

MONTHLY

FACTLY

EXCLUSIVE CURRENT AFFAIRS FOR

PRELIMS

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ForumIAS

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Polity

1. CODE OF CONDUCT FOR MP'S AND MLA'S

News: Lok Sabha Speaker said that a common code of conduct will be framed for MP's and MLA's.

Facts:

- A committee of speakers of state legislative assemblies have been formed which will present its report in 2 -3 months.

What is Code of Conduct

- It is the code which outlines the general principles of behavior which is expected from the members of an Organisation.
- The Code of Conduct for MPs sets out the standards of behaviour expected of Members of Parliament as they carry out their work
- By adhering to these standards, legislative members (MPs/MLAs) can maintain and strengthen the openness and accountability of legislative bodies. It helps in building public confidence and trust in the parliamentary system of government.

Why it is needed

- **To check Frequent Disruptions** - There has been continuous disruption of parliament by members. For example - The second half of Budget Session of 2018 witnessed complete washout. The productivity of the Lok Sabha was 4% and that of the Rajya Sabha at 8% in the same period. Thus, to hold legislative members accountable, a code of conduct is needed.
- **Professionalism in Behaviour** - The behaviour of parliamentarians is seen by the whole country and it impacts the legitimacy of the institution of parliament. The Code of conduct helps members of parliament in raising the level of professionalism into politics. It provides benchmarks against which conduct of MP's and MLA's can be judged by the public.
- **Ensuring civility in Political Speeches**- It is needed to ensure civility in political speeches and expressions (reduce personal attacks and hate speeches).
- **Promotes Dignified Debate:** It is also needed to improve the quality of debates in the Parliament

Current Status

- There is a code of conduct for members of Rajya Sabha since 2005.
- There is a code of conduct in place for Judges of the High Court and Supreme Court since 1947.
- There is also a code of conduct for State and Union Ministers.
- However, there is **no code of conduct for members of Lok Sabha**.

Global Scenario

- Countries such as the UK, USA, Germany has code of conduct for legislative members.

Way Forward

- Disruption of Parliament must be minimized to improve its productivity. Thus, it is necessary to put in place some mechanism to check unruly Members of Parliament.
- Further, adequate attention should be given in ensuring that the Code of Conduct does not become a tool to curb the role of Opposition. Like in the UK, some working days of Parliament should be allotted to Opposition to decide the Agenda of the day.

2. ART 371

News: Home Minister has said in Lok Sabha that the government has no intention of removing Art 371 of the Constitution

Facts:

- Art 371 appear in **Part XXI** of the Constitution, titled ‘Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions’.
- Article 371 of the Constitution includes “special provisions” for **11 states**
- Article 371 was part of the Constitution at the time of its commencement on January 26, 1950.
- Articles 371A to 371J were incorporated subsequently through constitutional amendments.

Article 371 (Special provision with respect to Gujarat and Maharashtra)

- Governor has “special responsibility” to establish “separate development boards” for “Vidarbha, Marathwada, and the rest of Maharashtra”, and Saurashtra and Kutch in Gujarat. Ensure “equitable allocation of funds for developmental expenditure over the said areas”, and equitable arrangement providing adequate facilities for technical education and vocational training, and adequate opportunities for employment” under the state government.

Article 371A (13th Amendment Act, 1962), (Special provision with respect to Nagaland)

- It states that no act of Parliament would apply to the state of Nagaland in matter relating to religious or social practices of Nagas, Naga customary law and procedure, administration of civil or criminal justice involving decisions according to Naga customary law and ownership and transfer of land and its resources. The Legislative Assembly of Nagaland must pass a resolution for an act to be applicable to the state.
- The governor is given special responsibilities with respect to law and order in the state as well.

Article 371B (22nd Amendment Act, 1969), (Special Provision with respect to Assam)

- It states that the President may provide for the constitution and functions of a committee of the Legislative Assembly of State consisting of members elected from the state’s tribal areas of Assam listed in schedule 6.

Article 371C (27th Amendment Act, 1971), (Special Provision with respect to Manipur)

- The President may provide for the constitution of a committee of elected members from the Hill areas in the Assembly and entrust “special responsibility” to the Governor to ensure its proper functioning.
- The governor must submit an annual report to the president regarding the administration of hill areas as well.

- the executive power of the Union shall extend to the giving of directions to the Manipur State as to the administration of the Hill areas

Article 371D (32nd Amendment Act, 1973; substituted by The Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014), Andhra Pradesh and Telangana

- President must ensure equitable opportunities and facilities in public employment and education to people from different parts of the state. He may require the state government to organise any class or classes of posts in a civil service of, or any class or classes of civil posts under, the State into different local cadres for different parts of the State. He has similar powers vis-à-vis admissions in educational institutions.

Article 371E:

- Allows for the establishment of a university in Andhra Pradesh by a law of Parliament. But this is not a “special provision” in the sense of the others in this part.

Article 371F (36th Amendment Act, 1975), (Special Provision with respect to Sikkim)

- The Legislative assembly of the state of Sikkim shall consist of not less than 30 members.
- To protect the rights and interests of various sections of the population of Sikkim, Parliament may provide for the number of seats in the Assembly, which may be filled only by candidates from those sections.

Article 371G (53rd Amendment Act, 1986), (Special provision with respect to Mizoram)

- The Legislative Assembly of the state of Mizoram must consist of not less than 40 members.
- Parliament cannot make laws on religious or social practices of the Mizos, Mizo customary law and procedure, administration of civil and criminal justice involving decisions according to Mizo customary law, ownership and transfer of land and its resources unless the State Legislative Assembly so decides.

Article 371H (55th Amendment Act, 1986), (Special provision with respect to Arunachal Pradesh)

- The legislative assembly of the state of Arunachal Pradesh shall consist of not less than 30 members.
- The Governor has a special responsibility with regard to law and order, and “he shall, after consulting the Council of Ministers, exercise his individual judgment as to the action to be taken”.

Article 371I (56th Amendment Act, 1987), (Special Provision with respect to Goa)

- The Legislative Assembly of the state of Goa shall consist of not less than 30 members.

Article 371J (98th Amendment Act, 2012), (Special Provision with respect to Karnataka)

- It grants special status to six backward districts of Hyderabad-Karnataka region. The special provision requires that a separate development board be established for these regions (similar to Maharashtra and Gujarat) and also ensures local reservation in education and government jobs.

3. NUMBER OF SUPREME COURT JUDGES INCREASED FROM 30 TO 33 (EXCLUDING CJI).

News: Parliament has passed the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Amendment Bill 2019. The Bill amends the Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956. The Bill has received Presidential assent and has become an Act.

Facts:

- **Article 124** of Constitution fixes the strength of Supreme Court at **eight** (one chief justice and seven other judges). It also provides the **power to the Parliament to increase the number of judges of SC** if it deems necessary. The Parliament through The Supreme Court (Number of Judges) Act, 1956 has increased strength of Supreme Court to ten.
- The Act was last amended in 2009 to increase the judges' strength from 25 to 31 (including CJI)
- The proposed Bill seeks to amend the above Act to increase the strength of Supreme Court from 30 to 33 (excluding the Chief Justice of India).

Need to increase the number of judges

- To **reduce the pendency of cases** in the SC. As on the 1st day of June, 2019, there were 58669 cases pending in the Supreme Court. The Chief Justice of India (CJI) has intimated that inadequate strength of judges is one of the prime reasons for backlog of cases in the Supreme Court.
- Further, due to the paucity of judges the required number of constitution benches to decide important cases involving questions of law were not being formed.
- However, by merely increasing the number of judges, the issue of pendency of cases in courts will not be solved completely.

Other measures which can be taken:

- As recommended by the Law Commission, SC may be split into two divisions, namely
 - Constitutional court
 - Court of Appeal (with benches at North, South, East, West and Central India)
- Constitutional Court will only hear matters related to constitutional law.
- Court of Appeal will deal with appeals arising out of the orders/judgments of the High Courts of the region

Benefits

- Supreme Court will be relieved of the backlog of accumulated cases. Supreme Court would be free to deal with only constitutional cases such as interpretation of the Constitution, matters of national importance.
- Court of Appeal with benches will reduce the cost of litigation and reduce the time taken to dispose of cases. It may also lead to an increase in strength of number of Judges in the higher judiciary.

4. SPECIAL STATUS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR REMOVED

News: The Central government has abrogated the certain provisions which granted special status to J&K under Article 370 of the Constitution

Facts**What has been done**

- Government of India through a Presidential Order has ended the special status granted to Kashmir under Art 370. Now, all the provisions of Indian Constitution is applicable to Jammu and Kashmir. Article 370 has not been repealed. Only its certain provision has been abrogated.
- State Jammu and Kashmir has been re-organised into two union territories
 - Jammu and Kashmir (with legislature)
 - Ladakh (without Legislature)
- Article 35A – Its provisions have been nullified by the Presidential Order. However, it continues to be part of the constitution.

What has Changed

Provisions	Before [J&K legislative assembly had special powers]	Now [No special power to J&K legislative assembly]
Special Powers	Special powers were exercised by J&K.	No special powers now.
Permanent Resident status	Permanent and non-permanent resident status of J&K (in addition to the Indian citizenship)	No such provision of Permanent and non-permanent resident status.
Flag	It had its own state flag along with the tricolour	Indian Tricolour would be considered as the flag.
Changing the name/area/boundary (Article 3)	Proviso under Article 3 of the Indian Constitution stated that the Union government could not alter the area, name and boundaries of J&K without the consent of the state legislature.	Article 3 is now applicable and thus, J&K Reorganisation Bill was introduced.
Status of J&K	Part VI of the Indian Constitution (related to state governments) was not applicable to the state.	It would be now governed under Article 239 and Article 239A in Part VIII (related to the administration of Union Territories) of the Indian Constitution.
Fundamental Rights (Part III)	Part III (dealing with Fundamental Rights) was applicable to the state with some exceptions and conditions. For instance, the fundamental right to property was still guaranteed in the state.	Part III of the Indian Constitution would be applicable in the same way as the other states.
Directive Principles (Part IV) and	Part IV (Directive Principles of State Policy) and Part IVA (Fundamental Duties) were not applicable to the state.	Part IV and IVA of the Indian Constitution would be applicable in the same way as the other states.

Fundamental Duties (Part IV A)	The J&K Constitution had its own set of directive principles and did not include any fundamental duties.	
National Emergency (Article 352)	A proclamation of emergency could have been made in J&K on the ground of internal disturbance (with the concurrence of the state government) or on the grounds of war or external aggression [without the concurrence of the state government].	National emergency could be declared on the basis of "external aggression or war" and "armed rebellion" in J&K (as in other parts of the country).
Financial Emergency (Article 360)	Article 360 of the Indian Constitution was not applicable.	Article 360 will now be applicable.
State Emergency	The State Emergency (President's Rule) was applicable to the state. However, it could be imposed in the state on the grounds of failure of the constitutional machinery under the state Constitution and not the Indian Constitution.	The provisions of Article 356 would now be applicable like the rest of the country.
Governor's Rule	The J&K Constitution also provided for the Governor's Rule. The Governor's Rule could be imposed when the state administration could not be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the J&K Constitution. In such a scenario, the governor (with the concurrence of the President of India) could assume all the powers of the state government.	No such provision exists now.
Extension to the emergency (Article 365)	The President had no powers to suspend the state assembly on the grounds of failure to comply with the directions given by him.	Article 365 can be used to suspend the state assembly.
Amendments to the Indian Constitution	A presidential order was required to extend a constitutional amendment to the state of Jammu and Kashmir.	No special order/procedure required.
Central laws	Earlier, the Central government had to seek approval of the State Legislature to enact laws on the subjects mentioned in the Union and Concurrent list.	No such approval is now required.

Law and Order	Provisions of Ranbir Penal Code were applicable. [IPC was not applicable]	Provisions of the Indian Penal Code would be applicable.
5th and 6th Schedule	The 5th Schedule (dealing with administration and control of schedule areas and scheduled tribes) and the 6th Schedule (dealing with administration of tribal areas) did not apply to the state.	The 5th Schedule and 6th Schedule provisions would now be applicable to the states.
Preventive Detention Laws	The state legislature of J&K had the power to make preventive detention laws. Thus, the preventive detention laws made by the Parliament were not applicable to the state.	The preventive detention laws of the Parliament can now be made applicable to the state.
Issuing writs	The High Court of J&K could issue writs only for the enforcement of the fundamental rights and not for any other purpose.	The High Court of J&K can now issue writs for other purposes as well along with for enforcing the fundamental rights.
Reservation for minorities	No reservation for minorities such as Hindus and Sikhs.	Minorities will be eligible for reservation.
Property ownership	Indian citizens from other states cannot buy land or property in J&K.	People from other states will now be able to purchase land and property in J&K, unless further government orders prohibit it.
Right to Information	RTI was not applicable.	RTI would now be applicable.
Assembly Duration	The duration of the state assembly was for 6 years.	The duration of the assembly of union territory of J&K will be 5 years.
Local bodies	Panchayats were governed under J&K Panchayati Raj Act, 1989. They did not have the same rights as in other states.	Panchayats would have the same rights as in other states and would be governed by the 73rd and 74th Constitutional Amendment Act of the Indian Constitution.
Right to Education	RTE wasn't applicable.	RTE would now be applicable.

Additional Information**Art 370**

- Art. 370 had “temporary provisions with respect to the State of Jammu and Kashmir”, which gave special powers to the state. It provided following special status to J&K:
 - It allowed J&K to have its own Constitution and Flag.
 - It explicitly mentioned that only the provisions of Article 1 and Article 370 applied to the state.
 - The Centre could extend the central laws on subjects included in the Instrument of Accession (IoA) — **Defence, External Affairs and Communications** — by consultation with the state government.
 - Other central laws could be extended to the state only with the concurrence of the state government.

Art 35A

- Article 35A was included in the Constitution by a Presidential Order in 1954.
- It does not appear in the main body of the Constitution and is listed in Appendix I.
- Article 35A of the Indian Constitution gave power to the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly to define ‘permanent residents’ of the state, their special rights and privileges.

5. LAW COMMISSION OF INDIA

News: The Ministry of Law and Justice has initiated the process to set up the **22nd Law Commission** of India after the tenure of 21st Law Commission ended on 31st August, 2018.

Facts**Law Commission of India:**

- It is a **non-constitutional, non-statutory** body constituted by GoI from time to time.
- It is created by the central government through an executive order.
- **First Law Commission was constituted in 1955. Its chairman was M C Setalvad**
- 21st Law Commission was constituted in 2015. Its chairman was Justice Balbir Singh Chauhan
- It is constituted for fixed tenure (generally three year).
- It works as an **advisory body** to the Ministry of Law and Justice. Its recommendations may be accepted or rejected by the central government.
- The Reports of the Law Commission are considered by the Ministry of Law and Justice in consultation with the concerned administrative Ministries and are submitted to Parliament from time to time.
- **Composition:**
 - Its membership primarily comprises Chairman, Full time members, and not more than five part time members.
 - As per convention, chairman of the Law Commission of India is retired judge of the Supreme Court.

Economy

1. TRANSFER OF SURPLUS FUND BY RBI

News: RBI has approved the transfer of record **Rs. 1.76 lakh crore** (including dividend and surplus) to central government.

Facts:

- RBI transfer of Rs 1.76 lakh crore includes the payment of net surplus income of the RBI worth ₹1.23 lakh crore for 2018-19 and a transfer of excess provisions worth ₹52,637 crore. The excess provisions were transferred as per the suggestions of the Bimal Jalan Committee.
- This is the highest ever transfer by the RBI to the government. This is the first time that RBI is transferring its surplus reserve.

Economic Capital Framework (ECF)

- Economic Capital is the **risk capital** that a central bank must have, to cover all its risks related to its assets and ongoing activities, such as market risk, operational risk, etc. It is expressed as contingency fund plus revaluation reserve and some other minor components, such as an asset-development fund etc. The present total economic capital of RBI is Rs. 9.6 trillion as of July 2018.
- The objective of holding risk capital by the RBI under the ECF for the following reasons:
 - a. To ensure that the RBI has sufficient financial resilience to give effect to its policy actions and use them as financial stability safeguard in times of a crisis.
 - b. To contribute in international transactions as a trustworthy counterparty in times of stress since it has very high levels of financial resilience globally.

Why the need for a revised ECF?

- The need for a revised ECF was felt after a disagreement between the RBI and the central government regarding the transfer of surplus funds. The government has been insisting that the central bank must hand over its surplus reserves amid a shortfall in central government revenue collections. The central government believed that the reserves with RBI was quite high and accordingly asked RBI to transfer at least one-third of its reserve assets.
- This was also reiterated by the Economic Survey of 2016-17, which found that the RBI is one of the most capitalised central banks in the world having the fourth highest amount of equity as a percentage of balance sheet
 - Therefore, Bimal Jalan Committee was formed to review the existing ECF and decide on the quantum of reserves.

