



इबलौइहव

Comprehensive **NEWS** Analysis

05-08-2018
to
11-08-2018
AUGUST
WEEK 02

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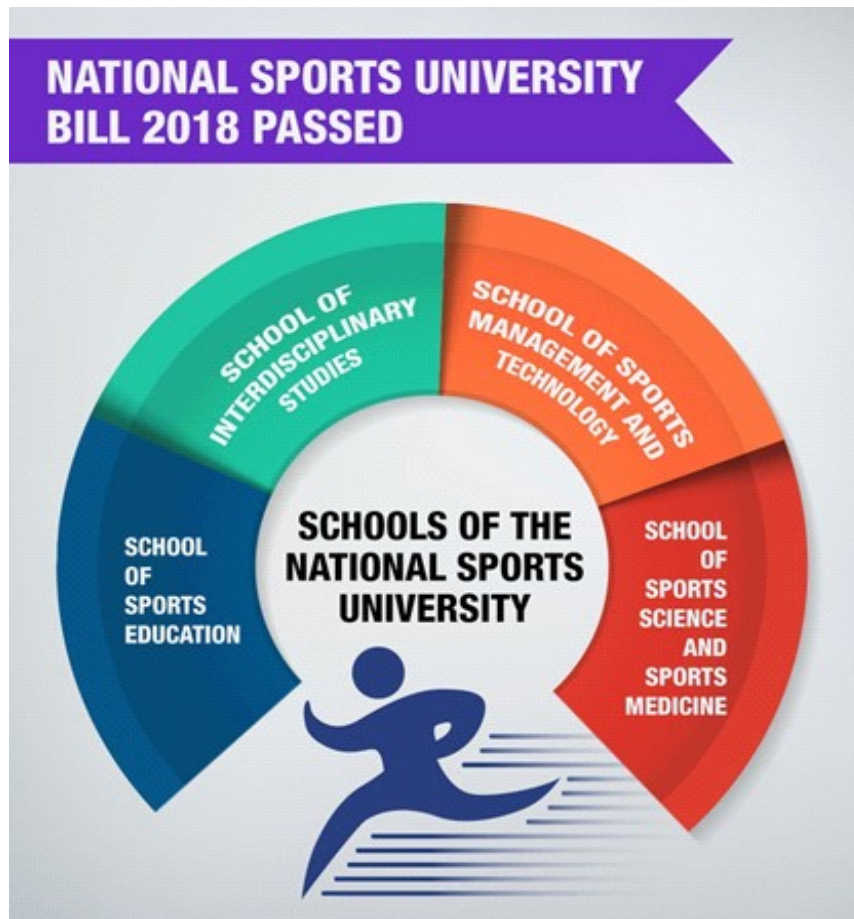
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Polity and Governance

1. National Sports University Bill, 2018

In News:

Lok Sabha has passed National Sports University Bill, 2018 to set up the country's first National Sports University in Imphal, Manipur that will provide sports education, research and coaching.



Details:

The Bill replaces National Sports University Ordinance, 2018 promulgated by President in May 2018 to protect interests of students who already have been enrolled in National Sports University.

Highlights of the Bill:

Establishment of the University:

The Bill establishes a National Sports University located in Manipur. It will promote sports education in the areas of: (i) sports sciences, (ii) sports technology, (iii) sports

management, and (iv) sports coaching. It will function as a national training centre for select sports disciplines. It may also establish campuses and study centres in other parts of the country. The University will be empowered to grant degrees, diplomas and certificates.

Objectives: The key objectives of the University are:

(i) research, development and dissemination of knowledge in physical education and sports sciences, (ii) strengthening physical education and sports training programmes, (iii) generating knowledge capabilities, skills and competence at various levels, and (iv) training talented athletes to help them to evolve into international level athletes.

Authorities of the University:

The Bill provides for several authorities under the University. These include: Court, Executive Council, Academic and Activity Council, Board of Sports Studies etc.

Role the central government:

The central government will review and inspect the functioning of the University. The Executive Council may take action based on the inspection report. If it fails to take action to the satisfaction of the central government, it will have to comply with the directions issued by the central government. Further, the central government may annul any proceeding of the University which is not in line with the Act.

Funding:

The University will be required to maintain a fund which will be credited with the funds that it receives from the central government, state government, and fees and money received from any other sources (grants and gifts). All funds of the University will be invested as decided by the Board on the recommendation of the Finance Committee.

Significance of the move:

Setting up of National Sports University in Manipur will result in giving an opportunity for youth of country in general and of North Eastern States in particular for pursuing courses such as B.PEd, MPed, Diploma / certificate courses in coaching, physiotherapy, fitness, sports management, sports journalism, etc.

2. Ujjwala programme

Context:

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana has achieved the 5 crore mark. Lok Sabha Speaker Smt Sumitra Mahajan handed over 5 croreth LPG connection under Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) to Smt Takrdiran of Delhi in the Parliament House.

- Through PMUY, initially, 5 crore BPL households were targeted for providing deposit free LPG connections to BPL households by 31st March, 2019. In a record time of 28 months for its launch, PMUY achieved the initial target of providing 5 crores LPG connection to BPL households.



huge success of the Scheme, target was revised to 8 crores with budgetary allocation of Rs 12,800 crore.

About the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana:

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

Some of the objectives of the scheme are:

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

What makes LPG adoption necessary?

- A large section of Indians, especially women and girls, are exposed to severe household air pollution (HAP) from the use of solid fuels such as biomass, dung cakes and coal for cooking. A report from the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare places HAP as the second leading risk factor contributing to India's disease burden.
- According to the World Health Organization, solid fuel use is responsible for about 13% of all mortality and morbidity in India (measured as Disability-Adjusted Life Years), and causes about 40% of all pulmonary disorders, nearly 30% of cataract incidences, and over 20% each of ischemic heart disease, lung cancer and lower respiratory infection.

Significance of the project:

- PMUY has been a revolutionary initiative that has transformed the lives of more than 3.57 crore households spanning across the length and breadth of the country. The initiative is in line with Governments aim to eradicate energy poverty, thereby promoting economic empowerment.

Way ahead:

- The PMUY is a bold and much-needed initiative, but it should be recognised that this is just a first step. The real test of the PMUY and its successor programmes will be in how they translate the provision of connections to sustained use of LPG or other clean fuels such as electricity or biogas.

- Truly smokeless kitchens can be realized only if the government follows up with measures that go beyond connections to actual usage of LPG. This may require concerted efforts cutting across Ministries beyond petroleum and natural gas and including those of health, rural development and women and child welfare.

3. SBM- Gramin

Context:

World Health Organisation has released the progress report on potential health impact from increased sanitation coverage through the Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G).

Highlights of the report:

- Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G) will result in preventing more than three lakh deaths due to diarrhoea and protein-energy malnutrition between 2014-October 2019.
- India's rural sanitation coverage has escalated to 89.07% till August 2. Under the SBM-G, 19 States and Union Territories were declared Open Defecation Free (ODF) and 7.9 crore toilets were built, while 421 districts were declared ODF. Also, more than 4.9 lakh villages in the country were declared ODF.
- The WHO study showed that before the initiation of SBM-G, unsafe sanitation caused 199 million cases of diarrhoea annually and that by 2019, the initiative aims to achieve 100% sanitation coverage.

Open defecation-free status

Rural	Villages declared ODF	% of villages declared ODF	Villages verified ODF	% of villages verified ODF	% of verified over declared
2015-16	47,127	8	17,887	3	38
2016-17	137,237	23	65,291	11	48
2017-18	125,345	21	116,219	19	93
Total	309,709	51	199,397	33	64
Urban	Cities declared ODF	% of cities declared ODF	Cities verified ODF	% of cities verified ODF	% of verified over declared
Total	1,846	42	1,337	30	72

Calculations from SBM-G official government data portal accessed on 15 January 2018 and SBM-U monthly programme December newsletter. Year-wise break-up not available for SBM-U.

About SBM- Gramin:

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) Gramin, launched on October 2, 2014 is the largest behaviour change campaign ever attempted in the field of sanitation in the world.

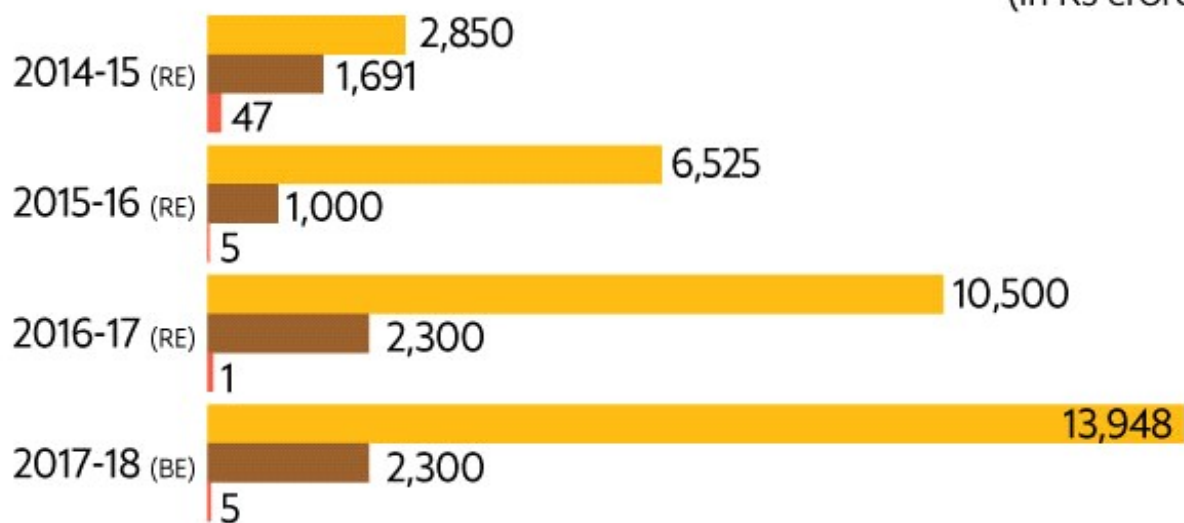
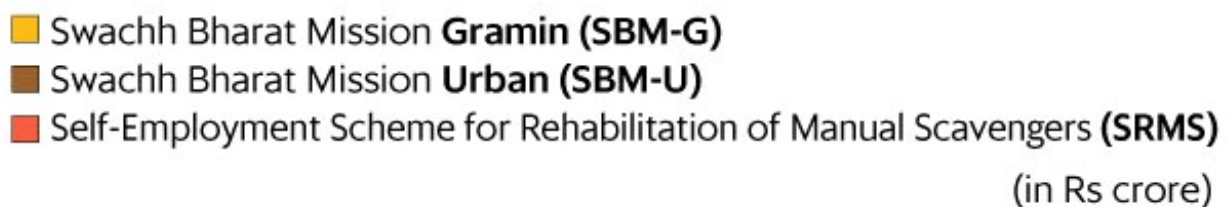
Aim: It aims to build an ODF (Open Defecation Free) and Swachh Bharat by October 2, 2019 as a tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary.

Focus: SBM-Gramin mainly focuses on ensuring the use of toilets, besides their construction. The States and their implementing agencies will be given incentives for meeting performance standards: reducing open defecation, sustaining their open defecation-free status and improving solid and liquid waste management in rural areas.

Significance of the scheme:

In Rural India, this would mean improving the levels of cleanliness through Solid and Liquid Waste Management activities and making villages Open Defecation Free (ODF), clean and sanitized.

Allocations



RE: revised estimates; BE: budget estimates

Source: Union Expenditure Budget

4. Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)

Context:

NITI Aayog has identified 117 districts as 'Aspirational Districts' for Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA).

Selection of the districts: These districts have been selected on the basis of the composite index which includes published data of deprivation enumerated under Socio-Economic Caste Census, Health & Nutrition, Education and Basic Infrastructure.

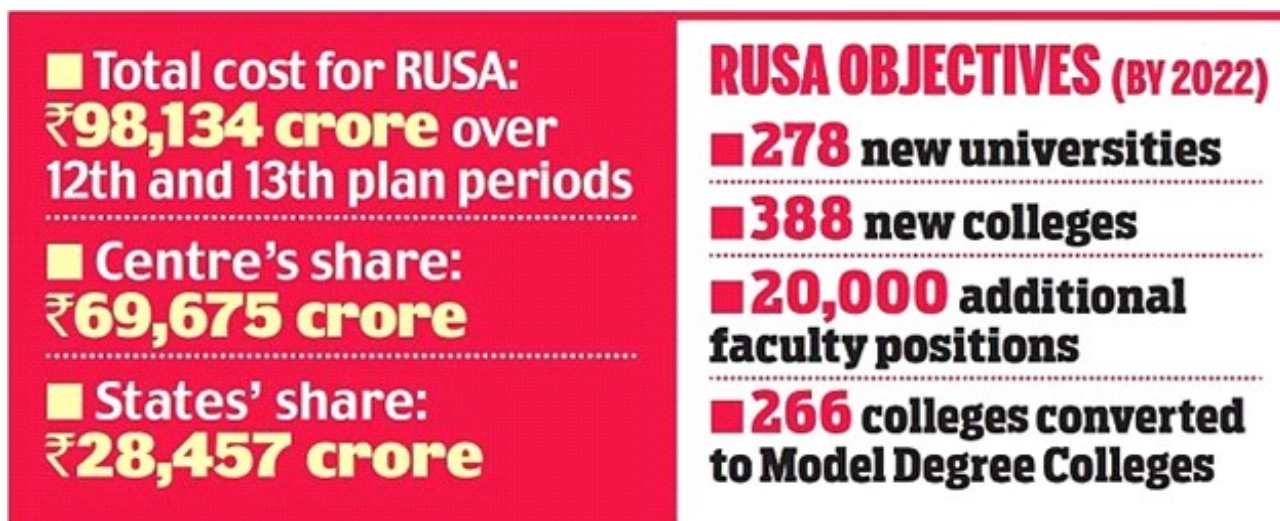
Support by the Centre: Under the scheme, central assistance is provided for opening of new Model Degree Colleges (MDCs) in these districts and in unserved & underserved districts in North Eastern and Himalayan States.

