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## Commission on Sub Categorization of OBC

The President, in exercise of the powers conferred by article 340 of the Constitution appointed a Commission to examine the sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes. The five-member panel will be headed by retired Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court G. Rohini.

This decision, taken on the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, reinforces, in the spirit of his teachings, the Government's efforts to achieve greater social justice and inclusion for all, and specifically members of the Other Backward Classes.

The terms of reference of the Commission are as under:

1. to examine the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation among the castes or communities included in the broad category of Other Backward
2. Classes with reference to such classes included in the Central List; to work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach for sub-categorisation within such Other Backward Classes; and
3. to take up the exercise of identifying the respective castes or communities or sub-castes or synonyms in the Central List of Other Backward Classes and classifying them into their respective sub-categories.

### Composition of the Commission

1. Chairperson -Justice (Retd.) G. Rohini,
2. Member -Dr. J.K. Bajaj
3. Member(Ex-officio)-Director, Anthropological Survey of India,
4. Member (Ex-officio)-Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India
5. Secretary of the Commission-Joint Secretary, Department of SJ&E, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment

PEPPER IT WITH  
Jat Case Judgement, Indra Sawhney Judgement, Art 340, Mandal 2.0

### Objective

The Commission is required to present their Report to the President within a period of twelve weeks of assumption of charge by the Chairperson of the Commission. On receipt of the Report of the Commission, the Central Government will consider ways and means for equitable distribution of the benefits of the reservation in Central Government jobs and admission in Central Government Institutions amongst all strata of the Other Backward Classes.

### Significance

- The move is significant as it aims to give greater representation to the less dominant OBC groupings and also work towards inclusion for all.
- The sub-categorization of OBCs will also ensure increased access to benefits such as reservations in educational institutions and government jobs for less dominant OBCs.
- The commission has been tasked with examining the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation among the castes or communities with reference to the central OBC list and also work out the mechanism, criteria, norms and parameters in a scientific approach for sub-categorization.

### Mandal Commission

On August 7, 1990, then PM V P Singh announced in Parliament that his government had accepted the Mandal Commission report, which recommended 27% reservation for OBC candidates at all levels of its services. With the implementation of the report, OBC or Other Backward Classes made its way into the lexicon of India's social justice movement.

The following were the terms of reference of the Mandal Commission:

1. To determine the criteria for defining the socially and educationally backward classes;

2. To recommend steps to be taken for the advancement of the socially and educationally backward classes of citizens so identified;
3. To examine the desirability or otherwise of making provision for the reservation of appointments or posts in favour of such backward classes of citizens which are not adequately represented in the services of both the central and the state governments/union territory administrations; and
4. To present a report setting out the facts as found by them and making such recommendations as they think proper. The Commission observed that backwardness was both social and educational. Caste was also a class of people.

In fact, the Commission, after a very thorough scientific investigation with the help of experts from various disciplines worked out 11 indicators to determine social backwardness. These indicators are social, educational and economic.

### International Day of Older Persons

To mark the 'International day of Older Persons' on 2<sup>nd</sup> October, more than 5000 participants gathered at India Gate at event 14<sup>th</sup> **"WALKATHON"** organized by Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment for a noble cause to spread the message of caring and

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giving respect to older persons and senior citizens. This year's theme was "Stepping into the Future: Tapping the Talents, Contributions and Participation of Older Persons in Society.

Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment is running two important schemes namely "Vridh Jan Grah

**Yojana and Day Care Centres"** for Older Persons all over India and Non Government Organizations and Voluntary Organizations are also participating in these schemes.

Objective

Showcasing of various positive physical activities were done like a RUN, slogan March, Yoga, A Semi classical programme with bhajans, Health Camp for senior citizens and demonstration of composting technology to spread the message of giving care and respect to parents and senior citizens.

Recent Initiatives for elderly citizens

- Atal Pension Yojana
- Senior Citizens Welfare Fund
- Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana
- Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana 2017
- Health Insurance for Senior Citizens
- Scheme for providing Aids and Assisted Living Devices to Senior Citizens below Poverty Line

**NPOP 1999:** The National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP), 1999 envisages State support to ensure financial and food security, health care, shelter and other needs of older persons, equitable share in development, protection against abuse and exploitation, and availability of services to improve the quality of their lives. The policy also covers issues like social security, intergenerational bonding, family as the primary caretaker, role of Non-Governmental Organizations, training of manpower, research and training.

PEPPER IT WITH  
National Policy on Senior Citizen, 2011, IGNOAPS, Vayoshreshtha Samman

Caring for Our Elders: Early Responses, India Ageing Report - 2017 (UNFPA) has been released recently to highlight the concerns of ageing society of India and the response of Govt and non Govt organisations.

To address this issue the govt has announced NPOP 1999, IPOP, IGNOAPS and MWPS Act 2007 etc.

### Facts

The ageing population which was 7.5% in 2001 has increased to 8.6% by 2011. It is projected that the population of senior citizen in India could be around 19% of total population by 2050. This means that caring for elderly and all aspects of geriatric services would come under greater focus and attention in coming year.

**IPOP:** The main objective of the INTEGRATED PROGRAMME FOR OLDER PERSONS Scheme is to improve the quality of life of the Senior Citizens by providing basic amenities like shelter, food, medical care and entertainment opportunities and by encouraging productive and active ageing through providing support for capacity building of Government/Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)/Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) / local bodies and the community at large.

**MWPSC Act 2007:** In 2007, the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act was passed to provide maintenance support to elderly parents and senior citizens. The Act establishes the Maintenance Tribunal to provide speedy and effective relief to elderly persons. Section 19 of the act also mandates the establishment of an old age home in every district and provides for the protection of life and property of the elderly. Parents can opt to claim maintenance either under Section 125 of the Criminal Procedure Code, 1973 or under this Act – they cannot opt for both.

**NPHCE:** The National Programme for Health Care of the Elderly is an articulation of the International and national commitments of the Government as envisaged under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD), National Policy on Older Persons (NPOP) adopted by the Government of India in 1999 and Section 20 of “The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007” dealing with provisions for medical care of Senior Citizen.

Main objective of the programme is to provide preventive, curative and rehabilitative services to the elderly persons at various level of health care delivery system of the country.

### Committee on water resources management in NER

#### In News

The Government has constituted a high-level committee for proper management of the water resources in the North Eastern Region (NER) under the Chairmanship of Vice-Chairman, Niti Aayog.

A statement of the Ministry for Development of North East Region (DoNER) said the Committee would submit its report by June 2018.

The committee would facilitate optimising benefits of appropriate water management in the form of hydro-electric power, agriculture, bio-diversity conservation, reduced flood damage erosion, inland water transport, forestry, fishery and eco-tourism. Including management of catchment areas in upper reaches of flood prone areas.

The terms of reference of the Committee include:

1. Appraisal of existing mechanism/institutional arrangements for management of water resources of the North Eastern Region.
2. Identification of gaps in the existing mechanism/institutional arrangements for optimal management of water resources of the NER.
3. Suggest policy interventions required for optimally harnessing the water resources for accelerating development in the NER
4. Spelling out of actionable measures required for optimizing the management of water resources in the North-East.
5. Chalking out a Plan of Action for dovetailing of the schemes/programmes of concerned Union Ministries, their attached offices and autonomous bodies as well as the schemes of the respective North-Eastern State Governments

The Committee includes Secretaries from the Ministries of Development of North Eastern Region, Department of Border Management, Department of Space, Power, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation and National Disaster Management Authority and Chief Secretaries of all the 8 states in NER as Members

Way Ahead

- As part of the strategy that is also being viewed as an attempt to contain China, an India-Japan Coordination Forum for Development of North East has been set up to

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DRIP, CWC**

focus on strategic projects such as connectivity and road network development, electricity and disaster management.

- India initiated an action plan to accelerate hydroelectric projects in Arunachal Pradesh, a key element of a multi-pronged strategy. This also involves prioritizing the construction of storage projects as a fallback option.
- **The committee's terms of reference also include identification** of gaps in the existing mechanisms and arrangements for water resource management, and suggesting policy interventions.

### Do not send juveniles to lock-up

Problem faced in India

The Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, has been in effect since January 2016 and the Union government has issued the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016, but the State police have failed to follow these diligently in the case of children involved in crimes.

Very often, such children are treated as adults, and put in lock-ups. They are detained for days or put up with adults, some of whom may have committed heinous offences. Even First Information Reports (FIRs) are lodged against children.

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015

- The Act permits juveniles between the ages of 16-18 years to be tried as adults for heinous offences. The three types of offences defined by the Act are:
  1. a heinous offence is an offence that attracts a minimum penalty of seven years imprisonment under any existing law,
  2. a serious offence is one that gets imprisonment between three to seven years and,
  3. a petty offence is penalized with up to three years imprisonment.
- Juvenile Justice Boards (JJB) and Child Welfare Committees (CWC) will be constituted in each district. It will conduct preliminary inquiry. The CWC will determine institutional care for children in need of care and protection.

Key Issues

- There are differing views on whether juveniles should be tried as adults. Some argue that the current law does not act as a deterrent for juveniles committing heinous crimes. Another view is that a reformative approach will reduce likelihood of repeating offences.
- The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires all signatory countries to treat every child under the age of 18 years as equal. The provision of trying a juvenile as an adult contravenes the Convention.
- Some penalties provided in the Act are not in proportion to the gravity of the offence

Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Model Rules, 2016

1. The circular underlines that no FIRs should be lodged against children who have had a run-in with the law except in cases where they are alleged to have committed heinous offences or are party to them along with adults.
2. When a child is apprehended, the officer concerned should not send the child to a lock-up, and should instead place the child under the charge of the Special Juvenile Police Unit or the Child Welfare Police Officer from the nearest police station without delay.
3. The child should be produced in front of the Juvenile Justice Board within 24 hours of being apprehended. The child may be sent to an observation home only till he is produced before the board.
4. The circular makes it clear that the children should not be handcuffed, chained, or fettered in any way or any coercion or force used.
5. The Child Welfare Police Officer, an officer not below the rank of assistant sub-

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JJB, POCSO Act 2012,  
CWC

inspector, should be in plain clothes during the interaction, and not in uniform. In cases of girl children, women police personnel should be roped in.

6. The circular makes it clear that the children should not be compelled to confess their guilt. They should be spoken to politely and their dignity and self-esteem maintained.

### International Conventions

#### Rule 17 of the Beijing Rules

It states that the reaction taken shall always be in proportion not only to the circumstances and the gravity of the offence but also to the circumstances and the needs of the juvenile as well as to the needs of the society.

Beijing Rules provide for rules applicable to persons between the age of 7 and 18 for juvenile.

United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the Children

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child requires all signatory countries to treat every child under the age of 18 years as equal.

#### Way Ahead

The current system serves neither the purpose of rehabilitation nor deterrence against future crime.

The standing committee also observed that the Bill violates some constitutional provisions and said that the approach towards juvenile offenders should be reformative and rehabilitative.

The provision of trying a juvenile committing a serious or heinous offence as an adult based on date of apprehension could violate the Article 14 (right to equality) and Article 21 (requiring that laws and procedures are fair and reasonable). The provision also counters the spirit of Article 20(1) by according a higher penalty for the same offence, if the person is apprehended after 21 years of age.

#### UNCRC

There are 45 Rights defined under articles of UNCRC. Few Child rights defined under it:

- Non-discrimination (article 2)
- Best interest of the child (article 3)
- Right to life survival (article 6)
- Right to development (article 6)
- Right to be heard (article 12)

### Paryatan Parv

Ministry of Tourism, Government of India in collaboration with other Central Ministries, State Governments and Stakeholders is organizing a **“Paryatan Parv”** across the country from the 5<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> October 2017.

The programme is being organized with the objective of drawing focus on the benefits of tourism, showcasing the cultural diversity of the country and reinforcing the principle of **“Tourism for All”**.

Paryatan Parv will have three main components:

1. Dekho Apna Desh: *To encourage Indians to visit their own country.*

This will include Video, Photograph and Blog Competitions of sites visited during the Event, **Stories of India through Travelers’ Eyes, on Social Media**, Tourism related Quiz, Essay, Debate and Painting Competitions for Students, Television Campaigns to promote travel to J&K and N.E. States.

2. Tourism for All: *Tourism Events at sites across all States in the country.*

The activities at these sites will include illumination in and around the Sites, Cultural Programmes of Dance, Music, Theatre, Story Telling,

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Apni Dharohar Apni  
Pehchan, Monument Mitras

The **“Adopt A Heritage”** project launched by the Ministry of Tourism will be implemented at key sites during this period. Wayside Amenities for tourists will also be launched at important sites in identified circuits.



Sensitisation Programmes for Stakeholders around the Sites, Tourism Exhibitions, Showcasing Culture, Cuisine and Handicrafts/Handlooms, Guided Heritage Walks, etc. These will be **“People’s Events” with large scale public participation.**

3. Tourism & Governance: Interactive Sessions & Workshops with Stakeholders on varied themes:

- Skill Development in Tourism Sector
- Innovation in Tourism
- For inducting Ex-servicemen as service providers for Taxi Operation.
- Developing Rural Tourism in locations near established Destinations.
- Community Sensitisation Workshops on Homestay and B&B Opportunities.

Paryatan Parv will be supported by extensive media activities and programmes in all media, including Social Media.

- ✓ Quiz Programmes – **“The Wonder that is India”**.
- ✓ Smile India Smile Campaign - A still photography competition.
- ✓ Do You Know? - A Campaign to propagate interesting facts about India.

Increased production and efficient distribution of food grains can move our country forward

The Vice President addressed the 49th Convocation of Acharya N.G. Ranga Agricultural University laying emphasis on production and distribution of food grains.

The Vice President of India, has stated that increased production and efficient distribution of food grains can move our country forward to achieve the goal of zero hunger and adequate nutrition for all. **He further said that the growing needs of our country’s** increasing population require us to evolve our own home grown food security strategy.

Agriculture plays a vital role in **India’s economy**. 64 percent of the total workforce in the rural areas is engaged in agriculture and contributes 39 percent of total rural net domestic product.

As per the 2<sup>nd</sup> advised estimates by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), the share of agriculture and allied sectors (including agriculture, livestock, forestry and fishery) is expected to be 17.3 per cent of the Gross Value Added (GVA) during 2016-17 at 2011-12 prices.


Key Highlights of Vice President's speech

- ✓ The Vice President suggested that first we have to provide an end-to-end (E2E) ecosystem comprising of **“4-I s” namely ‘Irrigation’, ‘Infrastructure’, ‘Investment credit’ and ‘Insurance’**. The second is Lab-to-Land (L2L) transfer of technology. This will help in achieving goal of doubling the income of Indian farmers by 2022.
- ✓ In addition to irrigation, the government is rightly focusing on infrastructure like rural roads, dependable quality power, godowns, cold storage facilities, refrigerated vans and market yards. These infrastructural improvements are an essential prerequisite for improving the efficiency of the agricultural sector.
- ✓ Two other important building blocks of a robust ecosystem are timely credit facilities at reasonable interest rates and farmer-

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PEPPER IT WITH  
APMC, E-NAM, India  
Water Week

**Electronic National Agriculture Market (eNAM)**  
making great strides



417 mandis across 13 states integrated till March 2017.

585 regulated mandis to be integrated by March 2018.

**Top 6 States with maximum number of mandis integrated**

State	Number of mandis integrated with e-NAM
Uttar Pradesh	66
Madhya Pradesh	58
Haryana	54
Maharashtra	44
Telangana	44
Gujarat	40





friendly insurance policies. These allow for farmers to invest in better, income-generating crops and agricultural practices and increase their incomes. The insurance cover shields the farmers against unforeseen climatic and natural disasters.

- ✓ The kisan credit cards and the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) are steps in the right direction and need to be universalized.
- ✓ Marketing of agricultural produce and getting a fair return is a big challenge for most farmers. The farmers still rely on local markets and have to resort, very often, to distress sale. A new initiative called E-NAM seeks to remedy this situation by adopting an e-trading platform for agricultural commodities. The Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act is also being proposed to be amended by introducing single-point levy of market fee across a State and a united single trading license.

#### Suggestions by Vice President

- First is intensification of farming by enhancing productivity through use of high yielding varieties of seeds and efficient use of land and water. High yielding varieties cover only 69 percent of the total area under cereal crops. This coverage should be expanded. While irrigation facilities are being expanded by the government, there is a need to educate the farmers on using the water efficiently.
- Second is diversification. Farmers must be encouraged to diversify and take up high value crops like fruits, vegetables, fibre, condiments, pulses, spices and sugarcane. It has been established that the average productivity of high value crops is around Rs. 1.4 lakh per hectare as compared to Rs. 41,169 per hectare from staple crops like cereals and oil seeds. There is also a tremendous potential to diversify towards other allied occupations as well like dairy and forestry.

#### Way Forward

Clearly, a concerted, coordinated focused action is required on a number of issues that impact the growth of agriculture sector and the quality of life of people who depend primarily on this sector. We cannot be complacent about the food security situation as it exists today. **The growing needs of our country's increasing population require us to evolve our own home grown food security strategy.** Increased production and efficient distribution of food grains can move our country forward to achieve the goal of zero hunger and adequate nutrition for all.

#### BBBP Week

The Ministry of Women and Child Development will be celebrating the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Week from 09th to 14th October, 2017. The week is being celebrated in view of the International Girl Child Day on 11th October, 2017. The theme of the program will be "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Week- The Daughters of New India".

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#### Key Highlight of Initiative

- ✓ The week-long celebration will witness various awareness generation activities and community engagement programmes such as Oath ceremonies, prabhat pherries, rallies, nukkad natraks, street plays, joint door to door campaigns by AWWs and ASHAs, opening of Sukanya Samriddhi Accounts, sensitization/orientation/counseling sessions and talk shows on gender, health and nutrition, legal rights and Acts.
- ✓ At the National level, the occasion will also be marked by a Panel Discussion to be held coinciding with the theme for this year's International Day of the Girl – "Girls



**Inclusive India**  
**Empowering Women**

**Stree Shakti-Desh ki Shakti**  
**Naree Shakti-Shashakt Bharat**

**BETI BACHAO, BETI PADHAO**

- Increasing trend in Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) is visible in **58%** of the BBBP districts between April-March 2014-16
- Budget allocation increased in 2017-18 to **Rs 200 crore**
- Ministry of HRD has allocated **Rs 5 lakhs** per district, for instituting district level awards to be given to **5 schools** in each district every year

**Progress=Goals Progress: What Counts for Girls** to engage key sport influencers

and women and girls role models from the field, to generate support through their voice and reach.

#### Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojana

It is a tri-ministerial effort of Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource Development.

Objective:

To save and empower girl child by generating awareness and improving the efficiency of welfare services meant for women.

Achievements:

- ✓ Launched in January 2015
- ✓ Implemented in 161 districts; improved child sex ratio in Haryana
- ✓ Preliminary reports for 100 districts indicate that for the time period between April-March 2014-15 & 2015-16, an increasing trend in Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) is visible in 58% of the BBBP districts;
- ✓ Haryana has registered a remarkable improvement in the sex ratio at birth (SRB) with the ratio jumping to 938 in February 2017. The average SRB for the past one year from March 2016 to February 2017 has been recorded as 907.
- ✓ Budget allocation for scheme increased in 2017-18 to 200 crore rupees.
- ✓ Ministry of HRD has allocated Rs. 5 lakh per district, for instituting district level awards to be given to 5 schools in each district every year.

This year UNWomen has theme of the International Day of the Girl as **'EmPOWER girls: Before, during and after conflict'**.

PEPPER IT WITH  
SABLA, POCSO E-Box

#### Prime Ministers Mudra Yojna (PMMY)

Prime Ministers Mudra Yojna (PMMY) the flagship scheme of Indian Government, which aims to provides formal access of financial facilities to the small businesses thereby creating more self-employment opportunities. The fact is that since the launch of the scheme on 08 April 2015, 9.13 crore loans have been sanctioned under PMMY. The total amount sanctioned is Rs. 3.96 lakh crore. Out of 9.13 crore loans, loans to women constitute 6.89 crore (76%), SC/ST/OBC constitute 5.07 crore (55%). With this, self-employment has been generated and some of the entrepreneurs have also created the job opportunities.

About PMMY

It provides loans upto Rs. 10 lakh (around US\$15,000) to the non-corporate, non-farm small/micro enterprises.

Under PMMY, all banks viz. Public Sector banks, Private Sector Banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), State Co-operative Banks, Urban Co-operative Banks, Foreign Banks and Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs)/Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs)-are required to lend to non-farm sector income generating activities below Rs.10 lakh. These loans are classified as MUDRA loans under PMMY.

Target Clients

Non-Corporate Small Business Segment (NCSB) comprising of millions of proprietorship/partnership firms running as small manufacturing units, service sector units, shopkeepers, fruits/vegetable vendors, truck operators, food-service units, repair shops, machine operators, small industries, artisans, food processors and others, in rural and urban areas.

#### Loan offerings under PMMY

Under the aegis of PMMY, the MUDRA has already created its initial set of products/schemes.

1. *Shishu*: covering loans upto Rs. 50,000/- provided with no collateral, @1% rate of interest/month repayable over a period of 5 years

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PEPPER IT WITH  
SA-DHAN, Mahila E  
Haat, Portfolio Credit  
Guarantee

2. *Kishor*: covering loans above Rs.50,000/- and upto Rs. 5 lakh
3. *Tarun*: covering loans above Rs. 5 lakh to Rs. 10 lakh

### Implementation

For implementing the Scheme, government has set up a new institution named, MUDRA (Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd.), for development and refinancing activities relating to micro units, in addition to acting as a regulator for the micro finance sector, in general.

**MUDRA:** It provides refinance to all banks seeking refinancing of small business loans given under PMMY. Thus, MUDRA refinances all Last Mile Financiers - Non-Banking Finance Companies of various types engaged in financing of small business, Societies, Trusts, Section 8 Companies [formerly section 25], Co-operative Societies, Small Banks, Scheduled Commercial Banks and Regional Rural Banks - which are in the business of lending to Micro/Small business entities engaged in manufacturing, trading and services activities.

### Scope:

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) loans will be extended by all Public Sector Banks such as PSU banks, Regional Rural Banks (RRBs), Cooperative Banks, Private Sector Banks, Foreign Banks, Micro Finance Institutions and Non Banking Finance Companies. All loans sanctioned on or after April 08, 2015 upto a loan size of 10 lakh for non farm income generating activities will be branded as PMMY loans.

### Monitoring:

Monitoring of PMMY progress at the State level will be done through SLBC forum and at National level by MUDRA/Department of Financial Services, Government of India. For this purpose, MUDRA has developed a portal, wherein the banks and other lending institutions directly feed their achievement details which is consolidated by the system and reports are generated for review.

The MUDRA Card will work with RuPay platform and can be used at PoS. Thus allow users to:

- ✓ Withdraw cash from ATMs
- ✓ Swipe the card at PoS
- ✓ Can be used as a credit card to avail overdraft facility

The total number of cards issued during the year was at 5.17 lakh for an amount of 1476.96 crore. An amount of 1391.25 crore was withdrawn by the borrowers. The average works out to ₹28,567 per MUDRA card.

## Intensified Mission Indradhanush

Prime Minister launched the Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) recently with a call of "Let no child suffer from any vaccine-preventable disease".

Through this programme, Government of India aims to reach each and every child under two years of age and all those pregnant women who have been left uncovered under the routine immunisation programme.

### Objective

The special drive will focus on improving immunization coverage in select districts and cities to ensure full immunization to more than 90% by December 2018. With the launch of IMI, achievement of the target has now been advanced.

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OBJECTIVES	TARGET BENEFICIARY	TARGET ACHIEVED	TOTAL OUTLAY (YEAR-WISE BUDGET)	BENEFITS
The objective of Mission Indradhanush is to increase full immunization coverage in India to at least 90% children by 2020.	Pregnant women, new born and children	Three phases of Mission Indradhanush have been completed in which 497 districts across 35 states/UTs have been covered. In NE states, during the three phases of Mission Indradhanush, 85 districts were covered. 2.10 cr children and 55.9 lakhs pregnant women covered up till 2015-16	From NHM-RCH flexi-pool of the NHM outlay.	The programme provides free vaccination against seven life-threatening diseases (diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, measles and hepatitis B) in the entire country.

