidal salt marshes.

## 2. Snow leopard spotted:

**News:** Elusive snow leopard has been spotted in Lippa Asrang wildlife sanctuary, Kinnaur district, Himachal Pradesh.

**Facts:**

- Snow leopard is a Schedule-I animal under the Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972.
- It is categorised as Vulnerable under the IUCN Red List for threatened species.

## 3. National Action Plan for the Conservation of Migratory Birds and their Habitats:

**News:** A National Action Plan has been developed by Ministry of Forest, Environment and Climate Change to conserve the Migratory Birds and to secure their Habitats along the Central Asian Flyway for 2018-23.

Asian Migratory Bird Flyways

**Facts:**

- Central Asian flyway stretches from Northern most breeding grounds of Siberia (Russia) to non-breeding grounds of West and South Asia, Maldives and British Indian Ocean Territory.
- India holds strategic position as 90% of the Migratory birds on this flyway have critical stopover sites in India.
- Short term goal: seeks to halt the decreasing population of the migratory birds by 2027 and to reverse the trend or at least bring it to stable numbers.
- Long term goal: to arrest the population decline and secure the habitats of the migratory birds.

**4. India Cooling Action Plan:**

**News:** India on the 24th World Ozone day released the draft India Cooling Action Plan becoming the first country to do so. It focuses on sustainable cooling through Thermal Comfort for All.

**Facts:**

- It aims to reduce the cooling demand across sectors by 20-25% by 2037-38.
- Training 100,000 service sector technicians by 2022-23 under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana.
- Reduction of refrigerant demand by 25-30% by 2037-38.

**5. Landslide early warning system:**

**News:** A real time landslide warning system being set up in Sikkim and Darjeeling belt of the Northeast Himalayas.

**Facts:**

- It will issue advance alerts by 24 hours.
- It consists of over 200 sensors to measure geophysical and hydrological parameters.

- It is deployed by Amrita University (Kerala) in collaboration with Sikkim SDMA partly funded by Ministry of Earth Sciences.
- The university had earlier deployed a Landslide Early Warning System at the Munnar district of Kerala.

**Other facts:**

- According to global database on landslides, there exists two landslide Hotspots in India namely southern edge of the Himalayan Arc and the coast of south west India along the Western Ghats.

Geological survey India

- Nodal agency of the government of India for landslide data repository and landslide studies headquartered at Kolkata.
- It is under the Ministry of Mines.
- It has initiated the National Landslide Susceptibility Mapping 2014(NLSM) for seamless landslide susceptibility maps and inventory maps of landslide prone areas for the purpose of disaster management and infrastructure building.

## 6. Glacial Lakes Outbursts Floods (GLOFs)

**News:** Disaster managers and scientists in Sikkim are taking out excess water from the South Lhonak Lake, to prevent GLOFs.

**Facts:**

- Lake Monitoring and Information System is installed, which gives information on the water level and sudden fluctuation of the water level.

**Other facts:**

- GLOFs: a type of outburst flood when the dam containing the glacial lake fails.
- Countries at risk: Bhutan, Tibet, India, Nepal and Pakistan.
- Indian states at risk: Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

## 7. WAYU (Wind Augmentation Purifying Unit)

**News:** WAYU is a device indigenously developed by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research and National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (CSIR-NEERI).

**Facts:**

- It is developed as a part of Technology Development Project funded by the Department of Science and Technology.
- It has the capacity to purify air in an area of 500-meter square.
- This device works on two principles:
  - o Wind generation for the dilution of air pollutants
  - o Active pollutant removal
- It is an energy efficient device.

# SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

## 1. APSARA-U:

**News:** An indigenously developed swimming pool type research reactor has been made operational at Trombay, Bhabha Atomic Research Center (BARC).
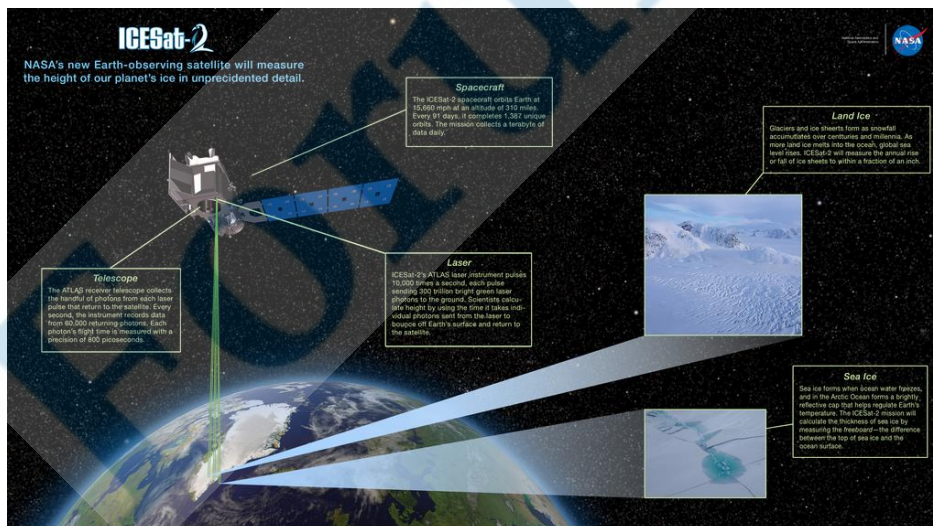
**Facts:**

- Apsara-U is an upgraded version of Apsara research reactor.
- Apsara was the first research reactor in Asia (1956-2009).
- It uses plate type dispersion fuel element made of low enriched Uranium.
- It has increased indigenous production of radioisotopes due to higher neutron flux.
- It produces neutrons for use in agriculture, medicine, industry, forensics etc.
- It will be for research in nuclear physics, material science and radiation shielding.

Other research reactors operational in India:

- KAMINI: Only reactor operating at 233U Fuel produced by Thorium fuel cycle.
- DHRUVA: India's largest research reactor and primary source for weapon-grade plutonium.

## 2. ICESat-2: (Ice cloud and land elevation satellite-2)

**News:** NASA has launched ICESat-2 as the benchmark Earth Observing System Mission. It is a sequel to ICESat launched in 2003.



**Facts:**

Features:

- It is equipped with instrument named ATLAS (Advanced Topographic Laser Altimeter System), a laser divided into 6 beams.
- It uses Photon Counting technique.

- It measures ice sheet mass balance, cloud and aerosol heights, land topography and vegetation characteristics and sea level rise with greater accuracy.
- It will survey the height of the earth's cryosphere, forests, lakes, urban areas, cloud cover etc.
- It will add the third dimension to the 2D images of earth from space.

## 3. Polarimetry Doppler Weather Radar:

**News:** ISRO launched the Polarimetry Doppler Weather Radar at Satish Dhawan Space center, Sriharikota.

**Facts:**

- It is a radar indigenously developed by the Bharat Electronics Ltd., Bengaluru. under the Make in India project.

Functions:

- It enhances the lead time in case of information regarding natural disasters.
- It provides with detailed information on storm's internal wind flow adding to the capabilities of the conventional radars.
- It also has an improved accuracy of rainfall estimation resulting in early warnings in cases of flash floods.

## 4. Fixed Dose Combinations (FDCs):

**News:** Ministry of Health and Family Welfare under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act,1940 banned the manufacture, sale or distribution of 328 FDCs for human use and has made the manufacture, sale and distribution of 6 FDCs conditional claiming that they are unsafe and irrational.

**Facts:**

- FDCs: Cocktail of 2 or more drugs packed in a single dose. These drugs are not covered under the ambit of price control regime.

Concerns:

- Dosing mismatches in FDCs can cause toxicity.
- Pharma companies fail to prove safety, compatibility and rationality of FDCs.
- Wrong dosage by physicians can result in resistance to treatment.
- India has become the dumping ground for the FDCs disapproved for consumption in other countries.

Committees that earlier recommended ban on FDCs:

- Chandra kanth Kokate Committee 2015
- Nilima Shirsagar Committee formed under the direction of the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB).

**Related organizations and authorities:**

| Organization/Authority | |
|---|---|
| Central Drug Standard Control Organization | • Under ministry of Health and Family Welfare.<br>• It approves new drugs for manufacture and import. |
| Drugs Technical Advisory Board(DTAB) | • Under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.<br>• It is a statutory body under Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940.<br>• Highest decision making body on technical matters. |
| State Drug Authority: | • It is a licensing authority for marketing drugs. |

**5. Guidelines on food fortification:**

**News:** Food Safety and Standards (Fortification of Food) regulations 2018 has been notified in the Gazette of India.

**Facts:**

- Food fortification: Food Fortification is a scientifically proven, cost-effective, scalable and sustainable global intervention that addresses the issue of micronutrient deficiencies.