Kind of support: The central support provided under the component of new MDCs is infrastructural in nature in which funds are released for creation of Colleges with requisite infrastructure such as appropriate number of class rooms, library, laboratory, faculty rooms, toilet blocks and other essential requirements for technologically advanced facilities.

States' role: Under this component, a commitment is given by the State Governments that all recurring expenditure (including salaries) in respect of the MDC being established, will be borne by the respective State Government. Additionally, under a separate component of RUSA viz., Faculty Recruitment Support, central support is provided for creation of additional posts of Assistant Professors.

About RUSA:

- Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS), launched in 2013 aims at providing strategic funding to eligible state higher educational institutions.



Funding:

- The central funding (in the ratio of 60:40 for general category States, 90:10 for special category states and 100% for union territories) would be norm based and outcome dependent.
- The funding would flow from the central ministry through the state governments/union territories to the State Higher Education Councils before reaching the identified institutions.
- The funding to states would be made on the basis of critical appraisal of State Higher Education Plans, which would describe each state's strategy to address issues of equity, access and excellence in higher education.

Objectives:

- The key objectives of RUSA are to improve access, equity and quality in higher education through planned development of higher education at the state level. Objectives include creating new academic institutions, expanding and upgrading the existing ones, developing institutions that are self-reliant in terms of quality education, professionally managed, and characterized by greater inclination towards research and provide students with education that is relevant to them as well the nation as a whole.

Components:

- RUSA would create new universities through up gradation of existing autonomous colleges and conversion of colleges in a cluster.
- It would create new model degree colleges, new professional colleges and provide infrastructural support to universities and colleges.
- Faculty recruitment support, faculty improvements programmes and leadership development of educational administrators are also an important part of the scheme.
- In order to enhance skill development the existing central scheme of Polytechnics has been subsumed within RUSA. A separate component to synergise vocational education with higher education has also been included in RUSA.
- Besides these, RUSA also supports reforming, restructuring and building capacity of institutions in participating state.

5. Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha

Context:

Harivansh Narayan Singh has been elected as the new deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha.

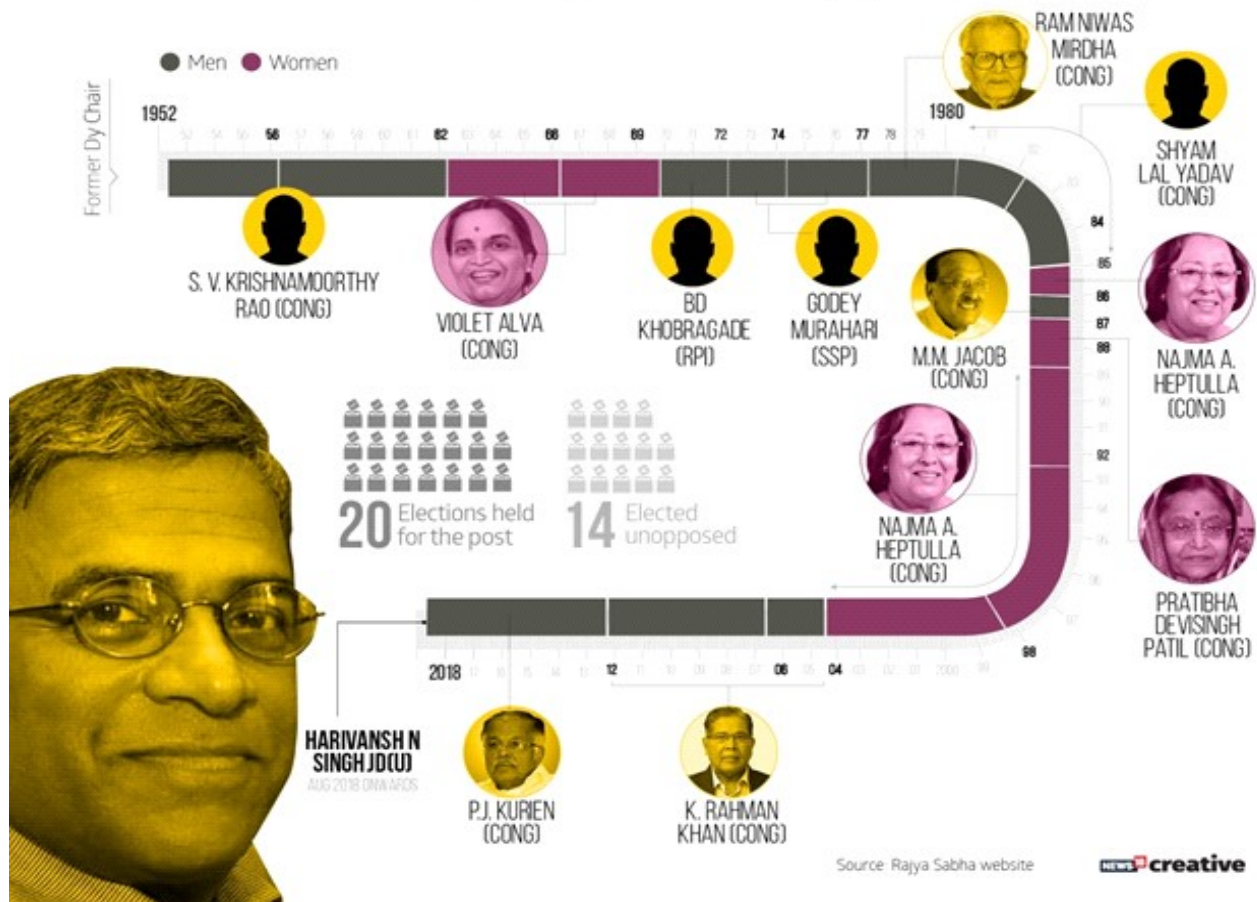
- The Deputy Chairman is a constitutional position created under Article 89 of the Constitution, which specifies that Rajya Sabha shall choose one of its MPs to be the Deputy Chairman as often as the position becomes vacant. The office becomes vacant either by resignation or removal from office or when the Rajya Sabha member's term gets over.

Election of Deputy Chairman:

- The election of a Deputy Chairman shall be held on such date as the Chairman may fix and the Secretary-General shall send to every member notice of this date.
- At any time before noon on the day- preceding the date so fixed, any member may give notice in writing addressed to the Secretary-General of a motion that another member be chosen as the Deputy Chairman of the Council, and the notice shall be seconded by a third member and shall be accompanied by a statement by the member whose name

THE NEW NO. 2 IN RAJYA SABHA

NDA candidate Harivansh Narayan Singh is the new RS Deputy Chairman



is proposed in the notice that he is willing to serve as Deputy Chairman if elected: Provided that a member shall not propose or second more than one motion.

- A member in whose name a motion stands in the list of business may, when called, move the motion or not move the motion, in which case he shall confine himself to a mere statement to that effect.
- The motions which have been moved and duly seconded shall be put one by one in the order in which they have been moved and decided if necessary by division. If any motion is carried, the person presiding shall, without putting later motions, declare that the member proposed in the motion which has been carried, has been chosen as the Deputy Chairman of the Council.

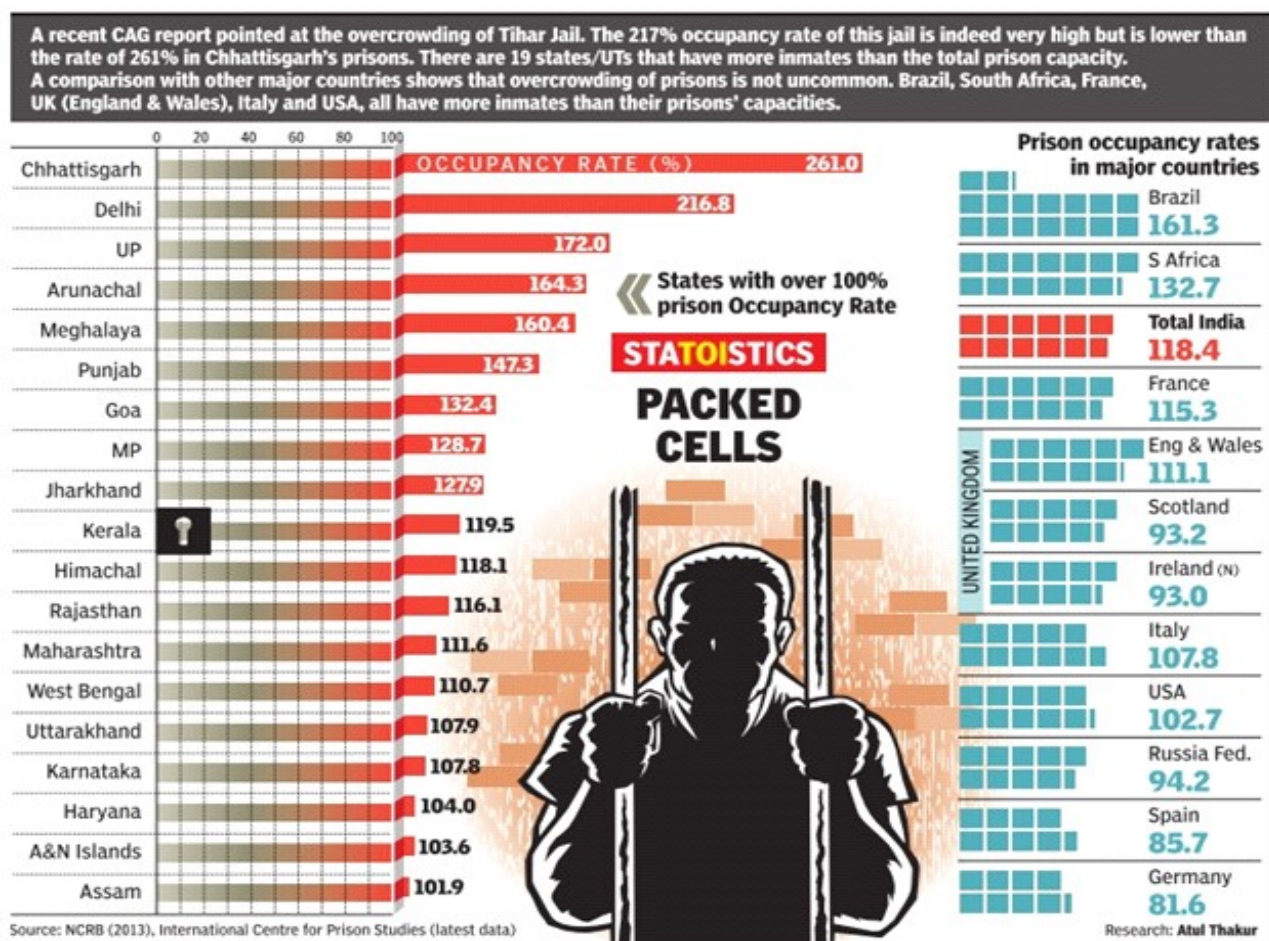
The Deputy Chairman or other member competent to preside over a sitting of the Council under the Constitution or these rules shall, when so presiding, have the same power as the Chairman when presiding over the Council and all references to the Chairman in these rules shall in these circumstances be deemed to be, references to any such person so presiding.

The Deputy Chair is the one position that is elected solely by members of Rajya Sabha. It is a critical position not just because s/he steps in when there is a vacancy in the office of Chairperson/Vice President but also because s/he plays a critical role in ensuring the smooth running of the House.