Bimal Jalan Committee Recommendations

- The committee has defined Economic capital as a combination of **realized equity** and **revaluation reserves**.
 - **Realized equity** - It is a form of contingency fund for meeting all risks/losses primarily built up from retained earnings. It is required to cover credit risk and operational risk.

- **Revaluation reserves** - It refers to those profits of the RBI which may arise from changes in the valuation of Gold, Foreign Currency or foreign securities.
- The committee recommended that total economic capital of the RBI needs to be in the range of **20 % - 24.5%** of the RBI's total balance sheet. (It is 23.3% as on 30 June, 2019). Further, the realised equity should be maintained at within a range of **5.5% to 6.5%** of the RBI's balance sheet. Also, any shortfall in revaluation balances would add to the requirement for realized equity.
- It recommended a **surplus distribution** policy. The current surplus distribution policy only targets the total economic capital. The committee recommends that the policy should also target realized equity. Only if realized equity is above its requirement, the entire net income is transferable to the Government. If it is below the lower bound of requirement, risk provisioning will be made to the extent necessary and only the residual net income (if any) will be transferred to the Government.
- It has recommended that RBI's capital framework be reviewed every five years.
- The committee recommended the alignment of the financial year of RBI (July-June) with the fiscal year of the government (April – March).

Positive Impact of transfer of surplus to economy

- Funds can help in revival of economy. It can be used to revive consumption and boost investment in core sectors (electricity, cement, coal, steel etc),
- The funds can also aid in the recapitalization public sector banks given the huge amount of Non-Performing Assets (NPAs). It may lead to ease of lending to different sectors of economy

Negative Impact of transfer of surplus to economy

- Immediate increased government spending (if not done in proper manner) may result in inflation
- Due to the transfer, the reserves of the RBI have been reduced. It may reduce RBI ability to deal with financial shock.

2. CONSOLIDATION/AMALGAMATION OF NATIONAL BANKS

News: Government has announced consolidation of 10 National banks into 4 banks.

S.No.	Amalgamated Banks	Anchor Banks
1	Punjab National Bank (PNB), Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC), and United Bank of India	Punjab National Bank
2	Canara Bank and Syndicate Bank	Canara Bank
3	Union Bank of India, Andhra Bank, Corporation bank	Union Bank of India
4	Indian Bank and Allahabad Bank	Indian bank

Facts

- The total number of PSBs after consolidation has come down to **12** from 27 in 2017.
- Previous instances of consolidation of banks are:
 - Vijaya Bank and Dena Bank with Bank of Baroda (BoB) – effective from April 01, 2019.
 - State Bank of India absorbed five of its associates and the Bharatiya Mahila Bank in 2017.

- After the consolidation, the four largest PSB's in India are (in decreasing order) – a) SBI b) PNB c) Bank of Baroda d) Canara Bank.

Benefits of Consolidation

- **Efficiency** – Operational cost may be reduced due to presence of overlapping shared networks. This operational efficiency gains may reduce cost of lending.
- **Self Sufficiency** - Better ability to raise resources from markets
- **Technological Synergy** - All merged banks in a particular bucket share common Core Banking Solutions (CBS) platform synergizing them technologically.
- **Wider offerings** – Bigger banks can provide wider offerings with enhanced customization
- **Cost Saving** and income opportunities for joint ventures and subsidiaries.
- **Wide Coverage** - It will result in wider geographical coverage/reach of Bank.
- Consolidation of bank is in line with the recommendation of Narasimham II committee.

Challenges in bank merger

- **Job loss** – It may result in job losses, in the immediate future. People may take voluntary retirement.
- **Cultural Clash** - Mergers may result in clash of different organizational cultures.
- **Too big to fail** – If systematically important bank fail, it can severely impact the entire banking industry.

3. DRAFT NATIONAL LOGISTICS POLICY

News: The Express Industry Council of India (EICI) has raised concerns regarding the Draft National Logistics Policy, which was released by the government early this year.

Logistics Sector in India

- Indian logistics sector is highly fragmented. Different parts of the logistics value chain currently are being managed by different ministries, including Road Transport and Highways, Shipping, Railways, Civil Aviation, D/o Posts, Commerce and Industry, Finance and Home Affairs.
- In addition, many government agencies including Central Drug Standard Control Organization, Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, Plant and Animal Quarantine Certification Service provide relevant trade clearances and impact the value chain.
- The Indian logistics sector provides livelihood to more than 22 million people and improving the sector will facilitate 10 % decrease in indirect logistics cost leading to the growth of 5-8% in exports.
- The worth of Indian logistics market would be around USD 215 billion in the next two years compared to about USD 160 billion currently.

Draft National Logistics Policy

- The policy has been prepared by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry in consultation with the Ministries of Railways, Road Transport and Highways, Shipping and Civil Aviation.
- **Aim** - The aim of the policy is to reduce the logistics cost from the present 14% of GDP to less than 10% by 2022.

Key thrust areas in the policy

- Focusing on critical projects to drive an optimal modal mix and to enable first mile and last mile connectivity.
- Driving development of Multi Modal Logistics Parks (MMLPs), creating single window logistics e marketplace, setting up logistics and data analytics centre.
- Creating a Centre of Trade facilitation and Logistics excellence (CTFL) and leveraging the expertise of multilateral agencies.
- Creating an Integrated National Logistics Action Plan and align with respective state development plans.
- Enhancing warehousing sector, transport and rolling stock infrastructure.
- Streamlining EXIM processes to promote trade competitiveness.
- Ensuring seamless movement of goods at Land Customs Stations (LCS) and Integrated Check Points (ICP).
- Strengthening the MSME sector through efficient logistics.
- Promoting cross regional trade on e-commerce platforms through seamless flow of goods.
- Promoting Green & Sustainable Logistics.
- Setting up a Startup acceleration fund.

Concerns

- The Express Industry Council of India (EICI) has said that the policy has overlooked the role of the air express industry (courier and parcel service) and air cargo sectors. EICI has said that in developing countries such as India, an efficient air express infrastructure could contribute directly to global competitiveness of the country by ensuring just-in-time deliveries and reducing clearance dwell time.

4. SANDBOX MODEL

News: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued the final framework for regulatory sandbox in order to enable innovations in the financial technology space.

What is Sandbox model?

- It allows companies to test products in a closed environment i.e. within a particular geography or among a set of users, before they are allowed to roll out commercially.
- As part of this policy, the regulator provides the appropriate regulatory support by relaxing specific legal and regulatory requirements for specified time duration.
- Regulatory sandbox (RS) is an infrastructure that helps financial technology (FinTech) players live test their products or solutions before getting the necessary regulatory approvals for a mass launch which saves start-up's time and cost.

Features of the model issued by RBI

The target applicants for entry to the RS are FinTech companies including startups, banks, financial institutions and any other company partnering with or providing support to financial services businesses, subject to the sandbox criteria laid down in these guidelines.

The requirements that should mandatorily be complied by the regulatory applicants are

- customer privacy and data protection,
- secure storage of and access to payment data of stakeholders,

- security of transactions,
- KYC requirements and
- statutory restrictions.

RBI has said that the entity should have a minimum net worth of Rs 25 lakh as per its latest audited balance sheet. The promoters/ directors of the entity should be fit and proper and the conduct of the bank accounts of the entity as well its promoters/directors should be satisfactory.

The regulatory relaxation which may be granted by the RBI are

- Liquidity requirements,
- Board composition,
- Management experience,
- Financial soundness and
- Track record.

Further, the negative list of products, services and technology which may not be accepted for testing are:

- credit registry,
- credit information,
- crypto currency
- trading or investing in crypto asset among others.

Benefits of Sandbox Policy

- A regulatory sandbox would help the users to check the viability of the product before its original roll-out.
- It would help in scaling-up the generation of a product based on evidence and appropriate checks.
- Appropriate modifications can be made in the product if any concerns are unearthed while the product is in the sandbox.
- The sandbox model provides avenues to the start-ups to check their products before the original launch. Thus, it would help the start-ups in saving costs and time.

What are Fintech Companies?

- The term “FinTech” is a combination of two words “finance” and “technology”. It refers to the technological start-ups that are emerging, contrary to the traditional banking and financial players in financial inclusion.
- Some of the major FinTech products and services are Peer to Peer (P2P) lending platforms, crowdfunding, block chain technology, Big Data etc.

5. MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE

News: The Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) monetary policy committee (MPC) has lowered the repo rate by 35 basis points to 5.4%.

Facts:**Monetary Policy Committee**

- It is a committee constituted under section 45ZB of amended RBI Act, 1934.
- It is entrusted with the task of fixing the benchmark policy interest rate (repo rate) to contain inflation within the specified target level (4 percent, within a band of +/- 2 per cent)

Constitution of the MPC

- It is a 6-member committee – the RBI Governor (Chairperson), the RBI Deputy Governor in charge of monetary policy, one official nominated by the RBI Board and the remaining three members are nominated by the Government of India.
- The Government of India nominees are appointed by the Central Government based on the recommendations of a search cum selection committee consisting of the cabinet secretary (Chairperson), the RBI Governor, the secretary of the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance and three experts in the field of economics or banking as nominated by the central government.

Repo rate

- Repo stands for 'Repurchasing Option. It refers to the rate at which commercial banks borrow money from the RBI. The MPC is mandated by law to ensure that retail inflation stays within a band of two percentage points of the target inflation rate of 4%. since inflation has been well below the 4% mark, the MPC members have voted for rate cut.
- The rate cut is expected to boost consumption and investment in the economy.
- Although, the MPC has cut the repo rate by 110 bps since February, 2019 but only about 40 bps have been transmitted to borrowers. The poor monetary transmission by banks has consistently undermined the effectiveness of the MPC's decision.

What is monetary transmission?

- Monetary transmission refers to the process by which a central bank's monetary policy signals (like repo rate) are passed on, through financial system to influence the businesses and households.
- Thus, monetary policy transmission is the entire process starting from the change in the policy rate(repo rate) by the central bank to various money market rates (e.g- inter-bank lending rates, to bank deposit rates, bank lending rates) to households and firms, to government and corporate bond yields and asset prices (stock prices and house prices). It is expected to finally result in stable inflation and economic growth.

International Relation

1. G – 7

News: PM Narendra Modi was invited as a special guest to attend 45th G -7 summit in France.

Facts

- India is not a member of the G-7. Indian Prime Minister will attend the summit as special guest as he has been personally invited by the French President.
- The summit was chaired by France. The main theme of the summit was fighting income and gender inequality and protecting biodiversity.
- France had invited non-member countries as guest nations (India, Australia, Spain, South Africa, Senegal and Rwanda) who are playing an important part in world politics.
- India had previously invited to the G-7 summit in 2005.

G-7

- The Group of Seven (G7) is an international intergovernmental economic organization consisting of the seven largest IMF-described advanced economies in the world: Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States. European Union is an invitee and is represented at G-7 by the European council president and the European commission president.
- It was setup in 1975 as an informal forum of six nations to discuss economic and political concerns prompted by the 1973 oil crisis. Canada joined in 1976. In 1998, Russia was formally inducted in the group, which transformed the G7 to G8. However, when Russia annexed Crimea in 2014, it was suspended from the grouping. As a result, the group became G7 again in 2014.
- The group has expanded its brief to cover a large number of international issues, including energy security, trade, climate change, global health issues, gender equality, poverty - and any other topic the country holding the G7 presidency chooses to put on the agenda.
- The major purpose of the G-7 is to discuss and deliberate on **international economic issues**.
- The G7 countries together represent 40% of global GDP and 10% of the world's population.
- It has no permanent secretariat.
- Annual G7 summit is attended by the heads of the government.

Other important grouping in News

G4	Four countries - India, Brazil, Germany and Japan supporting each other's bid to the permanent seat for the UNSC
G77	A coalition of developing countries to promote collective economic interest and improve the negotiating capacity at the UN
G20	It is an international economic cooperation forum.
G6	Its is an unofficial forum of world's 6 richest economies- US, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Japan.

2. NUCLEAR DOCTRINE OF INDIA

News: The Defence Minister of India said that India's No First Use (NFU) policy on nuclear weapons is not a binding commitment for the future despite strict adherence in the past.

Facts:

No First Use (NFU)

- It is a doctrine on the use of nuclear weapons. It is a formal declaration that India would not be the first to launch a nuclear weapon in any conflict scenario. Nuclear weapons will only be used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere.
- India brought its nuclear doctrine of NFU in 2003, after Pokhran nuclear test in 1998.

Main Features of India's Nuclear Doctrine

- Building and maintaining a credible minimum deterrence.
- No First Use policy, i.e. nuclear weapons to be used only in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or on Indian forces anywhere.
- **Doctrine of Mutually assured destruction:** Nuclear retaliation to a first strike will be "massive" and designed to inflict "unacceptable damage".
- Non use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states
- Nuclear retaliatory attacks to be authorized only by civilian political leadership through the Nuclear Command Authority.

India's Nuclear Doctrine vis-a-vis China and Pakistan's Doctrine

Pakistan

- Pakistan's perspective for its nuclear doctrine is India-specific. However, India's perspective encompasses a wider range than South Asia in keeping with its strategic potential.
- Pakistan's rationale for its nuclear weapons is not only to deter the threat of India's nuclear weapons but also to counter India's conventional military superiority.
- India has a "no first use" policy. However, Pakistan has even stated that it is disinclined to give any such guarantees, as 'no-first use' policy might invalidate its deterrence advantage against India

China

- Initially, China's doctrine was based on self-defence during the era of "people's war".
- It gradually shifted to one of minimum nuclear deterrence during the 1960s and 1970s and now appears to have stabilised at limited nuclear deterrence, which includes nuclear coercion.
- China has maintained a "no first use" policy since 1964.

Prevention of Nuclear Proliferation

1. Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), 1968:

- Put forward by the USA, UK and USSR, the treaty was signed in 1968 and came into force in 1970.

The main objectives of the treaty are:

- To prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and weapons technology,

- To promote cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy
- To further the goal of achieving nuclear disarmament and general and complete disarmament

The NPT classified its state-parties into 2 groups:

- Nuclear Weapon States (NWS):
 - It consists of the United States, Russia, China, France, and the United Kingdom
 - These five states had tested nuclear weapons before the treaty was negotiated in 1968.
- Non-Nuclear Weapon States (NNWS):
 - The treaty prohibits the NNWS from developing nuclear weapons
- **At present, India, Israel, and Pakistan have not joined the NPT.**

The three pillars of NPT:

- **Non-Proliferation** - [Article I] (pledge not to transfer nuclear weapons)
- **Peaceful Uses** - [Article IV] (Right of all parties to use and develop nuclear energy for peaceful purpose)
- **Disarmament** - [Article VI] (All Parties must pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race and to nuclear disarmament)

2. Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty:

- CTBT is a multilateral treaty that prohibits all nuclear explosive tests, above and below the Earth's surface.
- It was adopted in 1996 however did not come into force till date
- India, Pakistan and North Korea have not signed this treaty.
- With 183 signatories, CTBT is one of the most widely accepted arms control treaty. This is because its non-discriminatory nature- everyone has the same obligation of never conducting a nuclear explosion.
- CTBTO is the world's largest multilateral verification system. It has more than 300 stations across the globe to monitor signs of nuclear explosions.
- CTBTO has also made major contributions in the field of nuclear safety.

3. Nuclear Weapon Prohibition Treaty, 2017:

- The NWPT prohibits and makes it illegal to possess, use, produce, transfer, acquire, stockpile or deploy nuclear weapons.
- States are also prohibited from using or threatening to use nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices
- As of October 2017, 53 countries have signed the treaty.
- India has boycotted the official negotiations of the treaty.

4. Nuclear Weapon Free Zones:

- It is a regional approach to strengthen global nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament norms
- Many non- nuclear weapon states are party to NWFZs. Nuclear weapon-free zones are in force in South America and the Caribbean, Southeast Asia, the South Pacific, Africa, and Central Asia.

Other Initiatives:

Nuclear Suppliers Group:

- The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) is a group of nuclear supplier countries that seeks to contribute to the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.
- The group seeks to prevent nuclear proliferation by controlling the export of materials, equipment and technology that can be used to manufacture nuclear weapons.
- As of 2016, there are 48 members.
- India is not a part of NSG

Wassenaar Arrangement, 1996:

- It is an organisation which regulated the export of sensitive technologies (conventional arms and dual use goods and technologies)
- The goal of the arrangement is to "promote transparency and greater responsibility in transfers of conventional arms and dual-use goods and technologies".
- The arrangement seeks to prevent the acquisition of these arms by terrorists
- The Wassenaar Arrangement has 42 members- India was admitted as the 42nd member in December 2017.