## Key Highlights

1. With a sharpened focus on high priority districts and urban areas, under IMI, four consecutive immunization rounds will be conducted for 7 days in 173 districts -- 121 districts and 17 cities in 16 states and 52 districts in 8 north eastern states -- every month between October 2017 and January 2018.
2. Intensified Mission Indradhanush will have inter-ministerial and inter-departmental coordination, action-based review mechanism and intensified monitoring and accountability framework for effective implementation of targeted rapid interventions to improve the routine immunization coverage.
3. IMI is supported by 11 other ministries and departments, such as Ministry of Women and Child Development, Panchayati Raj, Ministry of Urban Development, Ministry of Youth Affairs among others. The convergence of ground level workers of various departments like ASHA, ANMs, Anganwadi workers, Zila preraks under National Urban Livelihood Mission (NULM), self-help groups will be ensured for better coordination and effective implementation of the programme.
4. Intensified Mission Indradhanush would be closely monitored at the district, state and central level at regular intervals. Further, it would be reviewed by the Cabinet Secretary at the National level and will continue to be monitored at the highest level under a special initiative **‘Proactive Governance and Timely Implementation (PRAGATI)’**.

The MoHFW, Govt. of India launched Mission Indradhanush in December 2014 as a special drive to vaccinate all unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children. (Pis. see table above)

PEPPER IT WITH  
UIP, RI

## Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA)

Prime Minister recently launched the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA) at Gandhinagar in Gujarat.

## Objective

Making one person in every family digitally literate is one of the integral

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components of the Prime Minister's vision of "Digital India".

Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyaan is the scheme to make six crore persons in rural areas, across States/UTs, digitally literate, reaching to around 40% of rural households by covering one member from every eligible household by 31st March, 2019.

PEPPER IT WITH  
PMGDISHA PMU,  
ImTeCHO, Bharat Net

## Key Highlights

1. The Scheme would empower the citizens in rural areas by training them to operate computer or digital access devices (like tablets, smart phones etc.), send and receive e-mails, browse Internet, access Government services, search for information, etc.
2. The scheme also focuses on enabling digital financial transactions among the citizens. By seeding Aadhaar number to bank account of the beneficiary and enabling him to access various online Government services like booking of railway tickets, passport application, etc would enable the citizen to leverage technology and participate actively in governance.
3. The Scheme aims to bridge the digital divide, specifically targeting the rural





population including the marginalised sections of society like Scheduled Castes (SC)/Scheduled Tribes (ST), Minorities, Below Poverty Line (BPL), women and differently-abled persons and minorities.

4. The scheme will be implemented by CSC e-Governance Services India Limited, a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) incorporated under the Companies Act 1956, (herein after referred to as "CSC-SPV"), under the overall supervision of Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology, with active collaboration of all the State Governments and UT Administrations.
5. Each State government and UT administration shall appoint a State Implementing Agency (SIA) to ensure the smooth implementation of the Scheme. SIAs have the responsibilities of coordination with various Government Agencies/ Stakeholders for formation of various State/ District/ Panchayat level committees for monitoring of the scheme.

#### Conclusion

A better understanding is needed of the public's perception and behavior concerning digital intellectual property. When popular attitudes and practices are out of sync with laws, the enforcement of laws becomes more difficult, which may instill in people a lack of confidence in and respect.

### THE CONTRACT LABOUR (REGULATION AND ABOLITION) AMENDMENT BILL, 2017

#### In News

The government has proposed a major overhaul in the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 which includes a three-year licence for contractors to work across the country instead of a separate one for new work orders. The proposed changes will be in line with International Labour Organisation Convention 181 [on private employment agencies].

The Objective of the Contract Labour Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 is to prevent exploitation of contract labour and also to introduce better conditions of work. A workman is deemed to be employed as Contract Labour when

he is hired in connection with the work of an establishment by or through a Contractor.

The proposed bill is not yet introduced in the parliament and is still in pipeline.

#### Contract Labour

Contract Labour differs from Direct Labour in terms of employment relationship with the establishment and method of wage payment. Contract Labour, by and large is not borne on pay roll nor is paid directly. The Contract Workmen are hired, supervised and remunerated by the Contractor, who in turn, is remunerated by the Establishment hiring the services of the Contractor.

#### Proposed Amendments

The contractors can obtain a one-time licence valid for three years to work anywhere in the country from the Central Government. The contractor will have to, however, clearly define a particular area of work.

Contractors will no longer require a licence for undertaking each project, as per the proposed changes. The same valid 3 year licence can be used to take up new projects.

The contractor will need to inform the government whenever it receives a work order from a company, failing which the licence may be cancelled.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
ILO, Trade Union Act,  
CACL B

International Labour Organisation  
Convention 181

*Adoption: Geneva, 85th ILC session  
(19 Jun 1997)*

1. This Convention applies to all private employment agencies.
2. This Convention applies to all categories of workers and all branches of economic activity. It does not apply to the recruitment and placement of seafarers.
3. One purpose of this Convention is to allow the operation of private employment agencies as well as the protection of the workers using their services, within the framework of its provisions.

The proposed law also seeks to make a distinction between contractors who provide services and those who provide human resources. Contractors who provide human resources to a company will no longer be responsible for providing canteen and restroom facilities to the workers.

Providing facilities such as canteen and restroom to contract workers has to be the responsibility of the principal employer who had hired workers from the contractor.

**It has been also proposed to make wage payment “primarily” through electronic mode** instead of cash payment if not so practicable, then, in cash in presence of the authorised representative of the principal employer

Way Ahead

The labour contractors easily circumvent this requirement through what have come to be **known as ‘sham contracts’**. It is a contract that may show a worker as having been hired for a cleaning job. But once he enters the factory premises, he is engaged in production work. There is no documentation to show that a contract worker who, on paper, is engaged for cleaning work, is actually in production.

**The SC judgment thus poses an old question to India’s labour movement: how to unionise contract workers, who are in one factory today, in another the next, and whose interests are all too easily played off against those of permanent workers?**

### Uday Kotak Committee on Corporate Governance

A committee was formed by SEBI to bring a strong corporate governance code in order to support and enable sustainable growth of enterprise, while safeguarding interests of various stakeholders facilitating the spirit of true governance. The committee composed of 23 member under the chairmanship of Uday Kotak.

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Why Review Corporate Governance Now?

Over the past decade, policymakers in India have been acutely conscious of the importance of

Corporate governance—several committees have made valuable recommendations which have been largely adopted.

Yet, governance practices even in some of the most reputed publicly listed Indian companies have come under question on a number of dimensions.

These include evaluation of company boards, board diversity, reliability of disclosures (especially those relating to financial statements), role of independent directors, protection of minority shareholder interests, managerial compensation and related party transactions.

Recommendations

Composition of the board of directors: Listed companies should be required to have at least six directors on the board with a minimum of 50% representation of independent directors — including one woman director including gender diversity.

Minimum Number of Board Meetings: The board of directors shall meet at least 5 times a year, with a maximum time gap of one hundred and twenty days between any two meetings and at least once a year, the board shall specifically discuss strategy, budgets, board evaluation, risk management, ESG (environment, sustainability and governance) and succession planning.

Minimum Number of Independent Directors: At least half of the board of directors shall comprise of independent directors for the top 500 listed entities, determined on the basis of market capitalization, as at the end of the immediately preceding financial year.

Disclosures on Resignation of Independent Directors: Detailed reasons for resignation of independent directors who resigns before the expiry of his tenure.

Minimum Compensation: The minimum total remuneration for an ID per year shall be Rs. 5 lakhs for top 500 companies by market capitalisation (subject to approvals as required under Companies Act). In case of inadequacy of profits, the minimum requirement of Rs. 5 lakhs shall not apply.

Audit: The committee is of the opinion that the audit committee should also review the utilisation of funds of the listed entity infused into unlisted subsidiaries, including foreign subsidiaries.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Corporate social  
responsibility

**Transparency:** The committee had also proposed a transparent framework to regulate the information rights of certain promoters and significant shareholders to prevent any abuse and unlawful exchange of unpublished price sensitive information (UPSI).

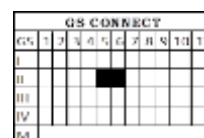
Way Ahead

Given global trends, not surprisingly, there's been a renewed focus on improved corporate governance: better structures, more rigorous checks and balances, and greater independence of all key gate-keepers including boards and auditors.

Arguably, governance suffers most when boards spend too much time looking in the rearview mirror and not enough scanning the road ahead. Directors have difficulty in prioritizing their time between quarterly reports, audit reviews, budgets and compliance on the one hand and matters crucial to the future prosperity and direction of the business on the other which has to change.

## GST Composition Scheme

22<sup>nd</sup> Meeting of GST Council under Chairmanship of the Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs has recommended increase in the threshold of turnover for taxpayer to ease the burden of compliance on small and medium businesses. The aim is to induce simplicity and reduce the compliance cost for MSME sector.



Composition Scheme

The composition scheme is an alternative method of levy of tax designed for small taxpayers whose turnover is up to Rs 1 crore— Rs 75 lakh in the case of Special Category States except J&K and Uttarakhand (both 1 crore).

PEPPER IT WITH  
Composition Levy, VAT  
Law

Special Category States

- |                      |                     |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| a) Arunachal Pradesh | e) Mizoram          |
| b) Assam             | i) Himachal Pradesh |
| c) Manipur           | h) Tripura          |
| d) Meghalaya         | g) Sikkim           |
| f) Nagaland          |                     |

Specified rate

S. No.	Category of Registered person	Rate of Tax
1.	Manufacturers, other than manufacturers of such goods as may be notified by the Government (Ice cream, Pan Masala, Tobacco products etc.)	2% ( 1% Central tax plus 1% State tax) of the turnover
2.	Restaurant Services	5% ( 2.5% Central tax plus 2.5% SGST) of the turnover
3.	Traders or any other supplier eligible for composition levy	1% ( 0.5% Central tax plus 0.5% State tax) of the turnover



A group of ministers or GoM has been set up under Assam finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma to make the composition scheme more attractive and to revisit the goods and services tax rates on restaurants.

GoM is a five member team consisting of Himanta Biswa, Sushil Modi, Haseeb Drabu, Manpreet Singh Badal and Amar Agrawal.

#### Task of GoM

1. Revisiting tax structure of different categories of restaurants with a view to rationalising or reducing the rates. Currently, GST is levied at 12% on non-AC restaurants while it is 18% in case of airconditioned ones.
2. Examining whether the AC restaurants pass on the benefit of cost reduction under GST to **consumers and if they don't, whether they** should be disallowed input tax credit claims.
3. It will examine whether the scheme can be extended to taxpayers dealing in inter-state supplies of goods and whether the manufacturers opting for it can be given the benefit of input tax credit.

GST Council is a federal forum with both centre and states in India. Council will make recommendations to the Union and the States on important issues related to GST.

#### Composition

1. Union Finance Minister - Chairperson.
2. The Union Minister of State, in-charge of Revenue of finance - Member.
3. The Minister In-charge of finance or taxation or any other Minister nominated by each State Government Members.

## Passive Euthanasia

### In News

Passive euthanasia, is already the law of the land, the government told a Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court. The issue of permitting **'passive euthanasia'** and **'living will'** for terminally ill patients was brought in lights via PIL filed by the NGO Common Cause.

### About Euthanasia

Passive euthanasia involves withholding of medical treatment or withholding life support system for continuance of life e.g., withholding of antibiotic where without doing it, the patient is likely to die or removing the heart-lung machine from a patient in coma.

Active euthanasia involves taking specific steps such as injecting the patient with a lethal substance e.g. Sodium Pentothal which causes the person to go in deep sleep in a few seconds and the person dies painlessly in sleep, thus it amounts to killing a person by a positive act in order to end suffering of a person in a state of terminal illness.

As per Court findings in the Aruna Shanbaug case and keeping with the recommendations of the 17<sup>th</sup> Law Commission's 196<sup>th</sup> Report THE MEDICAL TREATMENT OF TERMINALLY-ILL PATIENTS (PROTECTION OF PATIENTS AND MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS) BILL has been drafted. This Bill to provide for the protection of patients and medical practitioners from liability in the context of withholding or withdrawing medical treatment including life support systems from patients who are terminally-ill. But govt opted not to make law on euthanasia.

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The word **'Euthanasia'** is a derivative from the Greek words **'eu'** and **'thanatos'** which literally mean **"good death"**. It is otherwise described as mercy killing. The death of a terminally ill patient is accelerated through active or passive means in order to relieve such patient of pain or

A **"living will"** is a document prepared by a person in a healthy state of mind specifying that if person slides into a vegetative state because of an irreversible terminal illness, the debilitated existence should not be prolonged with the help of life support systems or other medical invasive measures.

## Aruna Shanbaug Case

- On November 27, 1973, Aruna Shanbaug, a nurse in KEM Hospital, was raped by a ward boy. He also gagged her with a dog chain that led to extensive brain injuries, resulting in her being in a permanent vegetative state for 42 years, aged 66 years, after a bout of pneumonia.
- Virani moved the Supreme Court with a euthanasia plea to end Aruna's 'agony'. On January 24, 2011, the Supreme Court set up a medical panel to examine her. The committee said Aruna met most of the criteria of being in a permanently vegetative state.
- On May 7, 2011, the Supreme Court turned down the mercy killing plea in Aruna's case, but allowed "passive euthanasia" or withdrawing life support for patients in permanently vegetative state.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Article 21, Airedale's  
case, Withdrawal of  
Medical Life Support  
Bill

## Law Commission Viewpoint

- Passive euthanasia, which is allowed in many countries, shall have legal recognition in our country too subject to certain safeguards, as suggested by the 17<sup>th</sup> Law Commission of India and as held by the Supreme Court in *Aruna's Case*. It is not objectionable from legal and constitutional point of view.
- A competent adult patient has the right to insist that there should be no medical treatment by way of artificial life sustaining treatment and such decision is binding on the doctors/hospital attending on such patient provided that the **doctor is satisfied that the patient has taken an 'informed decision' based on free exercise of his or her will.**
- As regards an incompetent patient such as a person in irreversible coma or in Persistent Vegetative State and a competent patient who has not taken an **'informed decision', the doctor's or relatives' decision to withhold or withdraw the medical treatment is not final.** The relatives, next friend, or the doctors concerned / hospital management shall get the clearance from the High Court for withdrawing or withholding the life sustaining treatment.
- The Medical Council of India is required to issue guidelines in the matter of withholding or withdrawing of medical treatment to competent or incompetent patients suffering from terminal illness.

## Way Ahead

The question of recognizing and legalizing euthanasia is being debated all over the world. The views *pro and contra* rest on philosophical, moral, ethical and legal perspectives. Different views have emerged, some of them being extreme. In a comprehensive **Dissertation on "Legislative Passive Euthanasia"** presented by Mr. Sayan Das, various viewpoints have been discussed and vast literature on the subject including end – of – life care has been referred. We cannot overlook the scope for misuse of such a will and must come up with stringent laws to safeguard.

## Cabinet approves SANKALP &amp; STRIVE Schemes to boost Skill India Mission

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by the Prime Minister has approved two new World Bank supported schemes of Rs. 6,655 crore - Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) and Skill Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE).

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## SANKALP &amp; STRIVE

- SANKALP is Rs 4,455 crore Centrally sponsored scheme including Rs. 3,300 crore loan support from World Bank whereas STRIVE is a Rs. 2,200 crore - central sector scheme, with half of the scheme outlay as World bank loan assistance.
- SANKALP at a cost of Rs. 4455 crores will provide industry relevant training to 3.5

PEPPER IT WITH  
TEC India, M-SIPS,  
PMKK

crore youth and address the issue of shortage of skilled manpower for accelerated growth in the manufacturing sector.

- STRIVE project to be launched in 2017-18 at a cost of Rs. 2,200 crores, as announced in the budget, will go a long way in improving the quality and market relevance of vocational training provided in ITIs and strengthening the apprenticeship programmes through the industry cluster approach. This would also be a step towards dual training system where the small industry would participate in the training programme.

#### Benefits

1. SANKALP and STRIVE are outcome focused schemes marking shift in government's implementation strategy in vocational education and training from inputs to results.
2. The two schemes shall address this need by setting up national bodies for accreditation & certification which shall regulate accreditation and certification in both long and short term Vocational Education and Training (VET).
3. The architecture shall help, for the first time in the history of vocational education in India, to converge the efforts of various central, state and private sector institutions thereby avoiding duplication of activities and bringing about uniformity in vocational training thus, creating better impact.
4. The schemes aim to develop a robust mechanism for delivering quality skill development training by strengthening institutions such as State SSDMs, NSDC, SSCs, ITIs and NSDA etc. Thus ensuring standardization in skill delivery, content and training output.
5. The schemes will develop a skilling ecosystem that will support the country's rise in the Ease of Doing Business index by steady supply of skilled workforce to the industry.

#### Way Ahead

Various cross sectoral measures announced in the budget 2017-18 have ramifications for enhancing employability and job creation for various strata of population. Among the various measures, **'Energising Youth through Education, Skills and Jobs' is the key** to address the challenges of aspirations of young India. The increase in the overall allocation by 16 percent for Employment Generation, Skill and Livelihood from Rs.14870 crores in RE 2016-17 to Rs.17273 crores in BE 2017-18 **reinforces government's** commitment to make India skill capital of the world and enhancing access to job opportunities.

### Sampoorna Bima Gram (SBG) Yojana

The Minister for Communications recently launched the SBG Yojana and an initiative for expansion of clientele base of Postal Life Insurance.

#### Objective

To provide affordable life insurance services to people, particularly those living in rural areas of the country and expand the clientele base of Postal Life Insurance (PLI).

#### Key Highlights

1. Under Sampoorna Bima Gram (SBG) Yojana, at least one village (having a minimum of 100 households) will be identified in each of the revenue districts of the country, wherein endeavour will be made to cover all households of that identified village with a minimum of one RPLI (Rural Postal Life Insurance) policy each.

PEPPER IT WITH  
IRDAI, Suraksha  
Bima Yojana

Postal Life Insurance (PLI), introduced in 1884, is one of the oldest life insurance schemes for benefit of Government and semi-Government employees.

Rural Postal Life Insurance (RPLI), introduced on March 24, 1995 on recommendations of Malhotra Committee, provides insurance cover to people residing in rural areas, especially weaker sections and women living in rural areas.

2. This scheme will bring all villages under the Saansad Aadarsh Gram Yojana within its ambit.

3. The benefits of Postal Life Insurance (PLI) will no more be confined to government and semi-government employees only, but will also be available to professionals such as doctors, engineers, lawyers, bankers etc.
4. Low Premium and High Bonus is the unique feature of PLI and RPLI schemes

### SC frames guidelines to designate lawyers as senior advocates

A three-judge bench, headed by Justice Ranjan Gogoi of the Supreme Court recently laid down the framework for the basis on which lawyers should be assigned the designation of senior advocates.

The Supreme Court has issued the following guidelines in the matter:

- All matters relating to designation of Senior Advocates in the Supreme Court of India and in all the High 105 Courts of the country shall be dealt **with by a Permanent Committee to be known as “Committee for Designation of Senior.**
- The said Committee shall have a permanent Secretariat the composition of which will be decided by the Chief Justice of India or the Chief Justices of the High Courts, as may be, in consultation with the other Members of the Permanent Committee.
- **The Permanent Committee will be headed by the Hon’ble Chief Justice of India** and will consist of two senior-most Judges of the Supreme Court of India (or High Court(s), as may be); the learned Attorney General for India (Advocate General of the State).
- For the HCs, Permanent Committee will have the Chief Justice of the respective HC and the Advocate General of the state in place of CJI and Attorney General.
- While deciding the issue of designating a lawyer as senior advocate, the committee would also consider aspects such as number of years put in the practise, judgements in cases to which a lawyer has been a part, the pro bono litigations, interview and the test of personality.
- The permanent secretariat will put the name of candidates being considered for senior designation on the website for inviting suggestions of stakeholders.
- All the names that are listed before the Permanent Committee/cleared by the Permanent Committee will go to the Full Court after which listed names would be put up for voting and selection for designation of Senior Advocate.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Section 16(1) of the  
Advocates Act, 1961

### Universal Social Security Scheme

The government has drafted an ambitious Rs 1.2 lakh crore plan to provide universal social security coverage for the poorest of the country.

Key Facts

1. This inclusive programme projects three categories — the poorest 20%, who will get a government payout; those who subscribe on their own and formal sector workers who will need to set aside a fixed proportion of income toward the scheme.
2. The scheme will have two tiers. The first of these comprises mandatory pension, insurance (both death and disability) and maternity coverage and the second, optional medical, sickness and unemployment coverage.
3. The labour ministry, which has drawn up the proposal, will soon send it to the finance ministry for vetting and funding with the intent of rolling it out next year as a compulsory scheme.
4. Funds collected under the universal social security scheme will be divided into sub schemes and be ringfenced, meaning the benefits and the contribution will be commensurate.

PEPPER IT WITH  
SECC 3&4 category,  
SOCIAL SECURITY Bill  
2017, Amnesty Scheme

- The new policy will be part of the social security code, one of four codes that the labour ministry is finalising and will subsume 17 existing items of legislation governing social security coverage in the country.

#### Way Ahead

Social Security protects not just the subscriber but also his/her entire family by giving benefit packages in financial security and health care. Social Security schemes are designed to guarantee at least long-term sustenance to families when the earning member retires, dies or suffers a disability. Thus the main strength of the Social Security system is that it acts as a facilitator - it helps people to plan their own future through insurance and assistance. The success of Social Security schemes however requires the active support and involvement of employees and employers.

### Women's Reservation Bill

The Govt. is planning to roll out Women's Reservation Bill [The Constitution (108th Amendment) Bill, 2008] seeking to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. It passed the RS test but is pending in LS.

#### Key Highlights of the Bill

- The Bill seeks to reserve one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the state legislative assemblies. The allocation of reserved seats shall be determined by such authority as prescribed by Parliament.
- One third of the total number of seats reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes shall be reserved for women of those groups in the Lok Sabha and the legislative assemblies.
- Reserved seats may be allotted by rotation to different constituencies in the state or union territory.
- Reservation of seats for women shall cease to exist 15 years after the commencement of this Amendment Act

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An attempt to end Gender bias in women against women, the Ministry of Women and Child Development is undertaking an online campaign on social media #IamThatWoman.  
**Women standing 'by' and 'for' women.**

#### Key Issues

- ✓ It is also contend that this policy diverts attention from the larger issues of electoral reform such as criminalisation of politics and inner party democracy.
- ✓ Opponents argue that it would perpetuate the unequal status of women since they would not be perceived to be competing on merit.
- ✓ Reservation of seats in Parliament restricts choice of voters to women candidates. Therefore, some experts have suggested alternate methods such as reservation in political parties and dual member constituencies.
- ✓ Rotation of reserved constituencies in every election may reduce the incentive for an MP to work for his constituency as he may be ineligible to seek re-election from that constituency.
- ✓ **The report examining the 1996 women's reservation Bill** recommended that reservation be provided for women of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) once the Constitution was amended to allow for reservation for OBCs. It also recommended that reservation be extended to the Rajya Sabha and the Legislative Councils. Neither of these recommendations has been incorporated in the Bill
- ✓ Reservation might promote wives and daughters of politicians whose constituencies fell under the reserved category defeating the purpose of the bill and fanning Nepotism.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Geeta Mukherjee  
recommendations, PRI  
women reservation



### Significance

**Political Empowerment:** In all walks of life, women who acquired the necessary skills and education have proved themselves capable of holding of their own. But unfortunately they have failed to gain the requisite ground in the field of politics. All these **trends indicate that women's representation in politics** (State legislatures and Parliament) requires special attention and positive action enhancing the role of women in democratization of the country.