6. SC to constitute panel to look into issues in prisons across country

Context:

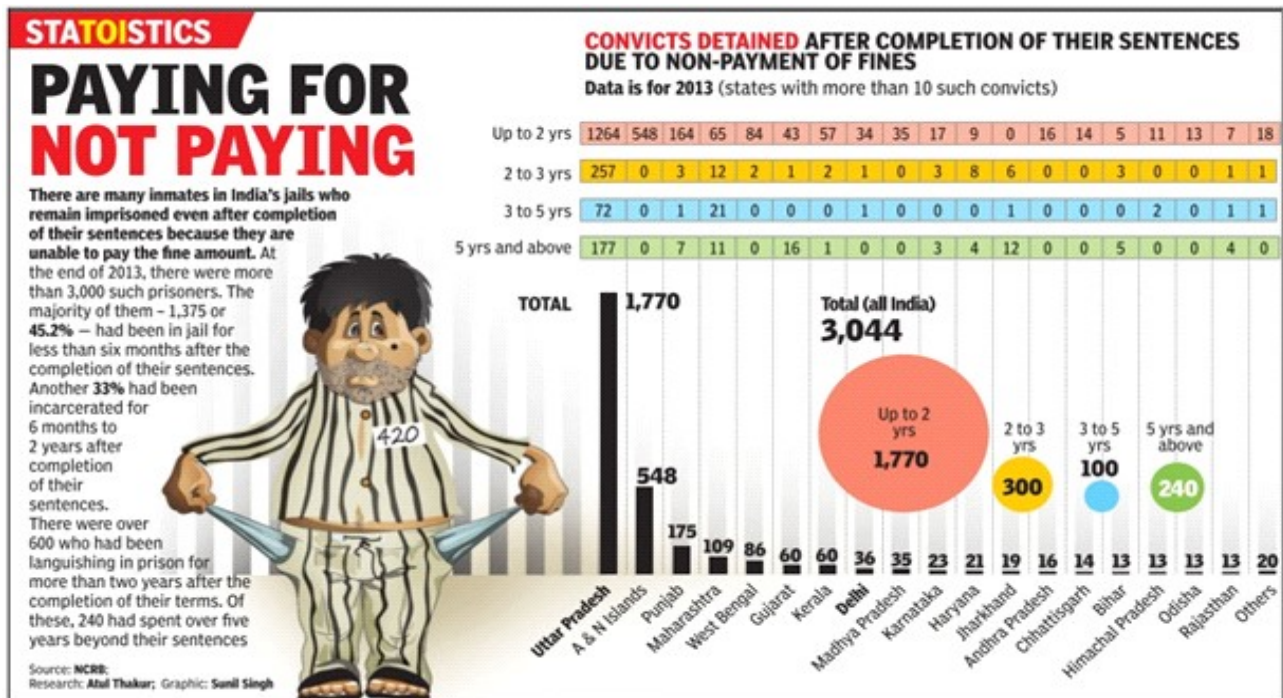
The Supreme Court has proposed to constitute a committee under the chairmanship of its retired judge to look into the problems in jails.



- The committee's duties will include looking into the problems of jails across the country including overcrowding and women prisoners languishing in cells for years. After studying the problems, the committee would be required to suggest measures to deal with them.

Background:

- The move is based on a petition in the court relating to inhuman conditions prevailing in 1,382 prisons across the country. The court had earlier taken strong exception to overcrowded jails across the country and said prisoners also have human rights and cannot be kept in jail like 'animals'.

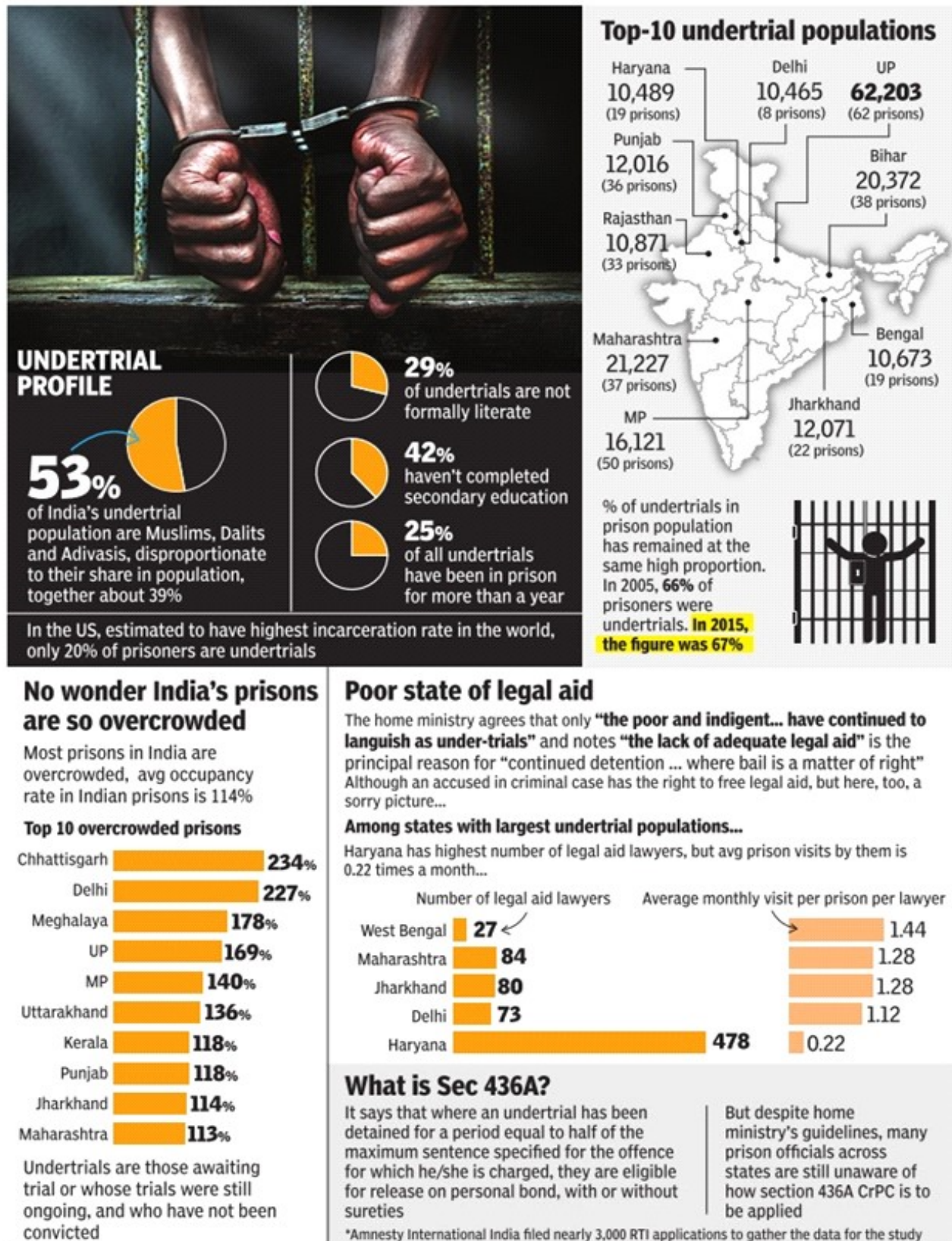


Need for reforms:

- NHRC figures show that prisoners cut off from family and friends had a 50% more chance of committing suicide than those outside. The average suicide rate among the general public for this period is 11 (per 100,000) whereas the average suicide rate in prison is 16.9 (per 100,000). In other words, the average suicide rate in prisons is over 50% more than in normal conditions.
- Indian prisons face three long-standing structural constraints: overcrowding, thanks to a high percentage of under trials in the prison population, understaffing and underfunding. The inevitable outcome is sub-human living conditions, poor hygiene, and violent clashes between the inmates and jail authorities.



- Besides, while 33% of the total requirement of prison officials still lies vacant, almost 36% of vacancy for supervising officers is still unfulfilled. In the absence of adequate prison staff, overcrowding of prisons leads to rampant violence and other criminal activities inside the jails.



Way ahead:

- Indian jails have often been dubbed as a university for grooming criminals due to pathetic and inhumane conditions. In the absence of a robust Whistleblower Protection Act and structural changes to address the issues of overcrowding and understaffing, India's prisons will continue to be heaven for politically connected criminals and hell for socio-economically disadvantaged undertrials, some regular media uproars notwithstanding.
- Fundamental rights of prisoners cannot be placed in the back-burner and the Centre and the states need to be more pro-active in sensitising staff about the need to treat prisoners as humanely as possible.

7. Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH)**Context:**

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has called for transforming heritage buildings in Rajasthan into “economic assets” for the society. Economic benefits could be derived from these properties as an alternative to paying for their upkeep on a regular basis.



About INTACH: The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is a non-profit charitable organization registered under the Societies' Registration Act, 1860.

Aim: It was founded in 1984 with the vision to create a membership organization to stimulate and spearhead heritage awareness and conservation in India.

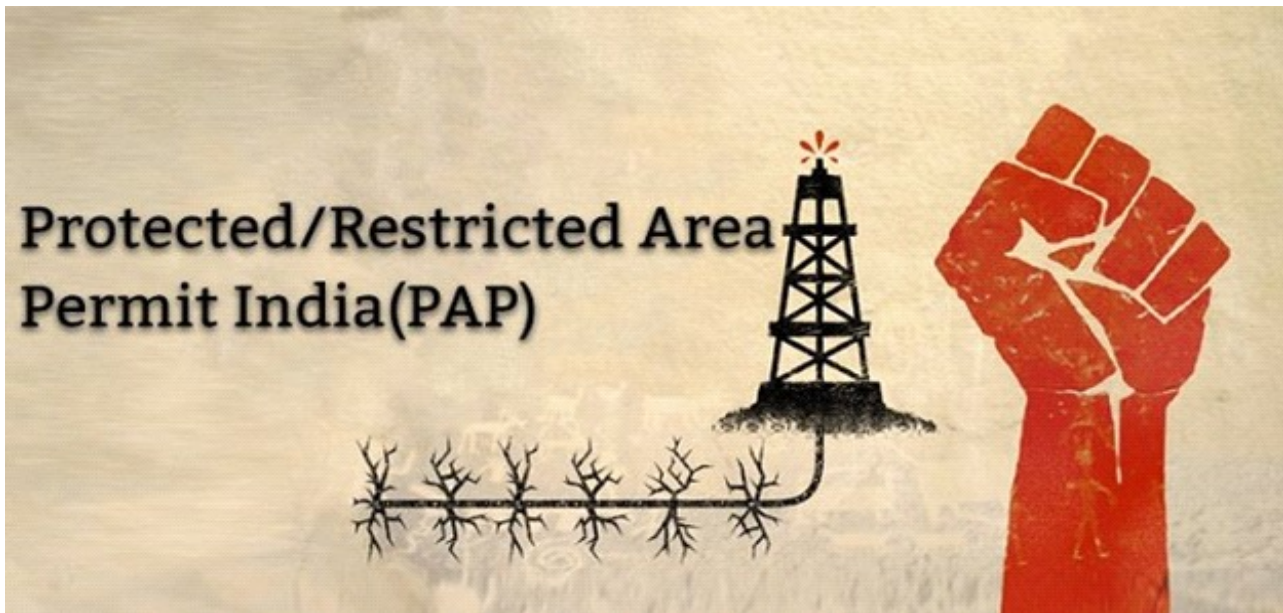
Contributions: Since 1984, INTACH has pioneered the conservation and protection of India's natural and cultural heritage and is today the largest membership organization in the country dedicated to conservation.

In 2007, the United Nations awarded INTACH a special consultative status with United Nations Economic and Social Council.

8. Restricted Area Permit (RAP) regime

Context:

The Union government has decided to exclude 29 inhabited Andaman & Nicobar Islands from the Restricted Area Permit (RAP) regime, subject to certain conditions, to boost tourism and overall development of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.



- The list of the islands permitted for foreigners visit includes East Island, North Andaman, Smith Island, Curfew Island, Stewart Island, Land Fall Island, Ayes Island, Middle Andaman, Long Island, Strait Island, North Passage, Baratang, South Andaman, Havelock, Neil Island, Flat Bay, Little Andaman, Chowra, Tillang Chong Island, Teressa, Katchal, Nancowry, Kamorta, Pulomilo, Great Nicobar, Little Nicobar, Narcondam Island and Interview Island.
- Foreigners will also be allowed to visit 11 uninhabited Islands, to be notified by Andaman and Nicobar Islands Administration, only for day visits.

Exceptions:

- Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals having their origin in these countries would continue to require RAP to visit Andaman & Nicobar Islands. In such cases, RAP may be granted only after obtaining prior approval of the ministry of home affairs.
- For visiting Mayabunder and Diglipur, citizens of Myanmar will continue to require RAP which shall be issued only with the prior approval of the MHA.

What is Restricted Area Permit (RAP) regime?

- RAP regime was notified under the Foreigners (Restricted Areas) Order, 1963.
- Under it, foreign nationals are not normally allowed to visit protected or restricted area unless Government is satisfied that there are extraordinary reasons to justify their visit.
- Every foreigner, except citizen of Bhutan, who desires to enter and stay in protected or restricted area, is required to obtain special permit from competent authority having power to issue such permits to foreigner, seeking it.
- Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals of Pakistani origin are exception and are not allowed to enter such areas.

9. One District One Product (Ek Zila – Ek Ut padan) Scheme**Context:**

Uttar Pradesh government had recently organized 'One District One Product' Summit to promote traditional industries in every district of the state.