Australia Group (AG)

- The Australia Group (AG) is an informal forum of countries which, through the harmonisation of export controls, seeks to ensure that exports do not contribute to the development of chemical or biological weapons. It was established in 1985.
- It was established in the background of the use of chemical weapons (in the form of nerve agents and sulphur mustard) by Iraq in the Iran-Iraq war in the 1980s.
- Members: 42 countries + European Union
- India is a member of this group.

The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), 1987

- The MTCR aims at restricting the spread of ballistic missiles and other unmanned delivery systems that could be used for chemical, biological, and nuclear attacks
- It is an informal political understanding. It is not a treaty and does not impose any legally binding on partners.
- India joined the MTCR in 2016

Hague Code of Conduct (HCOC), 2002:

- Also known as International Code of Conduct against Ballistic Missile Proliferation, it is a voluntary legally non-binding multilateral body
- It aims at preventing the proliferation of ballistic missiles
- India joined the HCOC in 2016

3. BASIC

News: The BASIC countries held their 28th Ministerial meeting on Climate Change from 14th to 16th August in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Facts

- The Ministerial meeting was held in the run-up to the UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP-25) meet to be held in Chile from 2nd-3rd December, 2019.
- The BASIC Ministers expressed their concern for climate change and its adverse effects and reaffirmed their commitment to the successful implementation of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)
- The BASIC Ministers **urged developed countries** to fulfill their climate finance commitments of **mobilizing USD 100 billion annually by 2020** for developing countries in a transparent manner and on a grant basis.

BASIC Grouping

- It comprises of four countries – Brazil, South Africa, India and China.
- The BASIC group was formed as the result of an agreement signed by the four countries on 28th November, 2009.
- It is one of several groups of nations working together to fight climate change and carry out negotiations within the UNFCCC.
- Brazil, South Africa, India and China put together has one-third of the world's geographical area and nearly 40% of the world's population.
- The 27th BASIC Ministerial Meeting on Climate Change was held on 19th-20th November, 2018 in New Delhi, India.
- China will host the 29th meeting of the BASIC Ministers.

4. PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI VISIT TO BHUTAN

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid a state visit to Bhutan in August, 2019 at the invitation of Prime Minister of Bhutan.

Facts: Key Takeaways of the PM visit:

- Inauguration of recently completed 720 MW Mangdechhu Hydroelectric power plant. The aggregate electricity generation capacity of India in Bhutan has crossed 2000 MW (including this project). Both sides will continue to work to expedite the completion of other ongoing projects such as Punatsangchhu-1, Punatsangchhu-2 and Kholongchhu. They also reviewed ongoing bilateral discussions on the Sankosh Reservoir hydroelectric project.
- The two Prime Ministers formally launched the facility to use Indian-issued Ru-Pay cards in Bhutan.
- Inauguration of the Ground Earth Station of the South Asian Satellite in Thimphu, which was constructed with the support of the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO).
- Both sides agreed to collaborate on the joint development of a small satellite for Bhutan.
- India also announced the increase in scholarships for Bhutanese students for studies at Nalanda University from 2 to 5.
- Indian PM announced the enhancement of quantum of subsidized LPG to Bhutan from the present 700 MT to 1000 MT per month
- Inaugurated the inter-connection between India's National Knowledge Network and Bhutan's Research and Education Network. This link-up would create an information highway, encouraging greater interaction among the universities and students of both sides.

- Both Sides have signed 10 MoUs

Additional Information

- Diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan were established in 1968 with the establishment of a special office of India in Thimphu. Before this, our relations with Bhutan were looked after by our Political Officer in Sikkim. The basic framework of India- Bhutan bilateral relations was the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed in 1949 between the two countries, which was revised in February 2007
- The Golden Jubilee of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations between India and Bhutan was celebrated in the year 2018.
- Bhutan has been central to India's two major policies – the 'Neighborhood First Policy' and the 'Act-East Policy'.
- Significance of Bhutan for India:
 - Economic
 - It is a rich source of hydroelectric Power. It can fulfill India's rising energy demand.
 - It provides market for Indian products and a destination for Indian investment
 - Geopolitical
 - Act as a Buffer between India and China.
 - Security
 - It shares a border with four Indian states - Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, West Bengal and Sikkim. It has made efforts to not allow its territory for anti-India activities.

5. INTERMEDIATE RANGE NUCLEAR FORCES (INF) TREATY

News: Russia and the USA have decided to withdraw Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

Facts:

- Both countries have blamed each other for violating the treaty in the past. In 2016, when America launched missile defence system in Europe, Russia accused the former of violating the treaty. Russian authorities also suggested that American deployment of unmanned aerial vehicles was against the treaty. Similarly, the US has accused Russia of having violated the treaty since 2008, when it tested the SSC-8 cruise missile.
- Further, increasing missile production by China is also being cited as one of the reasons for the suspension of the treaty.

INF treaty

- It is a nuclear arms control treaty between the United States and Soviet Union signed on Dec 8, 1987
- Under the treaty, both countries agreed to eliminate their stocks of intermediate and short range (500km – 5500km) ground launched ballistic and cruise missiles. All such existing weapons had to be destroyed within three years of the signing of the treaty. They also agreed not to develop, produce or deploy these missiles in future.
- However, the treaty did not cover air delivered and sea-based missiles.

Additional Information

New START Treaty (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty)

- It is a nuclear arms reduction treaty between the USA and Russia.
- It was signed in 2010 and came into force in February 2011. It is expected to last till 2021.
- It replaced the Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty (SORT)
- The treaty aims to reduce the number of strategic nuclear missile by half. It limits the number of deployed strategic nuclear warheads to 1550

6. UN CONVENTION ON INTERNATIONAL SETTLEMENT AGREEMENTS (UNISA)

News: India has signed the United Nation Convention on International Settlement Agreements (UNISA).

Facts**About the UNISA**

- The United Nations General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention on International Settlement Agreements on 20th December 2018.
- It is also known as Singapore Convention on Mediation
- The Convention provides a uniform and efficient framework for the enforcement of international settlement agreements resulting from mediation. It also allows parties to invoke such agreements which provides for arbitral awards (eg - Convention on the Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Arbitral Awards)
- The Convention defines two additional grounds upon which a court may, on its own motion, refuse to grant relief. Those grounds relate to the fact that a dispute would not be capable of settlement by mediation or would be contrary to public policy.

Benefits

- Signing of the Convention will boost the confidence of the investors and shall provide a positive signal to foreign investors about India's commitment to adhere to international practice on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR).

7. PM VISIT TO FRANCE, UAE AND BAHRAIN

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited France, UAE and Bahrain from 22nd to 26th August 2019.

Facts –**France:**

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited France at the invitation of French republic for a bilateral summit and to attend G-7 summit as special invitee.
- India and France enjoy strong cooperation in the fields of defence, maritime security, space, cybersecurity, counter terrorism, and civil nuclear energy.
- **Key Outcomes**
 - Decision to train medical support personnel for Indian astronauts, who will be part of India's manned space mission by 2022. The training will be carried out in France and in India.

- Both countries hailed the launch of a Space Climate Observatory that further enhances Indo-French cooperation on combating climate change, besides TRISHNA joint mission and accommodating Argos in Oceansat 3.
- Both countries agreed to set up a regular dialogue on consular matters, which will facilitate people to people exchange and mobility.
- Target of student exchange has been set to 20,000 students by 2025 (for 2018, it was set to 10,000 which was achieved)
- Both countries decided to hold the Second Knowledge Summit in Lyon, France, in October 2019.
- India will organise Namasté France, in 2021-2022.

United Arab Emirates

- Prime Minister Modi visited UAE in August 2019
- During the visit, PM Modi received the Order of Zayed, the highest civil decoration conferred by the UAE
- He officially launched Ru-Pay card in UAE. UAE is the first country in the Gulf where Indian RuPay card has been launched.

Bahrain

- PM Modi was on an official state visit to Bahrain
- The visit of Prime Minister Modi to Bahrain is the first ever visit by an Indian Prime Minister
- During the visit, PM Modi was conferred **Bahrain Order – First Class** (also called the King Hamad Order of the Renaissance) in recognition of his efforts to strengthen bilateral relations of India with the Kingdom of Bahrain
- The following MoUs were signed during the visit:
 - Cultural Exchange Programme between India and Bahrain
 - Statement of Intent on the collaboration between ISRO and NASA in the area of Space Technology
 - Statement of Intent on the collaboration of Bahrain with ISA
 - Memorandum of Understanding between BENEFIT and NPCI for Launch of 'RuPay Card' in Bahrain.

Policy

1. Campaign Angikaar

News: Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has launched campaign Angikaar- a campaign for behavioural change management.

Facts:

- **Objective:** To bring social behaviour change with special focus on waste management, water and energy conservation.
- **Target:** To reach out all beneficiaries of completed houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana - PMAY (U) in a phased manner.
- **Convergence:**
 - The campaign will converge with schemes and Missions of other Ministries dealing with these subjects.
 - The convergence would especially focus on Ujjwala for LPG connection and Ayushman Bharat for health insurance to the beneficiaries of PMAY (U).
- **Implementation:**
 - It will officially be rolled out in all cities with PMAY (U) on October 2, 2019 commemorating 150th Gandhi Jayanti and end on the occasion of Human Rights Day, 10th December, 2019
 - It will be implemented through community mobilisation and Information Education Communication (IEC) activities. It will include door to door activities, ward and city level events.

Additional Information:

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U)

- It aims to ensure “Housing for All by 2022” by providing financial assistance to the beneficiaries. It targets to construct 1.2 crore houses by 2022.
- It was launched in 2015 by Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.
- It has four components:
 - In-situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR),
 - Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP),
 - Beneficiary-led Individual house construction or Enhancement (BLC), and
 - Credit-Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS).
- Beneficiaries of Economically Weaker Section (EWS) are covered under all four verticals of the Mission. While Lower Income Group (LIG) and Middle Income Group (MIG)

BLC

- Beneficiary-Led Individual House Construction or Enhancement
- Govt grant @ Rs. 1.5 Lakh per house.

CLSS

- Affordable housing through Credit linked Subsidy Scheme
- Upfront interest subsidy From 3 to 6.5 %

AHP

- Affordable housing in Partnership with private or Public sector
- Assistance of Rs. 1.5 Lakh per EWS house.

ISSR

- In-Situ Slum Redevelopment using land as a resource
- Govt grant @ Rs. 1.00 lakh per House

beneficiaries are eligible for benefits under CLSS.

2. SHAGUN

News: Ministry of Human Resource and Development has launched Integrated Online junction for School Education 'Shagun'.

Facts:

- It is an initiative to improve school education system by creating a junction for all online portals and websites relating to various activities of the Department of School Education and Literacy.
- **Objectives:**
 - To assess the status of all government and government aided schools on various key indicators viz., availability of school infrastructure and other facilities related to teachers and students
 - To ensure authenticity of data provided in various portals
 - To provide feedback on various dimensions at all levels
 - To facilitate the system to be responsive to school-specific needs, analyse school reports and initiate appropriate policy interventions
- The word ShaGun is coined from two different words- '**Shala**' meaning **Schools** and '**Gunvatta**' meaning **Quality**.
- The ShaGun portal has **two parts**:
 - One part is a repository of best practices, photographs, videos, studies, newspaper articles etc. on elementary education in the schools of the Central Government, States & UTs & Autonomous bodies. The purpose is to showcase success stories, thus help schools learn from each other and instil positive competitiveness.
 - The second part is the online monitoring module of ShaGun which measures State-level performance and progress against key educational indicators. This would help the Government of India and the State and UT Departments of education to conduct real-time assessments.

3. JAL JEEVAN MISSION

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence Day speech, has announced Jal Jeevan Mission.

Facts:

About Jal Jeevan Mission:

- **Aim:** It seeks to provide safe and adequate drinking water through individual household tap connections (HarGharJal) to all rural households by **2024**.
- **Implementing Agency:** It will be implemented by the Department of Drinking Water and Sanitation under the Jal Shakti Ministry.
- **Features:**
 - It will focus on integrated demand and supply-side management of water at the local level.
 - It will implement source sustainability measures recharge and reuse through grey water management, water conservation, rain water harvesting.



- It will converge with other Central and State Government Schemes to achieve its objectives of sustainable water supply management across India.
- It seeks to generate maximum community participation in the form of 'jan andolan' to achieve the target of functional household tap connection by 2024.
- **Need:** According to the Jal Shakti Ministry, only 18% of India's rural households have access to piped water. Thus, to improve coverage of households with piped safe drinking water the mission has been initiated.

4. INTEGRATED NATIONAL SCHOOL EDUCATION TREASURY (INSET)

News: The Ministry of Human Resource and Development has announced the setting up of the Integrated National School Education Treasury (INSET).

Facts:

About INSET:

- It is envisaged as a fully integrated, instantly accessible and seamless information network for all parameters relating to the students, teachers and schools in the country.
- **Aim:** To create an easily accessible multi-layered ecosystem of information – school wise, block-wise, district-wise, constituency-wise, state-wise and region-wise.
- **Focus Areas:**
 - Reinforcing and cleaning the data of the Integrated Online Junction through feedback from Stakeholders
 - Ensuring full interoperability among the websites, portals and applications which are already hosted in the junction
 - Creating high quality e-contents, including quizzes and puzzles to enhance learning and also for teachers in aiding classroom transactions
 - Using artificial intelligence and deep machine learning in a variety of ways to enhance the quality of school education including for designing evidence based inventions.

Environment

1. ELEPHANT RESERVES

News: Chhattisgarh government has announced the setting up of Lemru Elephant Reserve (LER).

Facts:

Project Elephant

- The Project Elephant was launched by the Government of India in 1992 as a centrally sponsored scheme. It seeks better conservation of elephant through protection and management of their habitat.
- **Objectives:**
 - To protect elephants, their habitat & corridors
 - To address issues of man-animal conflict
 - Welfare of captive elephants.
- **Elephant Reserves:** Under the project, Elephant reserves have been notified in 16 states. An elephant reserve Include protected areas and forests as well as zones of human use and habitation. There are 32 elephant reserves in India.
- **Elephant landscape:** contiguous stretches of land with frequent movements of elephants is known as elephant landscape.

Elephant Landscape		Elephant Reserve	State
East-Central Landscape (South-West Bengal- Jharkhand - Orissa)	1	Mayurjharna ER	West Bengal
	2	Singhbhum ER	Jharkhand Odisha
	3	Mayurbhanj ER	
	4	Mahanadi ER	
	5	Sambalpur ER	
	6	Baitami ER	
	7	South Orissa ER	
	8	Lemru ER	Chhattisgarh
	9	Badalkhol - Tamorpingla ER	
Kameng-Sonitpur Landscape (Arunachal - Assam)	10	Kameng ER	Arunachal

	11	Sonitpur ER	Assam
Eastern-South Bank Landscape (Assam - Arunachal)	12	Dihing-Patkai ER South	Assam
	13	South Arunachal ER	Arunachal
Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong- Intanki Landscape (Assam - Nagaland)	14	Kaziranga-Karbi Anglong ER	Assam
	15	Dhansiri-Lungding ER	
	16	Intanki ER	Nagaland
North Bengal- Greater Manas Landscape (Assam - West Bengal)	17	Chirang-Ripu ER	Assam
	18	Eastern Dooars ER	West Bengal
Meghalaya Landscape (Meghalaya)	19	Garo Hills ER	Meghalaya
	20	Khasi-hills ER	
Brahmagiri-Nilgiri-Eastern Ghat Landscape (Karnataka - Kerala- Tamil Nadu- Andhra)	21	Mysore ER	Karnataka
	22	Wayanad ER	Kerala
	23	Nilambur ER	
	24	Coimbatore ER	Tamil Nadu
	25	Nilgiri ER	
	26	Rayala ER	Andhra
Anamalai-Nelliampathy- High Range Landscape (Tamil Nadu - Kerala)	27	Anamalai ER	Tamil Nadu
	28	Anamudi ER	Kerala
Periyar-Agasthyamalai Landscape (Kerala – Tamil Nadu)	29	Periyar ER	Kerala
	30	Srivilliputhur ER	Tamil Nadu
North- Western Landscape (Uttarakhand - Uttar Pradesh)	31	Shivalik ER	Uttarakhand
	32	Uttar Pradesh ER	U.P.

- **Elephant Corridors:** Elephant corridors are narrow strips of land that allow elephants to move from one habitat patch to another. In a 2017 study, Delhi-based non-profit, Wildlife Trust of India (WTI), identified 101 elephant corridors in India.