Women representation  
Worst State: Nagaland and Mizoram (No women MLA)  
Best State: Haryana, West Bengal and Bihar

**Social Empowerment:** Reservation for women are needed to compensate for the social barriers that have prevented women from participating in politics and thus making their voices heard. It is of the opinion that this Bill is a crucial affirmative step in the right direction of enhancing the participation of women. It is of the firm opinion that reservation is needed to ensure the participation of women who constitute a traditionally neglected section of the society.

**Democratisation:** It is need of hour that in the true democratic spirit, no class/community should be excluded from the decision making due to the social and economic barriers placed upon that gender as a whole. It is of the firm opinion that **'Reservation' is a sociological concept evolved to bring about social reengineering and** that reservation for women is therefore needed to make the democratic process inclusive. It further shows that through 1/3rd reservation of seats for women in Panchayats and Nagarpalikas, they have been able to make meaningful contributions and that the actual representation of women in Panchayati Raj institutions has gone upto 42.3% i.e., beyond the reservation percentage evidently making reservation in Parliament a stepping stone toward equality.

### Bharatmala programme

#### In News

The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) is set to get the power to approve projects with a construction cost of more than Rs 1,000 crore to ensure faster implementation of the Bharatmala programme.

Under the proposal, only public private partnership (PPP) projects under the build-operate-transfer (BOT) model, where viability gap funding (VGF) is to be provided by the government, will need CCEA clearance.

**NHAI wouldn't be required to go to the Cabinet for every project.** The NHAI board would be empowered to approve all engineering procurement and construction and hybrid annuity projects.

Components of BharatMala Project:

1. Construction of national highways through coastal/border areas, ports, backward areas, religious and tourist sites.
2. Border and coastal connectivity
3. Construction, strengthening and widening of approximately 1,500 major bridges and 200 Railway Over Bridges (ROBs)/Railway Under Bridges (RUBs) on national highways.
4. Improving connectivity to Char Dham i.e. the pilgrimage sites of Kedarnath, Badrinath, Yamunothri & Gangothri in Uttarakhand.
5. Enhancing freight traffic along the identified 44 economic (freight) corridors, inter-corridors and feeder-routes for development. The corridors include, among others,

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**Bharatmala programme**  
Bharatmala is a new umbrella program for the highways sector that focuses on optimizing efficiency of road traffic movement across the country by bridging critical infrastructure gaps.. A total fund of Rs 10 trillion (Rs 10 lakh crores) is to be allocated in different phases to complete the components of the programme. Networking of identified economic corridors (so far 44 economic corridors were identified) with high quality roads is the chief feature of Bharatmala.

Mumbai-Kochi-Kanyakumari, Bengaluru-Mangaluru, Hyderabad-Panaji and Sambalpur-Ranchi.

#### Projects Undertaken in Phase I

- ✓ A total of around 24,800 kms are being considered in Phase I of Bharatmala. In addition, Bharatmala Pariyojana phase –I also includes 10,000 kms of balance road works under NHDP, taking the total to 34,800 kms at an estimated cost of Rs.535000 crore. Bharatmala Phase I– is to be implemented over a five years period i.e. 2017-18 to 2021-22
- ✓ Bharatmala envisages improving the efficiency of the National Corridor (Golden-Quadrilateral and NS-EW corridor) in Phase I.
- ✓ The programme has identified around 26,200 km of Economic Corridors or routes that have heavy freight traffic, of which 9,000 kms are being taken up for development in Phase-I.
- ✓ 8,000 km of Inter-Corridors and around 7,500 km of Feeder Corridors have also been identified under Bharatmala, of which around 6000 km will be developed in Phase I.
- ✓ Bharatmala also envisages building 3300 kms of Border Roads of strategic importance along international boundaries and 2000 km of International Connectivity roads to promote trade with Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar. Out of this around 2000 km will be taken up under Phase-I.

PEPPER IT WITH  
NHAI, CCEA, Sagarmala,  
PMIS Mobile App

#### CVC to develop Integrity Index of 25 Organizations

With a view to implement its mandate the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC) wishes to adopt a strategy which will ensure transparent, accountable and efficient governance. One such tool is the Integrity Index for public organisations which will be based on benchmarking of governance processes by internal and external stakeholders.

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The CVC believes that integrity, long term sustainability and profitability are all closely linked and can help public organisations create islands of excellence in the medium to long term while achieving all the objectives.

CVC has appointed the Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad to undertake a research-based approach to create an integrity index that various organizations can use to measure themselves and which will evolve with changing needs.

Vigilance Awareness Week to be observed from 30th October to 4th November, 2017 with theme **“My Vision- Corruption Free India”**

#### Integrity Index

The Integrity Index will bring out annual scores/rankings of Public Sector Undertakings/Public Sector Banks and Financial Institutions/Departments/Ministries of Government of India by linking the essential drivers of vigilance with long term efficiency, profitability and sustainability of public organizations and create an internal and external ecosystem that promotes working with Integrity in public organizations.

The main objectives for which the Integrity Index is to be established are:

1. Define what constitutes Integrity of Public Organizations.
2. Identify the different factors of Integrity and their inter-linkages.
3. Create an objective and reliable tool that can measure the performance of organizations along these above factors.
4. Validate the findings over a period of time to improve upon the robustness of the tool that measures Integrity.
5. Create an internal and external ecosystem that promotes working with Integrity where public organizations lead the way.

PEPPER IT WITH  
CVC Act, 2003, CVC  
power & Function,  
Integrity Pledge

At the initial phase, 25 CPSUs will undergo the exercise of computing their Integrity index.



**About CVC**

CVC, a Statutory Body is conceived to be the apex vigilance institution, free of control from any executive authority, monitoring all vigilance activity under the Central Government and advising various authorities in Central Government organizations in planning, executing, reviewing and reforming their vigilance work. On the recommendations of the Committee on Prevention of Corruption, CVC came into existence.

The CVC Bill was passed by both the houses of Parliament in 2003 and the President gave its assent on September 11, 2003. Thus the Central Vigilance Commission Act 2003 (No.45 Of 2003) came into effect from that date.

Commission composition:

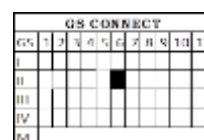
1. A Central Vigilance Commissioner - Chairperson;
2. Not more than two Vigilance Commissioners - Members;

**1<sup>st</sup> PMKK for Skilling in Smart Cities**

India's first Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKK) has been set up at New Delhi under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) by National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in collaboration with New Delhi Municipal Council.

**About PMKK**

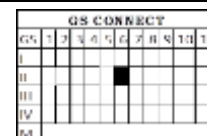
- The targets set for skilling Indian youth demands systematic execution through speed, scale and sustainability. A major towards ensuring quality and consistency while meeting the numbers is the formation of state-of-the-art training centers called the PMKK in partnership with training partners across India.
- The PMKK centres are divided into three categories based on the district population.
  - ✓ A population above 4 lakh
  - ✓ B population 1-4 lakh
  - ✓ C population less than 1 lakh
- For setting up the PMKK centre NSDC will provide funding in the form of a loan to cover 70% of its expenditure at an applicable rate of interest with a repayment period of 4 years.


**About PMKVY**

Scheme	Objectives	Eligibility	Beneficiary	Benefit
Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna	To provide formal short term training to impart skills to and recognition of skills through certification, to enhance employability of the youth.	-Undergoes a skill development training in an eligible sector by an eligible training provider -Is certified during the span of one year from the date of launch of the scheme; -Is availing this monetary award for the first and only time during the operation of this scheme	college / school dropouts or unemployed - with prior learning experience or skills but without any formal certification for the same	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 8479 training centers opened in 596 districts</li> <li>• Over 11 Lakh youth enrolled.</li> <li>• Training in 375 trades.</li> <li>• 19.85 Lakh youth trained and 2.49 Lakh placed as part of PMKVY (2015-2016)</li> </ul>

**MSME Samadhaan**

The govt has launched MSME Delayed Payment Portal – MSME Samadhaan, empowering micro and small entrepreneurs across the country to directly register their cases relating to delayed payments by Central Ministries/Departments/CPSEs/State Governments.


**Significance**

1. The delays in payments have made many MSMEs as NPA

**MSMED, Act 2006**

This Act provides for facilitating the promotion and development and enhancing the competitiveness of the micro, small, and medium enterprise and for matters connected.

in past. Timely payment makes them viable and vibrant. That was the reason why MSME Ministry has come out with this portal where entrepreneurs can upload their issues, problems in case they do not get payment within 45 days from PSUs or government.

2. The Portal will give information about the pending payment of MSEs with individual CPSEs / Central Ministries, State Governments, etc.
3. The CEO of PSEs and the Secretary of the Ministries concerned will also be able to monitor the cases of delayed payment under their jurisdiction and issue necessary instructions to resolve the issues. This will greatly facilitate the monitoring of the delayed payment in a more effective manner.
4. The information on the portal will be available in public domain, thus exerting moral pressure on the defaulting organisations. The MSEs will also be empowered to access the portal and monitor their cases.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Abid Hussain  
Committee(1997)  
Study Group under  
Dr. S.P. Gupta (2000)

### Liberalised Arms Rules to boost “Make in India”

In News

To boost the Centre's 'Make in India' policy, the Union Home Ministry has liberalised the Arms Rules to encourage investments in the manufacture of arms, ammunition and weapons systems in order to promote employment generation in this field.

Brief

The liberalised rules are expected to encourage the manufacturing activity and facilitate availability of world class weapons to meet the requirement of Armed Forces and Police **Forces in sync with country's defence indigenization programme.**

The liberalised rules will apply to licences granted by MHA for small arms & ammunition and licences granted by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) under powers delegated to them, for tanks and other armoured fighting vehicles, defence aircrafts, space crafts, warships of all kinds, arms and ammunition and allied items of defence equipment other than small arms.

The salient features of the liberalised rules are:

1. The licence granted for manufacturing shall now be valid for the life-time of the licensee company. The requirement of renewal of the license after every 5 years has been done away with.
2. Similarly, condition that the small arms and light weapons produced by manufacturer shall be sold to the Central Government or the State Governments with the prior approval of the MHA has been done away with.
3. The licence fee has been reduced significantly. Earlier the licence fee was Rs. 500/- per firearm which added up to very large sums and was a deterrent to seeking manufacturing licenses. The licence fee will now range from Rs. 5,000/- to the maximum of Rs. 50,000/-.
4. Single manufacturing licence will be allowed for a multi-unit facility within the same State or in different States within the country.

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### Efforts to tackle hate speech online

To tackle hate speech and the spread of hatred and incitement online, an expert committee constituted by the central government, has recommended that the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) and the Information Technology (IT) Act be amended to include strict provisions and specify punishment for such cases.

The committee, headed by former law secretary and Lok Sabha secretary general T. K. Viswanathan, submitted its report to the Union home ministry lately. It had been constituted in 2015 after the Supreme Court struck down Section 66A of the IT Act. Sending offensive messages

PEPPER IT WITH  
505A of the IPC, IPC  
Section 153C

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through a communication device to cause inconvenience was punishable under Section 66 of the IT Act.

#### Law commission viewpoint

We decided there was no need to reintroduce Section 66A but we need to strengthen the IPC instead.

#### Recommendation of committee

#### Amendments to IPC

1. Recommendation that the committee has made deals with the prohibition of incitement to hatred online. It has suggested that IPC Section 153C be amended **to include in communication “spoken or written words, signs, visible representation, information, audio, video or combination of both, transmitted, retransmitted through any telecommunication service, communication device or computer source.” The punishment it suggests for this is up to two years imprisonment or a fine of Rs 5,000 or both.**
2. Recommendation is to amend Section 505A of the IPC to include the punishment of up to a year or a fine of Rs 5,000 or both of a person or group who intentionally use means of communications to cause fear, alarm or provoke violence.

#### Amendment to CrPC, 1973

The committee also suggested an amendment to the CrPC 1973 – it recommended the creation of the post of a State Cyber Crime Coordinator and District Cyber Crime Cell.

#### Amendments to IT Act, 2000

1. It suggested that Section 78 be amended to allow a police officer not below the rank of sub inspector to investigate any offence under the IT Act.
2. Section 66A had provisions for police to make arrests based on their subjective **discretion about what could be “offensive” and over time, this had been used to arrest a number of people including cartoonist, scholars and students.**

#### IT Act 2006

- ✓ The Information Technology (Amendment) Bill, 2006 amends the Information Technology Act, 2000.
- ✓ The Bill makes a company handling sensitive personal data liable to pay compensation up to Rs 5 crore, if it is negligent in implementing reasonable security measures with respect to such data.
- ✓ The Bill does not hold intermediaries liable for third party data or content made available by them. This protection is not absolute and intermediaries are required to remove unlawful data or content on receiving information about it.
- ✓ The Bill proposes to enable authentication of electronic records by any electronic signature technique.
- ✓ The Bill changes the name and the composition of the appellate tribunal. It also establishes an **examiner of electronic evidence to give expert opinion on “electronic form evidence”.**

#### Bureau of Indian standards (BIS) Act 2016

A new Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) Act 2016 which was notified in March, 2016, has been brought into force with effect from 12th October, 2017.

The Act establishes the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) as the National Standards Body of India. The Act has enabling provisions for the Government to bring under compulsory certification regime any goods or article of any scheduled industry, process, system or service which it considers necessary in the public interest or for the protection of human, animal or plant health, safety of the environment, or prevention of unfair trade practices, or national security.

Enabling provisions have also been made for making hallmarking of the precious metal articles mandatory. The new Act also allows multiple types of simplified conformity assessment schemes including self-declaration of

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Revised Quality Standards  
for Caustic Soda

conformity against a standard which will give simplified options to manufacturers to adhere to the standards and get certificate of conformity. The Act enables the Central Government to appoint any authority/agency, in addition to the BIS, to verify the conformity of products and services to a standard and issue certificate of conformity. Further, there is provision for repair or recall, including product liability of the products bearing Standard Mark but not conforming to the relevant Indian Standard.

The new Act will further help in ease of doing business in the country, give fillip to Make in India campaign and ensure availability of quality products and services to the consumers.

#### About BIS

- BIS is the National Standard Body of India established under the BIS Act 1986 for the harmonious development of the activities of standardization, marking and quality certification of goods and for matters connected therewith or incidental there to.
- BIS has been providing traceability and tangibility benefits to the national economy in a number of ways - providing safe reliable quality goods; minimizing health hazards to consumers; promoting exports and imports substitute; control over proliferation of varieties etc. through standardization, certification and testing.
- BIS has its Headquarters at New Delhi and it has 5 Regional Offices (ROs). Under the Regional Offices are the Branch Offices (BOs) which offer certification services to the industry and serve as effective link between State Governments, industries, technical institutions, and consumer organization etc. of the respective region.

The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body of India is a statutory organization under the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986. The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body of India, resolves to be the leader in all matters concerning Standardization, Certification and Quality.

It aims to achieve excellence for effective and timely implementation of the objectives laid down in the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, and providing prompt and efficient services to all stakeholders.

#### Objectives

- Harmonious development of standardization, marking and quality certification
- To provide new thrust to standardization and quality control
- To evolve a national strategy for according recognition to standards and integrating them with growth and development of production and exports.

### Right to Adequate Housing

The United Nations has designated the first Monday of every October as World Habitat Day. The purpose of World Habitat Day is to reflect on the state of our towns and cities, and on the basic right of all to adequate shelter. It is also intended to remind the world that we all have the power and the responsibility to shape the future of our cities and towns.

Adequate housing was recognized as part of the right to an adequate standard of living in the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights and in the 1966 International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Many other international human rights treaties have since recognized or referred to the right to adequate housing or some **elements of it, such as the protection of one's home and privacy.**

#### What

Right to adequate housing should not be interpreted narrowly. Rather, it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity. The characteristics of the right to adequate housing can be explained as under.

- The right to adequate housing contains freedoms. These freedoms include:

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The theme for World Habitat Day '2 October 2017' is *Housing Policies: Affordable Homes*. World Habitat Day was established in 1985 by the United Nations General Assembly and was first celebrated in 1986.



- Protection against forced evictions and the arbitrary destruction and demolition of one's home.
  - The right to be free from arbitrary interference with one's home, privacy and family and
  - The right to choose one's residence, to determine where to live and to freedom of movement.
- The right to adequate housing contains entitlements. These entitlements include:
- Security of tenure.
  - Housing, land and property restitution.
  - Equal and non-discriminatory access to adequate housing.
  - Participation in housing-related decision-making at the national and community levels.
- Adequate housing must provide more than four walls and a roof. A number of conditions must be met before particular forms of shelter can be considered to constitute "adequate housing." These elements are just as fundamental as the basic supply and availability of housing. For housing to be adequate, it must, at a minimum, meet certain criteria e.g: Security of tenure, Availability of services, materials, facilities and infrastructure, Affordability, Habitability, Accessibility, Location, Cultural adequacy.

PEPPER IT WITH  
ICHUD, World  
conference on disaster  
Risk reduction.

The right to adequate housing does NOT require the State to build housing for the entire population. Rather, the right to adequate housing covers measures that are needed to prevent homelessness, prohibit forced evictions, address discrimination, focus on the most vulnerable and marginalized groups, ensure security of tenure to all, and **guarantee that everyone's housing is adequate.**

The right to adequate housing is not the same as the right to property or the right to land. The violation of the right to adequate housing may affect the enjoyment of a wide range of other human rights.

### India's UN peacekeeping Decision Making

India has sought enhanced role for troops contributing countries in the decision-making process of UN peacekeeping missions.

Current system of excluding the troop and police-contributing countries (T/PCCs) from the process of framing the mandates is not sustainable. The UN Security Council needs to revisit the way mandates are designed- India said. India is one of the largest contributors of troops and police to UN peacekeeping missions.

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### UN Peacekeeping Mission

United Nations Peacekeeping helps countries torn by conflict, create the conditions for lasting peace. It is comprised of civilian, police and military personnel.

As of 31 May 2017, our workforce in the field consisted of:

- 83,499 serving troops and military observers
- 12,494 police personnel;
- 5,043 international civilian personnel (31 December 2016);
- 10,276 local civilian staff (31 December 2016);
- 1,599 UN Volunteers.
- 124 countries contributed military and police personnel.

PEPPER IT WITH  
The General Assembly Security Council, Economic and Social Council, International Court of Justice

The UN does not have its own military force; it depends on contributions from Member States.

In addition to maintaining peace and security, peacekeepers are increasingly charged with assisting in political processes; reforming judicial systems; training law enforcement and police forces; disarming and reintegrating former combatants; supporting the return of internally displaced persons and refugees.

### Nobel Peace Prize 2017 to ICAN

The Norwegian Nobel Committee, warning of a rising risk of nuclear war, awarded the 2017 Nobel Peace Prize on Friday to a little-known international campaign group advocating for a ban on nuclear weapons.

The International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICAN) describes itself as a coalition of grassroots non-government groups in more than 100 nations. It began in Australia and was officially launched in Vienna in 2007.

#### Significance

This is a time of great global tension, when fiery rhetoric could all too easily lead us, inexorably, to unspeakable horror. The spectre of nuclear conflict looms large once more. If ever there were a moment for nations to declare their unequivocal opposition to nuclear weapons that moment is now.

In July, 122 nations adopted a UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons, although the agreement does not include nuclear-armed states such as the United States, Russia, China, Britain and France. This award shines a needed light on the path the ban treaty provides towards a world free of nuclear weapons. The Nobel prize seeks to bolster the case of disarmament amid nuclear tensions between the United States and North Korea and uncertainty over the fate of a 2015 deal between Iran and major powers to limit Tehran's nuclear program.

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### India invited to join SCO contact group meeting on Afghanistan

India following its rising profile in Afghanistan for the first time ever has been invited to join Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) contact group meeting on Afghanistan to discuss prevailing security situation and economic potential of the landlocked country.

#### About SCO Contact Group Meeting

- ✓ The meeting comes as a feather in the cap for India's Afghan strategy after successful US backed Indo-Afghan trade and investment show in Delhi. The development is viewed as acknowledgement of India's stake in the war-torn country.
- ✓ The SCO contact group on Afghanistan that became defunct in 2009 has been revived following intervention by Russia from this year.
- ✓ SCO Afghan contact group meet will not only discuss prevailing security situation in Afghanistan that has spill over impact across the region but also economic potential of the landlocked country that remains underutilised.

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## Significance

SCO membership that put India into the heart of Eurasian geopolitics enabling a larger say in Afghanistan that has direct bearing on security situation here. However, India's deeper engagement with Afghanistan has been opposed by Pakistan and its Army. Pak-backed Taliban and Haqqani network continue to target Indian interests and assets in the landlocked country as it strives to achieve "strategic depth".

PEPPER IT WITH  
Quadilateral  
Cooperation Group,  
Salma Dam

## About SCO

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) is a Eurasian political, economic, and security organisation, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan; the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter was signed in June 2002 and entered into force on 19 September 2003. Later India and Pakistan were admitted as full members.
- The SCO's main goals are as follows: strengthening mutual trust and neighbourliness among the member states; promoting their effective cooperation in politics, trade, the economy, research, technology and culture, as well as in education, energy, transport, tourism, environmental protection, and other areas; making joint efforts to maintain and ensure peace, security and stability in the region; and moving towards the establishment of a democratic, fair and rational new international political and economic order.

## Iran-U.S. relations: On dangerous footing

U.S. President Donald Trump announced that he could no longer certify that continuing the sanctions waiver for Iran, under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), contributes to U.S. national security interests in view of Iran's aggressive behaviour. He refrained from accusing Iran of violating the JCPOA given that International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has publicly stated that Iran is in full compliance with the deal and subject to the world's most robust nuclear verification regime. This passes the ball to the U.S. Congress.

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For the first time since 1945, a clear divide with European allies has emerged, with German, French and British leaders jointly declaring that preserving the JCPOA is in their shared national security interests. Only two countries have applauded Mr. Trump's decision—Saudi Arabia and Israel.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Stuxnet, IAEA

## About JCPOA

1. The JCPOA, signed on July 14, 2015, was the result of prolonged negotiations between Iran and P5+1 (U.S., U.K., France, Russia, China, Germany and EU).
2. In 2004, Iran had around 1000 centrifuges, and by 2015 that had grown to 20,000. The U.S. concluded that Iran had recovered from the Stuxnet debacle and was barely months away from producing enough highly enriched uranium for nuclear devices. Therefore the JCPOA focussed exclusively on rolling back Iran's nuclear activities.
3. Under the JCPOA, Iran ended certain activities, accepted restraints on other activities and accepted a highly rigorous inspection regime. In return, about \$100 billion of Iranian assets were unfrozen and Iran was allowed to resume sales of oil. January 16 last year was declared Implementation Day when the IAEA certified Iranian compliance and sanctions relief kicked in.
4. Since the Obama administration's negotiations with Iran did not enjoy support in the Republican-dominated Congress, an additional piece of legislation, Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act (INARA) was passed in May 2015. The objective was to constrain presidential authority to waive sanctions on Iran by obliging him to certify every 90 days that Iran was in full compliance with the deal and that continuing the waiver contributed to U.S. national security interests. INARA also obliged the President to provide a report on Iran's support to terrorism, human rights violations and ballistic missile activities.



## Significance

With the withdrawal from the certification, Mr. Trump has put the final nail in the coffin of an Iran-U.S. reset that had appeared possible during the Obama days. Now the threat of sanctions will hang over the nuclear deal. This is a boon for hardliners in Iran, who have suffered a political setback in recent years. The deal became possible only because the reformists and moderates rallied behind **President Hassan Rouhani's agenda**, despite strong opposition from the Iranian deep state. Even Mr. Rouhani, who promised a solution to the nuclear crisis, got the deal done and won re-election this year, will now find it difficult to mobilise public opinion behind the agreement in the light of continued U.S. hostility.



The Iran deal, despite its shortcomings, was a shining example of the capacity of world powers to come together and sort out a complex issue diplomatically. It assumed greater significance given the recent wars and chaos in West Asia. It should have set a model in addressing other nuclear crises. Instead, by going after Iran even though it complies with the agreement, the U.S. is damaging its own reputation.