- The ODOP Summit is stated to be the first of its kind in the country and is expected to give a big boost to the MSME and handicraft in the state.
- The summit, which aims to give boost to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), will be a corollary of the UP Investors Summit held in the state capital in February this year, followed by the groundbreaking ceremony for the launch of 81 projects in July.

About ODOP:

- ODOP is aimed at giving a major push to traditional industries synonymous with the respective districts of the state.
- The objective of the ODOP is to optimize production, productivity and income, preservation and development of local crafts, promotion of art, improvement in product quality and skill development.
- Under this, one product indigenous to every district would be showcased at the three-day UP Diwas event. This will boost economic development of the state, and also help in generation of five lakh new jobs annually.
- ODOP is basically a Japanese business development concept, which gained prominence in 1979. It is aimed at promoting a competitive and staple product from a specific area to push sales and improve the standard of living of the local population. Over time, it has been replicated in other Asian countries as well.

International Relations

10. Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development

Context:

India has been elected as the president of the Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development.

First time opportunity:

India got the presidency of the organization, servicing countries of the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) in the field of electronic media development, for the first time by defeating Iran in the election that took place in Sri Lanka.



About Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD):

- The Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) was established in 1977 under the auspices of UNESCO.
- It is a unique regional inter-governmental organization servicing countries of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) in the field of electronic media development.
- It is hosted by the Government of Malaysia and the secretariat is located in Kuala Lumpur.

Mandate:

- The AIBD is mandated to achieve a vibrant and cohesive electronic media environment in the Asia-Pacific region through policy and resource development.
- The Institute seeks to fulfill this mandate by mobilizing the intellectual and technological resources available within the national broadcasting organizations of its member countries as well as regional and international bodies through a well-established infrastructure and networking mechanism which includes government agencies, non-governmental organizations, and institutions of higher learning, private sector and individual professionals.

Membership:

- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) are founding

organizations of the Institute and they are non-voting members of the General Conference.

- The Asia-Pacific Broadcasting Union (ABU) is also a founding organization of the Institute and is a non-voting member of the General Conference.
- Full membership of the AIBD is confined to sovereign states and they are invited to designate the broadcasting authority of the country to be the beneficiary.
- The AIBD currently has 26 Full Members (countries), represented by 34 organizations, and 67 Affiliate Members (organization's) with a total membership of 101 representing 48 countries and regions and over 50 partners in Asia, Pacific, Europe, Africa, Arab States and North America.

11. 8888 uprising

Context:

August 8 marks the 30th anniversary of this uprising.

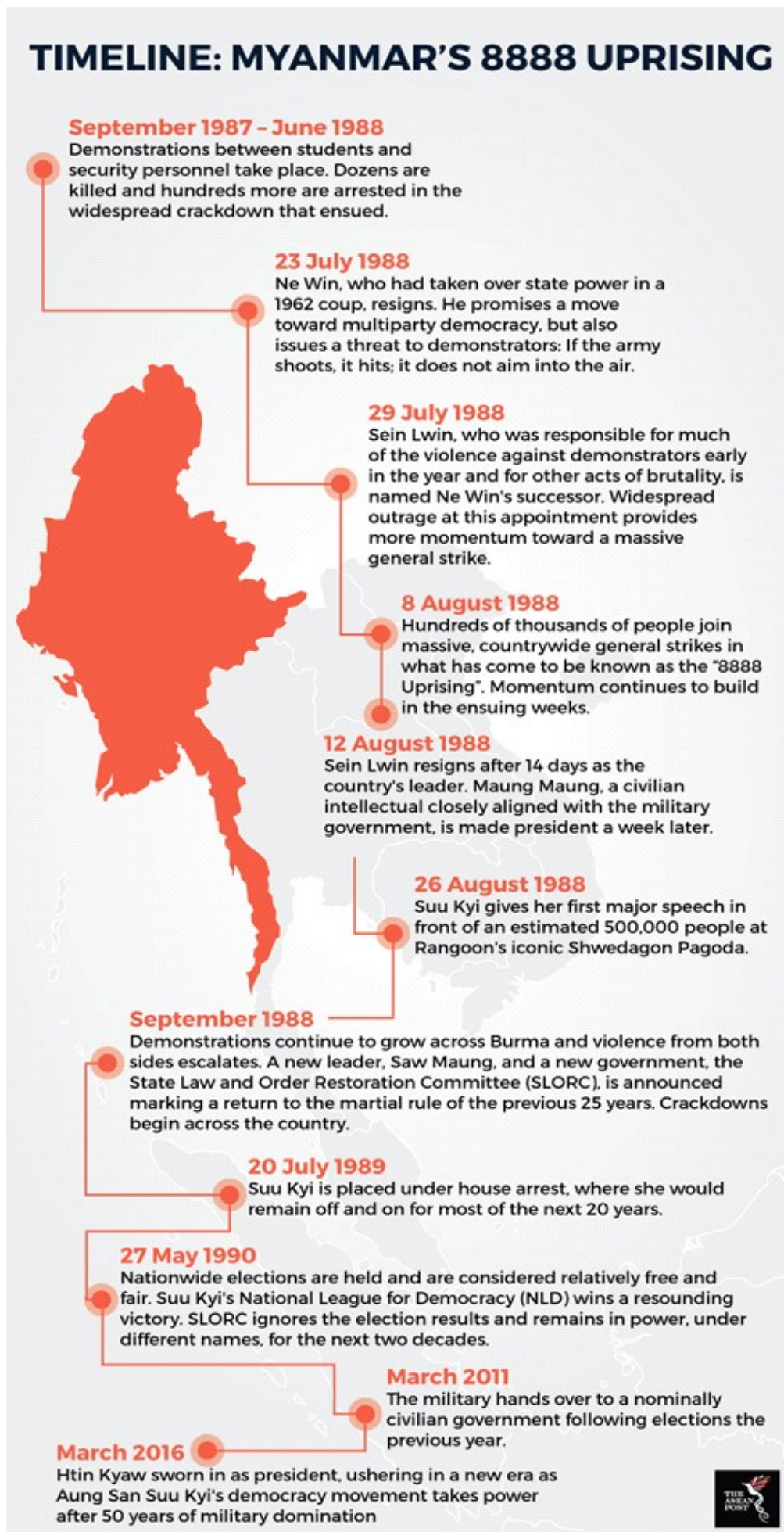
- It was a series of nationwide protests, marches and civil unrest in Burma (Myanmar) that peaked in August 1988. Key events occurred on 8 August 1988 and therefore it is known as the 8888 Uprising.
- '8888' was a people's movement that challenged the then ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party's grip on political, economic and social affairs which led the country into extreme poverty.
- The **objective** of '8888' was two-fold: to push for the transfer of power from the military to a civilian leadership and a change in the political system from an authoritarian regime to a multi-party democracy.

Outcomes:

- The protests and the bloody crackdown gave rise to the National League for Democracy (NLD), a political party which paved the way for the current Myanmar State Counsellor, Aung San Suu Kyi's entry into politics and for the pro-democracy movement to continue.

The present set up:

- The democratic transition in Myanmar thus far has been meticulously designed by the military. The primary objective, which is laid out in the country's 2008 Constitution, is to give the military a dominant role in politics.
- In a parallel to the 'Burmese way to socialism' introduced by former military leader Ne Win in the 1960s, Myanmar now practices what can be called the 'Burmese way to democracy' as introduced by former Prime Minister Khin Nyunt in 2003 when he announced the military's seven-step road map to a flourishing democracy.



Way ahead:

- For democracy to strike deep roots in Myanmar, the role of the '8888' leaders remains important. The military must note that the people of Myanmar as well as members of the international community want a democracy that respects the rights of its entire people, including the minorities.
- The military may hesitate to roll back its dominant role in Myanmar's politics but it should note that no democracy can succeed when the military holds the reins and is unaccountable to an elected civilian leadership.

12. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)**Context:**

The Centre has constituted a Group of Ministers (GoM) headed by Union Minister of Commerce and Industry Suresh Prabhu to decide on 16-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations.



- It has been mandated to find way forward from current deadlock over issues of joining RCEP or not.
- It will also help fine tune India's strategy for the upcoming RCEP ministerial meet in August 2018 in Singapore.

What's the issue with India?

- There's a Mounting pressure on New Delhi to give an early consent to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership. India has, however, refused to take responsibility for the long-winding negotiations and has stressed that it is important to address the sensitivities and aspirations of all participants.
- India is not comfortable with the ambitious dismantling of import tariffs being pushed for by the ASEAN, especially as it would also mean allowing duty-free access to Chinese goods. The Indian industry does not want the country to commit to high levels of liberalization as it fears that it could get out-priced in the domestic market.
- India has also stressed on the need for other RCEP members to deliver in the area of services to arrive at an agreement. So far proposals in the area of services, including on work-visas for movement of professionals, have been disappointing with no member ready to make meaningful contributions.

What you need to know about RCEP?

- RCEP is proposed between the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Brunei, Burma (Myanmar), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and the six states with which ASEAN has existing FTAs (Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand).
- RCEP negotiations were formally launched in November 2012 at the ASEAN Summit in Cambodia. RCEP aims to boost goods trade by eliminating most tariff and non-tariff barriers — a move that is expected to provide the region's consumers greater choice of quality products at affordable rates. It also seeks to liberalize investment norms and do away with services trade restrictions.

Why has it assumed so much significance in recent times?

- When inked, it would become the world's biggest free trade pact. This is because the 16 nations account for a total GDP of about \$50 trillion and house close to 3.5 billion people. India (GDP-PPP worth \$9.5 trillion and population of 1.3 billion) and China (GDP-PPP of \$23.2 trillion and population of 1.4 billion) together comprise the RCEP's biggest component in terms of market size.

Why is China so much interested in this deal?

- China, using its influence as the global leader in goods exports, has been deploying quiet diplomacy to ensure consistent focus on attempts to obtain commitments on elimination of tariffs on most traded goods. China is keen on an agreement on a 'high level' of tariff liberalization — eliminating duties on as much as 92% of traded products. This deal helps China fulfill its objectives.

- China is also speeding up the RCEP negotiation process and striving for an early agreement, so as to contribute to realizing the greater common goal of building the Free Trade Area of the Asia-Pacific (FTAAP). The FTAAP spans 21 Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation countries, including the U.S. and China, but does not cover India. With the U.S. withdrawing from the Trans Pacific Partnership — a mega-regional FTA not involving India and China — that similarly aimed to help establish the FTAAP, the path is clear for China to push ahead with this strategic initiative to its advantage through the RCEP.

Way ahead:

- India's FTA strategy has to be guided by the 'Make In India' initiative that aims to boost domestic manufacturing and job creation within India. In return for greater market access in goods, India, with its large pool of skilled workers and professionals, should try to use the RCEP to gain on the services side, by securing commitments from the other nations to mutually ease norms on movement of such people across borders for short-term work.

The advertisement is a horizontal banner divided into five colored panels, each representing a different location. Each panel features a background image (a statue, a building, the Gateway of India, a submarine, and a Buddha statue respectively), the location name, a contact number, and a calendar icon indicating the admission date. A central text overlay reads 'ADMISSIONS OPEN FOR NEW BATCHES'. A red starburst graphic with the text 'WEEKEND BATCH' is positioned over the Madhapur panel.

Location	Contact Number	Admission Date
ASHOK NAGAR	+91 991 244 1138	JULY 09 MONDAY
MADHAPUR	+91 990 856 4438	JUNE 09 SATURDAY
NEW DELHI	+91 880 028 3132	JULY 02 MONDAY
VISAKHAPATNAM	+91 998 513 6789	JUNE 25 MONDAY
GUNTUR	+91 996 335 6789	JULY 02 MONDAY

Economy

13. Strategic Investment Fund under NIIF

Context:

As on date, three funds have been established by the Government under the NIIF platform and registered with SEBI as Category II Alternative Investment Funds and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund II ('Strategic Fund') is one of those three funds.

- The other two funds are National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (or Master Fund) and NIIF Fund of Funds – I.



About Strategic Fund:

- The objective of National Investment and Infrastructure Fund II ('Strategic Fund') is to invest largely in equity and equity-linked instruments. The Strategic Fund will focus on green field and brown field investments in the core infrastructure sectors.

- It will focus on green field and brown field investments in the core infrastructure sectors.