FSSAI (Fortification of Foods) Regulations 2018

- It has prescribed standards for fortification of various food products.
- Quality assurance to be undertaken by every manufacturer and packer of fortified food.
- Random testing of fortificants and fortified food.
- Every package of fortified food should have name of the fortificant and the logo (+F logo).
- Food authority to take steps to encourage production, manufacturing, distribution, sale and consumption of fortified food.

Other facts:

- FSSAI is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, established under the Food Safety and Standards Act,2006.

- Food Fortification Resource center (FFRC) has been launched to promote large scale food fortification across India.

| Commonly Fortified Foods | |
|---|---|
| Salt | Iodine, iron |
| Wheat and maize flours | Iron, folic acid, B vitamins, vitamin A, zinc |
| Cooking oils and fats | Vitamins A and D |
| Sugar | Vitamin A |
| Condiments (sauces) | Iron |
| Milk | Vitamins A and D, iron |
| Complementary foods | Iron, folic acid, B vitamins, vitamin A, zinc |

**6. Coradia iLint:**

**News:** CoradiaiLint is world's maiden hydrogen fuel cell powered trains launched by Germany and nicknamed as Hydrail.

**Facts:**

- It is manufactured by Alstom, Europe's largest manufacturer of railways.
- It is world's first noise free and zero emission train.
- Hydrogen fuel cell combines hydrogen and oxygen to produce electricity and gives out only water and steam as by-products.

**7. Staphylococcus Epidermidis:**

**News:** It is a superbug resistant to all the antibiotics known to spread undetected through hospitals across the world.

**Facts:**

- It is a bacterium related to MRSA (methicillin Resistant Staphylococcus aureus).
- It is naturally found on human skin.
- It commonly affects elderly or patients who have prosthetic material implanted.

**Other facts:**

- When microorganisms become resistant to most of the antimicrobials they are referred to as Superbugs.

**8. Middle East Respiratory Syndrome(MERS):**

**News:** An Emirates flight from Dubai was quarantined in New York suspecting that the passengers are infected by MERS.

**Facts:**

- Middle East Respiratory Syndrome is a viral respiratory disease.

- It is caused by novel coronavirus (MERS-CoV), first identified in Saudi Arabia in 2012.
- MERS-CoV is a zoonotic virus, a virus that is transmitted between animals and humans.
- Dromedary camels are the reservoirs of this coronavirus.
- No vaccine is currently available.
- Affected regions: Saudi arabia, UAE, Republic of Korea.

# MISCELLANEOUS:

## 1. Paryatan parv 2018:

**News:** Ministry of Tourism organised the second edition of the Paryatan Parv.

**Facts:**

- It is a celebration of tourism across the country.
- Its main components are:
  - o Dekhoapna Desh: to encourage Indians to visit their own country.
  - o Tourism for All: to promote tourism events at sites across the country.
  - o Tourism and Governance: involves interactive sessions and workshops for all stakeholders of the tourism and hospitality sector.

## 2. Champions of The Earth Award:

**News:** PM Narendra Modi was awarded the Champions of the Earth Award for his efforts to beat plastic pollution (his pledge to eliminate all single-use plastic in India by 2022).

**Facts:**

- This award is UN's highest environmental honour recognising people for their transformative impact on environment.
- It was launched in 2005 by the UNEP.
- The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), is an agency of the United Nations. It coordinates the organization's environmental activities and assists the developing countries in implementing environmentally sound policies and practices.

**Other facts:**

- French president, Emmanuel Macron was given recognition in the Policy Leadership Category for his efforts towards International Solar Alliance (ISA).
- ISA was launched in 2015 on the side-lines of CoP21 to promote the use of solar energy. It is an intergovernmental organization comprising of countries between Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn
- Cochin international airport was awarded Entrepreneurial Vision award for its leadership role in the use of sustainable energy.

## 3. Magsaysay award:

**News:** Two Indian nationals, Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk received the Ramon Magsaysay Award,2018.

2018 recipients:

- Bharat Vatwani: for dedicating his life for rescuing mentally ill people and providing them with shelter and treatment through his Shraddha Rehabilitation Foundation.

- Sonam Wangchuk: for his efforts towards reforming the learning systems and improving life opportunities for Ladakhi youth.

**Facts:**

- It is known as Asia's Nobel prize.
- Established in 1957 in the memory of Ramon Magsaysay, the third Filipino president.
- Awarded every year to individuals or organisations in Asia who indulge in selfless service and radiate transformative influence.