## International Day of Girl Child

On the occasion of the International Day of the Girl Child, the Ministry of Women and Child Development and UNICEF together organized a panel discussion on The Role of Sports in the Empowerment of. A power-packed sports team comprising of UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, **Sachin Tendulkar**, **Indian Women's cricket team captain Mitali Raj**, **former captain Indian women's National Basketball Team**, Raspreet Sidhu, Special Olympics athlete, Ragini Sharma, Karate champion, Mana Mandlekar and International para swimmer and BBBP Champion Rajni Jha participated in the panel discussion.

About International Day of Girl Child

On December 19, 2011, United Nations General Assembly adopted Resolution 66/170 to declare October 11 as the International Day of the Girl Child, to recognize girls' **rights and the unique challenges girls face** around the world.

The International Day of the Girl Child focuses attention on the need to address the **challenges girls face and to promote girls' empowerment and the fulfilment of their human rights**.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Bet Bachao Beti  
Padao, Nirbhaya  
fund

## India - Belarus

The Union Cabinet has given its ex-post facto approval for a Memorandum of Understanding between India and Belarus for cooperation in the field of Vocational Education and Training (VET). This is for the first time MoU for cooperation in area of vocational education, training and skill development has been signed with Eurasian country.

Cooperation between two countries in identified areas would be implemented through establishing institutional partnerships between Republican Institute for Vocational Education" (RIPO), an apex institution for development of Belarusian vocational education system and Directorate General of Training for transfer of technology in VET delivery & its sustainability. Cooperation with Sectoral VET/ Centres of Excellence of Belarus is proposed for Research and Development in the skilling ecosystem.

Significance

Belarus has a large concentration of industries, mainly into manufacturing and heavy

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industries, which draw their strength from available skilled manpower and a highly developed skill training system. The transfer of knowledge of their skilling methodology will immensely help in our initiatives like "Make in India" and "Skill India". This MoU would pave the way for systematic transfer of their expertise and knowhow in skilling the manpower specially in manufacturing sector..

India Belarus Relation

**India's relations with Belarus have been traditionally warm and cordial. India was one of the first countries to recognize Belarus as independent country in 1991. Formal diplomatic relations were established and the Indian diplomatic mission in Minsk was opened in 1992 and Belarus opened its Mission in New Delhi in 1998. Belarus has an Honorary Consulate in Kolkata and Mumbai.**

**Belarus has been supportive of India's candidature for a permanent seat at the UNSC. Belarus supported India's candidature for the non-permanent seat of UNSC for the years 2011-12. Belarus also supported India at the NSG Session in Seoul in 2016. India supported Belarus for its membership in the NAM and other international and multilateral fora like IPU. India's supportive stand on various Resolutions in Geneva and New York targeting Belarus for violation of human rights and restrictions on freedom of expression has been appreciated by Belarus. Belarus recognizes India as an emerging global power and seeks to develop a "strategic relationship" with India.**

### IALA and its status

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) to change its status from Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) to Inter-Governmental Organization (IGO).

**The move will facilitate "to foster the safe, economic and efficient movement of vessels". It will bring IALA at par with International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and International Hydrographic Organisation (IHO).**

Background

The IALA, having headquarters at St. Germainen Laye (France) was established in 1957 under French law. It is governed by a General Assembly having 83 National members, with its Council as the executive body. The IALA council consists of 24 National Members and India is one of the council members represented through the Directorate General of Lighthouses and Lightships (DGLL), Ministry of Shipping. DGLL establishes and maintains Aids to Navigation in general waters along coast of India including A&N and Lakshadweep group of islands, as per Lighthouse Act 1927.

In its XII session held in La Coruna, Spain in May 2014, International Association of Marine Aids to Navigation and Lighthouse Authorities (IALA) General Assembly adopted a resolution stating its firm belief that the status of IALA from NGO to IGO will best facilitate IALA's aims in the 21st century.

PEPPER IT WITH  
International Maritime  
Organisation, International  
Hydrographic Organisation

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### Global Hunger Index

**India has a "serious" hunger problem and ranks 100th out of 119 countries on the global hunger index — behind North Korea, Bangladesh and Iraq but ahead of Pakistan, according to a report.**

**India stood at 97th position in last year's rankings. India is ranked 100th out of 119 countries, and has the third highest score in all of Asia — only Afghanistan and Pakistan are ranked worse. At 31.4, India's 2017 GHI (Global Hunger Index) score is at the high end of the 'serious' category, and is one of the main factors pushing South Asia to the category of worst performing region on the GHI this year, followed closely by Africa South of the Sahara.**

Significance

**The country's serious hunger level is driven by high child malnutrition and underlines need for stronger commitment to the social sector. India's high ranking on the Global Hunger Index [GHI] again this year brings to the fore the disturbing reality of the**

PEPPER IT WITH  
Human Development  
Index, Sustainable  
Development Goals

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country's stubbornly high proportions of malnourished children. More than one-fifth of Indian children under five weigh too little for their height and over a third are too short for their age.

Even with the massive scale up of national nutrition-focused programmes in India, drought and structural deficiencies have left large number of poor in India at risk of malnourishment in 2017.

However the on-going efforts are expected to make significant changes in improving the existing situation. India has developed and launched an action plan on 'undernourishment free India' by 2022. The plan shows stronger commitment and greater investments in tackling malnutrition in the coming years.

About Global Hunger Index

The Global Hunger Index (GHI) is designed to comprehensively measure and track hunger globally and by country and region. Calculated each year by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the GHI highlights successes and failures in hunger reduction and provides insights into the drivers of hunger. By raising awareness and understanding of regional and country differences in hunger, the GHI aims to trigger actions to reduce hunger.

### India act against bottom trawling

India has informed Sri Lanka that it has taken measures to stop bottom trawling by its fishermen in the waters near the Sri Lankan coastline.

Recent initiatives taken by the Government of India to end bottom trawling in the Palk Bay area include the launch of a programme on diversification of bottom trawlers into deep-sea fishing vessels for tuna long lining under the Blue Revolution Scheme, construction of Mookaiyur and Poompuhar fishing harbours, and capacity-building programmes for fishermen of the Palk Bay area in deep sea tuna long lining. Besides, fresh registration for bottom trawlers in the Palk Bay area has been banned by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

India also informed that schemes promoting seaweed farming and sea-cage farming have begun in the Palk Bay area to wean away fishermen from deep-sea trawling.

Bottom trawling by Indian fishermen had emerged as a major issue because of the disruptive impact it left on the coastal communities of Sri Lanka. Earlier in July, Sri Lanka banned bottom trawling, increasing the chances of interception of more Indian bottom trawlers.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
JWG mechanism  
Katchatheevu island

### BBIN motor vehicle agreement

India has embarked on the implementation of the BBIN motor pact with Bangladesh and Nepal. Action for implementation of BBIN MVA by Bangladesh, India and Nepal has been initiated

About BBIN motor pact

India in June 2015 had signed the major sub-regional transport project, Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA), for the seamless transit of passenger and cargo vehicles among them.

However, Bhutan could not get public and parliamentary support for it. Bhutan, which had inked the pact could not get public and parliamentary support for ratification of the agreement, while India, Bangladesh and Nepal have already ratified the pact.

The pact will realise the ultimate objective of free movement of people and goods in the region and said that this would be supplemented through the building and upgrading roads, railways and waterways infrastructure.

Way forward

Bhutan's announcement that it is unable to proceed with the Motor Vehicles Agreement with Bangladesh, India and Nepal is a road block, and not a dead end. The sub-grouping, BBIN as it is referred to, was an alternative mooted by the government after

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PEPPER IT WITH  
BCIM corridor

Pakistan rejected the MVA at the SAARC summit in Kathmandu in 2014. Of the other SAARC members, Sri Lanka and the Maldives are not connected by land, and Afghanistan could only be connected if Pakistan was on board. The main concern expressed by Bhutanese citizen groups and politicians is over increased vehicular and air pollution in a country that prides itself on ecological consciousness.

**Despite the setback, New Delhi must persevere with its efforts. Bhutan's objections are environmental, not political, and its government may well change its mind as time goes by. Bhutan's concerns may be assuaged if India considers the inclusion of waterways and riverine channels as a less environmentally damaging substitute. Above all, the BBIN pact denotes a "can-do" attitude on India's part, as it shows a willingness to broaden its connectivity canvas with all countries willing to go ahead. Connectivity is the new global currency for growth and prosperity as it secures both trade and energy lines for countries en route, and India must make the most of its geographic advantages.**

## Catalonia crisis

Spain said that it will move to seize some of the Catalan regional government's powers after its leader warned that he could declare independence, escalating the country's worst political crisis in decades.

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**Madrid had warned that it would trigger Article 155 of Spain's Constitution** — a never-before-used measure allowing it to impose direct rule over the wealthy northeastern region — unless Catalonia backed down.

There are fears that such a move, allowing Madrid to potentially suspend Catalonia government and take over its police force, could spark unrest in a region.

**Catalonia's 7.5 million residents are fiercely attached to their own language and culture but are divided on whether to break away from the rest of Spain.**

Catalonia said his regional administration has a mandate to declare independence from what he says was a 90-% **"Yes" vote in this year, marred by a heavy-handed police crackdown on voters. But turnout was given as only 43%. Many voters who oppose independence stayed away from a referendum that had been declared illegal by Spain's Constitutional Court.**

The history of Catalonia

- ✓ Catalonia was an independent region of the Iberian Peninsula – modern day Spain and Portugal – with its own language, laws and customs.
- ✓ In 1150, the marriage of Petronilia, Queen of Aragon and Ramon Berenguer IV, Count of Barcelona formed a dynasty leaving their son to inherit all territories concerning the region of Aragon and Catalonia.
- ✓ This lasted until the reign of King Philip V. The War of the Spanish Succession ended with the defeat of Valencia in 1707, of Catalonia in 1714, and finally with the last of the islands in 1715 – resulting in the birth of modern-day Spain.
- ✓ Subsequent kings tried to impose the Spanish language and laws on the region, but they abandoned their attempts in 1931 and restored the Generalitat (the national Catalan government).
- ✓ General Francisco Franco, however, set out to destroy Catalan separatism and with his victory at the Battle of Ebro in 1938 he took control of the region, killing 3,500 people and forcing many more into exile.



The economic crisis in Spain has only served to magnify calls for Catalan independence – as the wealthy Barcelona region is seen as propping up the poorer rest of Spain.

Way forward

This grim backdrop should trigger fresh thinking on **Prime Minister Mr. Rajoy's** overall approach. A plain refusal to talk to the separatists is politically untenable when the other side seems inclined to push back on the declaration of independence. The attempt instead should be to

impress upon his interlocutors in Catalonia that a sizeable proportion of the population was opposed to secession. In fact, Madrid should weigh the larger ramifications of rolling back **Catalonia's regional autonomy at a time when passions are running high**. What is needed most of all currently is calmer rhetoric. Mr. Rajoy needs to steer the public debate more constructively to how regional aspirations could be met without precipitating a bigger crisis. Mr. Rajoy should draw upon his decades-long political experience, and the backing he enjoys of the opposition socialists, to fashion an appropriate response to Catalonia's overtures.

### In numbers | Catalonia

- **7.5m:** The population of Catalonia makes up 16.1pc of Spain's 46.6 million
- **95 per cent:** Proportion of the population that understand Catalan, the region's primary language. An estimated 10 million speak Catalan worldwide - primarily in Catalonia, the Valencian Community, the Balearic Islands and France
- **9th:** Catalan's ranking on the list of the most widely spoken languages in Europe. It is not, however, on the EU's list of 24 official languages
- **€209bn:** Catalonia's GDP in 2014. Spain's was €1 trillion
- **€65.1bn:** Catalonia's annual exports to other countries (double that of any other Spanish region)
- **13.2 per cent:** Catalonia unemployment rate in June 2017 is below the national average of 17.2 per cent
- **8 per cent:** The amount of GDP the Catalan Government has said it would claw back if it didn't have to hand over its taxes to the Spanish Government
- **3 notable Catalans:** Salvador Dalí, Antoni Gaudí and Montserrat Caballé



Castells are symbolic of Catalan culture

### IBSA Trust Fund agreement

India, Brazil and South Africa signed the IBSA Trust Fund Agreement that seeks to fight poverty in developing countries.

The agreement was signed at the 8th IBSA trilateral Ministerial Commission Meeting in Durban.

The IBSA Trust Fund brings together the three emerging economies of India, Brazil and South Africa to combat poverty in other developing countries.

Each country contributes USD 1 million annually to this fund which is managed by the UN Development Programmes (UNDP) Special Unit for South-South Cooperation.

IBSA

IBSA is a unique Forum which brings together India, Brazil and South Africa, three large democracies and major economies from three different continents, facing similar challenges. All three countries are developing, pluralistic, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-lingual and multi-religious nations.

The idea of establishing IBSA was discussed at a meeting between the then Prime Minister of India and the then Presidents of Brazil and South Africa in Evian on 2 June 2003 on the margins of the G-8 Summit. The grouping was formalized and named the IBSA Dialogue Forum when the Foreign Ministers of the three countries met in Brasilia on 6 June 2003 and issued the Brasilia Declaration.

Cooperation in IBSA is on three fronts: first, as a forum for consultation and coordination on global and regional political issues, such as, the reform of the global institutions of political and economic governance, WTO/Doha Development Agenda, climate change, terrorism etc.; second, trilateral collaboration on concrete areas/projects, through fourteen working groups and six People-to-People Forums, for the common benefit of three countries; and third, assisting other developing countries by taking up projects in the latter through IBSA Fund.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
BIMSTEC, BRICS

### BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine (BTFTM)

Ministry of AYUSH, Government of India hosted first Meeting of BIMSTEC Task Force on Traditional Medicine on 24-25 October, 2017 at Parvasi Bhartiya Kendra, New Delhi.

India referred to the rich heritage of Traditional systems of Medicine in the BIMSTEC Member States and emphasized that the BIMSTEC Forum provides an ideal platform for fostering collaborations among the Member States in the area of Traditional Medicine.

All the Delegations made Country Presentations on the status and best practices of Traditional Medicine in their respective country.

The Meeting also acknowledged that the BTFTM Meetings shall be held on rotational basis among the BIMSTEC Member States.

About BIMSTEC

The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is an International Organisation involving a group of countries in the South Asia and South East Asia namely, Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal. India being a major stake holder in the field of Traditional Medicine plays an important role in influencing the policies and strategies related to the Traditional Medicine in the BIMSTEC Forum.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
National Aayush  
Mission

### India, Sri Lanka ink housing project deal in Hambantota

Sri Lanka signed an agreement with India to build 1,200 houses in Hambantota. Of the 1,200 houses to be built, 600 will be constructed in the Southern Province, while the remaining would be built across Sri Lanka, through one model village in each of the country's 25 districts.

Significance

The signing of the MoU in Hambantota assumes significance not only in its timing, but also in taking India's housing project to the Sinhala-majority Southern Province.

As many as 46,000 homes have been built in the Tamil-majority north and east, while 4,000 houses are currently being built in the hill country in the Central and Uva provinces, where several thousand Sri Lankans of recent Indian origin live and work. Of the 1,200 houses to be built, 600 will be constructed in the Southern Province, while the remaining would be built across Sri Lanka, through one model village in each of the country's 25 districts.

The coastal city of Hambantota gained strategic significance after President Rajapaksa built a massive

PEPPER IT WITH  
13<sup>th</sup> amendment to  
constitution of Sri  
Lanka

port and an airport with huge Chinese loans. In July this year, his successor government sold a majority stake of the port to

China to service an outstanding \$8-billion debt it owes China, fanning concerns of countries with competing strategic interests, particularly India and the U.S.

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### Burundi becomes first nation to leave international criminal court

Burundi became the first nation ever to leave the international criminal court, set up to prosecute those behind the world's worst atrocities. Burundi's withdrawal from the Rome Statute will take effect on 27th October 2017. The move comes a year to the day after Bujumbura officially notified the United Nations that it was quitting the world's only permanent war crimes tribunal. This is seen as a great victory for Burundi because it has defended its sovereignty and national pride.

Some see it as a major blow to international justice. The decision to withdraw Burundi

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from the Rome Statute comes at a time when there is violence in the country.

However, ICC stated that the preliminary investigation launched by the prosecutor in April 2016 into possible crimes against humanity in the central African nation would **continue**. **“Burundi’s withdrawal does not affect the jurisdiction of the court with respect to crimes alleged to have been committed during the time it was a state party, namely up until 27 October 2017.** Overall, the violence in Burundi has claimed between 500 and 2,000 lives, according to differing tolls provided by the UN or NGOs, and more than 400,000 Burundians have fled abroad.

About ICC

1. ICC investigates and, where warranted, tries individuals charged with the gravest crimes of concern to the international community: genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.
2. The Court is participating in a global fight to end impunity, and through international criminal justice, the Court aims to hold those responsible accountable for their crimes and to help prevent these crimes from happening again.
3. Set up in 2002, the ICC based in the Hague has often come under fire from some countries who claim it is unfairly targeting African nations.
4. The ICC now has 123 member states who have ratified the 1998 Rome Statute, the guidelines which underpin the work of the tribunal.

Significance

**Burundi’s decision could trigger a wave of copy-cat moves** from other African countries. South Africa and Gambia said they would both follow suit, but later reversed their decisions. And Kenya and Uganda have also threatened to leave, but not acted on it yet. Zambia meanwhile has held public consultations, with an overwhelming 93% of those who participated opting to stay within the court.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Permanent Court  
of Arbitration, ICJ

### India - US 11th Trade Policy Forum Meeting

The 11th Trade Policy Forum (TPF) Meeting was held in Washington D.C. on recently. TPF serves as a robust platform that contributes towards promoting bilateral trade and investment between India and the US. During the meeting, discussions were held on issues related to bilateral trade between the two countries, areas of mutual cooperation, market access in agriculture, non-agricultural goods and services and Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

India’s stand

On the United States concerns related to trade deficit with India, India said that the issue of trade deficit should be viewed in the larger context of the growing economic and strategic partnership between the two countries that has grown and strengthened in recent years. India has made significant investments in the US and Indian skilled workers and students make important contributions to the US economy. As the Indian economy grows, and with the renewed emphasis on reviving US manufacturing, there will be greater opportunities for US exports to India. India has already started to import crude oil and new Liquefied Natural Gas exports are expected to commence early next year. Indian aviation companies such as Spicejet and Jet Airways have placed orders for over 300 aircrafts valued at several billions of dollars. These developments will go a long way in fulfilling India and US desire to have a free, fair and balanced trade between India and the US.

On market access in areas of interest to each other, the Ministry for Commerce and Industry noted progress on issues like ground handling operations, import regulations relating to poultry, export of pork to India, that have been raised by the US side. India also sought easing of procedure for export of Indian mangoes and pomegranates and market access for table grapes from India.

The Ministry for Commerce and Industry strongly took up the Indian concern with regard to problems faced by Indian services companies in obtaining H-1B and L-1 visas.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
H1B visa,  
Totalisation  
Agreement



It requested the US to ease the movement of skilled professionals, which has over the years contributed towards making US companies more competitive.

On the issue of IPR in India, the Ministry for Commerce and Industry drew attention to the National IPR Policy 2016, which lays down the roadmap for future development in the field of IPRs, and is a major step towards strengthening the IPR ecosystem in India, including improvements in procedures, timelines and resolution of disputes.

While responding to U.S. concerns on price controls on medical devices India mentioned about the need to bring about a balance between the demand for optimum medical facilities and affordable health care to its citizens. India desires to address the concerns of providing affordable health care to its citizens and balancing it with the need to introduce high end technology. It encouraged American companies and manufacturers of medical devices to establish manufacturing facilities in India.

India also sought the support of the U.S. to India's **proposal on the Trade Facilitation in Services Agreement** which has been tabled by India at the WTO.

**Significance**

At the conclusion of TPF, both countries decided that the two countries will continue to work towards building strong trade and investment ties to realize mutual gains from the partnership. The talks were held in a friendly and cooperative environment, with both sides expressing the desire to reduce the existing gaps and work towards resolution of the outstanding issues before the next round of the TPF.

### India ships wheat to Afghanistan via Chabahar

India on Sunday began shipment of wheat to Afghanistan through the Iranian port of Chabahar. Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) noted that the consignment would be the first to use the new route via Chabahar to access Afghanistan, even as India plans similar transfers in the **coming months. The transfer was part of India's commitment to send 1.1 million tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan on grant basis.**

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**Significance**

The shipment of wheat is a landmark moment as it will pave the way for operationalisation of the Chabahar port as an alternative, reliable and robust connectivity for Afghanistan. It will open up new opportunities for trade and transit from and to Afghanistan and enhance trade and commerce between the three countries (India, Iran and Afghanistan) and the wider region.

However, the use of Chabahar for wheat transshipment indicates the firming up of an alternative route to extend necessary support to Afghanistan, in the absence of overland transit rights by Pakistan. The move also indicates that Chabahar that India has been developing for some years, will soon be fully operational. India had earlier sent goods through the Iranian port of Bandar Abbas in 2003 as Pakistan had not eased land access to Afghanistan.



### India to sign extradition treaty with Lithuania

**In News**

The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister has given its approval for the signing and ratification of the Extradition Treaty between India and Lithuania.

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### Significance of Treaty

- The treaty would provide a legal framework for seeking extradition of terrorists, economic offenders and other criminals from and to Lithuania.
- The treaty would help in extradition of fugitive criminals including terrorists for criminal prosecutions from Lithuania who may have committed crimes against India.
- It will bring the criminals to justice, with a view to ensure peace and tranquility to public at large.
- India & Lithuania signed Treaty on Extradition and Protocol amending & supplementing the Agreement relating to Air Services.
- External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and her Lithuanian counterpart Linus Linkevicius in New Delhi signed an extradition treaty, thus enhancing its engagement with the Baltic region.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Extradition Act, 1962,  
MEA Guidelines for  
Extradition

### Extradition

Extradition may be briefly described as the surrender of an alleged or convicted criminal by one State to another. More precisely, extradition may be defined as the process by which one State upon the request of another surrenders to the latter a person found within its jurisdiction for trial and punishment or, if he has been already convicted, only for punishment, on account of a crime punishable by the laws of the requesting State and committed outside the territory of the requested State.

### Extradition Arrangement

The Extradition arrangement is made in the absence of an extradition treaty on the assurance of reciprocity including under an international convention.

In the arrangement, two countries consider any international convention as the legal basis for extradition in respect of any offence to which the convention applies. It does not cover all offences.

### Extradition treaty

It means a treaty made by India with a foreign State relating to the extradition of fugitive criminals, and includes any treaty relating to the extradition of fugitive criminals made before the 15th day of August, 1947, which extends to, and is binding on, India. An extradition treaty is a mutually agreed text signed and ratified by two Governments

India has signed extradition treaties with 37 countries and extradition arrangements with 8 other nations.

### Extradition offence

In relation to a foreign State, being a treaty State, an offence provided for in the extradition treaty with that State.

### Fugitive criminal

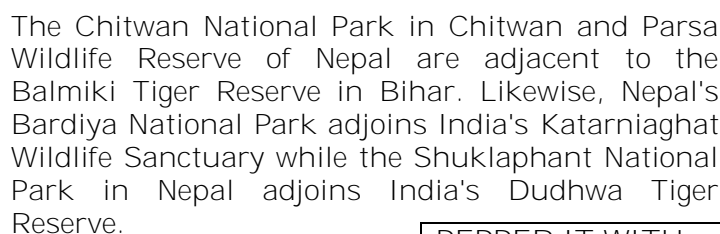
It means a person who is accused or convicted of an extradition offence within the jurisdiction of a foreign State and includes a person who, while in India, conspires, attempts to commit or incites or participates as an accomplice in the commission of an extradition offence in a foreign State.

## India Nepal First Joint Tiger Count

For the first time, Nepal and India will undertake a joint tiger census in their national parks, forests and protected areas adjoining the two countries using a globally-recognised method. Conservation authorities and experts would install cameras in various locations in tiger habitats as well as in buffer zones to capture and track the movements of the big cat.