Additional Information:

About Elephants:

- The Asian Elephant (*Elephas maximus*) is listed as **Endangered** in the IUCN Red List.
- It is included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Flora and Fauna (CITES).
- **Habitat in India:** It occurs across 16 Indian states in the central and southern Western Ghats, North-east India, eastern India and northern India and in some parts of southern peninsular India.
- **Population in India:** According to the 2017 Elephant Census report released by Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, there are 27,312 elephants. India has around 60% of Asian Elephant population.
- Elephant has been declared “**National Heritage Animal of India**” by the government of India in 2010.
- African Elephants are the largest terrestrial mammals on Earth. They are listed as **Vulnerable** in IUCN Red List.

Conservation and Protection Initiatives:

India:

- “**Joy rides on elephants is elephant abuse**”: India’s semi-high-speed train Gatimaan Express has decided to actively promote elephant protection in partnership with Wildlife SOS (a non-profit organization). Seats on the train will carry the message “Joy rides on elephants is elephant abuse”.
- **Plan bee:** It is an initiative by Northeast Frontier Railway (NFR). It uses a sound amplification system that imitate the buzz of a swarm of honey bees to keep wild elephants away from railway tracks.
- **Hathi Mera Sathi Campaign:** It was launched in 2011 by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change at Elephant- 8 (E-8) ministerial meeting. It aims to spread awareness and encourage people’s participation in elephant conservation and welfare. E-8 comprises of Botswana, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Republic of Congo, Indonesia, Tanzania, Thailand and India.
- **Gaj Yatra:** It was launched by Environment Ministry in 2017. It was a 15 month long nationwide campaign to protect elephants. Gaju mascot was the helm of the campaign.
- **Supreme Court judgements:**
 - In 2019 the SC pronounced that “Elephants have first right on the forest,” and ordered a public oil refinery in Assam to entirely remove a controversial wall built on major elephant migration corridors in Deopahar Reserve.
 - In 2018, SC directed the Tamil Nadu government to seal or close down hotels and resorts constructed on an elephant corridor in the Nilgiri Hills and upheld elephants Right to Passage.

Global:

- **Monitoring the Illegal Killing of Elephants (MIKE) programme:** It was established under CITES treaty in 2003. It systematically gathers information on the illegal killing as well as trends in the population of elephants in Africa and Asia.

World Elephant Day: World Elephant Day is observed every year on **August 12**. The goal of Elephant Day is to create awareness of the urgent plight of African and Asian elephants. It also aims to share knowledge and positive solutions for the better care and management of captive and wild elephants.

2. COMPOSITE WATER MANAGEMENT INDEX 2019

News: NITI Aayog has released a second report on Composite Water Management Index (CWMI 2.0).

Facts:

About CWMI:

- The report has been prepared in association with Ministry of Jal Shakti and Ministry of Rural Development.
- CWMI 2.0 ranks various states for the reference year 2017-18 as against the base year 2016-17. It ranks 25 states and two union territories.
- The index is based on 9 key themes:
 - Source augmentation and Restoration of Water Bodies
 - Source augmentation of Groundwater
 - Major and Medium Irrigation
 - Watershed Development
 - Participatory Irrigation Practices
 - Sustainable on-farm Water Use Practices
 - Rural Drinking Water
 - Urban Water Supply and Sanitation and
 - Policy and Governance.

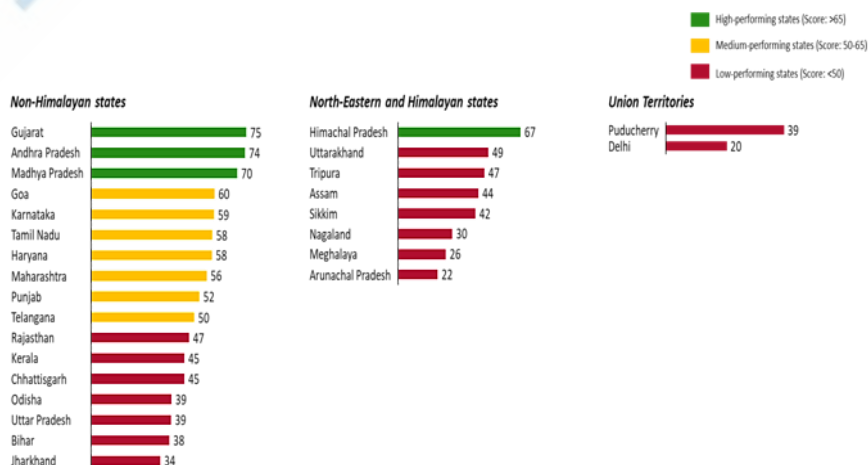
Significance:

- It is an important tool to assess the performance of States/ Union Territories in efficient management of water resources.
- It provides useful information for the States and also for the concerned Central Ministries/Departments enabling them to formulate and implement suitable strategies for better management of water resources.
- It promotes competitiveness among states, driving them toward effective water governance, and incentivizing improved water management across the country.

Performance of states in CWMI 2.0:

States were divided into 3 special group: Non Himalayan States, Himalayan and North-Eastern States and UTs.

- 80% of the states assessed on the Index over the last three years have improved their



water management scores.

- Among Non-Himalayan states, Gujarat has performed best, followed by Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu.
- In North-Eastern and the Himalayan States, Himachal Pradesh has been awarded rank one followed by Uttarakhand, Tripura and Assam.
- For the first time, Union Territories (Puducherry and Delhi) have submitted their data and Puducherry has been declared the top ranker.
- Jharkhand performed the worst among non-Himalayan states and Arunachal Pradesh performed worst among NE and Himalayan states.

Additional Information:

- NITI Aayog had first launched the Composite Water Management Index (CWMI) in 2018.
- In 2018, among the non-Himalayan states Gujarat performed the best. Among Himalayan and North-Eastern states, Tripura performed the best.
- Meghalaya was the worst performer among Himalayan and NE states and Jharkhand among non-Himalayan states.

Note: UTs were not assessed in 2018.

3. GREAT BARRIER REEF

News: The Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (GBRMPA) has downgraded the long-term outlook of the Great Barrier Reef to “very poor” for the first time.

Facts:

About Great Barrier Reef:

- The Great Barrier Reef is the world’s largest and longest coral reef system. The reef is located in the Coral Sea, off the coast of Queensland, Australia.
- It stretches for 2,300km from the tip of Cape York in the north to Bundaberg in the south in Australia.
- It is home to 400 types of corals, 1500 species of fish and 4000 types of molluscs. It also holds great scientific interest as the habitat of species such as the dugong (listed as Vulnerable in IUCN Red List) and the green turtle (listed as Endangered in the IUCN Red List)
- It is a World Heritage Site (natural site) since 1981 (the world’s first reef ecosystem to be recognised by UNESCO).



Major threats to the Great Barrier Reef:

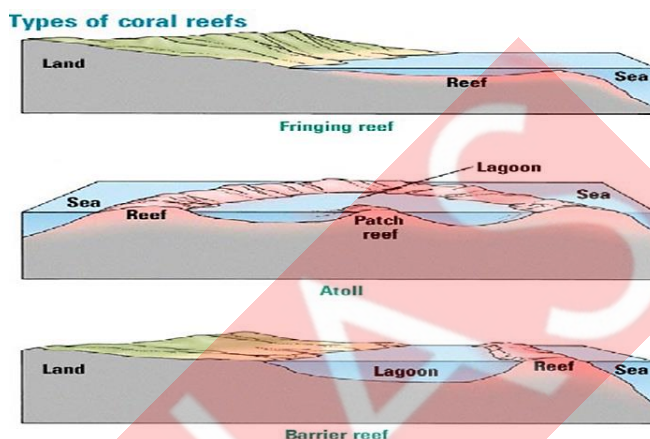
- Climate change and increased coral bleaching,
- Coastal development and increased land-based run-off,
- Direct human use (such as illegal fishing, mining).

Additional Information:

Coral Reefs: Coral polyps are small (0.25-12 inches), soft-bodied marine organisms that live in colonies called reefs that they build using a limestone skeleton (calicle) lying at their base.

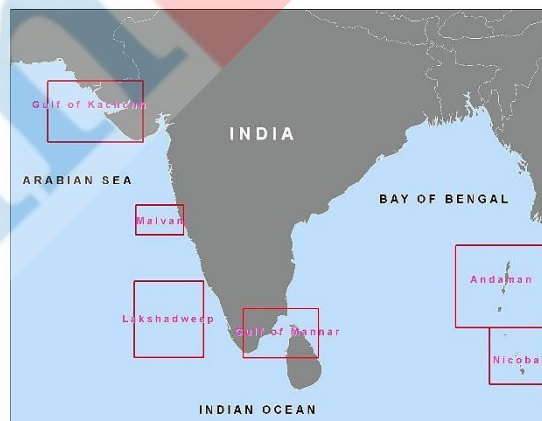
Types of Coral Reefs:

- Fringing Reef:** Reef that is directly attached to a shore or borders it with an intervening shallow channel or lagoon.
- Barrier Reef:** Reef separated from a mainland or island shore by a deep lagoon. The Great Barrier Reef lying to the east of Queensland is the largest living structure on the earth. It extends for more than 2000 km.
- Atoll Reef:** a more or less circular or continuous barrier reef extending all the way around a lagoon without a central island.



Coral reefs in India: Coral reefs are restricted to the following regions of India:

- Coral reefs in Gulf of Kutch,
- Coral reefs in the Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay,
- Malvan
- Coral reefs in Lakshadweep islands, and
- Coral reefs in the Andaman and Nicobar islands.



Coral Bleaching: When corals are under stress due to changes in environmental conditions such as temperature, light, or nutrients, they expel the symbiotic algae living in their tissues, causing them to turn completely white. This is called coral bleaching.

4. SARAL – ‘STATE ROOFTOP SOLAR ATTRACTIVENESS INDEX’

News: Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has launched the State Rooftop Solar Attractiveness Index–SARAL.

Facts:

- SARAL is a tool to provide comprehensive overview of state-level measures adopted to facilitate rooftop solar deployment.
- The aim of SARAL index is to evaluate Indian states based on their preparedness to support rooftop solar deployment. The index aims to objectively assess states based on several parameters critical for establishing strong solar rooftop markets.
- The index captures five key aspects namely-
 - Robustness of policy framework

- b) Implementation environment
- c) Investment climate
- d) Consumer experience and
- e) Business ecosystem.
- SARAL has been designed collaboratively by the MNRE, Shakti Sustainable Energy Foundation (SSEF), Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industry of India (ASSOCHAM) and Ernst & Young (EY).
- Performance of states: The index has ranked Karnataka as the most attractive solar-rooftop market. Telangana, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh have got 2nd, 3rd and 4th rank respectively

Additional Information:

India's Renewable Energy Target:

- The Indian government has set a growth target of installation of 175 GW aggregate capacity of renewable energy by 2022.
- It includes 100 GW from solar (under which, 40 GW is expected to come from grid connected solar rooftops), 60 GW from wind, 10 GW from bio-power and 5 GW from small hydro-power.

Grid Connected Rooftop and Small Solar Power Plants Programme:

- It was launched in 2014 with an aim to install 4,200 MW rooftop solar (RTS) plants in the country by year 2019-20. The programme is implemented by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy.
- It provides subsidy/incentives for residential, institutional, social and Government sector to install solar rooftops.
- In 2019 the government approved Phase-II of the programme or achieving cumulative capacity of 40 GW through RTS plants by 2022. It is being implemented by making the DISCOMs (distribution companies) and its local offices as the nodal points for implementation of the RTS programme.

5. OCEAN ENERGY

News: Ocean energy has been included in renewable energy to give a further boost to ocean energy in India. Energy produced using various forms of ocean energy such as tidal, wave and ocean thermal energy conversion will now be considered as Renewable Energy.

Facts:

Significance of inclusion in Renewable energy:

- Will help the sector to grow as it will enable DISCOMs and other service providers buy electricity generated from ocean energy route to meet their Renewable Purchase Obligations (RPOs).
- The deployment of Ocean energy is currently limited but the sector has the potential to grow which may fuel economic growth reduce carbon footprint and create jobs not only along the coasts but also inland along its supply chains.

About Ocean energy:

- Renewable ocean energy encompasses harnessing the power of the oceans to produce electricity from tides, waves, ocean thermal gradient and currents.
- a) **Tidal Energy:**

- **About:** The tidal cycle occurs every 12 hours due to the gravitational force of the moon. The difference in water height from low tide and high tide is potential energy. Tidal water can be captured in a barrage across an estuary during high tide and forced through a hydro-turbine during low tide.
- **Areas in India:** The Gulf of Cambay and the Gulf of Kutch in Gujarat on the west coast have the locations in the country where potential exists.
- **Potential:** Total identified potential of Tidal Energy in India is about 12455 MW.

b) Wave Energy:

- **About:** Wave energy is generated by the movement of a device either floating on the surface of the ocean or moored to the ocean floor using pressure fluctuations or movement of waves.
- **Potential:** The total theoretical potential of wave energy in India along the country's coast is estimated to be about 40,000 MW.

c) Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC):

- **About:** It uses ocean temperature differences from the surface to depths lower than 1,000 meters, to extract energy. A temperature difference of only 20°C can yield usable energy.
- **Potential:** OTEC has a theoretical potential of 180,000 MW in India subject to suitable technological evolution.
- **Areas in India:** India's maiden Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion (OTEC) project is coming up in Kavaratti, the capital of the Lakshadweep Islands.

d) Current Energy:

- Marine current is ocean water moving in one direction. Tides also create currents that flow in two directions. Kinetic energy can be captured from the Gulf Stream and other tidal currents with submerged turbines. Potential in India has not been assessed.

Additional Information:

- **Renewable Purchase Obligation (RPO):** RPO is a mechanism by which distribution companies, captive power plants and other large electricity consumers are obliged to purchase a certain percentage of power from renewable energy sources.
- Presently, sources of Renewable energy include- wind power, solar power, biomass power, small and large hydropower. Recently, the government has classified large Hydropower Projects (LHPs) as a Renewable Energy source. Previously, only small hydropower projects (SHPs) i.e. those up to 25MW were categorized as Renewable Energy alone.

6. WORLD BIOFUEL DAY

News: The World Biofuel Day was observed on 10th August.

Facts:

About World Biofuel Day

- **Background:** It is observed every year by the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas since 2015.

- **Aim of observance:** It is observed to create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels. The day also highlights the various efforts made by Government in the biofuel sector.
- **2019 Theme:** “Production of Biodiesel from Used Cooking Oil (UCO)”.

Additional Information:

Biofuel: Bio fuels are liquid/ solid or gaseous fuels produced from biomass resources. They are used in place of, or in addition to, diesel, petrol or other fossil fuels for transport, stationary, portable and other applications.

Classification of Biofuels:

- **First generation biofuels:** It refers to the fuels that have been derived from sources like starch, sugar, animal fats and vegetable oil.
- **Second generation biofuels** - These are produced from non-food crops, such as cellulosic biofuels and waste biomass (stalks of wheat and corn, and wood). Examples include advanced biofuels such as biohydrogen, biomethanol.
- **Third generation biofuels** - These are produced from specially engineered energy crops such as algae.
- **Fourth-Generation Biofuels:** It uses genetically modified (GM) algae to enhance biofuel production.

National Biofuel Policy 2018:

Salient Features:

- The Policy categorises biofuels as:
 - Basic biofuels- First Generation (1G) bioethanol and; biodiesel
 - Advanced Biofuels- Second Generation (2G) ethanol, Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) to drop-in fuels, Third Generation (3G) biofuels, bio-CNG etc.
- It expands the scope of raw material for ethanol production by allowing the use of Sugarcane Juice, Sugar containing materials like Sugar Beet, Sweet Sorghum, Starch containing materials like Corn, Cassava, Damaged food grains like wheat, broken rice, Rotten Potatoes, unfit for human consumption for ethanol production.
- It allows the use of surplus food grains for production of ethanol for blending with petrol with the approval of National Biofuel Coordination Committee.
- Under the policy, a viability gap funding scheme for 2G ethanol Bio refineries of Rs.5000 crore in 6 years in addition to additional tax incentives, higher purchase price as compared to 1G biofuels will be provided
- It encourages setting up of supply chain mechanisms for biodiesel production from non-edible oilseeds, Used Cooking Oil, short gestation crops.

Methanol Economy:

- NITI Aayog has initiated Methanol Economy Program.
- It is aimed at:
 - reducing our oil import bill;
 - reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions
 - converting Indian coal reserves and municipal solid waste into methanol

- Under Indian Methanol Economy program 5 methanol plants based on high ash coal, 5 DME plants (Dimethyl Ether – a derivative of methanol) and 1 natural gas based methanol production plant with a total production of 20 MMT/ annum in joint venture with Israel, are planned to be set up.

RUCO (Repurpose Used Cooking Oil):

- It is an initiative launched by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) in 2018.
- It is an initiative that will enable the collection and conversion of Used Cooking Oil (UCO) to biodiesel.
- Under the initiative, 64 companies at 101 locations have been identified to enable collection of used cooking oil.

7. AQUEDUCT WATER RISK ATLAS

News: The World Resource Institute (WRI) has released Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas.