About NIIF:

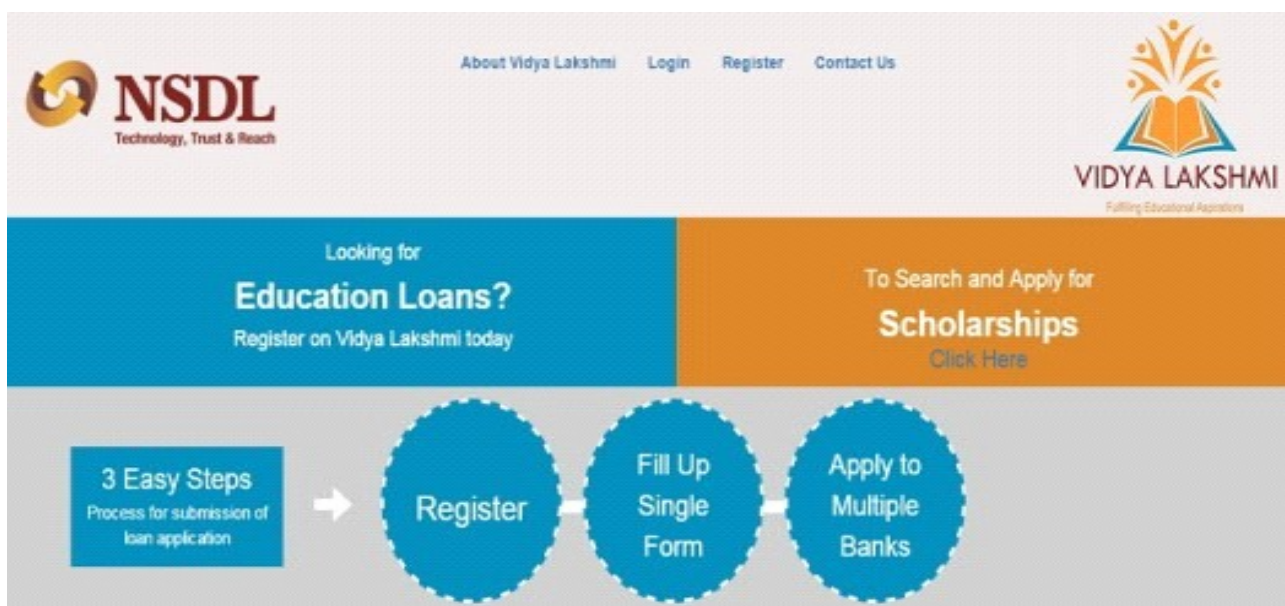
- National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (NIIF) is a fund created by the Government of India for enhancing infrastructure financing in the country.
- This is different from the National Investment Fund.
- Objective: to maximize economic impact mainly through infrastructure development in commercially viable projects, both Greenfield and brownfield, including stalled projects. It could also consider other nationally important projects, for example, in manufacturing, if commercially viable.
- NIIF was proposed to be set up as a Trust, to raise debt to invest in the equity of infrastructure finance companies such as Indian Rail Finance Corporation (IRFC) and National Housing Bank (NHB).
- NIIF is envisaged as a fund of funds with the ability to make direct investments as required. As a fund of fund it may invest in other SEBI registered funds.
- The functions of NIIF are as follows:

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

14. Vidyalakshmi Portal

Context:

As part of its digital initiative, Karnataka Bank has integrated its education loan scheme/s with Vidya Lakshmi Portal of Government of India.



About Vidyalakshmi Portal:

- Vidya Lakshmi is a first of its kind portal for students seeking Education Loan.
- This portal has been developed under the guidance of Department of Financial Services, (Ministry of Finance), Department of Higher Education (Ministry of Human Resource Development) and Indian Banks Association (IBA).
- The portal has been developed and being maintained by NSDL e-Governance Infrastructure Limited.
- Students can view, apply and track the education loan applications to banks anytime, anywhere by accessing the portal. The portal also provides linkages to National Scholarship Portal.

15. Niryat Mitra mobile app

Context:

Ministry of Commerce & Industry has launched Niryat Mitra – mobile App.

About Niryat Mitra:

- The app has been developed by the Federation of Indian Export Organizations (FIEO).
- It provides wide range of information required to undertake international trade right from the policy provisions for export and import, applicable GST rate, available export incentives, tariff, preferential tariff, market access requirements – SPS and TBT measures. All the information is available at tariff line.
- The app works internally to map the ITC HS code of other countries with that of India and provides all the required data without the users bothering about the HS code of any country. Presently the app comes with the data of 87 countries.

Significance of the App:

- The exports are showing good sign and registering increase at the rate of 20%. The government plans to further increase the ease of doing business. Therefore, the app will provide big opportunity to everybody and help promote export interests in the country.

The Human Resource tool of the app enables candidates with interest in the international trade sector to register and apply against the vacancies arising in the sector. Companies can also search the profiles of the candidates and engage them.

16. Bhoomi Rashi and PFMS linkage

Context:

The government has proposed to integrate Bhoomi Rashi with Public Financial Management System (PFMS). Integration of Public Financial Management System (PFMS) with Bhoomi Rashi is one of the key functionalities to facilitate payment related to compensation for land acquisition to all the beneficiaries directly through the Bhoomi Rashi system.

- Bhoomi Rashi, the portal developed by MoRTH and NIC, comprises the entire revenue data of the country, right down to 6.4 lakh villages.
- The entire process flow, from submission of draft notification by the State Government to its approval by the Hon. Minister of State for RT&H and publication in e-Gazette, is online.
- The portal, created for expediting the process of publication of notifications for LA, is now being fully utilised for issuing the notifications.

- Bhoomi Rashi portal has been instrumental in reducing the time taken for approval and publication of notifications pertaining to land acquisition.

About PFMS:

The Public Financial Management System (PFMS) is an end-to-end solution for processing payments, tracking, monitoring, accounting, reconciliation and reporting.

- It is administered by the Department of Expenditure.
- It is implemented by the Controller General of Accounts.

PFMS: Transaction Perspective (Real time Transaction System)

PFMS is a Centralized Transaction System & Platform, providing end to end Financial management services to all stakeholders.



Functions:

- It provides scheme managers a unified platform for tracking releases and monitoring their last mile utilization.
- It provides platform for efficient management of funds through tracking of funds and real time reporting of expenditure and receipts through treasury and bank interface.
- The line ministries/departments utilize this platform to monitor the utilization of funds provided to the implementing agencies and state governments.
- PFMS is also used for DBT payments under MGNREGA and other notified schemes of the Government of India.

Significance of PFMS:

- Introduction of the PFMS resulted in effectiveness and economy in public finance management through better cash management for government transparency in public expenditure and real-time information on resource availability and utilization across schemes.
- It also resulted in improved programme administration and management, reduction of float in the system, direct payment to beneficiaries and greater transparency and accountability in the use of public funds.

Benefits:

- Considering the diversity and multiplicity of channels through which money is spent/transferred (including through Direct Benefit Transfer), the 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.
- PFMS thereby enables real time monitoring of disbursements and utilization of funds which in turn provides a sound Decision Support System across Ministries and Departments of Government of India as well as all the State and UT Governments.
- The improvements brought-out in the Management of Public Funds through PFMS will have a cascading beneficial impact on the management of State Government Public Finances as well as efficient delivery of Public Services by the States.
- PFMS, therefore, reflects the true spirit of Co-Operative Federalism with the Centre and the State Governments combining their efforts to improve Public Finance Management for ultimate public good.
- It would reduce the float in the financial systems by enabling “just in time” releases and also the government borrowings with direct impact on interest cost.
- The Scheme will promote transparency and will ensure that the benefits reach to the last mile.

17. Defence India Startup Challenge**Context:**

Defence Minister has unveiled the Defence India Startup Challenge.

About Defence India Startup Challenge:

- Defence India Startup Challenge is part of iDEX (Innovation for Defence Excellence) scheme announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in April meant to build an eco-system of innovation and entrepreneurship in India for the defence sector to make India self-reliant.



The banner features the Ministry of Defence logo on the top left, which includes the Ashoka Lion Capital and the text 'रक्षा मंत्रालय' and 'MINISTRY OF DEFENCE'. On the top right are circular portraits of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The central text 'DEFENCE INDIA STARTUP CHALLENGE' is in large, bold, blue letters on a yellow background. Below this, two blue boxes contain the following text: 'Creating innovative products and prototypes to strengthen national security' and 'Support products to find a market and early customers'.

- It is an initiative to tap startups for finding safe and futuristic Indian solutions to critical needs of the three Armed Forces.
- A list of 11 technologies that the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force need, have been chosen. They included remote air vehicles, laser weapons, secure and safe communication systems and bandwidth, precision targeting systems, sensors, and protected and informed movement of soldiers in battle tanks.
- Those that come up with prototypes of usable products would be supported with ' 1.5 crore each and friendly procurement procedures from the Ministry under SPARK or Support for Prototype & Research Kickstart in Defence.

Geography and Environment

18. Jal Marg Vikas Project

Context:

IWAI recently held a large public outreach along Ganga for Jal Marg Vikas Project. Two-Day long advocacy meetings were held in Jharkhand leg of Ganga.

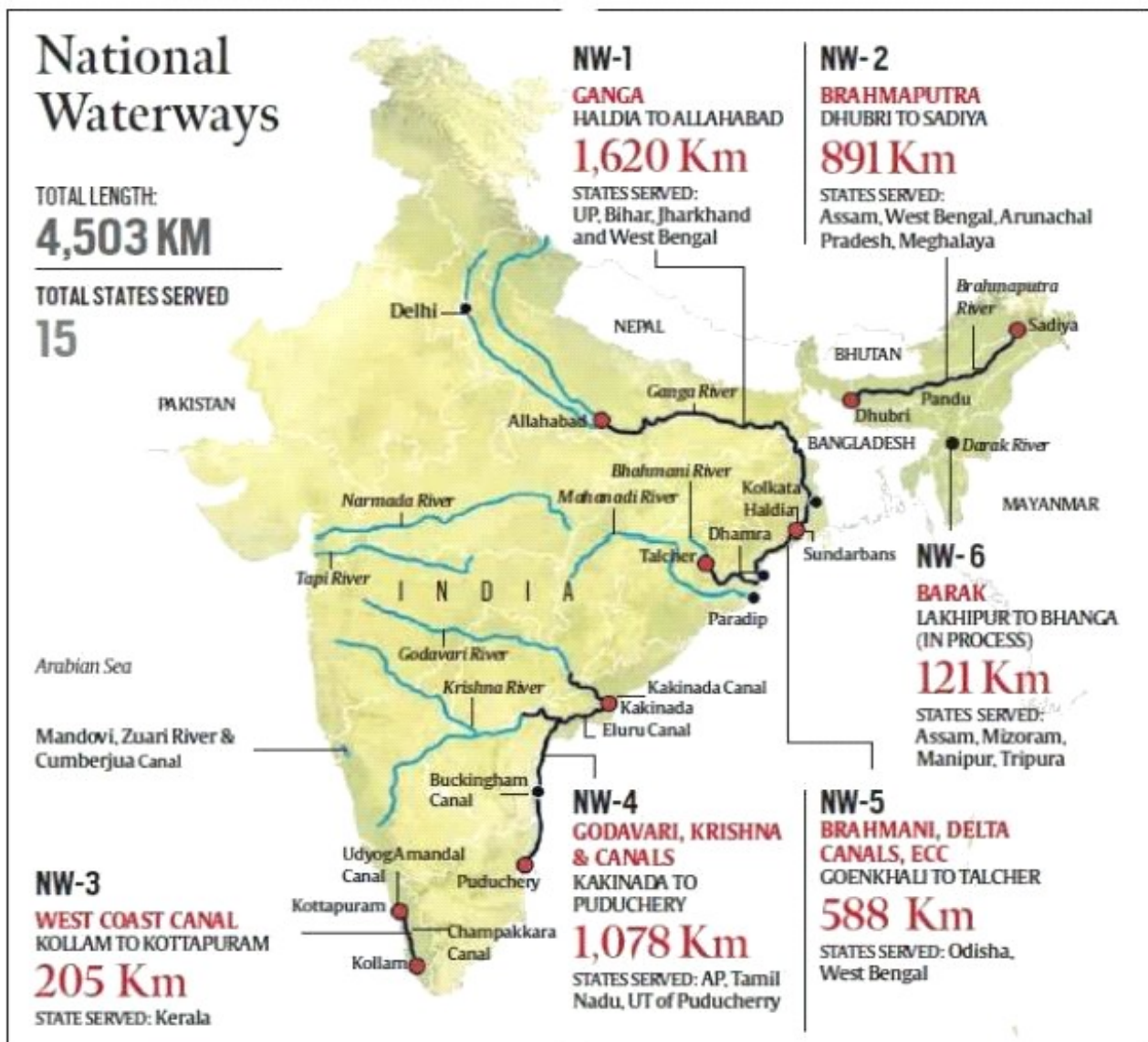


Image of Jal Marg Vikas Project

About Jal Marg Vikas Project:

- The Jal Marg Vikas Project seeks to facilitate plying of vessels with capacity of 1,500-2,000 tonnes in the Haldia- Varanasi stretch of the River Ganga. The major works being taken up under JMVP are development of fairway, Multi-Modal Terminals, strengthening of river navigation system, conservancy works, modern River Information System (RIS), Digital Global Positioning System (DGPS), night navigation facilities, modern methods of channel marking etc.

Implementation:

The JMVP, which is expected to be completed by March, 2023, is being implemented with the financial and technical support of the World Bank. The project will enable commercial navigation of vessels with the capacity of 1500-2,000 tons on NW-I.