The counting of tigers will begin from the second week of November and this is the first time that both the countries are counting tiger heads using the same method that is recognised globally. Both countries had decided to use the camera tapping procedure for the joint. By using this method chances of repeated counting of the same tiger can be avoided.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Jim Corbett Tiger  
Reserve,  
Ranthambore Tiger  
Reserve, Project  
Tiger, NTCA

figures showed that since 2010, the estimated

Significance

Tiger population is highest in karnatak followed by Uttarakhand. Nagarjunsagar-Srisaillam is the largest tiger reserve in terms of Area. Sunderbans in West Bengal has the largest number of Tigers.

The Centre has launched SECURE Himalaya a six-year project to ensure conservation of locally and globally significant biodiversity, land and forest resources in the high Himalayan ecosystem spread over four states in India. Protection of snow leopard and other endangered species and their habitats is one of the key components of the project which will also focus on securing livelihoods of the people in the region and enhancing enforcement to reduce wildlife crime.

PEPPER IT WITH  
CITES, Bhabar,  
Terai, Bangar,  
Khadar

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Enhanced enforcement efforts and monitoring under the project will also curb illegal trade in some medicinal and aromatic plants which are among the most threatened species in these landscapes.

### Global Wildlife Program Conference

India has jointly hosted the Global Wildlife Program (GWP) with World Bank and United Nations Development Program.

The GWP was held to address issues related to illegal wildlife trade across 19 countries in Asia and Africa. It will act as a platform to exchange knowledge and coordinate in on-ground action for combating illegal poaching of wildlife and improve governance on wildlife conservation.

The GWP hold discussions on management of wildlife habitat, securing sustainable community livelihood, enhancing enforcement, monitoring, cooperation to reduce wildlife crimes such as poaching and related threats. The conference provided an opportunity for India to showcase its conservation efforts through joint forest management, vana sanrakshan samitis, eco-development committees in and around protected areas.

Besides India, representatives and wildlife experts from 18 countries participated in the Global Wildlife Program conference. The Conference provided a platform to build strategic partnerships among all the 19 nations and enabled India to strengthen its enforcement mechanism to control wildlife trafficking.

### National Wildlife Action Plan (2017-31)

After integrating climate change into wildlife planning, putting greater thrust on wildlife health management and poaching, increasing public outreach and tweaking previous strategies, the Union Environment Ministry released the third National Wildlife Action Plan (NWAP) for 2017-31. The NWAP 2017-31, under which there are 250 projects, is India's road map to conserve wildlife for the next 15 years. Aspiring for a global leadership in wildlife conservation, the Union Ministry's plan is woven around the agenda of the United Nations' 15th Sustainable Developmental Goal -- "Life on Land".

The plan was released at the opening ceremony of Global Wildlife Program (GWP) that involves 19 Asian and African countries, United Nations, World Bank and other leading global organisations to deal with the wildlife crime.

PEPPER IT WITH  
CAMPA, National  
Board for Wildlife

The plan has been divided into five components, which are further divided into 17 themes carrying 103 conservation actions. Each theme has a set of conservation actions and projects - 250, in all. Man-animal conflict mitigation, adapting to the climate change, managing eco-tourism, ensuring public participation in the conservation, developing human resources, strengthening research and monitoring through modern technology like radio collars and drones and ensuring funding for the wildlife sector have been given special thrust in the planning.

#### Significance

The Plan is supposed to be one of the most modern plans ever which "exploits all the knowledge that country has gained in past years". The plan also ensures public participation.

The key strategic changes in the new plan is adopting a "landscape approach" in conservation of all the wildlife - uncultivated flora (plants) and undomesticated fauna (animals) - rather than the areas where they occur. This means that while till now programmes and plans related to wildlife were focused on and around national parks and sanctuaries, now the strategies would be based on the landscape of the region that may not be limited to a reserve forest system alone.



## Turtle Sanctuary to be set up in Allahabad

In order to protect the rich aquatic biodiversity of river Ganga from escalating anthropogenic pressures, development of a Turtle sanctuary in Allahabad along with a River Biodiversity Park at Sangam have been approved under Namami Gange programme.

The project at an estimated cost of Rs 1.34 crore would include development of River Biodiversity Park at Sangam (confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Sarasvati), establishment of a Turtle Rearing Centre (Permanent nursery at Triveni Pushp and makeshift annual hatcheries) and awareness about the importance of river Ganga and imperativeness of its conservation has been approved.

### Significance

This project will provide much needed platform to make the visitors aware of their place in the ecosystem, their roles and responsibilities, improve their understanding of the complexity of co-existence with the environment and help generate awareness for reducing the impact of human activities on critical natural resources. The task of dissipating knowledge about river Ganga will be taken up ardently in this project, which is 100% centrally funded.

The sustenance of more than 2000 aquatic species including threatened gharials, dolphins and turtles in river Ganga exemplifies the rich biodiversity of this lifeline to over **40 per cent of the country's population**. Rivers Ganga and Yamuna at Allahabad are home to some of the most endangered fauna like turtles (Batagur kachuga, Batagur dhongoka, Nilssonina gangetica, Chitra indica, Hardella thurjii etc.), the National Aquatic Animal - Gangetic dolphin (Platanista gangetica), the Gharial (Gavialis gangeticus) and numerous migratory and resident birds.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Olive Ridley  
Turtle, Namami  
Ganga

## India Water Week 2017 - IWW

The President of India, inaugurated India Water Week-2017 (October 10, 2017) in New Delhi.

### About IWW

The India Water Week 2017 was held between October 10 – 14, 2017 at Vigyan Bhavan, New Delhi. Based on the theme “Water and Energy for Inclusive Growth,” India Water Week-2017 is a platform to elicit ideas and opinions from global-level decision makers, politicians, researchers and entrepreneurs in the field of water resources development and management for mutual benefit and goodwill.

As a result, there is an urgency to conserve and utilize the limited availability of water resources in an optimum and efficient manner to satisfy larger needs. The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India has therefore created a unique platform for deliberating all the related issues and better management of water resources.

The government has involved all stakeholders including decision makers, politicians, researchers and entrepreneurs of water resources from India as well as abroad to discuss strategies for managing the demands and supplies in the right manner.

**The first event was organised in New Delhi in 2012 and the theme was ‘Water, Energy and Food Security: Call for Solutions’.** The event was inaugurated by the Prime Minister of India and was attended by about 1000 delegates including 32 foreign delegates representing 8 countries. The various technical themes related to the aspect of planning, development, utilization and management of water in different sectors were deliberated in various sessions.

### Significance

Water is essential to life. It is fundamental to the economy and to ecology – and to human equity. The issue of water is becoming still more critical in view of climate change and related environmental concerns. Better and more efficient use of water is a challenge for Indian agriculture and industry alike. It requires us to set new benchmarks in both our villages and in the cities we build.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
National Water  
Policy, Mihir shah  
committee



Currently 80 per cent of water in India is used by agriculture and only 15 per cent by industry. In the coming years, this ratio will change. The total demand for water will also rise. Efficiency of water use and reuse, therefore, has to be built into the blueprint of industrial projects. Business and industry need to be a part of the solution.

Access to water is a byword for human dignity. For India, providing safe drinking water to a population spread across six hundred thousand villages and urban areas is not just a project proposal. The government has prepared a strategic plan for ensuring drinking water supply in all rural areas by 2022, when India complete 75 years of Independence. By that year, the goal is to cover 90 per cent of rural households with piped water supply. The deliberations of this conference have to ensure that we do not fail.

### Pondicherry Shark, Red Sea Torpedo and Tentacled Butterfly Ray may have become extinct

Three marine species, the Pondicherry Shark, the Red Sea Torpedo and the Tentacled Butterfly Ray might have become possibly extinct in the oceanic waters of the Arabian Seas Region (ASR) since no evidence of its existence has surfaced in the last three decades. There are possibility of disappearance of other species from the region even before they were known to science. The ASR covers the waters of the Red Sea, Gulf of Aden, Arabian Sea, Sea of Oman, and the Gulf.

The first ever assessment of the conservation status of sharks, rays, and chimaeras (collectively called chondrichthyans) in the region has established that 78 of the 153 species revived were found fighting for survival.

The Guitar fish found in coastal waters of Kerala and Tamil Nadu and the Ganges Shark found in Arabian Sea were classified as Critically Endangered, among others.

The assessment also revealed that 27 species were Near Threatened and 19 others were of least conservation concerns. It was also known that less was known about 29 to evaluate their risk of extinction.

Reasons

1. By-catch was found to be the biggest threat to the majority of chondrichthyan fishes **besides the "pressure from artisanal and industrial fisheries."**
2. Increasing decline in the extent and quality of habitat as a result of coastal development and other anthropogenic disturbances, particularly for those critical habitats that many species depend on coral reefs, mangroves, sea grasses pose a serious threat to the survival of many species.
3. India, which banned the exploitation and trade of 10 species of sharks and rays, had in 2015 banned the export and import of shark fins of all species.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Olive Ridley Turtle

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### Pollution – Linked deaths

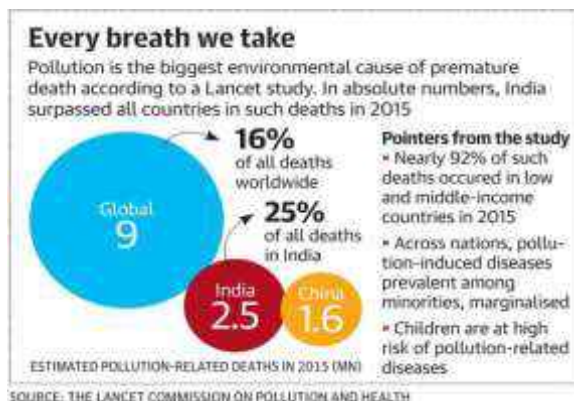
With 2.51 million deaths in 2015, India has been ranked No. 1 in pollution related deaths, according to a report by The Lancet Commission on pollution and health. China recorded the second highest number of such deaths (1.8 million). India accounted for about 28 per cent of an estimated nine million pollution linked deaths worldwide in 2015.

The Lancet Commission on pollution and health is a two-year project in which more than 40 international health and environmental authors led by environmental scientist Philip Landrigan were involved.

Recent Data over countries

1. At 6.5 million premature deaths globally, air pollution was the leading cause of deaths in 2015.
2. **Among the world's 10 most populous countries that year, the largest increase in numbers of pollution related deaths**

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were seen in India and Bangladesh. But the absolute number of air pollution deaths in Bangladesh was only 0.2 million.

3. With 1.58 million, China had the second-highest number of air pollution deaths after India (1.81 million). But the number of water pollution deaths in China was only about 34,000, compared to 0.64 million in the case of India.
4. Nearly 25% of all deaths in India in 2015 were caused by pollution; Pakistan, China, Bangladesh, and Kenya too reported that one in four deaths were caused by pollution.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Air Quality Index

### India's present scenario

- In the case of air pollution, the number of deaths in India from ambient air pollution was 1.09 million, while deaths from household air pollution from solid fuels were 0.97 million. In the case of water pollution, 0.5 million deaths were caused by unsafe water source, while unsafe sanitation caused 0.32 million deaths.
- Several cities in India and China recorded average annual concentrations of particulate matter PM<sub>2.5</sub> pollution of greater than 100 µg/m.
- Deaths from air pollution were a result of diseases such as heart disease, stroke, lung cancer, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). Pollution has been responsible for the most non-communicable disease deaths.

### Calamities displace 23 lakh every year in India

- India ranks top among world's most disaster prone countries with rising number of homeless people at an average annual displacement of 2.3 million, uprooted due to calamities such as floods, cyclone or earthquakes.
- A UN study, says eight of the top ten most disaster prone countries are in South and South-east Asia, India being on the top, followed by China which has annual average displacement at 1.3 million.
- Most of this displacement is being driven by flooding which is on the increase in a warming world where population growth in hazard-prone parts of the globe has increased exposure, observed the study, jointly conducted by the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre of the Norwegian Refugee Council and the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNISDR).

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### Significance

This study reminded countries of the Sendai framework signed by all UN members two years ago to mitigate disaster risk and take measures to bring down losses to human lives and properties. The metric is particularly relevant for urban planners and settlement programmes in areas prone to hazards which have to consider the expected lifespan of the built environment and the associated risks for those who live there.

### New species of large gecko discovered

- New species of large gecko has been discovered from Eastern Ghats. The Kanger valley rock gecko *Hemidactylus kangerensis* is the newest addition to India's lizard species. It has been discovered from Chhattisgarh's Kanger Ghati National Park. Though named after this park, the species is also found in Jagdalpur and Sukma in Chhattisgarh and in Khamman in the adjoining State of Telangana, which are part of the Eastern Ghats.
- Growing to over eight inches long, the adult Kanger valley rock gecko is fairly large. The researchers found them in abandoned houses in the national park and juveniles on termite mounds and tree trunks
- The distinct black-bordered beige bands that the new species sports right from its neck to its tail tip and specific scales on its thighs (which are visible only on closer inspection) set the Kanger valley rock gecko apart from the commonly-found rock gecko.

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### Sawfish more threatened than tigers

- The sawfish, included in Schedule I of the Indian Wildlife (Protection) Act 1972 enacted to save them from exploitation, have been sighted off the Indian coast less than 10 times in over a decade and they appear to be more threatened than tigers and elephants.
- A statement issued by the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute here on Monday said the sawfish may be the most endangered fish species in India. Anecdotal evidence suggested they were once common along the Indian coast.
- There are only five species of the sawfish ever identified — dwarf sawfish, knifetooth sawfish, smalltooth sawfish, largetooth sawfish and green sawfish.
- Sawfish are elasmobranchs, meaning their skeleton is made of cartilage. They are closely related to sharks and have shark-shaped bodies and, hence, are also called flat sharks.
- The sawfish family has been assessed either 'Endangered' or 'Critically Endangered' in the International Union for Conservation of Nature Global Red List, considering their threatened status, high extinction risk and observed population decline.

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### Centre eases norms for sewage plants

The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has relaxed standards for upcoming sewage treatment plants (STP), including those to come up on extremely polluted stretches of the Ganga.

One of the prongs of the government's ₹ 20,000 crore push to clean the river was a 2015-proposal to have higher standards for STPs. That is, they would have to ensure that the biochemical oxygen demand (Bod) — a marker for organic pollutants — in the treated water had to be no more than 10 mg/litre. Existing laws permit BoD up to 30 mg/litre. It says that STPs coming up after June 2019 — except in major State capitals and metropolitan cities — need only conform to 30 mg/litre of BoD. These include proposed STPs to treat sewage in stretches of the river downstream of Haridwar, including Kanpur and Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh. New STPs in State capitals, however, have to cap BoD at 20 mg/litre.

Reason

According to government the 10 mg criteria was impractical and required advanced technology that was too costly for most States.

CPCB

- The Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), statutory organisation, was constituted in September, 1974 under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974. Further, CPCB was entrusted with the powers and functions under the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.
- It serves as a field formation and also provides technical services to the Ministry of Environment and Forests of the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- Principal Functions of the CPCB, as spelt out in the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981, (i) to promote cleanliness of streams and wells in different areas of the States by prevention, control and abatement of water pollution, and (ii) to improve the quality of air and to prevent, control or abate air pollution in the country.

PEPPER IT WITH  
BOD,  
Eutrophication

## NOBEL PRIZE

### PHYSICS

The prize is shared by Rainer Weiss, Barry Barish and Kip Thorne “for decisive contributions to the LIGO detector and discovery of gravitational waves.”

#### What did they discover?

They are receiving the prize for the discovery of the gravitational waves released by violent events in the universe such as the mergers of black holes. The first time this was detected was on September 14, 2015, by the LIGO-VIRGO collaboration. Since then three more detections have been made, the latest one on September 28, 2017.

#### Why do gravitational waves matter to us?

The discovery is due to an extremely delicate experiment. Gravitational waves were predicted by Einstein almost 100 years ago. After about 50 years of experimentation the waves were detected for the first time in September 2015. The discovery and the repeated detection (four times now) has made the possibility of gravitational wave astronomy very real. Gravitational wave astronomy is a way of mapping out some of the most violent processes in the universe such as black hole or neutron star mergers that cannot be detected with light or the conventional methods.

The discovery can pave the way for proving the general theory of relativity, so that we can look deeper and deeper into the universe. It also throws up the possibility of detectors that can look at the beginning of the universe.

### CHEMISTRY

The 2017 Nobel Prize in Chemistry has been awarded to Jacques Dubochet (University of Lausanne, Switzerland) Joachim Frank (Columbia University, New York) and Richard Henderson (MRC Laboratory of Molecular Biology, Cambridge, U.K.) "For developing cryo-electron microscopy for the high-resolution structure determination of biomolecules in solution".

For many years — in the 1970s, the electron microscope was the only way to look into the cell and observe the minute beings that play such an important role in our lives such as viruses. However, the powerful beam of the electron microscope would destroy biological material, so it was believed that such microscopy could only reveal images of dead cells and dead organisms. Also it was then impossible to view solutions as water would evaporate under the microscope's vacuum. That was until this year's laureate Richard Henderson came on to the scene. To get the sharpest images he travelled to the best electron microscopes in the world. They all had their weaknesses, but complemented each other. Finally, in 1990, 15 years after he had published the first model, Prof. Henderson achieved his goal and was able to present a structure of bacteriorhodopsin at atomic resolution. However the problem still remained of imaging biological molecules which got destroyed when the electron beam of the microscope was focused on them at normal temperatures.

#### Cryo-electron microscopy

“Cryo”, short for cryogenic refers to very low temperatures. Though the actual temperature is not well defined, it is below minus 150°C. In the context of electron microscopy, it refers to the fact that the object to be imaged is frozen to such low temperatures to facilitate being studied under the beam of the electron microscope. This method is so effective that even in recent times, it has been used to image the elusive Zika virus:

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Gravitational Waves  
LIGO, CERN

- The Nobel Prize is regarded as the most prestigious award given for intellectual achievement in the world. Funding for this award was provided by Alfred Nobel in his will “to those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit on mankind.”
- Nobel Prizes are established for accomplishments in Physics, Chemistry, Physiology or Medicine, Literature and the Nobel Prize for Peace. The Nobel Prize for Economic Sciences was first established in 1968 and was first awarded in 1969.
- The first Nobel prizes were awarded on Dec 10<sup>th</sup> 1901 which included winners:
  - Jacobus H. van't Hoff – Chemistry
  - Wilhelm C. Röntgen – Physics
  - Emil A. von Behring – Physiology or Medicine
  - Rene F. A. Sully Prudhomme – Literature
  - Jean H. Dunant and Frédéric Passy – Peace



## MEDICINE

Three Americans won the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their discoveries about the body's daily rhythms, opening up whole new fields of research and raising awareness about the importance of getting proper sleep.

Jeffrey C. Hall, Michael Rosbash and Michael W. Young won the prize for isolating a **gene that controls the body's normal daily biological rhythm**. Circadian rhythms adapt the workings of the body to different phases of the day, influencing sleep, behavior, hormone levels, body temperature and metabolism. They "were able to peek inside our biological clock and elucidate its inner workings."

Our wellbeing is affected when there is a temporary mismatch between our external environment and this internal biological clock, for example when we travel across several time zones and experience jet lag. There are also indications that chronic misalignment between our lifestyle and the rhythm dictated by our inner time keeper is associated with increased risk for various diseases.

### Circadian Rhythm

Circadian rhythm regulates the periods of tiredness and wakefulness during the 24-hour cycle. Derived from the Latin "circa diem" meaning "approximately a day," the body clock is calibrated by the appearance and disappearance of natural light in a 24-hour period.

## Embryo Transfer Technology

Embryo transfer technology (ETT) has revolutionized the breeding strategies in Bovines as a tool to optimize the genetic improvement in cattle.

Department of Animal husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries in co-operation with 12 States has undertaken a Mass Embryo Transfer programme in Indigenous Breeds under the scheme, National Mission on Bovine Productivity. It has been planned to carry out 440 embryo transfers throughout the country. The programme is implemented with the objective of conservation and development of indigenous breeds under Rashtriya Gokul Mission.

The programme has been initiated in 12 ETT centres across the country. Under this programme, embryos of higher genetic merit indigenous bovines are being transferred in to surrogate cows. Embryos of Indigenous breeds such as Sahiwal, Gir, Red Sindhi, Ongole, Deoni and Vechur have been proposed to be transferred under this programme.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Gokul Gram

### Rashtriya Gokul Mission

The "Rashtriya Gokul Mission" aims to conserve and develop indigenous breeds in a focused and scientific manner.

Rashtriya Gokul Mission is a focussed project under National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development, with an outlay of Rs 500 crore during the 12th Five Year Plan. During 2014-15 Rs 150.00 crores will be allocated for development, preservation and conservation of indigenous breeds.

Mission has objectives

- development and conservation of indigenous breeds
- undertake breed improvement programme for indigenous cattle breeds so as to improve the genetic makeup and increase the stock
- enhance milk production and productivity
- upgrade nondescript cattle using elite indigenous breeds like Gir, Sahiwal, Rathi, Deoni, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi and
- distribute disease free high genetic merit bulls for natural service.

### Significance

The technology now being taken up to the doorstep of the farmers will result in rapid propagation of high genetic merit indigenous cattle. Through the use of ETT, (i) a farmer can get a 5-6 fold increase in number of offsprings, (ii) the calves so born will be of high genetic merit and (iii) the offsprings born will be free from diseases.



## Dawn Mission Extended at Ceres

NASA has authorized a second extension of the Dawn mission at Ceres, the largest object in the asteroid belt between Mars and Jupiter. During this extension, the spacecraft will descend to lower altitudes than before at the dwarf planet, which it has been orbiting since March 2015. The spacecraft will continue at Ceres for the remainder of its science investigation and will remain in a stable orbit indefinitely after its hydrazine fuel runs out.

A priority of the second Ceres mission extension is collecting data with Dawn's gamma ray and neutron spectrometer, which measures the number and energy of gamma rays and neutrons. This information is important for understanding the composition of Ceres' uppermost layer and how much ice it contains.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Rosetta, Juno,  
Galileo

The spacecraft also will take visible-light images of Ceres' surface geology with its camera, as well as measurements of Ceres' mineralogy with its visible and infrared mapping spectrometer.

The extended mission at Ceres additionally allows Dawn to be in orbit while the dwarf planet goes through perihelion, its closest approach to the Sun, which will occur in April 2018. At closer proximity to the Sun, more ice on Ceres' surface may turn to water vapor, which may in turn contribute to the weak transient atmosphere detected by the European Space Agency's Herschel Space Observatory before Dawn's arrival. Building on Dawn's findings, the team has hypothesized that water vapor may be produced in part from energetic particles from the Sun interacting with ice in Ceres' shallow surface. Scientists will combine data from ground-based observatories with Dawn's observations to further study these phenomena as Ceres approaches perihelion.

Dawn is the only mission ever to orbit two extraterrestrial targets. It orbited giant asteroid Vesta for 14 months from 2011 to 2012, then continued on to Ceres, where it has been in orbit since March 2015.

### Dawn Mission

A mission in NASA's Discovery Program, Dawn orbited and explored the giant protoplanet Vesta in 2011-2012, and now it is in orbit and exploring a second new world, dwarf planet Ceres.

Dawn's goal is to characterize the conditions and processes of its earliest history by investigating in detail two of the largest protoplanets remaining intact since their formation. Ceres and Vesta reside in the main asteroid belt, the extensive region between Mars and Jupiter, along with many other smaller bodies.

## Toxic Farming: Insecticides Regulation

### Why in News

Recent reports of farmers dying from pesticide exposure in **Maharashtra's cotton belt in Yavatmal**.

It is natural for cotton growers under pressure to protect their investments to rely on greater volumes of insecticides in the face of severe pest attacks. It appears many of them have suffered high levels of exposure to the poisons, leading to their death. The fact that they had to rely mainly on the advice of unscrupulous agents and commercial outlets for pesticides, rather than on agricultural extension officers, shows gross irresponsibility on the part of the government. But the problem runs deeper.

The system of regulation of insecticides in India is obsolete, and even the feeble efforts at reform initiated by recent governments have fallen by the wayside.

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### Insecticide Act (1968)

It extends to the whole of India and came into effect from 1971 with a view of regulating the import, manufacture, sale, transport, distribution and use of insecticides in order to prevent risk to human beings and animals.