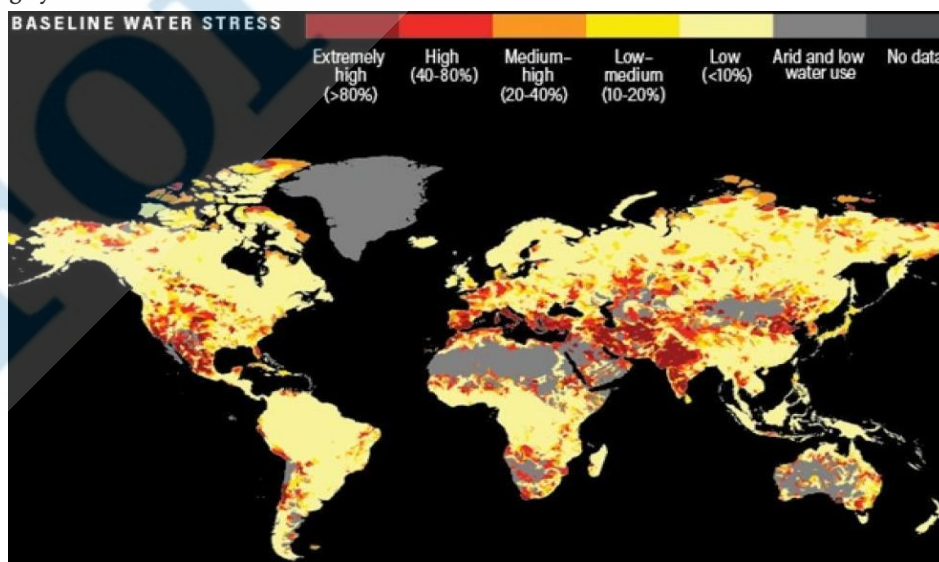
Facts:

About Aqueduct Water Risk Atlas

- The atlas ranks water stress, drought risk, and riverine flood risk across 189 countries and their sub-national regions, like states and provinces.
- It seeks to help companies, businesses, investors, and governments to identify and evaluate water risks around the world.

Key Highlights from the Atlas:

- 17 countries, which are home to a quarter of the world's population, face "extremely high" water stress.
- 12 out of the 17 most water-stressed countries are in the Middle East and North Africa and climate change will worsen water scarcity in the region.
- Qatar has been ranked as the most water stressed country followed by Israel, Lebanon, Iran, and Jordan.
- India has been ranked 13th. The WRI has noted that India has a population under water stress more than three times the population of the other 16 water stressed countries.
- Agriculture, industry, and municipalities are using 80% of available surface and groundwater in an average year in these 17 countries.



Additional Information:**Jal Shakti Mission:**

- It is a water conservation and water security campaign launched by Jal Shakti Ministry, Government of India.
- The 1st phase of the programme is currently running from July 1st to September 15th 2019 for all states and UTs. The second phase will run from 11th October 2019 to 30th November 2019 for states/UTs receiving NE retreating monsoon (Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Puducherry, and Tamilnadu).

8. CITES CoP 18

News: CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) CoP 18 was held in Geneva, Switzerland.

Facts:**About CITES:**

- It is an international treaty to prevent species from becoming endangered or extinct because of international trade.
- CITES was drafted after a resolution was adopted at a meeting of the members of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) in 1963. The text of the Convention was agreed at a meeting in Washington, DC in 1973. The Convention is therefore sometimes referred to as the Washington Convention. CITES came into force in 1975.
- CITES is legally binding on the Parties, but it does not take the place of national laws.
- The species covered by CITES are listed in three Appendices, according to the degree of protection they need.
 - Appendix I includes species threatened with extinction. Trade in specimens of these species is permitted only in exceptional circumstances.
 - Appendix II includes species not necessarily threatened with extinction, but in which trade must be controlled in order to avoid utilization incompatible with their survival.
 - Appendix III contains species that are protected in at least one country, which has asked other CITES Parties for assistance in controlling the trade.

Key Takeaways from CITES CoP 18:

- India's proposal to upgrade the protection of Indian star tortoises, the smooth-coated otter and small-clawed otters in CITES have been approved. These species have now been listed under Appendix I of CITES. Previously they were listed in Appendix II.
- Request from the United States to include the Saiga antelope in Appendix I was rejected.
- Proposals by southern African countries to resume international sales of their ivory stockpiles was rejected.
- A proposal by Eswatini to reopen legal international trade in white rhino horn was rejected.
- The giraffe has been placed in Appendix II of CITES thus, for the first time, giving it protection from unregulated trade.

Additional Information:

Animal	Geographic Range	IUCN Status	Status under Wildlife Protection Act 1972
Indian Star Tortoise	India; Pakistan; Sri Lanka	Vulnerable	Schedule IV
smooth-coated otter	South and South East Asia	Vulnerable	Schedule II
small-clawed otter	South and South East Asia	Vulnerable	Schedule I
Saiga	Kazakhstan; Mongolia; Russia; Uzbekistan	Critically endangered	Not applicable
White Rhino	Southern Africa	Near Threatened	Not applicable

Note: Karnataka has India's first otter reserve-The Tungabhadra Otter Conservation Reserve, established in 2018.

Clark Bavin Award:

- Conservationist Vivek Menon, head of Wildlife Trust of India was awarded the Clark R Bavin Wildlife Law Enforcement Award for the year 2019. The award was presented at CITES CoP18.
- The Bavin Awards recognise the extraordinary efforts that law enforcement officers and other field-based individuals are willing to make in order to protect wildlife.
- The US-based Species Survival Network, in cooperation with the Animal Welfare Institute, coordinates the presentation of the awards.
- The award is named in memory of Bavin, who was the Chief of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service's Division of Law Enforcement.

9. DRAFT NATIONAL RESOURCE EFFICIENCY POLICY, 2019

News: Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has proposed a draft National Resource Efficiency Policy, 2019

Facts:

Aim: To create a facilitative and regulatory environment to mainstream resource efficiency across all sectors so that there is minimum negative impact on environment.

Objective: To minimize resource use, minimize adverse environmental impacts, prevent trade-offs and problem shifting at all life cycle stages of a product by adopting the concepts of resource efficiency and circular economy

Guiding Principles:

- Reduction in primary resource consumption to 'sustainable' levels, in keeping with achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and staying within the planetary boundaries,
- Creation of higher value with less material through resource efficient and circular approaches,
- Waste minimization,
- Material security, and
- Creation of employment opportunities and business models beneficial to the cause of environment protection and restoration.

Recommendations:**1. Establishment of 'National Resource Efficiency Authority' (NERA):**

- It would draw power from Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, to provide for the regulatory provisions of this policy.
- **Functions:**
 - Develop an action plan with three years' timeframe and implement resource efficient strategies
 - Create and maintain a database of material use and waste generated, recycled and land filled across various sectors and regions.
 - Measure progress and monitor the implementation
 - Build capacities

2. National Resource Efficiency Advisory Board (NREAB): It would be an inter-ministerial body which will function to ensure coordination among all agencies.

3. Policy Instruments at different Life Cycle stages:

- It recommends developing a regulatory framework that integrates resource efficiency and Circular economy across life cycle stages. It calls for adequate focus on:
 - efficient extraction of resources,

Life cycle stages	Policy instruments
Extraction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Taxes on virgin materials • Restrictions on mining of materials • Differential pricing • Pricing of virgin materials to internalize cost to environment • Mandating good mining practices
Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Cycle Assessment based standards • Standards for longevity, durability etc. • Environment technology verification scheme • Research partnerships • Grants for Research and Development
Production	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product Taxes • Emission or performance standards • Advisory services for SMEs • Soft loans to green SMEs
Consumption	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deposit refund schemes • Pay-as-you throw pricing for waste collection systems • Product restrictions or bans • Labelling and certification schemes • Behaviourally informed interventions • Green Public Procurement
Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tax benefits for recycled materials • Standards for recycled materials • Platforms to match supply and demand of secondary raw materials • Promoting industrial symbiosis • Grants for Research and Development
Waste disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landfill and incineration taxes • Bans/restrictions on landfill • Information on dismantling products • Take-back schemes • Soft loans to construct waste disposal facilities

- fostering design for resource Efficiency and circularity,
- enhancing implementation of waste management laws
- Ensuring product recycling across sectors and for different materials.

Additional Information:

Resource Efficiency: It implies judicious use of earth's limited resources to achieve maximum benefit for sustained human well-being while minimizing the adverse impacts on the environment.

Life Cycle Stages: Life cycle of any product covers all stages including raw material extraction, material processing, production, use and maintenance, disposal and end-of-life management.

Circular Economy: It is an alternative to the traditional linear economy. Under this, resources are kept in use for as long as possible, extracting the maximum value, recovering and regenerating products and materials at the end of each service life. It is based on 6 Rs.

- i. **Reduce:** It means to require less use of material.
- ii. **Reuse:** is the use of goods or items again by different set of consumers or by repurposing them for a different use.
- iii. **Recycle:** It means transformation of the good into raw material that can be reshaped into a new item.
- iv. **Refurbish:** It means restoration of a used product for its intended use by performing minor alterations.
- v. **Redesign:** It means to rethink the design of a product to minimize use of materials, facilitate recyclability and reduce environmental impacts.
- vi. **Remanufacture:** It means rebuilding a product to specifications of the original product using reused, repaired and new parts.

Strategy Paper on Resource Efficiency

- NITI Aayog in collaboration with European Union had presented Strategy Paper on Resource Efficiency in 2017.
- The focus of the paper was to recommend a broad strategy for enhancing resource-use efficiency in Indian economy and industry.
- The strategic paper borne out of **Indian Resource Panel (InRP)**
 - The Government of India has established the Indian Resource Panel (InRP) in 2017. It is an advisory body under the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC).
 - It was set up through the support of Indo-German bilateral cooperation.
 - It has been mandated to assess resource-related issues which India is facing and advice the government on a comprehensive strategy for resource efficiency.

Sustainable Development Goals

- Resource Efficiency is a key element of Sustainable Development. This is reflected in the **Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 12** which aims to *Ensure Sustainable Consumption and Production Patterns*.
- Eight other SDG goals (2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 14 and 15) also have a bearing on resource efficiency.
 - GOAL 2: Zero Hunger
 - GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
 - GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
 - GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth
 - GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

- GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- GOAL 14: Life below Water
- GOAL 15: Life on Land

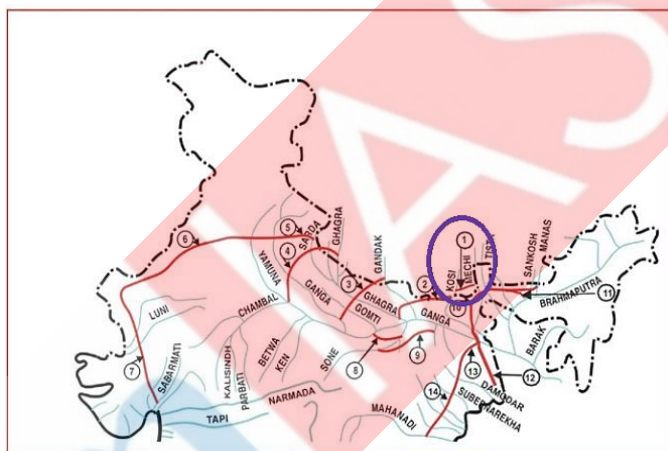
10. KOSI-MECHI INTERLINKING PROJECT

News: The Union Cabinet has approved Rs. 4,900 crore for Kosi-Mechi interlinking project in Bihar's Seemanchal Region

Facts:

About Kosi-Mechi Interlinking Project:

- The Kosi-Mechi interlinking project is an Intrastate Link Project. It has been planned as an irrigation project.
- It involves a diversion to the surplus water of Kosi River through existing Hanuman Nagar barrage to Mechi River of Mahananda basin.
- This will help provide annual irrigation to unirrigated enroute area of Mahananda basin between river Parman and Mechi of Araria, Purnea, Kishanganj and Katihar districts of Bihar.
- This is the second major river interlinking project in India to be approved by the Union government after the Ken-Betwa project in Madhya Pradesh.



About Kosi River:

- The river Kosi is an international river originating from Tibet.
- It flows through Nepal in Himalayan Mountains and the lower portion through plains of North Bihar.

About Mechi River:

- The Mechi River is a trans-boundary river flowing through Nepal and India. It is a tributary of the Mahananda River.
- It originates in the Mahabharat Range in Nepal.
- It flows through Nepal and forms the boundary between India and Nepal. It then flows through the Bihar to join the Mahananda in Kishanganj district.

Additional Information:

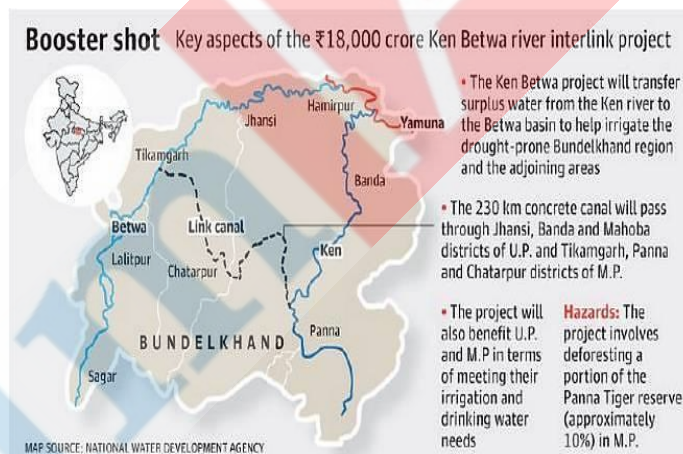
National River Linking Project (NRLP):

- The National River Linking Project (NRLP) formally known as the National Perspective Plan, aims to link Indian rivers by a network of reservoirs and canals.
- The main objective is to transfer water from water 'surplus' basins where there is flooding to water 'deficit' basins where there is drought/scarcity.
- It was prepared by the then Ministry of Irrigation in August 1980.

- The NRLP is managed by National Water Development Agency (NWDA), under the Union Ministry of Water Resources.
- It proposes to 30 links to connect 37 rivers across India. It has two components:
 - Himalayan Rivers Development Component: under it 14 links have been identified.
 - Peninsular Rivers Development Component or the Southern Water Grid: It includes 16 links that propose to connect the rivers of South India.
- Four priority links under Peninsular Rivers Component have been identified:
 - Ken-Betwa link project;
 - Damanganga-Pinjal link project,
 - Par-Tapi-Narmada link project
 - Mahanadi Godavari link project
- In 2012, the Supreme Court of India ruled that the river interlinking programmes are in the national interest and directed the central government to pursue it.

Ken-Betwa Link Project:

- It aims to transfer surplus water from the Ken basin in Madhya Pradesh to Betwa basin in Uttar Pradesh.
- This would ensure irrigation water in the drought-prone Bundelkhand region spread across Jhansi, Banda, Lalitpur and Mahoba districts of Uttar Pradesh and Tikamgarh, Panna and Chhatarpur districts of Madhya Pradesh.
- The project was declared as a National Project by Government of India in 2008.



II. ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK (ESMF)

News: The Environment Ministry has put forward draft Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF) in public domain. It has been prepared by SICOM.

Facts:

Environmental and Social Management Framework (ESMF):

- It is a part of Enhancing Coastal and Ocean Resource Efficiency Program (ENCORE).
- It aims to manage the social and environmental impacts through appropriate measures during the planning, design, construction and operation of various sub-projects of ENCORE.
- **Objectives:**
 - Integration of environmental and social aspects into the decision-making process at all stages of the sub-projects
 - Enhancement of sustainable environmental and social outcomes through sensitive planning, design and implementation of sub-projects

- Avoidance or minimization of impacts on cultural properties and natural habitats through careful planning and safeguards
- Restoration or improvement of the livelihoods and living standards of the subproject affected people (if any)
- Adoption of higher work safety standards, occupational and community health during project implementation.

Additional Information:

Enhancing Coastal and Ocean Resource Efficiency Program (ENCORE):

- It is a World Bank Funded Project.
- It aims to strengthen integrated coastal zone management in all coastal States and Union Territories of India.
- It seeks to strengthen coastal resource efficiency and resilience, for adopting and implementing integrated coastal management approaches.

Integrated Coastal Zone Management Project

- It is a World Bank supported project. It aims to assist the Government of India in building national capacity for implementation of comprehensive Coastal management approach in the country.
- Among coastal states, Gujarat, Odisha and West Bengal have prepared Integrated Coastal Zone Management Plans with support from the World Bank.
- The Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM), under the aegis of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change is the National Project Management Unit (NPMU) for ICZMP and ENCORE Programs.

Note: Integrated Coastal Zone Management is a strategy for an integrated approach to planning and management for environmentally sustainable development in coastal areas

12. GOGABEEL/ GOGABIL

News: Gogabeel, an ox-bow lake in Bihar's Katihar district, has been declared as the state's first 'Community Reserve'.