Benefits of this project:

Alternative mode of transport that will be environment friendly and cost effective. The project will contribute in bringing down the logistics cost in the country. Mammoth Infrastructure development like multi-modal and inter-modal terminals, Roll on – Roll off (Ro-Ro) facilities, ferry services, navigation aids. Socio-economic impetus; huge employment generation.

Environmental challenges:

- Though the project is ambitious in its intent, it does not account for the monetary value of the environmental costs that are imposed upon society. The river Ganga meanders across the landscape and spreads over its riverbed making pools and shallow areas. Fish and turtles lay eggs in these shallow areas. But thanks to dredging, which is already being done in the Ganga under the NW-1 project, the river is now channelised in one deep channel. The river no longer meanders and no longer has pools and shallow areas, destroying the habitat of fish and turtles. The stretch of the Ganga near Varanasi has been declared as a turtle sanctuary and studies in other countries indicate that large numbers get hit by fast-moving tourist boats because turtles move slowly.
- The stretch of the Ganga near Bhagalpur has been declared a wildlife sanctuary for the conservation of the Ganges Dolphin. This animal does not have eyes. It navigates and catches its prey by the sound made by the movement of other aquatic creatures. The plying of large barges will create a high level of sound and make it difficult for them to survive. The paint on ships and barges will also pollute the water. The carbon dioxide released by the ships will be absorbed more by the water because of its proximity and this too pollutes the river.

What can be done to minimize impacts in sensitive zones?

- A ban on dredging in protected habitat areas. In other areas that are known to be the habitat of valued aquatic species, no dredging should be allowed in the breeding and spawning seasons.
- The speed of barges travelling along the protected areas of the sanctuaries should be restricted to 5km per hour. All vessels plying on the Ganga should be fitted with noise control and animal exclusion devices so that aquatic life is not unduly disturbed. All vessels will also have to comply with 'zero discharge' standards to prevent solid or liquid waste from flowing into the river and affecting its biodiversity.

Way forward:

- It is time to ensure that the small direct benefits from cheaper transportation shall not have large environmental costs.

19. Kadaknath chicken meat from Jhabua gets GI tag**Context:**

The famous Kadaknath chicken meat from Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh has now got a Geographical Indication (GI) tag. GI registration is valid up to a period of around five years till February 7, 2022.

**Kadaknath:**

- Kadaknath is famous for its delicious black meat ('kali-masi'), which is supposed to be invigorating and full of medicinal properties.
- The Indian poultry breed is famous for its unique black colour of feathers as well as black meat, which is claimed to contain low cholesterol level as compared to the routine table chicken.
- Kadaknath is found mainly in the tribal

district of Jhabua. This poultry is reared mainly by the tribal community of Bhil & Bhilala in the districts of Jhabua and Dhar.

- It is locally known as Kalamasi and is used for treatment of many diseases, besides being considered an aphrodisiac.

About GI tag:

A GI is primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product (handicrafts and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.

Significance of a GI tag:

Typically, such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness, which is essentially attributable to the place of its origin.

Security:

Once the GI protection is granted, no other producer can misuse the name to market similar products. It also provides comfort to customers about the authenticity of that product.

Provisions in this regard:

- GI is covered as element of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under Paris Convention for Protection of Industrial Property.
- At international level, GI is governed by WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- In India, Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999 governs it.

20. World Biofuel day 2018**Context:**

World Biofuel Day is observed every year on 10th August to create awareness about the importance of non-fossil fuels as an alternative to conventional fossil fuels and to highlight the various efforts made by the Government in the biofuel sector.

About World Bio Fuel Day:

- Every year 10th August is observed as World Bio-Fuel Day in a bid to create awareness about non fossil-fuels (Green Fuels). On this day in 1893, Sir Rudolph Diesel (inventor of the diesel engine) for the first time successfully ran mechanical engine with Peanut Oil.
- His research experiment had predicted that vegetable oil is going to replace the fossil fuels in the next century to fuel different mechanical engines. Thus to mark this extraordinary achievement, World Biofuel Day is observed every year on 10th August.

Government initiatives to promote the use of Biofuels:

- Since 2014, the Government of India has taken a number of initiatives to increase blending of biofuels. The major interventions include administrative price mechanism for ethanol, simplifying the procurement procedures of OMCs, amending the provisions of Industries (Development & Regulation) Act, 1951 and enabling lignocellulosic route for ethanol procurement.
- The Government approved the National Policy on Biofuels-2018 in June 2018. The policy has the objective of reaching 20% ethanol-blending and 5% biodiesel-blending by the year 2030. Among other things, the policy expands the scope of feedstock for ethanol production and has provided for incentives for production of advanced biofuels.
- Recently, the Government has increased the price of C-heavy molasses-based ethanol to Rs. 43.70 from Rs. 40.85 to give a boost to EBP

Programme. Price of B-heavy molasses-based ethanol and sugarcane juice-based ethanol has been fixed for the first time at Rs. 47.40. The Government has reduced GST on ethanol for blending in fuel from 18% to 5%. The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas is making all efforts to increase ethanol supply for petrol and has taken several steps in this direction.

Outcomes:

- These interventions of the Government of India have shown positive results. Ethanol blending in petrol has increased from 38 crore litres in the ethanol supply year 2013-14 to an estimated 141 crore litres in the ethanol supply year 2017-18. Bio-diesel blending in the country started from 10th August, 2015 and in the year 2018-19, Oil Marketing Companies have allocated 7.6 crore litres of biodiesel. Oil PSUs are also planning to set up 12 Second Generation (2G) Bio-refineries to augment ethanol supply and address environmental issues arising out of burning of agricultural biomass.

21. All-women expedition to Mt. Manirang

Context:

An all-women expedition team has begun its journey to Mt. Manirang from Himachal Pradesh. The expedition commemorates the silver jubilee of 1993 Women Everest expedition.

The 1993 Women Everest expedition:

- The Indo-Nepalese women's Everest expedition in 1993 was the first all women expedition, launched by Indian Mountaineering foundation.
- It was funded by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- The 21-member team was led by Ms. Bachendri Pal.
- The historic expedition set up several world records at the time which included the largest number of persons (18) of a single expedition to climb Mount Everest, largest number of women (six) from a single country to climb Mount Everest.
- Santosh Yadav, member of the team, became the first woman in the world to climb Mount Everest, while Miss Dicky Dolma became the youngest women (19) years in the world to climb the highest peak in the world.

About Mt. Manirang:

- Manirang is one of the highest mountains in the Indian state of Himachal Pradesh. It lies on the border between Kinnour and Lahaul and Spiti district.
- Mount Manirang (Altitude: 6593 mtr. / 21625.04 ft) is known as the crown of the Spiti valley.

- The whole region is situated in the rain shadow area and more or less lies dry other than winter.

22. World Network of Biosphere Reserves

Context:

The Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve has become the 11th Biosphere Reserve from India to be included in the UNESCO designated World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR).

- This decision was taken at the recently concluded 30th Session of International Coordinating Council (ICC) of Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme of UNESCO held at Palembang, Indonesia.
- India has 18 Biosphere Reserves. With the inclusion of Khangchendzonga, the number of internationally designated World Network of Biosphere Reserves (WNBR) has become 11, with 7 Biosphere Reserves being domestic Biosphere Reserves.

Biosphere reserves:

- Launched in 1971, UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB) is an Intergovernmental Scientific Programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments.
- MAB combines the natural and social sciences, economics and education to improve human livelihoods and the equitable sharing of benefits, and to safeguard natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate, and environmentally sustainable.
- Its World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently counts more than 600 sites in 122 countries all over the world, including 20 trans boundary sites.
- The first of India's reserves to make it to UNESCO's list was Tamil Nadu's Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in 2000.
- Protection is granted not only to the flora and fauna of the protected region, but also to the human communities who inhabit these regions, and their ways of life.

Key facts on Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve:

- Kanchenjunga Biosphere Reserve is a National Park and a Biosphere Reserve located in Sikkim, India. The park is named after the mountain Kangchenjunga, which with a height of 8,586 metres (28,169 ft), is the third-highest peak in the world.
- The Biosphere Reserve is one of the highest ecosystems in the world, reaching elevations of 1, 220 metres above sea-level. It includes a range of ecolines, varying from sub-tropic to Arctic, as well as natural

forests in different biomes, which support an immensely rich diversity of forest types and habitats.

- The core zone – Khangchendzonga National Park was designated as a World Heritage Site in 2016 under the 'mixed' category.

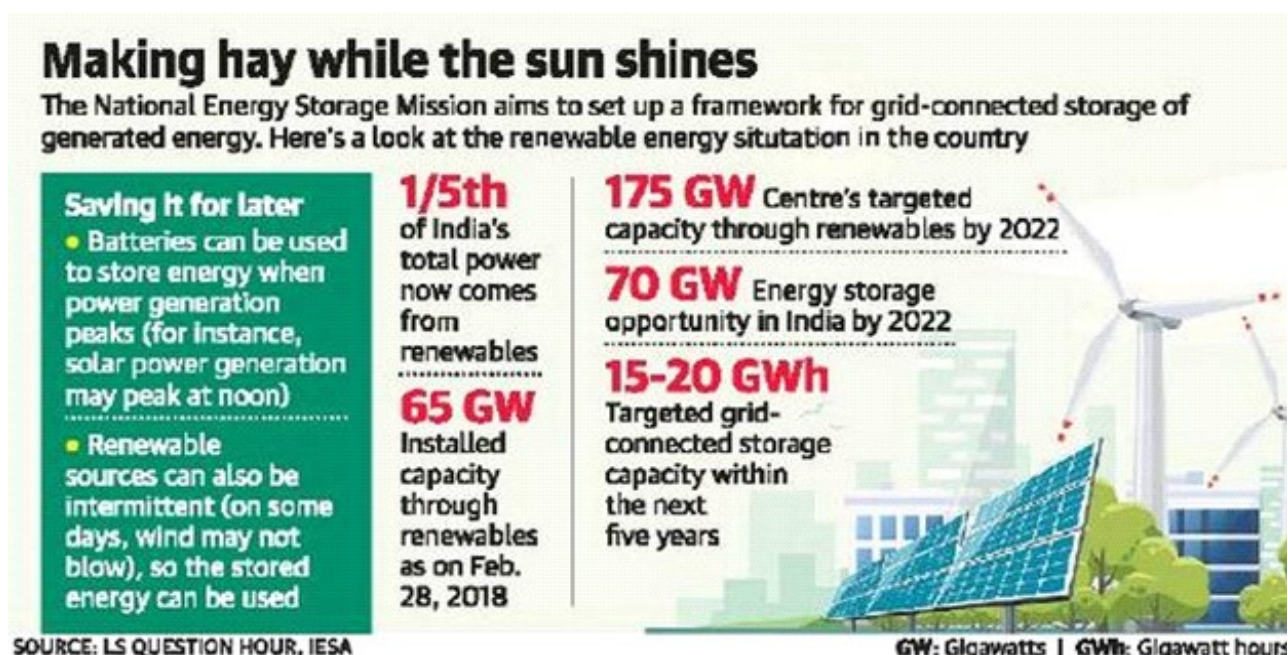
Biosphere Reserves- Definition:

- A Biosphere Reserve is a unique and representative ecosystem of terrestrial and coastal areas which are internationally recognized, within the framework of UNESCO's Man and Biosphere (MAB) programme. The biosphere reserve should fulfill the following three objectives:
- In-situ conservation of biodiversity of natural and semi-natural ecosystems and landscapes.
- Contribution to sustainable economic development of the human population living within and around the Biosphere Reserve.
- Provide facilities for long term ecological studies, environmental education and training and research and monitoring.
- In order to fulfill the above objectives, the Biosphere Reserves are classified into zones like the core area, buffer area. The system of functions is prescribed for each zone.

23. National Energy Storage Mission

Context:

In February 2018, an Expert Committee under the chairpersonship of Secretary, Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, with representatives from relevant Ministries, industry associations, research institutions and experts was constituted by the Ministry of New & Renewable Energy to propose draft for setting up National Energy Storage Mission (NESM) for India.



- The Expert Committee referred has proposed a draft NESM with objective to strive for leadership in energy storage sector by creating an enabling policy and regulatory framework that encourages manufacturing, deployment, innovation and further cost reduction.

Key areas for energy storage application include:

- Integrating renewable energy with distribution and transmission grids.
- Setting Rural microgrids with diversified loads or stand-alone systems.
- Developing Storage component of electric mobility plans.

Highlights of the draft National Energy Storage Mission (NESM):

- The draft expects to kick-start grid-connected energy storage in India, set up a regulatory framework, and encourage indigenous manufacture of batteries.
- The draft sets a “realistic target” of 15-20 gigawatt hours (GWh) of grid-connected storage within the next five years. Power grids do not currently use storage options that would help in smoothly integrating renewable energy sources.
- The mission will focus on seven verticals: indigenous manufacturing; an assessment of technology and cost trends; a policy and regulatory framework; financing, business models and market creation; research and development; standards and testing; and grid planning for energy storage.