A new Pesticides Management Bill introduced in 2008 was studied by the Parliamentary Standing Committee, but it is still pending.

Clearly, there is a need for a high-level inquiry into the nature of pesticides used across the country, and the failure of the regulatory system. This should be similar to the 2003 Joint Parliamentary Committee that looked into harmful chemical residues in beverages and recommended the setting of tolerance limits.

It is incongruous that the Centre has failed to grasp the need for reform in the regulation of pesticides, when it is focussed on growth in both agricultural production and exports. Agricultural products from India, including fruits and vegetables, have been subjected to import restrictions internationally for failing to comply with safety norms.

#### What Needs to Be Done

- It is imperative that a Central Pesticides Board be formed to advise on use and disposal of pesticides on sound lines, as envisaged under the law proposed in 2008. This will strengthen oversight of registration, distribution and sale of toxic chemicals.
- There can be no delay in updating the outmoded Insecticides Act of 1968. A stronger law will eliminate the weaknesses in the current rules that govern enforcement and introduce penalties where there are none.
- Aligning the new pesticides regulatory framework with food safety laws and products used in health care will make it broad-based.
- After the recent deaths, Maharashtra officials have hinted at the loss of efficacy of some hybrids of genetically modified cotton in warding off pests to explain the growth and intensity of pesticide use. The responsible course would be to make a proper assessment of the causes.
- Centre should use its vast communication infrastructure, including DD Kisan, the satellite television channel from Doordarshan dedicated to agriculture, to address distressed farmers.
- A forward-looking farm policy would minimise the use of toxic chemicals, and encourage organic methods where they are efficacious. This will benefit both farmer and consumer.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Stubble Burning

#### Farm Loan Waiver- Horned Dilemma

The genesis

The first farm loan waiver in India was announced in 1990. In the past decade alone, close to Rs 1 lakh crore of waivers were funded by the Centre and states. A chunk of this – Rs 52,500 crore – was announced by the Centre in February 2008.

The central scheme, popularly known as Agricultural Debt Waiver and Debt Relief Scheme (ADWDRS), benefited nearly four million farmers. Among states, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Maharashtra have a history of offering such waivers. Subsidies on fertilisers and crop procurement are the other large payouts – worth a humongous –Rs 1.9 lakh crore just last fiscal.

All this has significantly impacted the ability of governments to spend on capital formation in agriculture, which stands at close to 8% of total gross fixed capital formation in India, and less than half compared with agriculture's share of GDP.

Rotting of food grains in warehouses is endemic. And falling ground-water levels in Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana indicate lack of initiatives to tap rain water. To be sure, we have seen fast-tracking of delayed major irrigation projects, and sharper focus on minor ones but there is a long way to go.

RBI Viewpoint

A farm waiver undermines an honest credit culture and discipline. It endangers moral hazard and entails transfer from taxpayers. There is a need to create consensus that farm loan waiver promises are eschewed.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
The Economic Effects of a  
Borrower Bailout, CAG finding  
in ADWDRS Scheme, 2008

### CRISIL Viewpoint

Terming farm loan waivers as a "paradox" in a year of normal monsoon, Crisil said, "CRISIL estimate that if other states also announce loan waiver schemes the way Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Punjab did, the collective cost to the exchequer would be ~Rs 2.5 lakh crore - or 0.5% of GDP - per year, assuming the waiver gets equally staggered over three years."

What is it?

Farm loans may be crop loans or investment loans taken to buy equipment. Both farmers and banks reap a good harvest when all is well. But when there is a poor monsoon or natural calamity, farmers may be unable to repay loans. The rural distress in such situations often prompts States or the Centre to offer relief — reduction or complete waiver of loans.

Why is it important?

1. Agriculture in India has been facing many issues — fragmented land holding, depleting water table levels, deteriorating soil quality, rising input costs, low productivity. Add to this vagaries of the monsoon.
2. Output prices may not be remunerative. Farmers are often forced to borrow to manage expenses. Also, many small farmers not eligible for bank credit borrow at exorbitant interest rates from private sources.
3. When nature rides roughshod over debt-ridden farmers in the form of erratic monsoon and crop failures, they face grim options. Indebtedness is a key reason for the many farmer suicides in the country.
4. Loan waivers provide some relief to farmers in such situations, but there are debates about the long-term effectiveness of the measure. Critics demand making agriculture sustainable by reducing inefficiencies, increasing income, reducing costs and providing protection through insurance schemes. They point out that farm loan waivers are at best a temporary solution and entail a moral hazard — even those who can afford to pay may not, in the expectation of a waiver.

### Drawbacks

1. Such measures can erode credit discipline and may make banks wary of lending to farmers in the future. It also makes a sharp dent in the finances of the government that finances the write-off.
2. Waiving off loan is an unhealthy activity and every time a waiver is done, it diverts access to credit and shrinks credit availability.
3. In fact, in the case of repeated waivers, it makes sense for borrowers to default strategically in anticipation of a waiver. But this can become a self-fulfilling cycle with long-term consequences—defaults would warrant loan waivers, and waivers will lead to more defaults.
4. It can lead to a rise in agricultural non-performing assets (NPAs) at banks.

### Sustainable way ahead

Materially reducing post-harvest losses, better market price for offtake, higher financial inclusion at affordable rates, and better water management are the long-term solutions to ensure farm prosperity. Indeed, policies are facilitating better and more transparent market pricing as e-mandis proliferate and farmers get direct access to markets skirting usurious brokers.

Enabling higher crop insurance penetration, fast-tracking of irrigation projects, and sharper focus on micro irrigation can lower the weather risk and that, in turn, would reduce the risks for lenders.

Proper identification to identify the vulnerable farmers based on certain criteria and give an equal amount as financial relief to the vulnerable and distressed families.

Improved technology and crop diversification towards high-value crops are **appropriate measures for raising productivity and farmers' income.**

## National Waterways-4

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu laid the foundation stones of project for development of Muktyala to Vijayawada stretch of Krishna River (National Waterways – 4), along with the Union Minister for Shipping, Road Transport & Highways and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.

About NW-4

NW 4 was declared in November, 2008 for a total length of 1078 km but NW-4 was extended by National Waterway Act, 2016 up to 2890km.

Revised length 2890KM

1. River Krishna from Wazirabad to Galagali (628 Km)
2. River Godavari from Bhadrachalam to Nasik (1184Km)

Proposed Development Phases

Phase-I: -Muktyala to Vijayawada (Krishna River) (82 Km)

Phase-II: -Vijayawada to Kakinada (Eluru canal & Kakinada canal) and Rajahmundry to Polavaram stretch of Godavari (233 Km)

Phase-III: -Commamur Canal, Buckingham canal and balance stretches of Krishna & Godavari Rivers (573km)

Significance

The project will provide an efficient logistics solution to boost the economic growth of the region and facilitate the development of Amravati during its early development stage as substantial construction material is expected to be transported on this stretch.

The Ministry also said that under Sagaramala programme, several port-related projects would be taken up in the state. The capacity of the Visakhapatnam port would be expanded. Visakhapatnam-Chennai industrial corridor was another major project which would benefit the state enormously and it would be taken up expeditiously

History

In India, the national waterways are developed by the central government through the Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) - the regulatory body for the Inland Waterways Transport (IWT) sector. IWAI was set up by the Inland Waterways Authority of India Act in 1985 and given responsibility of development, maintenance, and regulation of national waterways in the country.

- NW-1: The Ganga - Bhagirathi - Hooghly river system between Haldia (Sagar) & Allahabad (1620 km) was declared as National Waterway No.1 (NW-1) in 1986.
- NW-2: The river Brahmaputra having a length of 891 Km between Bangladesh Border and Sadiya was declared as National Waterway no. 2 (NW-2)
- NW-3: West coast canal (Kottapuram - Kollam) 168 km ;Udyogmandal canal (Kochi Pathalam bridge)23 km ;Champakara canal (Kochi - Ambalamugal)14 km
- NW-4: Mentioned Above
- NW-5: East Coast Canal along with Brahmani riverand Mahanadi delta (623 km)

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PEPPER IT WITH  
NW Act 2016, IWAI,  
Navika Sagar Parikrama



## Inheritance tax

The government is considering the levy of an inheritance tax on high net worth individuals, some of whom are already preparing to insulate themselves from such a liability by forming family trusts. It is also known as estate duty or estate tax in India.

### Definition

Inheritance tax is imposed on the assets inherited from a deceased person. Some states and a handful of federal governments around the world levy this tax. The tax rate on inheritances depends on the value of the property received by the heir or beneficiary and his relationship to the decedent. Inheritance tax is known in some countries as a "death duty" and is occasionally called "the last twist of the taxman's knife."

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Expenditure tax

### India's Perspective

- **Government's deliberation for 'reintroducing inheritance tax' is a move in the right direction** as the richest 1% own 58% of total wealth in India and this concentration of wealth is fuelling inequality in the country.
- The tax could range from 5% to 10% and would apply only to families with a certain net worth.
- India had inheritance tax from 1953 and discontinued it in 1986.
- Japan has the highest tax rate of 55 per cent while BRICS countries Brazil, China and South Africa have some taxes which are of the nature of inheritance taxes. Drawing upon global evidence, India could set an inheritance tax rate anywhere between 30 to 40 per cent with a higher threshold limit.

Countries like USA, UK, Netherlands, Japan, Spain and Belgium have inheritance tax.

### Way Ahead

**Given India's GDP, growing inequality, very low tax-GDP ratio,** and more dependence on indirect taxes, re-introducing inheritance tax could generate funds for essential public services like health and education that could create a more equal opportunity country and reduce the intergenerational persistence of inequality.

## Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016

The Joint Committee of Parliament submitted its recommendations and a modified Code based on its suggestions on April 28, 2016. This modified Code was passed by Lok Sabha on May 5, 2016. The Code creates a framework for resolving insolvency in India. Insolvency is a situation where an individual or a company is unable to repay their outstanding debt. This code is known as Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016.

The Code creates a framework for resolving insolvency in India.

### Key Highlights

- ✓ The Code creates time-bound processes for insolvency resolution of companies and individuals. These processes will be completed within 180 days. If insolvency cannot be resolved, the assets of the borrowers may be sold to repay creditors. This limit may be extended to 270 days in certain circumstances
- ✓ The Code repeals the Presidency Towns Insolvency Act, 1909 and Provincial Insolvency Act, 1920. In addition, it amends 11 laws, including the Companies Act, 2013, and the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993, among others.

### Cross-border insolvency:

Cross border insolvency relates to an insolvent debtor who has assets abroad. The central government may enter into agreements with other countries to enforce provisions of the Code.

**PEPPER IT WITH**  
Fresh Start Process,  
DRT, NCLT



- ✓ The resolution processes will be conducted by licensed Insolvency professionals (IPs). These IPs will be members of insolvency professional agencies (IPAs). IPAs will also furnish performance bonds equal to the assets of a company under insolvency resolution.
- ✓ Information utilities (IUs) will be established to collect, collate and disseminate financial information to facilitate insolvency resolution.
- ✓ The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) will adjudicate insolvency resolution for companies. The Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) will adjudicate insolvency resolution for individuals.
- ✓ The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India will be set up to regulate functioning of IPs, IPAs and IUs.
- ✓ As specified under code penalty will be imprisonment of up to five years, or a fine of up to one crore rupees, or both for offences committed under individual insolvency.

National e-Governance Services Ltd (NeSL) has become India's first Information Utility (IU) for bankruptcy cases under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code 2016.

IU is an information network which would store financial data like borrowings, default and security interests among others of firms.

#### Issues for consideration

The successful implementation of the Code will depend on establishment and smooth functioning of new entities proposed to be setup under the Code: (i) Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India, (ii) insolvency professionals, (iii) insolvency professional agencies, and (iv) information utilities. It also requires adjudication by two agencies: (a) National Company Law Tribunal under Companies Act, 2013, which has not yet been set up, and (b) Debt Recovery Tribunals (DRT) which are overloaded with pending cases.

#### Recent Amendments

1. FAST TRACK INSOLVENCY RESOLUTION PROCESS FOR CORPORATE PERSONS REGULATIONS, 2017.
2. INSOLVENCY RESOLUTION PROCESS FOR CORPORATE PERSONS (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS, 2017.

### Raw Jute Demand Falls

#### In News

The West Bengal government has called for an urgent meeting this week to review the raw jute situation in the State as farmers are selling jute below MSP.

Production State: West Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Tripura and Meghalaya.

#### Issue & Analysis

1. Jute Corporation of India (JCI) has so far purchased only 28,000 bales this year out of the estimated production of 65 lakh bales for 2017-18. Last year, it purchased 56,000 bales out of a total production of 85 lakh bales.
2. The problem being faced by the farmers is mainly on account of declining demand for the low grade jute being grown by the farmers in West Bengal.
3. The State is the hub of the low grade — TD 6 — variety of raw jute. The demand for this type of the natural fiber, used mainly for making sacking and gunny bags, has been declining since last year.
4. **Textile Ministry's specifications to the jute mills** to make lighter bags in order to tackle competition. However, lightweight jute bags of 560 grams (replacing the earlier

#### Jute crop requires

Climate: humid

Temperature: 24-38 Celsius

Rainfall: 1000 mm.

Soil: New grey alluvial and sandy looms & clay loams.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Kenaf, Jute  
Geotextiles, Burlap

665 grams) necessitates the use of better quality raw jute. This has led to a drop in demand for the TD-6 variety.

5. Poor agricultural practices and lack of facilities for retting (a process of washing raw jute to get better fiber), has led to the West Bengal farmers resorting to production of this variety.

#### Conclusion

The Jute Advisory Board (JAB) needs to hold meetings to assess and evaluate the raw jute situation keeping in view the volatility prevailing in the raw jute market and give a realistic crop forecast. The jute sector has suggested that the JAB meetings should take place during pre-sowing, post-sowing, pre-harvest and post-harvest periods. At present, raw jute produced in the country is of lower quality from which only sacking varieties can be made. The jute sector feels the Union agriculture ministry and the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices should work on quality enhancement before commenting on the future of the sector.

### International Conference on Consumer Protection

**The First International Consumer Protection Conference on “Empowering consumers in new markets” for the South, South East and East Asian Countries** was held in New Delhi. Prime Minister of India inaugurated the Conference which was attended by 1600 participants that included delegates from 19 countries. Dr. Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General of UNCTAD addressed the conference in the Inaugural session.

The Conference was chaired by Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution. The deliberations and exchange of experiences led to the following conclusions:

- The comprehensive implementation of the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection is a priority for Governments and stakeholders in ensuring more effective and better-coordinated protection efforts in all countries and across all areas of commerce.
- Wide stakeholder participation and engagement of consumer associations, businesses, and the academia is necessary for a successful consumer policy-making and enforcement.
- **The protection of consumers’ rights in the digital context is important for a sustainable and inclusive development of e-commerce, which also needs to address cross-border cooperation and enforcement.**
- Consumer protection is essential for well-functioning financial markets, and efforts should be devoted to achieve financial consumer literacy and inclusion.
- Consumer education is paramount to maximize consumer empowerment, needing **new and innovative ways to reach and enhance consumers’ knowledge of their rights and obligations in the marketplace.**
- The needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged consumers must be attended to, in all sectors of commerce and across all areas of consumer protection including legislation, enforcement action and redress systems in accordance with their particular needs and interests.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Consumer protection  
bill, 2015

Towards meeting these objectives, it was decided that Regional Consumer Protection Conferences on biannual basis will be considered, in consultations with countries in the Region regarding the structure and organisational details.

#### Significance

This is the first time an international conference on consumer protection is being organised by India for countries of the region which account for a majority of the global consumers and share common challenges and experience as 22 countries from East, South and South-East Asia are expected to participate in the conference, being hosted by the Department of Consumer Affairs and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development.

The conference will have six working sessions on the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection and Implementation, stakeholder participation in consumer protection, protection of online consumers, fostering consumer inclusion in financial

services, protection of vulnerable groups of consumers and consumer empowerment through education.

#### About UNCTAD

1. UNCTAD is a permanent intergovernmental body established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1964. Its headquarters is located in Geneva, Switzerland.
2. UNCTAD is part of the UN Secretariat. It report to the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council but have its own membership, leadership, and budget. It is also part of the United Nations Development Group.
3. It support developing countries to access the benefits of a globalized economy more fairly and effectively. It help equip them to deal with the potential drawbacks of greater economic integration. To do this, it provide analysis, consensus-building, and technical assistance. This helps them to use trade, investment, finance, and technology as vehicles for inclusive and sustainable development.

### Sovereign Gold Bonds Scheme (SGB)

#### Why in News

Government of India, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, has decided to issue SGB 2017-18 – Series-III. Applications for the bond will be accepted from October 09, 2017 to December 27, 2017.

#### Characteristics of SGB, series-III.

- To be issued by RBI on behalf of the Gol and the bonds will be restricted for sale to resident Indian entities including individuals, HUFs, Trusts, Universities and Charitable Institutions.
- The Bonds will be denominated in multiples of gram(s) of gold with a minimum permissible unit of 1 gram. The maximum limit of subscribed shall be 4 KG for individual and HUF and 20 Kg for trusts and similar entities per fiscal year.
- The tenor of the Bond will be for a period of 8 years with exit option from 5<sup>th</sup> year and it will be issued as Government of India Stocks under GS Act, 2006. The investors will be issued a Holding Certificate for the same. The Bonds are eligible for conversion into demat form.
- The investors will be compensated at a fixed rate of 2.50 per cent per annum payable semi-annually on the nominal value. The interest on Gold Bonds shall be taxable as per the provision of Income Tax Act, 1961. The capital gains tax arising on redemption of SGB to an individual has been exempted.
- Bonds will be sold through banks, Stock Holding Corporation of India Limited (SHCIL), designated post offices as may be notified and recognised stock exchanges.
- Bonds can be used as collateral for loans. Moreover, the Bonds will be eligible for Statutory Liquidity Ratio purposes
- The issue price of the Gold Bonds will be ₹50 per gram less for those who subscribe online and pay through digital mode.

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SGB Scheme was notified by the Gol in 2015. The main objective of the scheme was to develop a financial asset as an alternative to purchasing metal gold. The target was to shift part of the estimated 300 tons of physical bars and coins purchased every year for Investment into 'demat' gold bonds. In view of less than expected response of the investors to the scheme, and considering its bearing on CAD and consequently on overall macro-economic health of the country, it was felt necessary to make changes in this scheme to make it a success. So, in July 2017 Gol made certain changes in the scheme and finally launched series III of SGB.

PEPPER IT WITH  
HUF, Demat Account,  
CAD

### National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF)

#### Why in News

Abu Dhabi Investment Authority (ADIA) became the first **institutional investor in NIIF's Master Fund and a shareholder in National Investment and Infrastructure Ltd** by signing an investment agreement worth \$1 billion.

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This agreement marks the culmination of an extensive process of collaboration with ADIA to develop an investment structure that is attractive to international investors, while remaining closely aligned with NIIF's objectives.

NIIF was set up in 2015 to invest in areas such as energy, transportation, housing, water, waste management and other infrastructure-related sectors in India.

### Objectives

- The objective of NIIF would be to maximize economic impact mainly through infrastructure development in commercially viable projects, both greenfield and brownfield, including stalled projects.
- It could also consider other nationally important projects, for example, in manufacturing, if commercially viable.
- To attract investment from both national and international sources.

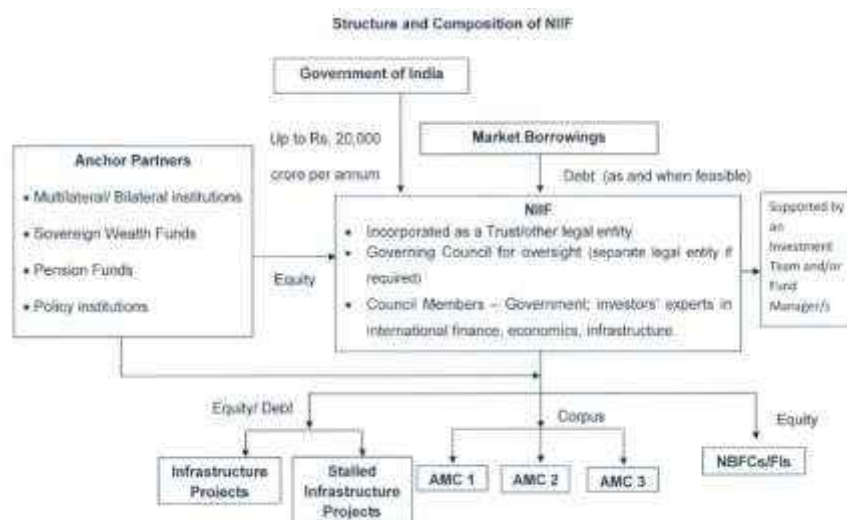
### Functions of NIIF

- Fund raising through suitable instruments including off-shore credit enhanced bonds, and attracting anchor investors to participate as partners in NIIF;
- Servicing of the investors of NIIF.
- Considering and approving candidate companies/institutions/ projects (including state entities) for investments and periodic monitoring of investments.
- Investing in the corpus created by Asset Management Companies (AMCs) for investing in private equity.
- Preparing a shelf of infrastructure projects and providing advisory services.

NIIF is not a single entity. There can be more than one fund. The NIIF will be established as one or more Alternate Investment Funds (AIF) under the SEBI Regulations. Of the various

forms an AIF can take, NIIF was proposed to be set up as a Trust though other legal forms could also be considered from the perspective of flexibility and taxation. If set up as Category I and II AIFs, then NIIF will be eligible for a pass through status under the Income Tax Act. A 'pass-through' status means that the income generated by the fund would be taxed in the hands of the ultimate investor, and the fund itself would not have to pay tax on the same. In the case of category III AIF, where pass through status is not available, all income received by NIIF will be taxable at its level and any distribution made to the unit holders (investors) would be tax exempt.

- The corpus of NIIF is Rs. 40,000 Crores. The initial authorized corpus of NIIF would be Rs. 20,000 crore, which may be raised from time to time, as decided by Ministry of Finance. Government can provide upto 20000 crore per annum into these funds.
- Government's contribution/share in the corpus will be 49% in each entity set up as an AIF and will neither be increased beyond, nor allowed to fall below, 49%. The whole of 49% would be contributed by Government directly. Rest is open for contribution from others.
- The contribution of Government of India to NIIF would enable it to be seen virtually as a sovereign fund and is expected to attract overseas sovereign/ quasi-sovereign/multilateral/bilateral investors to co-invest in it.



## India Economic Summit

The 2017 India Economic Summit was held in partnership with the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII). It was World Economic Forum's 33rd India Economic Summit.

The summit addresses key issues of national and regional significance under five thematic pillars:

- ✓ Leaving No One Behind: Education and Healthcare for All – How can the Indian education system prepare citizens for life-long learning? What innovative and scalable solutions can help provide affordable healthcare?
- ✓ Oiling **India's** Growth Engines: Agriculture and Manufacturing – How can India ensure food and nutrition security for 1.25 billion citizens? What will enable India to become an innovation-driven manufacturing hub?
- ✓ Fixing **India's** Nuts and Bolts: Infrastructure and Energy – How can India build integrated solutions that encompass energy production, transmission and storage innovations? What public-private partnership models can help India meet vast infrastructure needs and address the financing deficit?
- ✓ Leveraging Technology and Innovation for the Fourth Industrial Revolution: Entrepreneurship and Digital – How can policy-makers and regulators support **technological development without stifling innovation? What will make India's economy truly digital?**
- ✓ Unleashing **India's** Untapped Potential: Jobs and Skills – How can the public and private sectors collaborate for sustainable job creation in India? What solutions can **make India's growing youth population employable?**

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### CII

Founded in 1895 CII is a non-government, not-for-profit, industry-led and industry-managed organization, playing a proactive role in India's development process. It has international offices also.

The CII works to create and sustain an environment conducive to the development of India, partnering industry, Government, and civil society, through advisory and consultative processes

## External Benchmark While Pricing Loans

Why in News

An internal Study Group constituted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended that banks should set interest rates based on an external benchmark and not as per internal benchmarks as is the practice now.