Facts:

About Gogabeel

- Gogabeel is formed from the flow of the rivers Mahananda and Kankhar in the north and the Ganga in the south and east.
- In 2004, Gogabeel, including the neighbouring Baghar Beel and Baldia Chaur, were given the status of an IBA (Important Bird Area of India) by the Indian Bird Conservation Network (IBCN).
- In august 2019, Gogabeel has been notified as a 57 hectare Community Reserve and a 30 hectare 'Conservation Reserve'.

Additional Information:

- Conservation reserves and community reserves are terms denoting protected areas of India which typically act as buffer zones to or connectors and migration corridors between established national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and reserved and protected forests of India.
- These protected area categories were first introduced in the Wildlife (Protection) Amendment Act of 2002 – the amendment to the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972. Earlier, there were only two protected area categories- National parks and Wildlife sanctuaries.
 - **Community Reserves:** Community reserves are declared on land of private or community ownership, where a group of people are doing conservation work. Keshopur chamb in Gurdaspur, Punjab is India's first community reserve.
 - **Conservation Reserves:** They are declared on lands which are uninhabited and completely owned by the Government of India but used for subsistence by communities. Tiruvudaimarudur Conservation Reserve, Tamil Nadu is the first conservation reserve in India.

Oxbow lake: An oxbow lake is a U-shaped body of water. It is formed when a wide U-shaped meander of a river is cut off from the main stem of the river, resulting in a separate body of water

13. CLIMATE CHANGE AND LAND

News: Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has recently released a report titled Climate Change and Land.

Facts:

- The report explains how land-based activities such as agriculture, forestry, cattle-rearing and urbanisation is causing global warming, and is affected by climate change.

Key highlights:

- **Land as a resource:** People currently use one quarter to one third of land's potential net primary production for food, feed, fibre, timber and energy.
- **Impact of land-based activities on Climate:**
 - The land sector had contributed about 5.2 billion tonnes of Carbon dioxide every year between 2007 and 2016.
 - The global food production system could account for 16 to 27% of GHG emissions — up to 37%, if factors such as transportation and food processing are included.
 - Nearly 25% of all food produced is either lost or wasted. And even the decomposition of the waste releases emissions.
- **Impact of increased CO₂ on food crops:** Increased atmospheric concentrations of CO₂ can reduce the nutritional quality of staple foods like wheat and rice.
 - Wheat grown at CO₂ levels of 546-586 parts per million (ppm) has 5.9-12.7% less protein, 3.7-6.5% less zinc, and 5.2-7.5% less iron.
 - Under similar levels of CO₂, rice grains has lower protein (7.8%), iron (8%) and zinc (5%).

Recommendations put forward:

- reduction in food wastage

- improved land management and sustainable agriculture practices
- Shifting of dietary preferences to include more plant-based food, could reduce GHG emissions and strengthen food security.
- Conservation of high carbon ecosystems (peat lands and wetlands)
- Sustainable forest management

Additional Information:

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)

- The IPCC is an intergovernmental body of the United Nations.
- It was founded in 1988. It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- It provides policymakers with regular scientific assessments on climate change, its implications and potential future risks. It also puts forward adaptation and mitigation options.
- The IPCC does not carry out original research, nor does it monitor climate or related phenomena itself. It assesses published literature including peer-reviewed and non-peer-reviewed sources.

14. REDD+

News: REDD+ programme being carried out in the Himalayan states jointly by Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education (ICFRE) and International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD) has been extended till July 2020.

Facts:

About ICFRE-ICIMOD's REDD+ Himalaya: Developing and using experience in implementing REDD+ in the Himalaya programme:

- It was launched in January 2016 in Mizoram.
- The programme seeks to address the drivers of deforestation and forest degradation in India's Himalayan states.

About REDD and REDD+:

REDD

- REDD stands for: Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and forest Degradation.
- **Background:**
 - It was first proposed at the 11th Conference of Parties (CoP) to the UNFCCC in 2005.
 - It is collaborative programme of Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).
- **Aim:**
 - It seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from deforestation and forest degradation.
 - It encompasses offering incentives to developing countries to main forests that act as carbon stores. Thus it attaches financial value to forests.

REDD+

- REDD+ extends REDD by adding Sustainable Forest Management, Conservation of Forests and Enhancement of carbon sinks.
- **Background:**
 - It was included under the Bali Action Plan adopted at CoP 13th in 2007.

- In 2013, the Warsaw Framework on REDD-plus was adopted at the CoP 19 at Warsaw.
- **Aim:** The aim of REDD+ is to encourage developing countries to contribute to climate change mitigation efforts by:
 - reducing greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by slowing, halting and reversing forest loss and degradation; and
 - Increasing removal of GHGs from the earth's atmosphere through the conservation, management and expansion of forests.
- REDD+ underscores the full rights and respect of indigenous and other forest dependent communities. It calls activities that will help in sustainable livelihood of indigenous communities and also lead to biodiversity conservation.

Additional Information:

National REDD+ Strategy:

- It was released by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) in 2018. It was prepared by Indian Council of Forestry Research & Education (ICFRE), Dehradun
- The strategy seeks to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation.
- It also seeks to develop a roadmap for enhancement of forest carbon stocks and achieving sustainable management of forests through REDD+ actions.
- It is also a tool to achieve India's commitment to Paris Agreement (2015) which recognizes role of forests in climate change mitigation and calls upon country Parties to take action to implement and support REDD+.
- This strategy builds upon the existing National Action Plan on Climate Change (2008).

India's INDC to Paris Agreement:

- reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33% to 35% by 2030 from 2005 levels,
- Increase the generation of total cumulative electricity from renewable sources of energy to **40% by 2030**,
- Create additional **carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tons** through **additional forest and tree cover by 2030**.

15. COMPENSATORY AFFORESTATION

News: The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has transferred ₹47,436 crore to 27 States for afforestation. These funds are from the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF).

Facts:

Compensatory afforestation: It refers to afforestation and regeneration activities carried out as a way of compensating for forest land diverted to non-forest purposes.

Legal Provisions:

- According to Forest (Conservation) Act 1980, whenever a forest land is to be diverted for non-forestry purposes, the equivalent non forest land has to be identified for compensatory afforestation and funds for raising compensatory afforestation are to be collected from the user agency.
- **Net Present Value:** the law also requires that the Net Present Value (NPV) of the diverted forest is calculated for a period of 50 years, and recovered from the user agency that is diverting the forests.

- Net Present Value include the value of goods and services during the interim period i.e. the time taken for the afforested land to become forests. These include the value of timber, bamboo, fuel wood, carbon sequestration, soil conservation, water recharge, and seed dispersal.

Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF):

- It comprises of the money paid by developers who have cut down forests for construction and other activities. The money is paid for:
 - compensatory afforestation,
 - net present value of forest (NPV),
 - Other project specific payments.

Compensatory Afforestation Fund and Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA):

Background:

- In 2001, the Supreme Court ordered establishment of Compensatory Afforestation Fund and Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) to manage the CAF.
- In 2006, Supreme Court observed that CAMPA had still not become operational and ordered the constitution of an ad-hoc body (known as 'Ad-hoc CAMPA'), till CAMPA became operational.

Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016

- **Objective:** To provide for proper institutional mechanism for compensatory afforestation matters
- It establishes the **National Compensatory Afforestation Fund** under the Public Account of India, and a **State Compensatory Afforestation Fund** under the Public Account of each state. National Fund receives 10% of CAF funds, and the State Funds receive the remaining 90%.
- It also establishes **National and State Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management Authorities** to manage these funds.

Additional Information:

Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) Rules 2018

- It states that at least 80% of the fund shall be used for activities like:
 - assisted natural regeneration,
 - artificial regeneration,
 - silvicultural operations in forests,
 - protection of plantations and forests,
 - pest and disease control in forest,
 - forest fire prevention and control operations,
 - soil and moisture conservation works in the forest,
 - voluntary relocation of villages from protected areas and
 - Improvement of wildlife habitat as provided in the approved wildlife management plan.
- The remaining 20 percent will be used for strengthening of the forest and wildlife-related infrastructure and capacity building of the personnel.

Science and Technology

1. JUNO MISSION

News: Scientist have provided new insights on Jupiter based on information sent by JUNO.

Facts:

Key takeaways from the study:

- Jupiter has a “fuzzy core” that includes lighter elements like helium and hydrogen. This could be explained by a head-on collision with a still-forming planet about 10 times the size of Earth.
- The blue stripes on Jupiter captured in photographs are far zonal winds (alternating east-west jet streams) around Jupiter that descend to a depth of about 4 percent of Jupiter’s radius.

About Jupiter

- Jupiter is the **fifth planet from the Sun**. It is the **largest planet in the Solar System**.
- Jupiter has 79 known moons. **Ganymede**, the largest of these, has a diameter greater than that of the planet Mercury. It is the solar system’s largest moon.

About Juno Mission

- Juno is a NASA space mission orbiting the planet Jupiter. It was launched in 2011. The principal goal of Juno is to understand the origin and evolution of Jupiter.
- The Juno mission is the second spacecraft designed under NASA’s New Frontiers Program.

Additional Information:

New Frontiers Program: It is a series of space exploration missions being conducted by NASA. It seeks to study several of the Solar System bodies. The various missions under New Frontiers Program are:

- a) **New Horizons:** It was launched in 2006. It is the first scientific investigation to closely study Pluto and its moons.
- b) **OSIRIS-Rex:**
 - It is an acronym for Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer. It was launched in 2016.
 - It is currently orbiting asteroid Bennu. It will map the asteroid and bring a sample to Earth in 2023.
- c) **Dragonfly:** It is scheduled to be launched in 2026. It will visit Saturn’s moon Titan.

2. TEMPLATES

News: NASA will study the formation of new stars under a program called Targeting Extremely Magnified Panchromatic Lensed Arcs and Their Extended Star Formation, or TEMPLATES.

Facts:

About TEMPLATES:

- It has four main goals:
 - Measure how many new stars are forming, to determine how rapidly galaxies form stars,
 - Map the star-formation rate in four selected galaxies,

- Compare the young and old stellar populations and
- Measure the conditions of the gas within these galaxies.
- The study will be conducted using NASA's James Webb Space Telescope.
- Scientists would take help of gravitational lensing which would magnify the light from distant galaxies that are at or near the peak of star formation.

Additional Information:

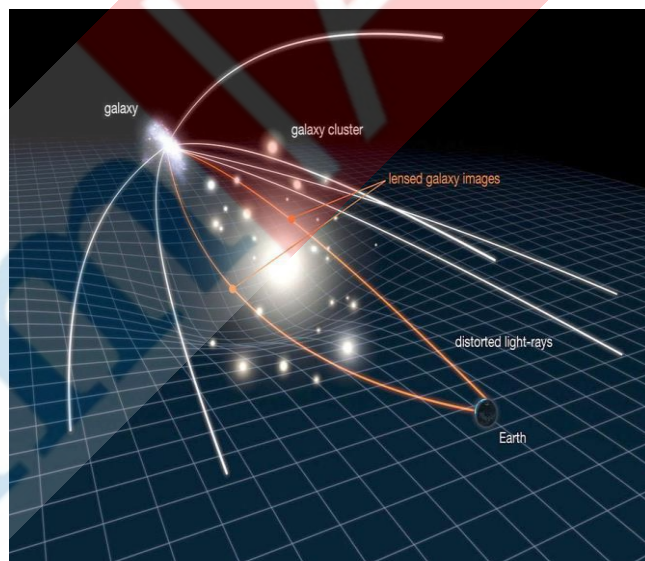
James Webb Space Telescope:

- It is a large infrared telescope with a 6.5-meter primary mirror. The telescope will be launched on an Ariane 5 rocket from French Guiana in 2021.
- It is an international collaboration between NASA, the European Space Agency (ESA), and the Canadian Space Agency (CSA).

TEMPLATES

Gravitational Lensing:

- Light around a huge body such as a massive galaxy, cluster of galaxies or a black hole is bent due to the gravitational field of that body. As a result the body acts as a lens for the things that lie behind it.
- The gravitational field distorts and magnifies the light from the more distant galaxy directly behind it. This allows researchers to study the details of early galaxies too far away to be seen otherwise with even the most powerful space telescopes.
- The process of gravitational lensing is an evidence of Albert Einstein's **Theory of General relativity** which showed that gravity will cause light to bend. The more massive the object, the stronger will be its gravitational field and this will result in greater bending of light rays.



3. LRO and MESSENGER

News: According to a new analysis of data from NASA's LRO and MESSENGER spacecraft, Earth's Moon and Mercury (the closest planet to the Sun) may contain significantly more water ice than previously thought.

Facts:

About Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter (LRO) Mission:

- It is a NASA robotic spacecraft currently orbiting the Moon in an eccentric polar mapping orbit. It was launched in 2009.
- The mission seeks to help identify sites close to potential resources with high scientific value, favourable terrain and the environment necessary for safe future robotic and human lunar missions.
- **Key achievements of LRO:**
 - Made a 3-D map of the Moon's surface at 100-meter resolution and 98.2% coverage

- In polar shadowed regions of the moon, found the coldest spots measured (below 30 K) in the solar system.
- Discovered significant subsurface hydrogen deposits in regions cold enough for water ice to survive.
- First radar measurements of the lunar far side.
- Mapped in detail the temperatures, UV reflectance, and near-surface hydrogen abundance of the moon's polar cold traps
- Created the first cosmic ray albedo proton map of the Moon
- Made high-resolution images of robotic and human exploration sites

About MESSENGER – MErcury Surface, Space ENvironment, GEochemistry, and Ranging

- It was NASA robotic spacecraft that orbited Mercury from 2011 to 2015. It was launched in 2004.
- It is the first spacecraft to orbit Mercury. MESSENGER became the second mission, after Mariner 10 in 1975, to reach Mercury. Mariner 10, launched in 1973 had flyby the planets Mercury and Venus.
- The objective of MESSENGER was to study the characteristics and environment of Mercury from orbit.
- **Key achievements:**
 - It achieved 100% mapping of the Mercury.
 - It discovered both water ice and organic compounds in permanently shadowed craters in Mercury's North Pole.

4. FEDOR- The Robot

News: Russia has sent its first life sized Humanoid robot known as FEDOR into the International Space Station (ISS).

Facts:

- FEDOR stands for Final Experimental Demonstration Object Research (Skybot F-850). It is the first humanoid robot to be sent to space by Russia.
- FEDOR is the size of an adult and can emulate movements of the human body. It can be operated manually by ISS astronauts wearing robotic exoskeleton suits.
- The main purpose of the robot is to be used in operations that are especially dangerous for humans on board spacecraft and in outer space.

Additional Information:

Other Robots in Space:

- **Robonaut 2:** It is a semi-humanoid robot deployed on the ISS by NASA in 2011. It had an aim of working in high-risk environments. It was flown back to Earth in 2018 after having technical problems.
- **Kirobo:** It is a small robot sent to ISS in 2013 by Japan.
- **CIMON (Crew Interactive Mobile companion):** It is a head-shaped AI robot. It has been developed by Airbus and IBM, with funding from the German Aerospace Center. It was sent to ISS in 2018.

Additional Information:

International Space Station (ISS):

- The ISS is a partnership between European Union (European Space Agency), the United States (NASA), Japan (JAXA), Canada (CSA) and Russia (Roscosmos).
- It is placed in the Earth's lower orbit. Currently, it is the only fully functional space station.

5. SMALL SATELLITE LAUNCH VEHICLE (SSLV)

News: US-based satellite rideshare and mission management provider Spaceflight has signed a deal with New Space India Ltd (NSIL) for payload slot on the first commercial launch of Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV).

Facts:

About Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV):

- It is a satellite launch vehicle developed by Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO). Its first flight is expected to take place from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in late 2019.
- It is 34 metres tall and has a diameter of just two metres. It has a lift-off mass of 120 tonnes.
- The SSLV has three solid motor stages. It can accommodate multiple satellites.
- It is capable of putting a payload of **500 kg to mid-inclination Low Earth Orbit (LEO)**. It can also put a payload of **300 kg to Sun Synchronous Orbit (SSO)**.

Additional Information:

New Space India Ltd (NSIL):

- NSIL is a recently established commercial subsidiary of the ISRO. It is under the administrative control of Department of Space (DOS).
- **Functions of NSIL:**
 - Transfer technology to industry for producing the commercially successful PSLV spacecraft launchers
 - Outsource assembly of small satellites and the upcoming Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV)
 - commercially exploit the R&D work done by ISRO centres and DoS constituents
- NSIL is the second commercial entity of the Department of Space (DoS) after **Antrix Corporation Limited** which was set up in 1992. Antrix is mandated with marketing the products and services of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Sun synchronous Orbits: These are polar orbits are synchronous with the Sun. Thus, it passes over the same part of the earth at the same time of the day. A satellite in a sun synchronous orbit are usually at an altitude of between 600 and 800 km. Polar orbits are the ones that pass over the Earth from its North pole to the South Pole.