## 4. UN Global Media Compact:

**News:** Over 30 organizations including India's Ministry of Information and Broadcasting have come together to form the Global Media Compact.

**Facts:**

- It is aimed at disseminating awareness about SDGs to be achieved by 2030.
- It seeks to inspire organizations to partner with the UN and leverage their resources to reach the 2030 goals.
- It ensures accountability of the Governments across the world regarding their efforts towards the SDGs.

## 5. Aapoorti app

**News:** Indian railways launched a new mobile app under the Indian Railways e-Procurement System (IREPS).

**Facts:**

- It will provide data and information about e-tendering and e-auctioning undertaken by the Indian Railways.

**Other facts:**

- IREPS is an official portal of Indian Railways for procurement of good, services and sales of the material and for leasing out assets.
- It is the largest G2B portal.
- It received the Vigilance Excellence Award 2017 awarded by the Central Vigilance Commission.

## 7. Gandhi ji's Nai Talim:

**News:** HRD ministry released a book titled- Experiential Learning-Gandhi ji's Nai Talim.

**Facts:**

- This book is a joint project of Mahatma Gandhi National Council of Rural Education (MGNCRE) and State Council of Educational Research and Training(SCERTs) along with the universities in the country.
- It was simultaneously released in 13 languages.

## 8. Anti-Nuclear Medical Kit:

**News:** Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Sciences has developed India's first indigenous anti-nuclear medical kit.

**Facts:**

- It will ensure protection from serious injuries and faster healing of wounds from nuclear warfare and radioactive leakages.
- It was developed by Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Sciences (INMAS).
- The kit includes 25 items including radio-protectors that provide 80-90 per cent protection against radiation and nerve gas agents, bandages that absorb radiation, tablets and ointments.

## 9. Hepatitis E Virus

**News:** World's first human case of Rat Hepatitis E has been detected in Hong Kong.

**Facts:**

- Hepatitis E is a liver disease caused by Hepatitis E Virus.
- It is commonly known as Rat Fever.
- The Virus has four genotypes:
  - Genotype 1 and 2 has been found only in humans.
  - Genotype 3 and 4 circulate in several animals without causing any disease and occasionally infect humans.
- The virus spreads through contaminated drinking water and stool of infected person via the intestine.

**Other facts:**

- Kyasanur Forest Disease cause by the Kyasanur Forest Disease Virus(KFDV), is more popularly known as Monkey Fever.

## 10. Zika Virus:

**News:** A woman in Jaipur tested positive for Zika virus, a mosquito borne disease.



Zika Virus
Transmitted by mosquito bite
No treatment or vaccine is available
ABOUT 1 in 5 people infected will became ill
SYMPTOMS: fever, rash, joint pain conjunctivitis (red eyes)
SYMPTOMS normally last 2–7 days
ILLNESS is usually mild and death is rare

**Facts:**

- Zika virus is transmitted through the bite of an infected Aedesaegypti mosquito, from mother to the fetus, sex and blood transfusion.
- There is an understanding that Zika virus is a cause of microcephaly and Guillain Barre syndrome.

**Other facts:**

- Microcephaly is a medical condition where the baby is born with a small head or stops growing after birth.
- Guillain Barre syndrome is a medical condition where the body's immune system attacks the peripheral nervous system resulting in weakness and loss of sensation in limbs. It is more common among adult males.

**11. Leptospirosis:**

News: Cases of Leptospirosis have been reported in Kerala after the floods.

**Facts:**

- It is an infectious disease caused by bacteria of the genus Leptospira.
- Transmitted through cuts in skin, mucous membrane of eyes, nose and mouth by contaminated water or urine of the infected animal.
- For humans, rodents are the primary source of transmission.
- Human to human transmission occurs rarely.
- It can be treated with antibiotics.

# POINTLY:

1. **Cochin International Airport:** World's first fully solar powered airport.

2. **Rooppur project**: First initiative under Indo-Russian deal to undertake atomic energy project in Bangladesh.

3. **Bangabandhu-1**: First communication satellite of Bangladesh negotiated and financed with the help of the Chinese government.

4. **Operation Cactus**: Indian army's operation in Maldives to prevent a coup by the pro-Eelam group (1988).

5. **Sinamale bridge**: Infrastructure bridge undertaken by the Chinese companies in Maldives, to link Male and Hulhule island.

6. **Hambantota port:** Chinese built strategic port in srilanka.

7. **Kyaukpyu port:** Deep sea port to be constructed in the Rakhine state of Myanmar with Chinese assistance.