Why is it needed

The Study Group has found that the present loan pricing regime, that is, the marginal cost of fund based lending rate (MCLR) or the base rate under the previous regime were both **calculated based on banks' internal factors** such as cost of funds. They are insensitive to changes in the policy interest rate or repo rate. Analyses by the group suggested that banks deviated in an ad hoc manner from the specified methodologies for calculating the base rate and the MCLR to either inflate the base rate or prevent the base rate from falling in line with the cost of funds.

The report has said that no instrument in India meets all the requirements of an ideal benchmark. It has shortlisted 3 instruments from 13 — one of which could be selected by RBI as external benchmarks after receiving feedback from all stakeholders. The Study Group is of the view that the T-Bill rate, the

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The Study Group has recommended that all floating rate loans extended beginning April 1, 2018 could be referenced to one of the three external benchmarks selected by RBI.

The group suggested quarterly interest rate resets as opposed to a one-year reset as practised now for improvement in monetary transmission.

It also said that banks may be encouraged to accept deposits, especially bulk deposits at floating rates linked directly to one of the three external benchmarks.



CD rate and the RBI's policy repo rate are better suited than other interest rates to serve the role of an external benchmark.

#### What are T-Bills

Treasury bills; generally shortened as T-bills, have a maximum maturity of a 364 days. Hence, they are categorized as money market instruments (money market deals with funds with a maturity of less than one year). Treasury bills are zero coupon securities and pay no interest. Rather, they are issued at a discount (at a reduced amount) and redeemed (given back money) at the face value at maturity

### Gig Economy

#### Why in News

The recent crackdown of taxi app titan Uber in London has again highlighted the concept of Gig Economy.

A gig economy is an environment where temporary, flexible jobs are commonplace and companies tend toward hiring independent contractors and freelancers instead of full-time employees. A gig economy undermines the traditional economy of full-time workers who rarely change positions and instead focus on a lifetime career.

It is estimated that as much as a third of the working population in America is already working in some sort of gig capacity. This number is only expected to rise. In the modern digital world, it's becoming increasingly common for people to work remotely or from home. This facilitates independent contracting work, as many of those jobs don't require the freelancer to come in to the office to work. Employers also have a wider range of applicants to choose from, as they don't necessarily have to choose to hire someone based on their proximity. Additionally, computers have developed to the point that they can take the place of the jobs people previously held.

Economic reasons also factor in to the development of a gig economy. In many cases, employers cannot afford to hire full-time employees to do all the work they need done, so they hire part-time or temporary employees to take care of busier times or specific projects. On the side of the employee, people often find that they need to move around or take more than one position in order to afford the lifestyle they want. People also tend to change careers many times throughout their lives, so the gig economy is the reflection of this occurring on a large scale.

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### The Multi Commodity Exchange of India Limited (MCX)

#### Why in News

The Multi Commodity Exchange has introduced gold option contracts for the first time in India. The derivative instrument allows investors to enter into contracts to either buy or sell gold some time in the future at a pre-determined price, thus allowing investors to hedge any volatility in the price of the metal, for a price. Gold options will help in bringing into formal channels more of the gold that is traded.

With the introduction of a new financial instrument, India is a step closer to building a vibrant market for commodities. The debut of gold options should be seen as a step towards greater reforms. Success in the long journey, however, will require avoiding some policy mistakes of the past.

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#### About MCX

MCX is India's first listed exchange, is a state-of-the-art, commodity derivatives exchange that facilitates online trading, and clearing and settlement of commodity derivatives transactions, thereby providing a platform for risk management. It started operations in 2003 and operates under the regulatory framework of Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI).

PEPPER IT WITH  
Exchange of Futures  
for Physical, ISO  
Standards

- MCX offers trading in varied commodity futures contracts across segments including bullion, industrial metals, energy and agricultural commodities. The Exchange focuses on providing commodity value chain participants with neutral, secure and

transparent trade mechanisms, and formulates quality parameters and trade regulations, in conformity with the regulatory framework.

- The Exchange's flagship index, the MCXCOMDEX, is a real-time composite commodity futures price index which gives information on market movements in key commodities. Other indices developed by the exchange include MCXAgri, MCXEnergy, MCXMetal and Rainfall Indices.
- The exchange has integrated with the global commodities ecosystem and various trade bodies. These alliances enable the Exchange in improving trade practices, increasing awareness, and facilitating overall improvement of the commodity market.
- The Exchange is committed to nurturing communities that are vital for the development of its business. To achieve its goal of inclusive growth, it collaborates with diverse partners. Gramin Suvidha Kendra, its social inclusion programme in partnership with India Post, seeks to enhance farmers' value realisation from agricultural activities.

### Public finance Management System (PFMS)

#### Why in News

Union finance minister recently launched the mandatory use of Public Finance Management System (PFMS) for all Central Sector Schemes (CSS). Central Sector Schemes have a total budgetary outlay of Rs.6, 66,644 crore, which covers over 31 percent of the total Central Government expenditure during the current financial year 2017-18.

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PFMS has enabled the Government in taking forward the ground breaking initiative of Direct Benefit Transfers (DBT) with collateral benefits of plugging leakages and eliminating ghost beneficiaries. The implementation of Schemes through PFMS has brought transparency in system and has helped in easy transfer and tracking of funds.

Payments to 34.19 crore beneficiaries have been made through PFMS and there are 21.72 lakh Programme Implementing Agencies registered on PFMS. This has been achieved on the strength of PFMS having an interface with 170 Banks including the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

- PFMS initially started as a Plan scheme named CPSMS of the Planning Commission in 2008-09 as a pilot in four States of Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Punjab and Mizoram for four Flagship schemes e.g. MGNREGS, NRHM, SSA and PMGSY.
- The scheme was included in 12th Plan initiative of Planning Commission and Ministry of Finance.
- In December, 2013 the Union Cabinet approved the national roll out of PFMS for all States and schemes.

#### Advantages of PFMS

- It will help in tracking and monitoring the flow of funds to the implementing agencies which will lead to know the actual status of utilization of funds by the multiple implementing agencies of the Central and the State Governments.
- With the capability of providing real time information on resource availability, flows and actual utilization, PFMS has tremendous potential to improve programme/financial management, reduce the float in the financial systems by enabling 'just in time' releases and also the Government borrowings with direct impact on interest costs to the Government.
- It will also lead to decrease in paper work and it would go a long way in monitoring and tracking of any unnecessary parking of funds by the implementing agencies and thereby minimizing the cases of delay and pending payments to a large extent.
- It is aimed to ensure in time transfer of funds for 13 CSS which are under PFMS.
- PFMS is designed to serve the pertinent need of establishing a common electronic platform for complete tracking of fund flows from the Central Government to large number of programme implementing agencies, both under Central Government and the State Governments till it reaches the final intended beneficiaries.
- The Finance Minister hoped that soon PFMS will progress towards a Government

wide Integrated Financial Management System (GIFMIS) - as a comprehensive Payment, Receipt and Accounting System.

### Universal basic income vis-a-viz Subsidy Schemes

A basic income is a periodic cash payment unconditionally delivered to all on an individual basis, without means-test or work requirement.

So, basic income has the following five characteristics:

1. Periodic: it is paid at regular intervals (for example every month), not as a one-off grant.
2. Cash payment: it is paid in an appropriate medium of exchange, allowing those who receive it to decide what they spend it on. It is not, therefore, paid either in kind (such as food or services) or in vouchers dedicated to a specific use.
3. Individual: it is paid on an individual basis—and not, for instance, to households.
4. Universal: it is paid to all, without means test.
5. Unconditional: it is paid without a requirement to work or to demonstrate willingness-to-work.

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Although the basic idea of Universal Basic Income is not new for India—the erstwhile Planning Commission had worked on it in the early 1960s—it has attracted significant attention in the recent past. A large proportion of the population in India still lives below the poverty line and a number of government programmes providing subsidies and support to the poor are marred by inefficiencies. There are leakages in the system, and often, people who actually need government support are left out. Therefore, it is argued that Universal Basic Income will overcome these problems by providing a basic income to all citizens.

The latest Fiscal Monitor of the IMF, in its analysis, used fiscal space equivalent to the cost of the public distribution system and energy subsidies in 2011-12 showed an annual Universal Basic Income of Rs2,600 per person. The Fund did not account for the subsidy reforms of recent years.

**Th recent publications by the government argued that Universal Basic Income is “...more feasible in a country like India, where it can be pegged at relatively low levels of income but still yield immense welfare gains”. Lifting people out of poverty is a worthy goal and,** despite considerable progress, India has not been able to attain desired results in this area. However, the real question is: Is Universal Basic Income the best way to eradicate poverty in India?

There are strong economic and political reasons why India cannot opt for Universal Basic Income, at least in the present circumstances.

- **The biggest issue is that India doesn't have the fiscal capacity to implement Universal Basic Income.** For example, the Economic Survey calculations showed that a 75% universality rate with an annual Universal Basic Income of Rs7,620 per year at 2016-17 prices will cost about 5% of the GDP.
- Universal Basic Income can create distortions in the labour market. A steady, permanent and guaranteed income without any work is likely to affect labour mobility and participation. It is also likely to increase wages, as has been witnessed after the implementation of the MGNREGA. Higher wages without a commensurate increase in **productivity will affect India's competitiveness. This could also have longer-term** implications in terms of higher inflation and lower growth. The distortions in the labour market will depend on the amount of Universal Basic Income.
- The nature of Indian politics can create complications. It is highly likely that political parties, in order to improve their chances in elections, would want to increase the amount of Universal Basic Income or try to bring back subsidies in some form or the other, which will have fiscal implications.

### Conclusion

What India needs is not Universal Basic Income. It needs rationalization of subsidies, better targeting and operational efficiency. It needs to move to cash transfers at an accelerated pace with the use of Jan-Dhan, Aadhaar and mobile. This will help

reduce costs and spare resources for capital spending to augment growth. As history has shown, the best way to pull people out of poverty is sustained higher growth. Therefore, rather than creating permanent doles like Universal Basic Income for the entire population, which will be impossible to reverse in the future, the idea should be to save costs with better targeting. This will help create the necessary conditions for higher growth which will decisively lift people out of poverty.

### Noble Prize in Economics

The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences has decided to award the Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel 2017 to Richard H. Thaler

University of Chicago, IL, US *for his contributions to behavioural economics.*

Richard H. Thaler has incorporated psychologically realistic assumptions into analyses of economic decision-making. By exploring the consequences of *limited rationality*, *social preferences*, and *lack of self-control*, he has shown how these human traits systematically affect individual decisions as well as market outcomes.

Richard Thaler's contributions have built a bridge between the economic and psychological analyses of individual decision-making. His empirical findings and theoretical insights have been instrumental in creating the new and rapidly expanding field of *behavioural economics*, which has had a profound impact on many areas of economic research and policy.

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### Structural Reforms in India

Recently International Monetary Fund (IMF) has suggested a three—pronged approach for structural reform in India.

1. First priority is to address the corporate and banking sector weaknesses, by accelerating the resolution of non—performing loans, rebuilding the capital buffers for the public sector banks, **and enhancing banks' debt recovery mechanisms.**
2. India should continue with the fiscal consolidation through revenue measures, as well as further reductions in subsidies.
3. **And lastly, it's to maintain the** strong momentum for structural reforms in addressing the infrastructure gaps, improving the efficiency of labour and product markets as well as furthering agricultural reforms.

On labour market reforms IMF suggested reforming the market regulations in order to create a more favorable environment for investment and employment. There is a need to reduce the number of labour laws which currently number around 250 across the central and the state level. India should also focus on closing the gender gap which may help a great deal in boosting the employment opportunities for women

Improvements in infrastructure can be one important way to facilitate the entry of women into the labour force. But in addition, there is a need to strengthening the implementation of specific gender regulations, as well as to invest more in gender specific training and education.

- **According to IMF's Regional Economic Outlook, India's growth slowed in recent quarters** due to the temporary disruptions from the currency exchange initiative—demonetisation—that took place in November 2016, and the recent roll—out of the Goods and Services Tax (GST).
- The report, however, went on to say that the growth in 2017 was revised downward to reflect the recent slowdown, but is expected to accelerate in the medium term as these temporary disruptions fade.

### Background

Reforms in Indian economic management started in 1985 took a different shape in 1991–92. Faced with acute balance of payments deficits mainly due to two international factors **beyond India's control** i.e demise of the Soviet Union and the war against Iraq. Domestic factors behind the crisis were excessive government consumptions financed by debts starting from 1985.

### What else can be done

- Focus must be given to credit penetration which continues to be relatively low in comparison with several other developed and emerging market economies with regard to financial inclusion.
- Fiscal Consolidation will increase the overall saving rate and will also help in sorting out the twin deficit problem of Indian economy.
- Administration of subsidies is a very vital issue. India's subsidy rose from 15 billion in 2007-8 to 45 billion in 2011-12.
- Programmes like MGNREGA have increased the bargaining power of labour. This further needs to be continued so as give the Indian labour it's proper value.
- More focus is required in Rural Infrastructure which will lead to better supply chain in rural areas.
- doing bussiness in India is still very expensive. So, steps should be taken to bring down the cost of doing bussiness in India.
- Steps should be taken to control the growing unemployment, poverty and other micro and macro level economic shortcomings.

### Project CHAMAN

Under the Mission of Integrated Horticulture Development (MIDH), the **Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare** has initiated the project CHAMAN (Coordinated Horticulture Assessment and Management using GeoInformatics) for assessment and development of Horticulture through Remote Sensing & geo-informatics. The project is being implemented by Mahalanobis National Crop Forecast Centre (MNCFC) in collaboration with ISRO Centres (SAC & NRSC) and 12 state horticulture departments, NHRDF, IMD, ICAR Centre and State Remote Sensing Centres.

This programme envisages use of satellite remote sensing data for area and production estimation of 7 horticultural crops (Potato, Onion, Tomato, Chili, Mango, Banana and Citrus) in 12 major states in 180 districts.

The programme also uses GIS (Geographical Information System) tools along with remote sensing data for generating action plans for horticultural development (site suitability, infrastructure development, crop intensification, orchard rejuvenation, aqua-horticulture, etc.).

Another component of CHAMAN is to carry out research activities on horticultural crop condition studies, diseases assessment and precision farming.

The project was launched in 2014 for 3 years but is likely to be completed by march 2018.

Horticulture sector is one of the major drivers of growth in Agriculture sector. This sector provides nutrient rich crops to the people and better remunerative prices to the farmers thereby augmenting their income. It also provides higher employment opportunities in the primary, secondary and tertiary sectors. Thus it has gained significant prominence in the recent years. It is a matter of pride that India is the Second largest producer of Vegetables and Fruits in the world.

Driven by consumer demand, farmers across India have rapidly adopted horticulture crops which ensure a quicker cash flow and can be grown in very small plots. However, major crops like tomatoes, onion and potatoes see frequent price risks, which force farmers to either sell at a loss or dump their produce for lack of buyers.

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As horticulture crops are grown in small plots, and on backyards of homes, and these crops have multiple harvesting seasons in a year, it is difficult to estimate their exact production.

### ORGANIZATION INVOLVED





## Commercial Papers

### Why in News

Commercial papers have become one of the popular routes for corporates to raise funds when compared with loans from banks in recent times. Because of surplus liquidity, short-term borrowing rates in money markets have significantly declined post demonetisation and are much lower than the lowest benchmark lending rates of the banks.

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Commercial Paper (CP) is an unsecured money market instrument issued in the form of a promissory note. It was introduced in India in 1990 with a view to enabling highly rated corporate borrowers to diversify their sources of short-term borrowings and to provide an additional instrument to investors. Subsequently, primary dealers and all-India financial institutions were also permitted to issue CP to enable them to meet their short-term funding requirements for their operations. Corporates, primary dealers (PDs) and the All-India Financial Institutions (FIs) are eligible to issue CP.

A corporate would be eligible to issue CP provided –

1. The tangible net worth of the company, as per the latest audited balance sheet, is not less than Rs. 4 crore
2. Company has been sanctioned working capital limit by bank/s or all-India financial institution/s; and
3. The borrowal account of the company is classified as a Standard Asset by the financing bank/s/ institution/s.

CP can be issued for maturities between a minimum of 7 days and a maximum of up to one year from the date of issue. CP will be issued at a discount to face value as may be determined by the issuer.

Only a scheduled bank can act as an Issuing and Paying Agent for issuance of CP. Individuals, banking companies, other corporate bodies (registered or incorporated in India) and unincorporated bodies, Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) etc. can invest in CPs. However, investment by FIIs would be within the limits set for them by Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) from time-to-time.

### Limitations

- As the CP is an unsecured loan, the investor in commercial papers largely prefers highly-rated corporates or public sector entities in terms of credit rating. Lender appetite is limited to better rated companies.
- Also commercial paper markets can be seasonal and vulnerable to liquidity conditions. In case of sudden tightening of liquidity, a firm's ability to secure funding can be challenged. Within the year, liquidity conditions can become tight in certain months such as the end of a quarter, because of advance payment of taxes and the like. At such times, funding costs can also rise for the issue of CPs.
- Therefore, commercial papers should not be used as a permanent source of capital and should largely be used to benefit from liquidity conditions and arbitrage in short-term borrowing rates.

## Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple- Cleanest Iconic place

The famed Meenakshi Sundareswarar Temple in Madurai has been adjudged the best **'Swachh Iconic Place'** (clean place) in India. Ten spots were identified by the Central government as part of the 'Swachh Iconic Places' initiative earlier this year.

### About Temple

Meenakshi Sundareswar Temple is dedicated to Sundareswar (form of Lord Shiva) and Meenakshi (form of Goddess Parvati). The term "Sundareswar" suggests "the beautiful lord" and "Meenakshi" means "the fish-eyed goddess".

### Location

Madurai, Tamil Nadu

### Structure

1. The temple complex comprises not less than twelve superlative gopurams (towers), which are richly sculptured and decorated. The tallest tower rises to the extent of 170 feet.
2. The main sanctum sanctorum is believed to be more than 3500 years old. The

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**PEPPER IT WITH**  
**Swachh Iconic Places**

fortifications and other outer construction are estimated to be 1500-2000 years old. The colossal structure of the temple has got the dimensions of 254 by 237 meters.

3. Having history of thousands of years, the present structure of the temple got erected in the early 17th century.
4. Aayiram Kaal Mandapam is a thousand pillared hall, which is prominent due to its class sculptures.
5. 'Kalyana Mandapa' is the hall, where the marriage of Shiva and Parvati is observed every year in the Hindu month of 'Chaitra' (April).

### Thumri Dance

#### Why in News

Recently Girija Devi, an eminent classical singer passed away. She was from Banaras Gharana.

- **Thumrī** is a common genre of semi-classical Indian music. The term "thumri" is derived from the hindi verb thumakna, which means to walk with dancing steps so as to make the ankle-bells tinkle. The form is thus, connected with dance, dramatic gestures, mild eroticism, evocative love poetry and folk songs of Uttar Pradesh, though there are regional variations.
- Thumri dance is based on the romantic-devotional literature inspired by the *bhakti* movement. The text is usually derived from the Radha-Krishna theme and is of primary importance. The words are strictly adhered to, and the singer attempts to interpret them with his melodic improvisations.
- It is quite usual for a singer to deviate momentarily from the raga in which the composition is set, by using accidentals and evoking other ragas that might be suggested by the words, but he always returns to the original raga.

#### Bhakti Movement

Usually it is accepted that the most characteristic feature of the religious development during the medieval period was the movement which emphasized single-minded intense devotion to God. It was a complete surrender of oneself to God. The movement which emphasized primarily these ideas was the Bhakti movement—devotion to God. Bhakti to God was accepted as salvation. Following are the main features of Bhakti Movement.

- ✓ Unity of God or one God though known by different names.
- ✓ Bhakti, intense love and devotion, the only way to salvation.
- ✓ Repetition of the True Name.
- ✓ Self-Surrender.

### Shyamji Krishna Varma

Prime Minister of India paid tributes to Shyamji Krishna Varma on his birth anniversary and urged people to visit Kranti Teerth (Gujrat), a memorial that celebrates Shyamji Krishna Varma's life and contribution.

Pandit Shyamji Krishna Verma was a Revolutionary freedom Fighter, who operated mainly from Europe. He was born on the 4th October, 1857 at Mandvi ( in Gujarat State ) to a poor Bhanushali family.

He founded the Indian Home Rule Society in London in 1905 with the objective to help secure Home Rule for India. He drew his inspiration from Herbert Spencer.

**"The Indian Sociologist" was an english monthly published by Shyamji Krishna Verma.**

With Vinayak Savarkar, one of the member of India house, he shifted to Paris in 1906 and with the help of devoted circle of friends including Madam Cama (Mother of the Indian-Revolution) and others started political activities for Indian Independence with redoubled vigour. Shyamji Krishna Varma passed his last years in Paris. It was on 31st March, 1930, when the end came, and a great revolutionary of his time passed away.

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## Sir Syed Ahmad Khan

October 17 marks the two hundredth birth anniversary of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, founder of Aligarh Muslim University. He was born on 17 October 1817 in an illustrious Delhi family, which traced its lineage to the Prophet, and which was known for its learning and erudition.

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Sir Syed Ahmad Khan was a man of many distinctions. A government servant, an aristocrat, an Islamic scholar, a journalist, an educationalist, he has left behind a vast canon of books and magazine and newspaper articles. He was a historian and archaeologist who could write with verve on the historical monuments of Delhi. In fact with his famous work "Asar-us-Sanadid", which was later translated into French, he heralded the tradition of Indian archaeology. His analysis of the causes of the revolt of 1857, a daring act in the context of its time, is still quoted by historians as one of the best studies of the event.

He was also a journalist who used his pen for social reform. "Tahzebul Akhlaq" (Social Reformer), a magazine founded by him, tried to awaken people's consciousness on social and religious issues in a very expressive prose. He was an Islamic thinker who was greatly interested in interfaith understanding. His was the time of intense missionary activity and Hindu reform movements. Sir Syed encouraged a process of dialogue and discussion on religious matters.

Modern education was his long time solution for the ills of the community. He established his college on the model of Oxford and Cambridge. The Muhammadan Anglo Oriental College founded by him, which became Aligarh Muslim University in 1920, is rated as one of the top-ranked universities in the country by all ranking agencies.

He started the Aligarh Movement. The Aligarh Movement was the push to establish a modern system of education for the Muslim population of British India, during the later decades of the 19th century. The movement's name derives from the fact that its core and origins lay in the city of Aligarh in Northern India and, in particular, with the foundation of the Muhammadan Anglo Oriental Collegiate School. The educational reform established a base, and an impetus, for the wider Movement: an Indian Muslim renaissance that had profound implications for the religion, the politics, the culture and society of the Indian sub-continent.

## Sri Ramanuja

### Why in News

This year marked the 1000th birth anniversary of Sri Ramanuja. Various functions were organized in Srirangam and Kanchipuram to culminate the 1000th birth anniversary of Vaishnavite saint Sri Ramanuja, the Acharya who gave the Navagranthas to the world.

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Central Postal region will release special postal cover on Sri Ramanujacharya, in a function that will be held at Thousand pillar mandapam in Srirangam temple.

The divine body of Sri Ramanujacharya is said to be preserved in sannidhi inside Srirangam Ranganathar Swamy temple.

Ramanuja was a Hindu theologian, philosopher, and one of the most important exponents of the Sri Vaishnavism tradition within Hinduism. He was born in a Tamil Brāhmin family in the village of Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu. His philosophical foundations for devotionism were influential to the Bhakti movement.

PEPPER IT WITH  
Navagranthas and  
Advaita philosophy

Rāmānuja himself wrote influential texts, such as bhāṣya on the Brahma Sutras and the Bhagavad Gita, all in Sanskrit.

His Vishishtadvaita philosophy has competed with the Dvaita philosophy of Madhvāchārya, and Advaita philosophy of Ādi Shankara, together the three most influential Vedantic philosophies of the 2nd millennium. Rāmānuja presented the epistemic and soteriological importance of bhakti, or the devotion to a personal God as a means to spiritual liberation. His theories assert that there exists a plurality and distinction between Ātman (soul) and Brahman (metaphysical, ultimate reality), while he

also affirmed that there is unity of all souls and that the individual soul has the potential to realize identity with the Brahman.