Significance and the need for energy storage:

- Energy Storage is one of the most crucial & critical components of India's energy infrastructure strategy and also for supporting India's sustained thrust to renewables.
- Renewable energy sources now make up almost one-fifth of India's total installed power capacity. However, as power grids increase their share of solar and wind energy, the problem remains that the peak supply of renewable sources does not always meet peak demand. For instance, solar energy generation may be at its peak at noon, but unless stored, it will not be available when needed to light up homes at night. Moreover, renewable sources are inherently intermittent: there are days when the wind doesn't blow or the sky is cloudy.

Science & Technology

24. India's first Blockchain district in Telangana

Context:

Tech Mahindra and the Telangana government have signed an agreement to establish a Blockchain district in Hyderabad, a first-of-its-kind Centre of Excellence for Blockchain in India.



- Initially it would be a virtual cluster, connecting with the stakeholders working in the emerging technology. It would have a physical building at a later phase.
- In short, it will be “a cluster of buildings”, which will house start-ups and other stakeholders working on the development of the platform.
- Tech Mahindra, as a founding member of the Blockchain district, will provide platform and technology assistance to all the incubators in the district.
- On its part, the Telangana government would provide regulatory and policy support to promote the growth of Blockchain.

About Blockchain technology:

- Blockchain is a new-age technology that helps in record-keeping through the use of cryptography, a secure method of writing digital codes. With blockchain, many people can write entries into a record of information, and a community of users can check the records to reduce the scope of fraudulent practices in altering information.

Benefits of blockchain technology:

- As a public ledger system, blockchain records and validate each and every transaction made, which makes it secure and reliable.
- All the transactions made are authorized by miners, which makes the transactions immutable and prevent it from the threat of hacking.
- Blockchain technology discards the need of any third-party or central authority for peer-to-peer transactions.
- It allows decentralization of the technology.

How blockchain can be used in public administration?

- Blockchain has the potential to optimize the delivery of public services, further India's fight against corruption, and create considerable value for its citizens.
- By maintaining an immutable and chronologically ordered record of all actions and files ("blocks") linked together ("chain") in a distributed and decentralized database, Blockchain creates an efficient and cost-effective database that is virtually tamper-proof. By doing so, blockchain promises to create more transparent, accountable, and efficient governments.
- In addition to creating a more efficient government, blockchain can also help create a more honest government. A public blockchain, like the one Bitcoin uses, records all information and transactions on the decentralized database permanently, publicly, and most importantly, securely. By allowing governments to track the movement of government funds, blockchain can hold state and local actors accountable for any misappropriations.
- Blockchain not only deters corruption through accountability, but it can also do so by bypassing the middleman entirely. Earlier this year, the World Food Programme began testing blockchain-based food and cash transactions in Pakistan's Sindh province. Refugees in Jordan's Azraq camp are now using the same technology, in conjunction with biometric registration data for authentication, to pay for food.

25. Social media hub plan dropped**Context:**

The Centre has withdrawn a proposal to have hubs to monitor social media traffic and trends. The decision comes after the court had questioned the proposal in a hearing on July 13, saying this may transform the country into a surveillance state.

Concerns over the Social media hub:

- It was alleged that though the stated aim of the project was to enable the government to understand the impact of social media campaigns on welfare schemes and improve the reach of such campaigns, the

project had two aspects — “mass surveillance apparatus that aims at collecting and analysing huge volumes of data, and profiling people based on that” and “utilising this data to predict the mood of people online and issue responses, including those targeted at individuals or groups”.

- The social media analytical tool is expected to ‘listen’ to conversations on all major digital channels, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, Tumblr, as well as blogs and news channels. Therefore, it was contended that “such intrusive action on the part of the government, is not only without the authority of law, but also infringes fundamental right to freedom of speech under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution.” The move was also violative of Articles 14, 19(1)(a) and 21.

About Social media communication hub:

- The hub proposes to monitor social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and even email) handles at the very local level in multiple languages to carry out “sentiment analysis”, track down the influence-making social media users and to categorise the conversations on social media into positive, negative and neutral sections.
- It also aimed to track real time the way social media receives news on government’s schemes and announcements and also political events.

Usage of this information:

- This information would help the government in formulating policies, schemes or rectify any flaws in their implementation at the ground level so that the ultimate beneficiary who is the common man is benefited and has a direct way to communicate any complaints regarding the same to the Government.

Social media managers:

- As per the proposal, the project is meant to strengthen the social media division and recruit social media managers to be deployed in 712 districts of the country.
- Each district will have one social media manager who will be entrusted with the tasks of keeping a close eye on the regional and local media, collecting data of regional media and of local events, providing content for social media and supporting media units at the regional level for social media publicity.

Role of social media managers:

- These social media managers will also monitor local editions of newspapers, local cable channels, local audio channels (FM) and key local social media handles for important local developments. They will make a daily analysis report incorporating local sentiments to be sent to region head in the PIB as well as the media hub (command centre).

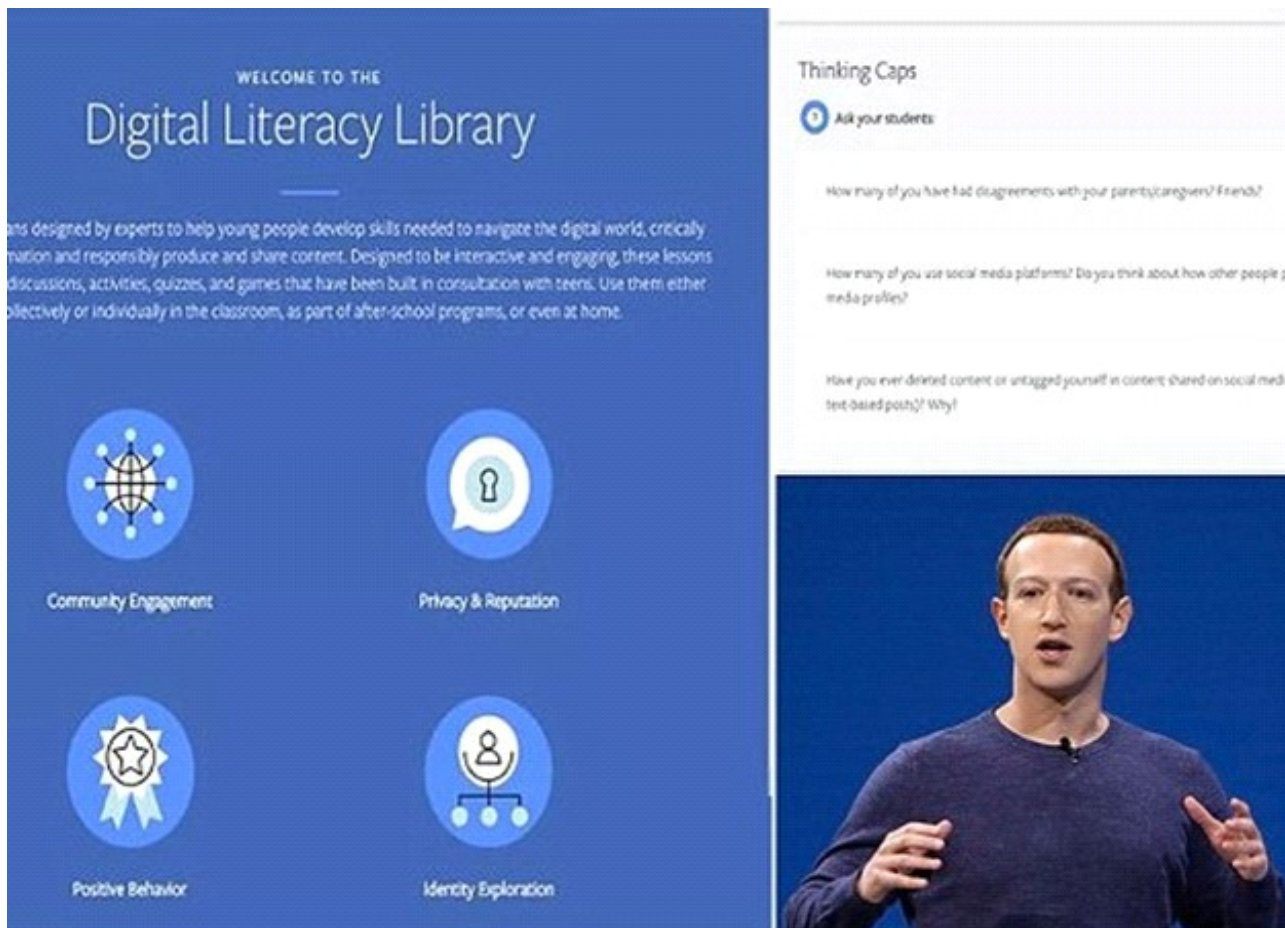
26. Digital Literacy Library

Context:

Facebook Launches Digital Literacy Library to Help Youth Build Skills Online.

About the Digital Literacy Library:

- The Library aims to help young people build the skills they need to safely enjoy online technology.



- The library is a collection of lessons to help young people think critically and share thoughtfully online.
- Divided into themes such as privacy and reputation, identity exploration, security, safety and well-being, the lessons reflect the voices of young people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, geographies, and educational levels.
- The lessons can be found on Facebook's Safety Center as well as on Berkman Klein's Digital Literacy Resource Platform.
- There are 830 million young people online around the world, and this library is a resource for educators looking to address digital literacy and help these young people build the skills they need to safely enjoy digital technology

27. Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)

Context:

The nominating committee of Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) has selected Ajay Data, Founder & CEO of Data XGen Plus and a global leader in email linguistic services, as a new council member of Country Code Supporting Organization (ccNSO).



- Ajay Data is the first Indian to have been selected as a member of ccNSO and will be representing India at a global level. He will be the custodian of Asia, Australia and Pacific Islands as a member of ccNSO.

About ccNSO:

- ccNSO of the ICANN is the policy-development body for global issues regarding country code top-level domains (ccTLD) within the ICANN structure.
- The members of ccNSO, which is ICANN's policy development body for ccTLD (country code top-level domains) issues, are all country code top level domain operators from around the world.

What is the ICANN?

- The Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is a nonprofit organization that was set up in 1998 to oversee the administration of domain names.
- ICANN coordinates and ensures the smooth and secure functioning of the cybernetic framework.

What it does?

- The global nature of the Web today means that there are constantly increasing numbers of Domain Names, Host Names, IP addresses and web sites that are emerging on a daily basis. ICANN oversees this interconnected network and ensures that computers across the internet can find one another through defined unique pathways and identifiers.

ICANN performs four major functions namely:

- Approval of companies that can become accredited registrars for domain names.
- Decision making regarding the addition of new Top Level Domains (TLDs) to the Root system.
- Coordinating technical parameters to maintain universal connectivity.
- Creating a Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) for competing domain names.

28. IMPRINT-2**Context:**

For advancing research in the high education institutions, the government has approved 122 new research projects at a cost of Rs 112 crore under IMPRINT-2 covering Energy, Security, Healthcare, Advanced Materials, ICT and Security/Defence domains.

About IMPRINT:

- Impacting Research, Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT) is a national initiative of the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) designed to address all major engineering challenges relevant to India through an inclusive and sustainable mode of translational research.
- IMPRINT-2 has been approved by Government of India (GoI) with a revised strategy under which, this national initiative will be jointly funded and steered by MHRD and Department of Science and Technology (DST).
- While any faculty member from an MHRD funded Higher Education Institute (HEI) including Centrally Funded Technical Institution (CFTI) may lead as the Principal Investigator (PI), single or multiple partners from stake holder ministry, institutions, PSUs, strategic agencies and industry are welcome as Co-PI, partner or collaborator.
- Proposals under IMPRINT II Projects should (a) address any declared theme (thrust area) under one of the 10 domains of IMPRINT, and (b) connect either with already identified or new research topics defined by the PI under the same 10 domains.

- Projects proposals should provide clear and convincing evidence of promise for translational research leading to viable technology (product, process or prototype) development.



The poster features a large orange and green circular graphic on the left. At the top, logos for the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Science and Technology, CSIR, and IMPRINT are displayed. The title 'IMPACTING RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY IMPRINT-2' is prominently displayed in the center. Below the title, the text 'A technology development initiative of MHRD and DST' is shown. The 'AIM' section states the goal of translating knowledge into viable technology. The 'Salient features' section lists six key points. The 'Million challenges – Billion minds' section is followed by a table of 10 technology domains. At the bottom, a website link is provided.