8. **Dickinsonia:** An ancient fossil of the earliest animal on the geological record. It belonged to the Ediacaran Biota (earliest mammal group).

9. **Flyway:** A geographical region within which a single group of migratory species complete their annual cycle. It includes breeding, stopover and wintering areas.

10. **Twenty fourth World Ozone Day**: Celebrated on 16th September. Theme for this year: "Keep Cool and Carry On".

11. **Hidden hunger:** Deficiency of micronutrients is known as hidden hunger.

12. **HCNG:** It is a vehicle fuel blending of CNG and hydrogen, with 8-50% of hydrogen by volume.

13. **cybercrime.gov.in:** An online portal launched by the government of India to receive complaints from citizens regarding content on child pornography, child sexual abuse material and sexually explicit material on rape and gang rape.

14. **Bandicoot:** India's first manhole cleaning robot. An exoskeleton robot which cleans manholes without the need of humans entering into it.

**15. Mission SAMPARK**: Mission launched to reach out to those Left to Follow Up and those outside the purview of the Antiretroviral Treatment(ART) for HIV.

**16. Battle of Haifa**: 23 September 2018 marks the centenary of the battle of Haifa, where the Indian cavalry brigades helped liberate Haifa, an Israeli city, from the Turkish-German forces in 1918.

**17. Indian Tourism Mart 2018:** First ever Indian Tourism Mart organised during the ParyatanParv 2018 by Ministry of Tourism and FAITH (Federationof Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality).

**18. Vorombe Titan:** It is named as the world's largest bird belonging to the Elephant bird species.

**19. Elephant bird:** It is a group of extinct colossal flightless birds once found on the Madagascar island during the late quaternary.

**20. Punch tantra:** It is a collection of tribal artefacts inspired and promoted by Mary Kom. It was launched by Tribes India under the Ministry of Tribal Affairs specifically for the diwali festive season (2018).

**21. Ornithine Decarboxylase-1 (OCD-1):** A gene whose mutation has led to a new disorder causing large birth weight, enlarged head size, hair loss and development delays. The disorder has not been named yet.

**22. www.psbloansin59minutes.com** : A web portal launched by the Ministry of Finance to grant loans to MSMEs within an hour.

**23. Pakyong airport:** Sikkim's first airport.

**24. Rail Sahyog:** It is a web portal launched for the corporates to fund the creation of amenities at the Railway stations.

**25. Maralal Camel Derby:** It is the prestigious camel race of Kenya, held every year in the outskirts of Maralal town of Kenya.

**26. RashtriyaPoshanMaah** (National Nutrition Month): The Ministry of Women and Child Development celebrated September 2018 across India as the Poshan Maah to address the malnutritional challenges and to sensitize citizens regarding the importance of holistic nutritional intake.

27. **Incredible India mobile app:** App launched by the Ministry of Tourism on the World Tourism Day. It is a single app on the Information like registered travel agents, transport operators, classified hotels in the city, tourist centers etc.

28. **E-sahaj portal:** Home Ministry launched the e-sahaj portal for ease of security clearance to the private business proposals in sensitive sectors and geographical locations.

29. **NeVA (National e Vidhan Application):** Paperless Assembly or e-Assembly uses electronic means to facilitate the work of Assembly. NeVA aims to bring all the legislatures of the country together, in one platform, thereby creating a massive data depository without having the complexity of multiple applications.

30. **Jan DhanDarshak app:** This app was launched by the Finance Ministry to help locate the banking infrastructure service points like banks, ATMs, bank mitra, post office etc.

31. **Phone-a-Sahayak Scheme:** It is a Scheme implemented by the Delhi government to provide doorstep delivery of public services to delhiites.

32. **Exporting Corruption Report:** The report is released by the Anti-Corruption organisation Transparency International.

33. **Future of Jobs Report:** Report is released by the World Economic Forum(WEF).

34. **Great Garbage Patch:** The eastern Pacific Ocean where the circular currents have concentrated plastic garbage in one large area is known as the Great Garbage Patch.

35. **IOWave16:** It is the name of a Tsunami mock drill conducted by the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO. India participated in it along with 23 other countries.

36. **Coffee Connect and Coffee Krishi Tharanga:** Coffee Connect is a mobile app and Coffee Krishi Tharanga is a digital mobile extension service, both aimed at better information exchange between the Coffee Board and the ground workers engaged in growing and selling coffee.