### Offshore Patrol Vessel-Vikram

Vikram, the first of a series of seven Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs), was launched recently. The long-range ship was built by Larsen and Toubro. It was slated to be delivered in march next year.

The vessel, equipped with modern weapon and state-of-the-art radar systems, would be deployed for day and night surveillance patrol, search and rescue and in pollution response operations in exclusive economic zones of the country.

The vessel is equipped with state-of-the-art radars, navigation and communication systems capable of operating in tropical conditions.

The ship is indigenously designed and would be inducted into service by April 2018 after completion of extensive trials of equipment and machineries.

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OPVs are long-range surface ships capable of coastal and offshore patrolling, policing maritime zones, control & surveillance, anti-smuggling & anti-piracy operations with limited wartime roles.

### INS Kiltan

- It is the third of the four indigenously built AWS stealth corvettes under project 28 (Kamorta class) to join Indian Navy after sister ships INS Kamorta and INS Kadmat.
- INS Kiltan is India's first major warship to have a superstructure of carbon fibre composite material resulting in improved stealth features, lower top weight and maintenance costs.
- The ship derives its name from one of the islands in Aminidivi group of the strategically located Lakshadweep and Minicoy group of islands.
- The ship also boasts of the pompous legacy of the erstwhile **Petya Class ship of same name 'Kiltan (P79)' built in the USSR**, which had actively participated as Task Force Commander in the **'Operation Trident'** during the 1971 Indo-Pak war, the statement added.
- It can achieve a speed of over 25 knots.
- It is the first major warship to have undertaken sea trials of all major weapons and sensors as a pilot project.

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PEPPER IT WITH Shivalik class and Kolkata class ships.

### Exercise Indra (India and Russia)

The year 2017 marks a major milestone as Exercise Indra has been upgraded to involve all the three Services of the Armed Forces (Army, Navy and Air Force), which further accentuates the importance of Joint Services in the present world environment.

- Exercise INDRA-2017 is being conducted at the 249th Combined Army Range Sergeevsky and in the Sea of Japan near Vladivostok, Russia.
- Since its beginning in 2003, the Indra military drill has alternatively involved Indian and Russian ground and naval forces.
- The 11-day exercise, which is being carried out under the mandate of the United Nations saw simulations of various settings and possible exigencies in dealing with terrorists.
- The exercise will strengthen mutual confidence, inter-operability and enable sharing of best practices between both the armed forces. It will be a landmark event in the history of Indo-Russian defence cooperation.

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- The scope of the Exercise includes professional interactions, establishment of joint command and control structures between the Indian & Russian forces and elimination of terrorist threat in a multinational environment under the UN mandate.

### Mitra Shakti 2017

The fifth India-Sri Lanka Joint Training Exercise MITRA SHAKTI 2017 took place at Aundh Military Station, Pune. The exercise is based on Counter Terrorist Operations and an Infantry company from both the countries is participating in the same.

- The spectacular display of Unarmed Combat, Khukri Dance and Pipe Band was carried out by Indian Army and Udarata Narthanaya by Sri Lanka Army.
- The joint training exercise sends a strong signal to the world that both India and Sri Lanka understand the emerging threat of terrorism and stand shoulder to shoulder in countering this menace.
- The aim of the joint training is to share the best military practices and promoting healthy military to military relations between the two Armies and developing joint strategies by sharing expertise of conducting operations.
- The idea is to tap the rich repository of experience of each other and extract maximum learning value from the joint training.
- Forming part of different levels of the military to military engagement across the entire spectrum of operations, this exercise will enrich the two contingents in further honing basic military skills.

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### FIFA U-17 World Cup

The 2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup was the 17th FIFA U-17 World Cup; a biennial international football tournament contested by men's under-17 national teams was played in India in 6 cities between 6-28 October 2017. 24 teams participated in the event which was won by England who defeated Spain 5-2.

- The 6 destinations of the tournament were Kolkata (final was also played here), Kochi, Goa, Navi Mumbai, New Delhi and Guwahati.
- The World Cup's slogan in India, Football Takes Over, was widely claimed to have been true.** A total of 1.3 million people had confirmed their attendance which broke the mark of 1.23 million set 32 years ago in China during the inaugural edition.
- This was the first time India had participated in FIFA world cup (due to being the host city). India had earlier qualified for the 1950 World Cup but did not go due to a lack of funds and interest; the barefoot myth has been refuted by historians.

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### World Food day

FAO celebrates World Food Day each year on 16 October to commemorate the founding of the Organization in 1945. Events are organized in over 150 countries across the world, making it one of the most celebrated days of the UN calendar. These events promote worldwide awareness and action for those who suffer from hunger and for the need to ensure food security and nutritious diets for all. World Food Day shows commitments to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2 – to achieve Zero Hunger by 2030.

**It's also a day to celebrate the progress made towards reaching ZeroHunger.**

FAO of UN

An intergovernmental organization, FAO has 194 Member Nations, two associate members and one member organization, the European Union. Its employees come from

PEPPER IT WITH  
Zero Hunger  
Program



various cultural backgrounds and are experts in the multiple fields of activity FAO engages in. Headquartered in Rome, Italy, FAO is present in over 130 countries.

It aims to meet the demands posed by major global trends in agricultural development and challenges faced by member nations, FAO has identified key priorities on which it is best placed to intervene.

### Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP)

#### Why in News

The Central Water Commission (CWC) has signed MoUs with IIT Roorkee and Motilal Nehru National Institute of Technology Allahabad to support capacity building in dam safety under a rehabilitation and improvement project. The CWC has already signed MoUs with IIT Madras, IISc Bangaluru, NIT Calicut and NIT Rourkela to support these institutes in procuring specified equipment and software for enhancing their testing and modeling capabilities.

#### DRIP

The objective of the Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project for India is to improve the safety and operational performance of selected existing dams in the territory of the participating states. There are three components to the project, the first component being rehabilitation and improvement of dams and associated appurtenances. The second component is the dam safety institutional strengthening. Finally, the third component is the project management.

The closing date of the project is 2020 (many are of the view that the closing date be shifted to 2022) and it is being assisted by the World Bank and being implemented by ministry water resource (GOI) and the participating states.

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### US, Isarel and UNESCO

The U.S. announced its withdrawal from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), accusing it of “continuing anti-Israel bias.

- Israel has also decided to pull out of UNESCO. The Prime Minister of Israel has instructed the Foreign Ministry to prepare Israel's withdrawal from the organisation alongside the U.S.
- UNESCO is the first UN agency to have admitted Palestine as a full member in 2011.
- U.S. laws bar funding to any U.N. agency that recognises the Palestinian state. So, the U.S. stopped funding UNESCO since then. The U.S. withdrawal will take effect on December 31, 2018. Until then, it will remain a full member.
- The US previously withdrew from UNESCO under Ronald Reagan(1984), only to rejoin under George W Bush (2002).

For more information on UNESCO please go through Current Connect September 2017.

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### Body Mass Index (BMI)

BMI is used to determine a person's weight in regard to their height. The BMI (Body Mass Index) is used by the medical profession to quickly and simply determine a person's weight in regard to their height.

- It gives a measure which can be used to determine if a person is underweight, of normal weight, overweight or obese.
- The calculation for BMI was invented by Adolphe Quetelet, a Belgian mathematician born in 1796. He proposed that people's weight could be classified relative to an ideal weight for their height. To this day, Body Mass Index is also referred to as the Quetelet index.
- BMI (kg/m<sup>2</sup>) = mass (kg) / height (m)<sup>2</sup>

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#### BMI

Below 18.5	Underweight
18.5 to 24.9	Healthy weight
25 to 29.9	Above ideal
range 30 and above	Obese

## India's contribution in the field of Science

**London's Science Museum unveiled a new exhibition that traces India's contribution to science and technology globally over the past 5,000 years.**

Some of the highlights of the exhibition were

**Bakhshali manuscript** - It is a famous ancient Indian scroll. The birch bark scroll is known as the Bakhshali manuscript after the village, which is now in Pakistan, where it was found buried in 1881.

A black dot on a third-century Indian manuscript has been identified by Oxford University as the first recorded use of the mathematical symbol for zero, 500 years earlier than previously thought.

**Jambudvīpa**, or Jain map of the world - **Jambudvīpa is the dvīpa (island or continent)** of the terrestrial world, as envisioned in the cosmologies of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism, which is the realm where ordinary human beings live. The word Jambudvīpa literally refers to "the land of Jambu trees" where Jambu is the name of the species and dvīpa means "island" or "continent".

**Raman spectroscopy** - Raman spectroscopy is a spectroscopic technique used to observe vibrational, rotational, and other low-frequency modes in a system. Raman spectroscopy is commonly used in chemistry to provide a structural fingerprint by which molecules can be identified.

**Jaipur Foot** - The Jaipur Foot, also known as the Jaipur Leg, is a rubber-based prosthetic leg for people with below-knee amputations. Although inferior in many ways to the composite carbon fibre variants, its variable applicability and cost efficiency make it an acceptable choice for prosthesis. Ram Chander Sharma designed and developed it in 1968.

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Caraka-Samhita  
and Susruta-Samhita,

## WHO new guidelines for obesity in children

**With increasing evidence that childhood obesity is a "global epidemic",** affecting even the poorer nations, the World Health Organization (WHO) has released new guidelines on how trained professionals can better identify youngsters in need of help.

**The WHO guidelines, titled "Assessing and managing children at primary healthcare facilities to prevent overweight and obesity in the context of the double burden of malnutrition", provides** updates for the Integrated Management of Childhood Illness (IMCI). The guidelines include counselling, dieting and assessment of eating habits along with the usual weight and height measurements.

In 2016, one half of all children overweight or obese lived in Asia and one quarter lived in Africa. Paradoxically, overweight and obesity is found in populations where under-nutrition remains common — **the term 'double-burden of malnutrition' is sometimes used to describe these settings."**

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) is disseminating the guidelines to all its members. India has the second highest number of obese children in the world after China, according to a study. India will have over 17 million children with excess weight by 2025. According to WHO document, urbanisation, increased income, availability of fast foods, educational demands, television viewing and gaming have led to a rise in the consumption of foods high in fats, sugar and salt and low physical activity.

**Guidelines**

- ✓ WHO recommends that all infants and children aged less than 5 years presenting to primary health-care facilities should have both weight and height measured in order to determine their weight-for-height and their nutritional status according to WHO child growth standards. Comparing a child's weight with norms for its length or height is an effective way to assess for both wasting and overweight.
- ✓ Where infants and children are identified as overweight, WHO recommends providing counselling to parents and caregivers on nutrition and physical activity including promotion and support for exclusive breastfeeding in the first 6 months and

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PEPPER IT WITH  
Body Mass Index

continued breastfeeding until 24 months or beyond.

- ✓ If children are obese, they should be further assessed and an appropriate management plan should be developed. This can be done by a health worker at primary health-care level, if adequately trained, or at a referral clinic or local hospital.

#### Significance

1. In 2016 an estimated 41 million children under 5 were affected by overweight or obesity. Without effective treatment they are very likely to remain overweight and obese throughout their lives, putting them at risk of cardiovascular disease, diabetes and premature death, as well as suffering physical and psychological consequences in childhood.
2. While there have been major public health interventions to promote improved diet and patterns of physical activity in adults, the contribution of ante-natal and young-child interventions to reducing the risk of obesity in later life have not been significantly reviewed.
3. The guideline aims to support their efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, the global targets set by the Comprehensive implementation plan on maternal, **infant and young child nutrition, and the Global strategy for women's, children's and adolescents' health 2016–2030.**

### Global Passport Power Rank 2017

1. The 2017 Global Passport Power Rank, produced by advisory firm Arton Capital, **ranks all of the passports of the world by their 'total visa-free score'.**
2. This is worked out by giving a point for each country that the **passport's holders can visit without a visa, with a visa on arrival, or with electronic travel authorisation.**
3. Singapore ranked 1st and became first Asian country with most powerful passport in **the world. UK's score is 156, while the US scored 154** – putting it in sixth place along with Canada, Ireland and Malaysia. Meanwhile Australia is ranked seventh, Russia is ranked 41st, Uganda is 66th, China is 67th, India is 75th, and Nigeria is ranked 82nd.

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### World City Day

The United Nations General Assembly has designated the 31st of October as World Cities Day. The Day is expected to greatly promote the international community's **interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries in meeting opportunities and addressing challenges of urbanization, and contributing to sustainable urban development around the world.**

This year, the United Nations has selected the theme Innovative Governance, Open Cities to highlight the important role of urbanization as a source of global development and social inclusion.

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### Modern Slavery Report

It is a report released by the U.N.-affiliated International Labor Office (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation.

Forced marriage is included for first time in worldwide statistics that **show 'money and debt' to be at the heart of the exploitation**. The report was titled as **'Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage 2017'.** **The report doesnot mention India.** Although country-wise figures were not mentioned in the 2017 ILO-WFF report, the study showed that 40.3 million people were victims of **'modern slavery' in 2016.**

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### CONCEPT CLEARING ASSIGNMENT

1. **The Women's Reservation Bill** has been introduced in the Rajya Sabha on the **International Women's Day**. **How far will women's reservation empower women and the society?** Do you think women reservation in India is fair? Elucidate.
2. A farm waiver undermines an honest credit culture and discipline. It endangers moral hazard and entails transfer from taxpayers. There is a need to create consensus that farm loan waiver promises are eschewed. Critically analyze with examples and suggest solution for high indebtedness and exorbitant interest rates.
3. Water is essential to life. It is fundamental to the economy and to ecology – and to **human equity**. **The India Water Week 2017 was held with theme "Water and Energy for Inclusive Growth," recently. Bring out the issues faced by India in water management and suggest steps for efficient management and distribution of water to cope up with state demands.**
4. What is Integrity Index and highlight its objectives. How will it help in achieving vision of corruption free India? Comment.
5. It is projected that the population of senior citizen in India could be around 19% of total population by 2050. This means that caring for elderly and all aspects of geriatric services would come under greater focus and attention in coming year. Elucidate with strategies and schemes/initiative by government for geriatric caring.
6. The 11th Trade Policy Forum (TPF) Meeting was held in Washington D.C. recently. TPF serves as a robust platform that contributes towards promoting bilateral trade and investment between India and the US. What are the significance of TPF meeting **and India's stand to boost bilateral trade?**
7. Pollution is the biggest environment cause of premature death according to Lancet study. In absolute numbers, India has surpassed all countries in such death in 2015. Enumerate step taken by Indian Government to curb premature death due to pollution.
8. Department of Animal husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries in co-operation has undertaken a Mass Embryo Transfer programme in Indigenous Breeds under the scheme, National Mission on Bovine Productivity. What is Embryo transfer technology and examine its economic, ecological and ethical implications?
9. The shipment of wheat to Afghanistan is a landmark moment as it will pave the way for operationalisation of the Chabahar port as an alternative, reliable and robust connectivity for Afghanistan. How this move will ramp up the trade between India, Afghanistan and Iran in wake of Pakistan denying transit facilities. Critically analyse.
10. Present an account on Catalonia Crisis and examine its economic and political implications and how its call for independence will affect its neighboring Spanish countries.
11. Examine the main provisions of the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and throw light on the functions of NIIF.
12. BIS is the National Standard Body of India established under the BIS Act 1986 for the harmonious development of the activities of standardization, marking and quality certification of goods. Bring out the salient features of BIS act 2016 and the significance of its proper implementations.
13. Present an account on Sovereign Gold Bonds Scheme and examine its economic implications in context of government initiatives to develop a financial asset as an alternative to purchasing metal gold.
14. The right to housing is recognised in a number of international human rights instruments. Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognises the right to housing as part of the right to an adequate standard of living. Compare its implementation in accordance of International standards by Indian Government. **Also mention recent initiatives/scheme to highlight India's effort to provide housing and shelter to its citizens.**

## P.T. Oriented Questions

1. Which among the following given below was/were not the places where FIFA U-17 world cup was played.  
1) Chennai  
2) Vishakhapatnam  
3) Guwahati  
4) Trivandrum  
Code:  
A) 1 and 2 only  
B) 2 and 3 only  
C) 3 and 4 only  
D) 1,3 and 4 only
2. Consider the following statements given below.  
1) The birch bark scroll is known as the Bakhshali manuscript after the village, which is now in Pakistan.  
2) Jambudvipa is a Jain map.  
Code:  
A) 1 only  
B) 2 only  
C) Both 1 and 2  
D) Neither 1 nor 2
3. Which among the following given below is/are correct.  
1) The commission on sub-categorisation of OBCs is headed by justice Rohini.  
2) Farm loans may be crop loans or investment loans taken to buy equipment.  
3) Inheritance tax is also known as death duty.  
Code:  
A) 1 and 2 only  
B) 2 and 3 only  
C) 1 and 3 only  
D) All of the above
4. Consider the following statements given below about Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 and mark the correct one/ones.  
1) Juveniles between the ages of 16-18 can be tried as adults for heinous offence.  
2) Heinous offence is any offence for which a minimum penalty of 5 years is given under law.  
Code:  
A) 1 only  
B) 2 only  
C) Both 1 and 2  
D) Neither 1 nor 2
5. Consider the following statements given below and choose the correct one/ones.  
1) Tarun covers loans between Rs 5-10 lakhs.  
2) Shishu covers loans up to Rs 50000.  
3) Kishor covers loans between Rs 50000 to 5 lakhs.  
Code:  
A) 1 and 2 only  
B) 2 and 3 only  
C) 1 and 3 only  
D) All of the above
6. Consider the following statements about Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme and choose the correct ones.  
1) The main objective of the scheme is to develop a financial asset as an alternative to purchasing gold  
2) It is issued by SEBI on behalf of RBI  
3) the interest earned on gold bonds is tax exempted  
Code:  
A) 1 and 2 only  
B) 2 and 3 only  
C) 1 and 3 only  
D) all of the above
7. Consider the following statements about National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) and mark the correct one/ones.  
1) It attracts investment from both national and international sources.  
2) NIIF is a single entity and there cannot be more than 1 fund.  
Code:  
A) 1 only  
B) 2 only  
C) Both 1 and 2



- D) Neither 1 nor 2
8. Modern Slavery Report is released by which among the following.
- South Asian Foundation for Education Research(SAFER) in Collaboration with International Labour Organisation.
  - International Labor Office (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation.
  - International Labor Organisation (ILO) and the Walk Free Foundation.
  - None of the above.
9. Which among the following is/are the target beneficiaries of intensified mission Indradhanush.
- Pregnant women
  - New born baby
  - Children up to 12 months
- Code:
- 1 and 2 only
  - Only 1
  - 2 and 3 only
  - All of the above
10. Consider the following statements about Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA).
- It is a scheme to make all rural population digitally literate
  - The scheme will be implemented by special purpose vehicle
- Which of the following is/are INCORRECT?
- 1 only
  - 2 only
  - 1 and 2 both
  - Neither 1 nor 2
11. Consider the following statements about GST council.
- It is headed by union minister of finance
  - All the state finance ministers are its members
  - It is a constitutional body
- Which among the following is/are correct?
- 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - All of the above
12. Which among the following schemes are supported by World Bank.
- Sankalp which is a central sector scheme
  - Strive which is for improving vocational training
- Code:
- 1 only
  - 2 only
  - Both 1 and 2
  - Neither 1 nor 2
13. Consider the following statements about Integrity index and mark the correct ones.
- It is being developed by Central Vigilance Commission which is a statutory body
  - It aims to create an internal and external ecosystem that promotes working with Integrity where public organizations lead the way.
  - At the initial phase only top Central Public Sector Organisations will be consider
- Code:
- 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - All of the above
14. Consider the following statements given below and choose the correct one/ones.
- Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Kendra (PMKK) has been set up at New Delhi
  - It comes under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana(PMKVY)
  - The main beneficiary of the scheme are college/school dropouts
- Code:
- 1 and 2 only
  - 2 and 3 only
  - 1 and 3 only
  - All of the above
15. Consider the following statements given below
- Meenakshi Sundeshwari

- temple is dedicated to Lord Vishnu and goddess Parvati
- 2) It is located on the bank of river Vaigai in Madurai
  - 3) It is built by Pagoda style of architecture
- Code:
- A) 1 and 2 only
  - B) 2 and 3 only
  - C) 1 and 3 only
  - D) All of the above
16. Which among the following is not a member of Shanghai Corporation Organisation.
- A) Kazakhstan
  - B) Kyrgyzstan
  - C) Tajikistan
  - D) Turkeministan
17. Consider the following statements about PFMS and choose the correct one/ones.
- 1) It aims at promoting transparency and bringing about tangible improvements in the overall Central Government Financial Management
  - 2) The ambit of PFMS coverage includes Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes as well as other expenditures including the Finance Commission Grants.
- Code:
- A) 1 only
  - B) 2 only
  - C) Both 1 and 2
  - D) Neither 1 nor 2
18. Consider the following statements about National Air Quality Index (AQI) and chose the correct one/ones.
- 1) The AQI is an index for daily air quality
  - 2) Particulate matter is not calculated in AQI calculation
  - 3) The lower the AQI value, the greater the level of air pollution
- Code:
- A) 1 and 2 only
  - B) 2 and 3 only
  - C) 1 and 3 only
  - D) All of the above
19. HORTINET a mobile app is associated to:
- (a) CSIR (Council of Scientific and Industrial Research)
  - (b) FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry)
  - (c) APEDA (Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority)
  - (d) MeitY (Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology)
20. Which of the following is not a tributary of Narmada river.
- (1) Hiran
  - (2) Gomai
  - (3) Lohar
  - (4) Vaki
  - (5) Nemawar
- Code:
- (a) 1 and 2
  - (b) 2 and 4
  - (c) 3 and 5
  - (d) 4 and 5
21. Consider the following statements about International energy agency and choose the correct one/s about International energy agency.
1. It was established in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.
  2. It publishes World Energy Outlook.
  3. India is founding member of IEA.
- Code:
- (a) 1 and 2
  - (b) 1 and 3
  - (c) 2 and 3
  - (d) None
22. Consider the following about Zero Hunger Program and choose the correct one/s:
1. It is an effort of Indian government in association with WHO.
  2. It is a scheme for South-East Asian nations only.
- Code:
- (a) 1 only
  - (b) 2 only
  - (c) 1 and 2
  - (d) None

23. Consider the following about Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana, or Saubhagya and choose the correct one/s
1. It is a scheme for rural areas.
  2. Beneficiaries for connections would be identified using Socio Economic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011 data.
- Code:
- (a) 1 only      (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 2    (d) None
24. Which of the following are located in Karnataka
1. Anamalai tiger reserve
  2. Nagarhole tiger reserve
  3. Bandipore tiger reserve
- Code:
- (a) 1 and 2    (b) 1 and 3  
(c) 2 and 3    (d) All the above
25. Which of the following state is called Fruit Orchid of India?
- (a) Arunachal Pradesh
  - (b) Himachal Pradesh
  - (c) Assam
  - (d) Uttarakhand
26. Consider the following about INS tarasa and choose the correct one/s
1. It is the first ship of the series of Water Jet Fast Attack Craft (WJFAC).
  2. It is named after a picturesque island of Andaman and Nicobar.
- Code:
- (a) 1 only      (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 2    (d) None

27. The natural habitat of lion-tailed macaque (UPSC 2013)
1. Tamil nadu
  2. Kerala
  3. Karnataka
  4. Andhra Pradesh
- Code:
- (a) 1,2 and 3    (b) 1,2 and 4  
(c) 1,3 and 4    (d) 2,3 and 4
28. Which of the following has been assigned the status of Domestic Systemically Important Banks (D-SIBS)
1. HDFC bank
  2. ICICI bank
  3. SBI
  4. SIDBI
- Code:
- (a) 1 and 3      (b) 1, 2 and 3  
(c) 3 and 4      (d) All the above
29. Consider the following about Masala Bonds
1. It is a rupee dominated bond
  2. The "Masala bonds" marked the first rupee bonds listed on the London Stock Exchange.
- Code:
- (a) 1 only      (b) 2 only  
(c) 1 and 2    (d) Non