IMPACTING RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY
IMPRINT-2
 A technology development initiative of MHRD and DST

AIM:
 Address all major engineering challenges faced by the nation by translating knowledge into viable technology (product & process)

Salient features:

- ▶ IMPRINT-2 is open to all MHRD funded HEIs/CFTIs
- ▶ Projects leading to products and prototype are solicited
- ▶ Projects with industry support will be preferred
- ▶ Each project should have an approximate cost of ₹ 2 crore and duration upto 36 months
- ▶ MHRD and DST will jointly steer the initiative
- ▶ All Ministries and Departments of the Government of India are welcome as partners

Million challenges – Billion minds

Engineering challenges distributed in 10 technology domains (Living & Materials World)

Living World	 ENERGY SECURITY	 ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE AND CLIMATE CHANGE	 HEALTHCARE TECHNOLOGY	 SUSTAINABLE HABITAT	 WATER RESOURCES AND RIVER SYSTEMS
Materials World	 ADVANCED MATERIALS	 INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY	 MANUFACTURING TECHNOLOGY	 NANOTECHNOLOGY HARDWARE	 SECURITY AND DEFENCE

For details about IMPRINT-2, please visit: www.imprint-2.in

29. RISECREEK

Context:

They are industry-standard microprocessors developed by scientists from IIT- Madras. They are produced under Project Shakti and have been fabricated free at Intel's facility at Oregon, U.S., to run the Linux operating system.

- These microprocessors can be adapted by others, as the design is open source. They optimize power use and compete with international units such as the Cortex A5 from Advanced RISC Machines (ARM).
- At a frequency of 350 MHz, RISECREEK can meet the demands of defence and strategic equipment such as NAVIC (Indian Regional Navigation Satellite) and Internet of Things (IoT) electronics.

Project Shakti:

- The Shakti plan started in 2014 as an IIT-M initiative. Last year, the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology funded a part of the project.
- The Shakti project is not aimed at only building processors. It also aims to build high speed inter connects for servers and supercomputers based on variants of the RapidIO and GenZ standards. These are key to build large clusters of processors to get Petaflop and Exaflop level supercomputers.

30. Uakitite

- It is a new mineral has been discovered in a meteorite in Eastern Russia.
- It is named “uakitite” after the Uakit region of Siberia where the meteorite was discovered.
- 98% of the Uakit meteorite is an iron alloy called kamacite, which so far has only been found in other meteorites. The other two percent is comprised of minerals that form in space.
- Scientists don't know a lot more about this mysterious space rock as they were unable to obtain all physical and optical properties of the mineral because of its small size.

31. Scrub typhus

Context:

As per recent findings by a team of experts, Scrub typhus is key encephalitis cause in eastern U.P. This finding is important, given that the mite-borne disease can be treated easily if doctors look for it early.

- Scrub typhus is an infectious disease with symptoms similar to any viral fever. However, it is not caused by a virus, but by a parasite called *Orientia tsutsugamushi*, which is transmitted by the bite of infected mite larvae in soil containing scrub vegetation.
- The disease is also known as bush typhus because the mites (*Leptotrombidium deliense*, commonly known as trombiculid mite) that cause it reside in vegetation predominantly comprising small shrubs.

- The disease is more common during the wet season when the mites lay eggs. Incubation period (time between bite and beginning of symptoms) is 10 – 14 days.

Transmission:

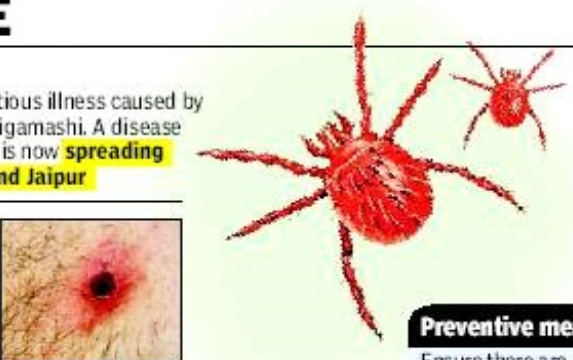
- It is usually transmitted by mites that are found in the shrubs in hilly areas. It can also be transmitted by lice, ticks and fleas.

KILLER BITE

What is scrub typhus
An acute, fever causing infectious illness caused by bacteria called *Orientia tsutsugamushi*. A disease of the mountainous region, it is now **spreading to plains, including Delhi and Jaipur**

How it is transmitted
It is transmitted to humans from the bite of an infected **chigger – larva of the mite**. Rodents are the most common carriers followed by **squirrels, field mouse and bandicoots**. Infection with scrub typhus is most often self-limiting but can **occasionally be severe and even fatal**

Treatment
At early stages, **certain antibiotics** are given to control infection. If the disease spreads, a patient **may require symptomatic treatment, including ventilator support**



Symptoms
A black spot or eschar at the site of chigger feeding, **high fever, headache, cough, difficulty in breathing, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting, regional lymphadenopathy.**

Severe cases can develop encephalitis and pneumonia, which may be fatal

Preventive measures
Ensure there are **no rodents** in or around the house
Pets should be **cleaned regularly**
Keep your **skin covered properly** if you visit jungle or area where there are lots of shrubs
Get **blood tests done** for scrub typhus if there is undiagnosed **fever for over a week**

Causes of Scrub Typhus:

- The species which transmits Scrub typhus are found in areas which have heavy scrub vegetation.
- *Orientia tsutsugamushi* gets transmitted through the bite of trombiculid mites. These mites feed on rural and forest rodents, including

voles, rats and field mice.

- A person develops infection after the bite of the mite larva. When a person gets bitten by this mite, it leaves a characteristic black colored eschar which helps with the diagnosis.

Symptoms:

- The symptoms of scrub typhus are similar to chikungunya. At onset there is fever, headache, bodyache, cough and gastrointestinal symptoms. Patients with a mild infection may recover without any other symptoms. However, roughly every second patient develops a visible black scab at the point of the bite, with a swelling of the lymph nodes.
- In about a third of cases, a delayed onset of rashes occurs 4-6 days into the disease. Severe cases typically include encephalitis and interstitial pneumonia due to vascular injury. The fatality rate is 7%.
- Other symptoms include high fever, skin rashes, respiratory problems, red eyes and unconsciousness. Some of the patients also develop joint pains, which is characteristic of chikungunya.
- It may progress on to respiratory distress, pneumonitis (inflammation of lung tissue), and multi-organ failure.

What needs to be done?

- If detected in time, the disease can be cured using antibiotics. Antibiotics like Doxycycline or Azithromycin are commonly used to treat the disease. Dengue and chikungunya are self-limiting viral diseases that do not have any treatment, apart from management of symptoms. In scrub typhus, however, administering antibiotics on time can save lives.
- But, getting an early diagnosis is a problem in Himachal, where Indira Gandhi Medical College and Hospital (IGMCH) is the only scrub typhus testing and treating centre.

Preventive measures:

- Limit the spread of rodents.
- Pets should be cleaned regularly.
- Skin should be properly covered while visiting jungle or area with lot of shrubs.

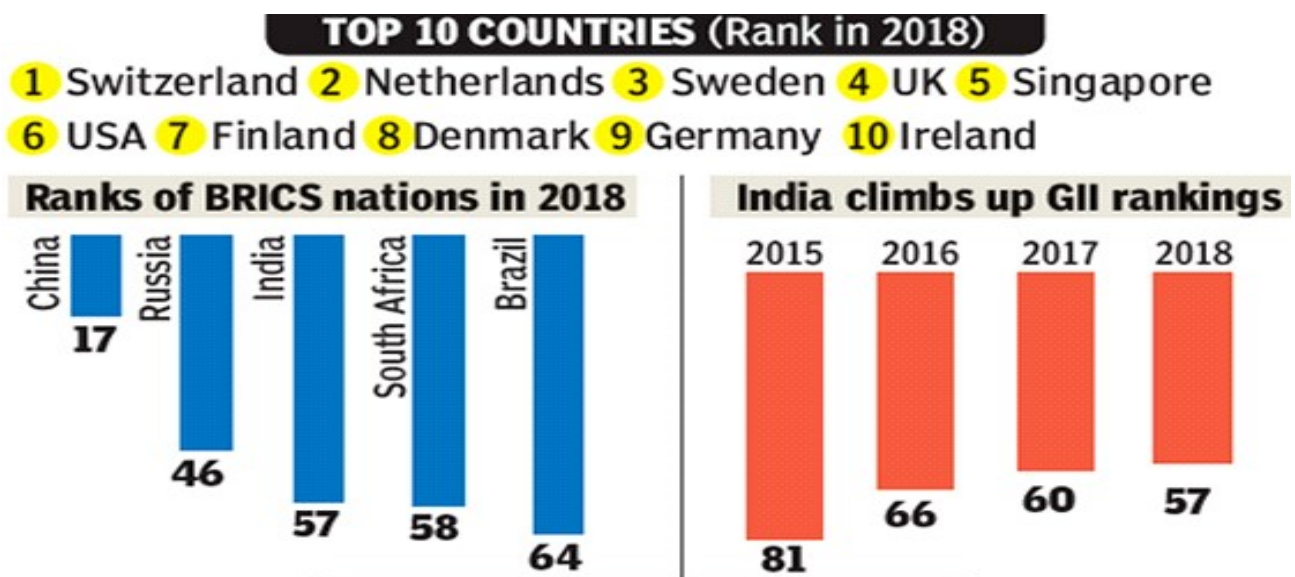
32. Global Innovation Index

Context:

NITI Aayog has proposed to join hands with Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to develop a Roadmap for Top 10 Rank in Global Innovation Index (GII).

India's performance in GII:

India's rank on the Global Innovation Index (GII) has improved from 60 in 2017 to 57 in 2018. India has been consistently climbing the GII ranking for the past two years.



There is a need to:

- Transform India's Innovation Ecosystem by formulating a New Innovation Policy to attract R&D investment into cutting edge technologies and build appropriate infrastructure and institutions.
- Tap Global hotspots of Innovation in latest technologies like AI, Blockchain and Robotics etc.
- Connect Tinkering labs in schools with start-ups, business and high end educational institutions.
- Target efficient, productive and outcome driven R&D in the Government Sector.

GII 2018:

- GII is jointly released by Cornell University, INSEAD and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). GII ranks 126 economies based on 80 indicators.
- The GII 2018 marks the 11th edition of the GII, and the beginning of its second decade providing data and insights gathered from tracking innovation across the globe.
- This year's edition, is dedicated to the theme of Energizing the World with Innovation. It analyses the energy innovation landscape of the next decade and identifies possible breakthroughs in fields such as energy production, storage, distribution, and consumption.
- It also looks at how breakthrough innovation occurs at the grassroots level and describes how small-scale renewable systems are on the rise.

Performance of India:

- This year, India has moved up 3 places as compared to 60th rank in GII 2017 and emerged as top-ranked economy in Central and South Asia. It has consistently moving up on global ranking from 81st in 2015 to 57th this year.
- India is a top performer in the lower middle income group, where it is ranked at fifth position. It is the most innovative country in its region of central and southern Asia.
- In the indicators that capture the quality of innovation inputs and outputs, India is ranked second after China in the lower and upper middle income group combined.
- However, India has fared badly on indicators such as ease of starting business, political stability and safety, overall education and environmental performance.

Performance of other countries:

- Switzerland is at the top. Since 2011, Switzerland has been ranked at the top every year.

- This year, Netherlands follows at second place and Sweden at third. The US drops down to sixth from fourth last year.
- Four of the top five innovation clusters are in Asia, based on patents and publishing. San Francisco is the only innovation cluster outside Asia among the top five.
- Tokyo is at the top, and two of the top five clusters are in China.
- China, at 17, broke into the world's top 20 most-innovative economies.
- On a new indicator – mobile-app creation – Cyprus, Finland and Lithuania emerged as global leaders in development of mobile apps relative to GDP.

Miscellaneous

33. International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples 2018

Context:

The International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples is being observed across the world on August 9, 2018.

Aim: To strengthen international cooperation for solving problems faced by indigenous peoples in areas such as human rights, the environment, education, health and social development.

Theme: 'Indigenous peoples' migration and movement'.

Significance of the day: The United Nations General Assembly on December 23, 1994 proclaimed 9 August as the International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples. The date marks the day of the first meeting of the UN Working Group on Indigenous Populations of the Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in 1982.

34. Train Captain Service

- In order to introduce the concept of a single person/leader responsible for coordinating the entire team and facilitating all services during the complete journey of the train, instructions have been issued introducing the concept of Train Captain.
- In trains like Rajdhani/ Shatabdi/ Duronto and other trains where a Train Superintendent (TS) is on end to end basis, TS shall be nominated as "Train Captain" and made responsible for all the facilities on train.
- In all other trains, where TS is not present, Zonal Railways are to nominate the senior most ticket checking staff as Train Captain.



Abhyasa Program Structure

	Multiple Choice Questions (PRELIMS)	Descriptive Questions (MAINS)	Total Marks
Daily Test	10 (10*1 = 10 marks)	1 (1*10= 10 Marks)	20
Weekly Test	20 (20*1 = 20 marks)	2 (2*10= 20 Marks)	40
Fortnightly Test	30 (30*1 = 30 marks)	3 (3*10= 30 Marks)	60
Monthly Test	50 (50*1 = 50 marks)	5 (5*10= 50 Marks)	100
3 Months Test	100 (100*1 = 100 marks)	10 (10*10= 100 Marks)	200
Total Questions	4250+	500+	



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