Low Earth Orbit: A low Earth orbit is normally at an altitude of 2000 km or less.

Internal Security and Defence

1. CHIEF OF DEFENCE STAFF

News: Indian Prime Minister in his Independence Day address announced the creation of the position of Chief of Defence Staff (CDS).

Facts:

- The CDS is a proposed permanent position for a combined head of the tri-services i.e. Army, Navy and Air Force.
- **Background:** Various committees over time have recommended the creation of the post of CDS:
 - CDS was first advocated by General KV Krishna Rao, a former Chief of Indian Army in 1982.
 - The Kargil Review Committee under K. Subrahmanyam in 1999, recommended for a 5-star military officer as the CDS.
 - A Group of Ministers (GoM) formed various task forces in 2000, as suggested by the Kargil Review Committee. Among the various task forces, the Task Force on the Management of Defence advocated the creation of a post of CDS.
 - In 2012, the Naresh Chandra Task Force on National Security recommended the creation of the post of Permanent Chairman of Chief of Staff Committee.
 - In 2016, a Committee of Experts (CoE) was constituted under the chairmanship of Lt. General (retired) D.B Shekatkar. It recommended for a 4-star CDS as a military advisor to the defence minister.

Additional Information:**Present Status:****Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC)**

- Currently India has a permanent chairman of the Chief of Staffs Committee (CoSC).
- The senior most chief among the three forces is appointed as Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee having a four star ranking.
- He is responsible for the inter-services synergy but being the first among equals, he does not have any significant powers. It remains more of a ceremonial post.

Defence Planning Committee

- The Defence Planning Committee under the chairmanship of the National Security Advisor (NSA) was established in 2018.
- Its members also include the foreign secretary, Defence secretary, the three service chiefs and the Chief of integrated defence staff.
- It is a permanent body which facilitates comprehensive and integrated planning for national and international defence matters.

2. CORAS (Commando for Railway Security)

News: Ministry of Railways has launched CORAS (Commando for Railway Security) of Indian Railways.

Facts:

- CORAS is a separate Commando Unit of Railway Protection Force (RPF).
- The commandos of CORAS will be selected from motivated and willing young staff of Railway Protection Force (RPF)/ Railway Protection Special Force (RPSF). The average age of CORAS commandos will be between 30-35 years.
- The commandos will be specialized responder for any situation pertaining to damage, disturbance, disruption of train operations, attack and disaster situations in railway areas.
- CORAS commandos will be posted in Left extremist wing affected areas, north-eastern region and Jammu and Kashmir where providing security to the passengers and the railway network is of utmost priority.
- A new commando training centre will be set up in Jagadhri, Haryana to modernize and train commandos of the Railway Protection Force (RPF).

Additional Information:**Railway Protection Force (RPF)**

- It is a security force, established by the Railway Protection Force Act, 1957. Its primary function is protection and security of railway property. It functions under the Ministry of Railways. In 1965 it has been renamed as "Railway Protection Special Force" (RPSF).

3. BIOMETRIC SEAFARER IDENTITY DOCUMENT (BSID)

News: India has become the first country in the world to issue a Biometric Seafarer Identity Document (BSID) to its seafarers.

Facts:

- The project has been undertaken by Ministry of Shipping in collaboration with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Mumbai.
- The project is being implemented under the Merchant Shipping (Seafarers Biometric Identification Document) Rules in 2016.
- It is in confirmation of the Convention No. 185 (Seafarers' Identity Documents Convention) of the International Labour Organisation. India ratified the Convention in October 2015.
- A record of each Seafarer Identity Document (SID) issued will be maintained in a national database and its related information will be internationally accessible.
- **Features of BSID:**
 - It has the dimensions of a smart ID card. It has an embedded biometric chip.
 - It also has optical security features such as micro prints/micro texts and Unique Guilloche pattern.
- **Advantage of BSID:** It will give a fool proof identification to Indian seafarers which will facilitate their movement, provide ease of getting jobs and help in identifying them from any location in the world.

Additional Information:

Seafarer: Seafarer is any person who is employed or is engaged or works in any capacity on board a vessel, other than a ship of war, ordinarily engaged in maritime navigation.

Social

1. RASHTRIYA BAL SWASTHYA KARYAKRAM (RBSK)

News: The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched a scheme for universal screening of children below 18 years for leprosy and tuberculosis (TB). It is a part of the Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK)

Facts:**About Rashtriya Bal Swasthya Karyakram (RBSK)**

- It was launched in 2013 under the National Rural Health Mission. It is implemented by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
- **Aim:** early identification and early intervention for children from birth to 18 years to cover 4 'D's viz. **Defects at birth, Deficiencies, Diseases, Development delays including disability.**
- The **District Early Intervention Centres** are established under the programme for providing management of children identified with developmental delays. It also seeks to link children identified with specific diseases, deficiencies and defects at birth with tertiary level health services in case surgical management is required.
- Child Health Screening and Early Intervention Services under RBSK covers 30 selected health conditions for screening, early detection and free management. Tuberculosis and Leprosy were previously not a part of it.

Additional Information:**About Leprosy:**

- Leprosy, also known as Hansen's disease, is a chronic infectious disease caused by **Mycobacterium leprae**. The disease mainly affects the skin, peripheral nerves, mucosal surfaces of the upper respiratory tract and the eyes.
- It can be cured with Multi-Drug Therapy (MDT).

Status of Leprosy in India:

- In 2005, India achieved the goal of elimination of leprosy as a public health problem, defined by the WHO as less than 1 case per 10,000 population.
- All states except Chhattisgarh and the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli have eliminated leprosy. However, 1.15 lakh to 1.2 lakh new leprosy cases are still detected annually

Elimination efforts:**India:**

- **National Leprosy Eradication Programme** was launched in 1983 with an objective to arrest the disease activity in all the known cases of leprosy and eventually eliminate leprosy.

Global:

- **Global leprosy strategy 2016-2020:** It has been launched by WHO. It aims at a) zero children with leprosy-affected disabilities by 2020 and b) reduction of new patients diagnosed with leprosy-related deformities to less than 1 per million population

About Tuberculosis (TB)

- TB is an infectious airborne bacterial disease caused by *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. It mainly affects the lungs.
- When TB infection becomes resistant to the first line of treatment — isoniazid and rifampicin, it is called Multi-drug resistant TB (MDR-TB). When the infection becomes resistant even to the second-line treatment it is called Extensively-drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB)

Status of TB in India

- The WHO 2018 Global TB Report says that India has the highest burden of TB and multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB)
- TB kills an estimated 4, 80,000 Indians every year — an average over 1,300 every day.

Elimination Efforts:**India:**

- The Indian government has put forward **National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB Elimination, 2017-2025**. The plan is a framework to provide guidance for the activities of various stakeholders to reduce the burden of TB mortality and morbidity.
- In 2018, the government launched the **TB Free India campaign** to take activities under NSP for TB Elimination. The campaign seeks to **eliminate TB in India by 2025**

Global:

- **SDG 3.3:** It calls to eliminate TB by 2030
- **WHO End TB Strategy:** It aims to end the global TB epidemic, with targets to reduce TB deaths by 95% and to cut new cases by 90% between 2015 and 2035.

2. MOB LYNCHING

News: West Bengal and Rajasthan governments have passed anti-mob lynching bills.

Facts:

Mob Lynching: Mob Lynching means killing of someone by a mob for an alleged offence without following any principles of jurisprudence or due process of law.

Instances of Mob Lynching in India:

- According to a report from Human Rights Watch, 44 people were lynched in India between May 2015 and December 2018.
- Examples:
 - September 2015-Mohammad Akhlaq was killed in Dadri, Uttar Pradesh, for allegedly killing a cow.
 - 2017- Pehlu Khan, a dairy farmer killed by cow vigilantes in Alwar, Rajasthan
 - June 2018- Two men killed under suspicion of child trafficking in Karbianglong, Assam
 - June 2019- Tabrez Ansari was killed in Jharkhand.

Note: National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which compiles data on crime rates, does not maintain specific data on lynching incidents in India.

Supreme Court Directions:

- The Supreme Court in 2018 in the case of Tehseen S. Poonawalla vs. Union of India had recommended the central government to enact a legislation to create a separate offence for lynching.
- The SC provided 11 directions, including preventive, remedial and punitive steps to combat mob lynching incidents.

Initiatives by States:**Manipur:**

- Manipur had passed Manipur Protection from MOB Violence Ordinance, 2018. It calls for rigorous life term imprisonment for those involved in mob violence, if the crime results in death of the victim.

West Bengal:

- The West Bengal Assembly has passed the West Bengal (Prevention of Lynching) Bill, 2019
- The bill proposes “rigorous imprisonment for life and a fine not less than Rs 1 lakh and up to Rs 5 lakh” in case of death of the victim.
- It also proposes a jail term of a maximum of three years and fine up to Rs 1 lakh for those who create “a hostile environment for a person or a group of persons”.

Rajasthan:

- The Rajasthan Assembly has passed Rajasthan Protection from Lynching Bill, 2019.
- It provides for life imprisonment and a fine of up to Rs 5 lakh to convicts in cases of mob lynching involving the victim’s death.
- It also provides for appointment of a nodal officer of the rank of Inspector-General of Police to prevent lynching and establishment of relief camps in safe zones for the victims.

Uttar Pradesh:

- State Law Commission in Uttar Pradesh has drafted the UP Combating of Mob Lynching Bill, 2019, and submitted it to Chief Minister.

Maharashtra:

- Maharashtra Government has formulated a policy which provides compensation between ₹2 lakh to ₹3 lakh which could be increased to ₹10 lakh in special cases of lynching. It is in addition to the existing scheme for victims of communal violence who get ₹5 lakh as compensation.

Civil Society Initiatives:

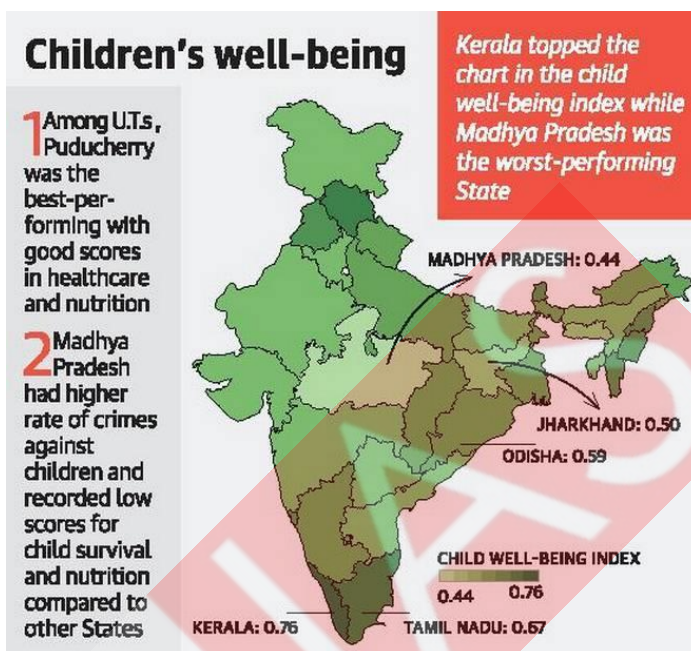
- **‘NOT IN MY NAME’ campaign:** It was launched in 2017 to protest against the cow vigilantism.
- **National Campaign against Mob Lynching (NCAML):** It is also known as ‘Masuka’, short for Manav Suraksha Kanoon (law to protect humans). It seeks to make lynching a non-bailable offence.

3. CHILD WELL-BEING INDEX REPORT

News: World Vision India, a child-focused humanitarian organisation and IFMR LEAD, a research organisation based in India, have released India Child Well-Being Report.

Facts:**About the Report:**

- It provides insights on health, nutrition, education, sanitation and child protection.
- It examines how India fairs on child well-being using a composite child well-being index. The index is based on three dimensions viz.
 - healthy individual development,
 - positive relationships and
 - Protective contexts.
- 24 indicators under the 3 dimensions were selected to develop the computation of the child well-being index.
- NITI Aayog has cited the report as crucial and said that it can be used both by the Government and civil organisations to achieve the goal of child well-being.

**Highlights from the Report:**

- Kerala (0.76), Tamil Nadu (0.67) and Himachal Pradesh (0.67) topped the child-wellbeing index. Puducherry performed the best among union territories.
- Meghalaya (0.53), Jharkhand (0.50) and Madhya Pradesh (0.44) performed worst in the overall index.

Additional Information:

- India had ranked 113th in the End of Childhood Index- a part of the Global Childhood Report, published by the NGO Save the Children in May 2019. Singapore had topped the index which ranked 176 countries.

4. NATIONAL MEDICAL COMMISSION ACT, 2019

News: The Parliament has passed The National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill, 2019.

Facts:

Objective: to repeal the Indian Medical Council Act, 1956 and replace Medical Council of India (MCI) with NMC to regulate medical education and practices in India.

Salient Features of the Act:

1. **Establishment of National Medical Commission:**
 - The Act sets up a National Medical Commission (NMC). It also mandates the state governments to establish State Medical Commissions within 3 years of passage of the bill.
 - It will consist of 25 members, with a term of maximum four year (no reappointment).
 - **Functions:**
 - framing policies for regulating medical institutions and medical professionals,

- assessing the requirements of human resources and infrastructure in the health sector and
 - framing guidelines for determining the fees for up to 50% of the seats in private medical institutions and deemed universities which are regulated as per the Act
 - The Commission will have four autonomous boards: a) Undergraduate Medical Education Board, b) Post-Graduate Medical Education Board, c) Medical Assessment and Rating Board, and d) Ethics and Medical Registration Board.
2. **Medical advisory Council:**
- The central government will constitute a Medical Advisory Council. The Council will act as a platform for the states/union territories to put forward their views and concerns before the NMC.
3. **Qualifying Examinations:**
- **NEET:** National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test will be a uniform exam for admission to under-graduate and postgraduate medical education in all medical institutions regulated by the Act.
 - **NEXT:**
 - National Exit Test will be a common final year undergraduate exam for the students graduating from medical institutions.
 - It would be a test to obtain a license for practice.
 - NEXT will also serve as the basis for admission into postgraduate courses at super speciality medical institutions.
 - It would also act as a screening test for foreign medical graduates.
4. **Community health providers:**
- The Act empowers the NMC to grant limited license to community health providers [non-medical degree holders connected with the modern medical profession] to practice medicine. They can prescribe specific medicines in primary and preventive healthcare and in other categories under the supervision of a registered medical practitioner.
 - The NMC Act has proposed to introduce bridge courses for dentists, AYUSH and homoeopathic practitioners etc. It would be a six-month crash course in practical medicine after which the trained students could be allocated the post of the doctor at healthcare facilities.

5. NATIONAL ESSENTIAL DIAGNOSTICS LIST

News: Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has finalised India's first National Essential Diagnostics List (NEDL). With this, India has become the first country to have such a list.

Facts:

About NEDL:

- It builds upon the Free Diagnostics Service Initiative and other diagnostics initiatives of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- It is on the lines of the essential drugs list, the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) which was first released in 1996. It was last updated in 2015.
- The NEDL has recommended that at least 159 tests should be made available for patients in even primary government health facilities. Both in vitro diagnostics and other diagnostic tests.

- The diagnostics list mentions 105 general laboratory tests for a broad range of common conditions. It also mentions 30 disease-specific tests such as for HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis, and 24 imaging tests including X-rays, CT and MRI scans and ultrasound sonography.
- A guidance document on “Regulatory framework for diagnostics: National and International” has been included.

Significance of NEDL:

- Expected to improve healthcare service delivery through evidence-based care, improved patient outcomes and reduction in out-of-pocket expenditure.
- It is also expected to lead to effective utilisation of public health facilities; effective assessment of disease burden, identify outbreaks and curb antimicrobial resistance.
- It will enable standardization of technology/diagnostic services and will aid in the promotion of R&D for new appropriate and effective diagnostics.
- It will also foster improved regulation in procurement, strengthened capacity of laboratories including their accreditation, establishment of nation-wide quality control systems etc.
- It is complementary to the essential medicines list which will ensure healthy lives and eventually help achieve the goal of providing universal healthcare (SD 3.8).

Additional Information:

Regulation of Diagnostics in India: Diagnostics are regulated under the provisions of Medical Device Rules 2017 formulated, under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 by Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO).

The Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO):

- It is the national regulatory body for Indian pharmaceuticals and medical device. It functions under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.
- CDSCO comes under Directorate General of Health Services, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

WHO's Essential diagnostics list (EDL): The World Health Organisation (WHO) released a first edition of its essential diagnostics list (EDL) in May, 2018. This has acted as a reference for ICMR's NEDL.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR):

- It was established in 1911 and is located in New Delhi.
- It is the apex body in India for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research.
- It is funded by the Government of India through the Department of Health Research, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

Miscellaneous

1. GI TAGS

News: Tirur Vettala, Palani panchamirtham, Dindigul locks and Kandangi sarees have received GI Tags.

Facts:

Name	Description	Region	GI Category
Tirur Vettala	It is a betel leaf. It is unique for its significantly high content of total chlorophyll and protein in fresh leaves. Eugenol is the major essential oil in Tirur betel leaf contributing to its pungency.	Tirur and nearby areas of Malappuram district, Kerala.	Agricultural Product
Palani panchamirtham	It is served as prasadam at the Murugan temple. It is a combination of five natural substances — banana, jaggery, cow ghee, honey and cardamom and is served in semi solid state. This is the first time a temple 'prasadam' from Tamil Nadu has been given GI tag.	Palani, Dindigul district, Tamil Nadu	Food Stuff
Dindigul locks	It is world famous for their superior quality and durability, and the Dindigul city is often referred to as the "Lock City".	In and around Dindigul in Tamil Nadu.	Manufactured Product
Kandangi sarees	They are characterised by large contrast borders.	Karaikudi taluk in Sivaganga district of Tamil Nadu	Textile
Mizo Puanchei	It is a colourful Mizo shawl/textile. It is worn in marriages, Mizo festive dances and official ceremonies The weavers insert the designs and motifs by using supplementary yarns while weaving to create the textile.	Mizoram	Textile
Tawlhlohpuan	It is a medium to heavy, compactly woven, good quality fabric. It is known for warp yarns, warping, weaving & intricate designs that are made by hand. Tawlhloh, in Mizo language, means 'to stand firm or not to move backward'	Mizoram	Textile

Additional Information:**GI Tags:**

- GI is an Intellectual Property Right. It is a status accorded to a good which is unique to a particular region or area and is originated from there. The tag is valid for a period of 10 years following which it can be renewed.
- The GI tag in India is governed by the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999 and is administered by the Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trademarks, under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Good in the categories of a) Agricultural products (e.g. Nagpur Orange), b) foodstuffs (e.g. Joynagar Moa), c) handicrafts (e.g. Agates of Cambay), d) textile (e.g. Kullu Shawl), e) natural products (e.g. Makrana Marble) and f) manufactured products (e.g. Kannauj Perfume) come under the ambit of GI Tags.
- Darjeeling Tea is the first good to receive a GI Tag in India.

2. FIT INDIA MOVEMENT

News: Prime Minister Narendra Modi has launched the nation-wide campaign called Fit India Movement on the occasion of National Sports Day (29th August).

Facts:

Aim: To encourage Indians to include fitness activities and sports in their daily lives to remain healthy and fit.

Need:

- According to Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), 54% of Indian are physically inactive and less than 10% engage in recreational physical activity.
- Lifestyle diseases are on a rise in India. According to the 4th National Family Health Survey, NCDs account for 60% of all deaths in India. The major metabolic risk factors for NCDs are obesity, raised blood pressure, raised blood glucose, and raised total cholesterol levels in the blood.

Committee Formed: A committee comprising government officials, members of Indian Olympic Association (IOA), national sports federations, private bodies, and fitness promoters has been formed to advise the government on the Fit India Movement. It is headed by Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju.

Additional Information:**National Sports Day:**

- Every year on August 29, the National sports day is celebrated in India.
- The day is celebrated to honor the legendary hockey player Major Dhyan Chand Singh.
- The day is observed to spread awareness on the importance of sports and daily physical activities in everyone's life.
- On this day, the President of India confers National sports and adventure awards including Arjuna award and Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Puraskar to celebrate the achievements of exceptional athletes in India.

Hum Fit Toh India Fit campaign: In 2018, the government had launched #HumFitTohIndiaFit social media campaign to promote fitness.

Khelo India:

- In 2016, the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports had merged three schemes — the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Abhiyan, Urban Sports Infrastructure Scheme, and National Sports Talent Search Scheme — into the Khelo India Programme.
- **Objectives:**
 - Mass participation of the young population in Sports through annual sports competitions
 - Identification of sporting talent
 - Nurturing of the sporting talent through sports academies and
 - Creation of Sports Infrastructure at Block, District and State/UT Level.

WHO's "Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health":

- The WHO issued Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for health in 2010.
- It aims to provide national and regional level policy makers with guidance on the frequency, duration, intensity, type and total amount of physical activity needed for the prevention of NCDs.

3. BHARAT RATNA AWARD

News: Former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee has been conferred the Bharat Ratna award. The award has also been given posthumously to social activist Nanaji Deshmukh and noted Assamese singer Bhupen Hazarika.

Facts:

- Bharat Ratna is the highest civilian award of India. It is given for exceptional service towards advancement of Art, Literature and Science, and in recognition of Public Service of the highest order. In 2011, the government expanded the criteria to include "any field of human endeavour".
- The provision of Bharat Ratna was introduced in 1954. The first recipients of the award were scientists Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman, Rajagopalachari and Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan.
- From 1955, the award is also conferred upon posthumously. Former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri became the first individual to be honoured posthumously.
- It is usually awarded to Indian citizens. However, the award has also been awarded to a naturalized Indian citizen, Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, better known as Mother Teresa (1980). It has also been awarded to two non-Indians - Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and Nelson Mandela (1990).
- The recommendations for the Bharat Ratna are made by the Prime Minister to the President, with a maximum of three nominees being awarded per year

4. SAFE CITIES INDEX 2019

News: UK based, Economist Intelligence Unit, has released Safe Cities Index 2019.

Facts:**About the Index:**

- It ranks 60 cities worldwide across five continents. It measures the multi-faceted nature of urban safety.
- It ranks on the basis of 57 indicators covering digital, infrastructure, health and personal security.

Key takeaways:

- Global:** Tokyo (Japan) has been ranked overall the safest city followed by Singapore (Singapore) and Osaka (Japan) and Amsterdam (Netherlands). Lagos (Nigeria) has been ranked as the most unsafe city.
- India:** Mumbai has been ranked as the 45th safest city. Delhi stood at 52nd position.

**5. TOTAL FERTILITY RATE**

News: Recently released 2017 Sample Registration System (SRS) data of 22 states on Total fertility Rate (TFR). The 2017 SRS Report has been compiled by the Registrar General & Census Commissioner under the Ministry of Home Affairs.

Facts:**Key highlights:**

- TFR for India has declined to 2.2 in 2017 after being stable at 2.3 between 2013 and 2016.
- The TFR for **rural areas**, varies from 1.6 (lowest) in Delhi and Tamil Nadu to 3.3 (highest) in Bihar.
- For **urban areas**, the variation is from 1.1 (lowest) in Himachal Pradesh to 2.4 (highest) in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- States with an overall lower TFR than the national average are Kerala (1.7), Tamil Nadu (1.6), Karnataka (1.7), Maharashtra (1.7), Andhra Pradesh (1.6), Telangana (1.7), West Bengal (1.6), Jammu and Kashmir (1.6) and Odisha (1.9).
- States with overall high TFR than the national average are Uttar Pradesh (3.0), Bihar (3.2), MP(2.7), Rajasthan(2.6), Assam(2.3), Chhattisgarh(2.4) and Jharkhand(2.5)

Additional Information:**Total Fertility Rate (TFR)**

- TFR indicates the **average number of children expected to be born to a woman** during her reproductive span of 15-49 years.
- TFR of 2.1 children per woman is called **Replacement-level fertility**. This represents the *level at which a population can replace itself from one generation to other without growing or declining*.

Sample Registration System

- The Sample Registration System is the most regular source of vital statistics in India since 1964. The SRS provides information on (a) population composition, (b) fertility, (c) mortality, and (d) medical attention at the time of birth or death

6. LIVESTOCK CENSUS

News: The provisional 2019 Livestock Census (20th Livestock Census) has been released.

Facts:

Key takeaways:

- India's total livestock population is estimated at 533.20 million.
- India's total population of indigenous and nondescript cattle is estimated at 139.82 million. This is a 7.5% decrease from 2012 indigenous cattle population. In contrary, the exotic and crossbred cattle population has increased by 29.5%.

About Livestock Census

- Livestock Census usually covers all domesticated animals.
- It is conducted by the Animal Husbandry Statistics Division, Department of Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- The census has been conducted in the country periodically since 1919-20. It is conducted quinquennially (every five years). The 19th Census was conducted in 2012.

Additional Information:**Rashtriya Gokul Mission:**

- Rashtriya Gokul Mission was launched in 2014. It seeks development and conservation of indigenous bovine (cattle) breeds (through selection of high genetic merit bulls for breeding).
- The mission is under Department of Animal Husbandry and dairying, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- **Objectives:**
 - To undertake breed improvement programme for indigenous cattle breeds so as to improve their genetic makeup and increase the stock.
 - To enhance milk production and productivity of indigenous bovine breeds.
 - To upgrade non-descript cattle using elite indigenous breeds like Gir, Sahiwal, Rathi, Red Sindhi etc.
 - Arrange quality Artificial Insemination services at farmers' doorstep
- **Gokul Grams:** Integrated Indigenous Cattle development Centres – “Gokul Grams”- are established under mission with the aim of conservation and development of indigenous bovine breeds in a scientific and holistic manner.

Rashtriya Kamdhenu Aayog:

- It has been established by the government in 2019. It seeks for conservation protection and development of cows and their progeny.

- It is high powered permanent body. At present it functions as a part of Rashtriya Gokul Mission under Department of Animal Husbandry and dairying, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.
- Functions:
 - provide the policy framework and direction to the cow conservation and development programmes and
 - Ensure proper implementation of laws with respect to the welfare of cows.






7. INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

News: According to Ethnologue, Papua New Guinea has the highest number of ‘living’ (languages that are still being used and spoken by people) indigenous languages in the world (840). India has been ranked 4th (453).

Facts:

UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger', 2010:

- The atlas is intended to raise awareness about language endangerment and the need to safeguard the world's linguistic diversity.
- It is a tool to monitor the status of endangered languages and the trends in linguistic diversity at the global level.
- **Key highlights:**
 - 228 languages have become extinct since 1950. About 10% of the languages are classified as ‘vulnerable’. 10% are ‘critically endangered’.
 - In India, 5 languages have become extinct since 1950. 42 languages are critically endangered.

Degree of endangerment	Intergenerational Language Transmission
safe	language is spoken by all generations; intergenerational transmission is uninterrupted >> not included in the Atlas
 vulnerable	most children speak the language, but it may be restricted to certain domains (e.g., home)
 definitely endangered	children no longer learn the language as mother tongue in the home
 severely endangered	language is spoken by grandparents and older generations; while the parent generation may understand it, they do not speak it to children or among themselves
 critically endangered	the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently
 extinct	there are no speakers left >> included in the Atlas if presumably extinct since the 1950s

International Year of Indigenous Languages:

- United Nations has announced 2019 as the International Year of Indigenous Languages.
- It aims to promote indigenous languages in five key areas:
 - Increasing understanding, reconciliation and international cooperation,
 - Creation of favourable conditions for knowledge-sharing and dissemination of good practices,
 - Integration of indigenous languages into standard setting,
 - Empowerment through capacity building and
 - Growth and development through elaboration of new knowledge.

Additional information:**Scheme for Protection and Preservation of Endangered Languages (SPPEL):**

- The scheme was instituted by the Ministry of Human Resource Development in 2013.
- The scheme aims at protection, preservation and documentation of all the mother tongues/languages of India spoken by less than 10,000 speakers.
- The sole objective of the Scheme is to document and archive the Indian languages that have become endangered or likely to be endangered in the near future
- It is monitored by the Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL), Mysore.

Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL):

- Established in 1969, CIIL functions under the Ministry of Human Resource and Development. Its primary function is to coordinate the development of Indian languages.

Note: Ethnologue is an annual publication that provides statistics and other information on the living languages of the world. It is published by US-based SIL International.

Pointly

1. **National Lab Directory:** It is an online platform for all testing needs of the industries, academia, researchers and other stakeholders who need to get their testing facilities accredited / certified / recognised. It has been created by the National Standards Body of India, Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution.
2. **Spacecom:** USA has launched a new command called Spacecom-dedicated to warfare in space.
3. **Coprolite:** Coprolites are fossilised faeces belonging to animals that lived millions of years ago. Recently, researchers have discovered the oldest parasite DNA ever recorded in a coprolite of a prehistoric puma in Argentina.
4. **Gooty Tarantula:** It is a spider species endemic to India. It is listed as “Critically Endangered” in IUCN Red List.
5. **Janaushadhi Sugam:** It is a mobile app launched by Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers. It will help locate nearby Janaushadhi Kendra, provide direction to Janaushadhi Kendra through Google Map, search Janaushadhi generic medicines, analyse products etc.
6. **Akademik Lomonosov:** It is the world's first floating nuclear reactor launched by Russia in the Arctic region. It is the northernmost nuclear plant in the world.
7. **BT cowpea:** Nigeria has become the first country to approve open cultivation of genetically modified (GM) Bt cowpea.
8. **Project SU.RE:** SU.RE stands for ‘Sustainable Resolution’. It is a commitment by India’s apparel industry to set a sustainable pathway for the Indian fashion industry. It has been launched by Ministry of Textiles.
9. **Adratiklit boulahfa:** It is a stegosaurus, a type of dinosaur. It dates back to 168 million years ago which makes it the oldest known member of that group of dinosaurs ever known.
10. **NISHTHA:** It stands for National Initiative for School Heads and Teachers Holistic Advancement. It has been launched by the Ministry of Human Resource and Development. The objective of the programme is to motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students. It is the world’s largest teachers’ training programme of its kind.
11. **Mobile Metallic Ramp:** It has been designed and developed by DRDO’s premier research laboratory called Centre for Fire, Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES). It has been designed and developed on requirements projected by Army for increasing Strategic Mobility by reducing the time of mobilising Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFVs). It has a load-bearing capacity of 70 metric ton (MT).
12. **Okjokull:** It is the first glacier lost to climate change in the world. It is located in Borgarfjörður, West Iceland.
13. **Tardigrade:** Often called water bears or moss piglets, are a phylum of water-dwelling eight-legged segmented micro-animals. They are among the most resilient animals which can survive extreme conditions such as exposure to outer space. Israeli spacecraft Beresheet that had crashed onto the Moon in April, 2019 was carrying tardigrade.
14. **“School Fagadaba” (Make education better):** It is a scheme launched by Manipur government. The objective of the scheme is to ensure better infrastructure, quality education and overall improvement of government schools to make them model schools.

15. **Navroz:** It is the Iranian/Persian New Year. It was celebrated on August 17 to mark the beginning of the new Iranian calendar. It has been listed in the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2016.
16. **Space Science Museum:** India's first Space Science Museum has been opened in Hyderabad, Telangana. The museum is a collaborative effort between the Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) and the B M Birla Science Centre.
17. **Mission Reach Out:** It has been launched by the Indian army in Jammu. The mission aims to ensure basic necessities and essential services are available in the region post the abrogation of the provisions of Article 370 and reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir.
18. **Uber for Tractors:** It is a farm equipment rental app developed by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' welfare. The app will allow the farmers to hire tractors, rotavator and other farm related machinery on rent for with flexible tenure.
19. **Kajin Sara Lake:** It is located at an altitude of 5200m in Singarkharka area of Chame rural municipality in Manang district of Nepal. Once its location and measurement is officially verified, it will be the world's highest lake. Current world's highest lake is **Tilicho Lake**, situated at an altitude of 4,919m in Nepal.
20. **Samagra Shiksha-Jal Suraksha drive:** It has been launched by the Ministry of Human Resource and Development. The programme aims to create awareness about water conservation among all school students in the country.
21. **Emex australis Steinh:** It is an invasive species of weed of the family Polygonaceae. It is commonly known as 'doublegee', 'three corner jack' or 'spiny emex'. It is native to Australia and South Africa. It has been recently found in wheat fields at villages of Faridabad and adjoining districts in Haryana.
22. **Prickly pear:** A Mexican researcher has invented a new form of biodegradable plastic made primarily from the juice of prickly pear cactus (opuntia).
23. **QRSAM:** The Defence Research Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully test-fired the Quick Reaction Surface to Air Missile (QRSAM). It has been indigenously developed by the DRDO for the Indian Army. QRSAM is an all-weather and all-terrain missile. It uses solid-fuel propellant. It has a range of 25-30 km.
24. **Mitra Crater:** Chandrayaan 2's orbiter has captured the picture of Mitra crater. It is a lunar impact crater that is attached to the western outer rim of the larger crater Mach, on the far side of the Moon. It is named after Sisir Kumar Mitra noted Indian physicist known for his work on the ionosphere.

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