



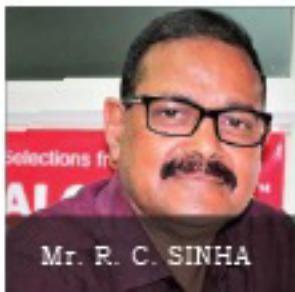
Samiksha

Comprehensive NEWS Analysis

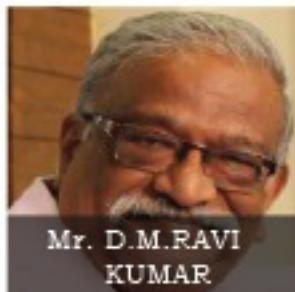
**26-11-2018
TO
02-12-2018
NOVEMBER
WEEK 05**

OUR TEAM

GENERAL STUDIES



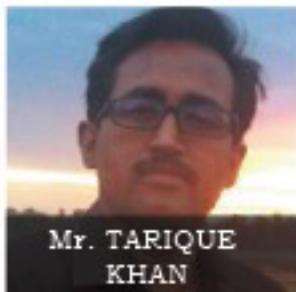
Mr. R. C. SINHA



Mr. D.M.RAVI KUMAR



Mr. SAROJ SAMAL



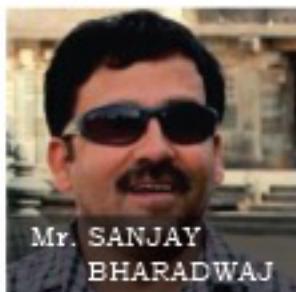
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GEOGRAPHY

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POLITICAL SCIENCE

TELUGU LITERATURE

HISTORY

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Polity and governance

1. Prevention of Corruption Act

Context:

The Supreme Court has ordered the government to respond to a petition challenging two amendments to the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The amendments were:

- The introduction of S. 17 A (1) by which prior permission for investigation of corruption offences was required from the government.
- The removal of S. 13 (1) (d) (ii) (criminal misconduct) from the Act. It had earlier made it an offence for a public servant to abuse his position to give pecuniary or other advantage to a third party.

Highlights of the Prevention of Corruption (Amendment) Bill, 2018:

- Punishment for bribe-taking enhanced: Minimum punishment of 3 yrs, extendable up to 7 yrs with fine; from the earlier 6 months, with extension up to 3 yrs.
- ‘Undue Advantage’ expanded: The earlier limited definition of “undue advantage” expanded to now include “anything other than legal remuneration”.
- Gifts criminalised: Gifts received for established undue advantage/ mala-fide motive are now considered an act of corruption.
- Collusive bribe-givers criminalised: For the first time, the giving of bribe has now been made a direct offence on par with taking of bribe.

At the same time, protection has been built-in against coercive bribery, as long as the victim comes forward within 7 days.

INSULATING PUBLIC SERVANTS: Lowdown on the significant changes in the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, adopted by both Houses of Parliament				
 Bribery What is new <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Giving a bribe is now an offence, punishable by a 7-year prison term ▪ Except when one is forced to give a bribe. But it should be reported it to within seven days ▪ Bribe is termed “undue advantage”, defined as “gratification other than legal remuneration” ▪ What it was <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No specific provision, except as abetment <i>It could empower the public to refuse to give a bribe but seven-day limit may not be enough...As to what happens if citizen's report of coercion is not registered by the police is unclear</i>	 Pre-investigation approval What is new <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Police officer cannot begin probe without prior approval of relevant authority or govt (except when caught red-handed) ▪ What it was <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No such provision in the Act, but a rule similar to it was struck down by Supreme Court <i>Protection formerly available to officials of rank of joint secretary and above (before SC struck it down) is extended to all public servants</i>	 Sanction for prosecution What is new <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sanction needed for prosecuting former officials for offences done while in office ▪ Centre may notify guidelines for sanction ▪ Decision on request for sanction within 3 months, which may be extended by a month* ▪ What it was <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sanction was required under PCA for serving officers only <i>Sanction for IPC offences covered both serving and retired officers. Guidelines and time-limit may help make sanction process easier</i>	 Criminal misconduct What is new <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Only be two forms of criminal misconduct. ▪ Misappropriation of property entrusted to public servant ▪ Intentionally enriching oneself illicitly ▪ What it was <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ There were five kinds: omitted ones are taking bribe habitually, getting anything free or at a concession, obtaining pecuniary advantage for oneself or for another without public interest <i>This is to protect public servants from being wrongly prosecuted for official decisions. Earlier it was a crime to “obtain advantage to a private party without public interest”</i>	 Forfeiture of property What is new <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Section introduced for Special Court under this Act to attach and confiscate property ▪ What it was <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This was not done under the Prevention of Corruption Act, but under a 1944 ordinance through civil courts <i>This helps avoid a fresh procedure to confiscate property obtained through corruption, enables court conducting trial to do so itself</i>
<i>Compiled by K. Venkataraman</i>				

- Corporate bribery criminalised: Superiors to be held if employee/agent has bribed with their approval, for advancement of the organisation's interests.
- Immediate forfeiture: Law enforcement empowered for immediate attachment & forfeiture of illegal property of a public servant, invoking provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).
- Timely trial mandated: To conclude the investigation and trial within 2 yrs, extendable up to 4 yrs.

2. 10 Years after Mumbai Attack

Context:

- 26/11 Mumbai terror is comparable to September 11; terror attacks in the US but it cannot be compared with the Madrid train bombings in 2004 and the London bombings in 2005
- The most audacious terror attack till the 26/11 Mumbai terror incident in India was the attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001 by the Pakistan-based terror outfits, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).
- About terrorism author observes that it is not a post-modern phenomenon. Although tactics used in 21st century attacks carried out in different corners of the world by al-Qaeda and its affiliates, the Islamic State, al-Shabaab, and similar terror outfits, are very different from those witnessed in the previous century.
- The tactics employed may vary, but the objective is common, viz. achieving mass casualties and widespread destruction.

Involvement of Pakistan

- In Mumbai terror attack the authorities in Pakistan, the Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate, and the Pakistani armed forces, were involved. It is difficult to recall any recorded instance in modern times where a state and its various agencies were directly involved in carrying out a terror attack of this nature.
- Evidences show involvement of Pakistan agencies at every stage of attack from planning to provide instructions to the terrorists during the entire four-day siege.
- The involvement of the Pakistani Special Forces in preparing the 10-member fidayeen group was confirmed by one of the conspirators, Abu Hamza, arrested subsequent to the 26/11 terror attack.
- The training regimen dictated by the Pakistani Special Forces involved psychological indoctrination; commando training; training in weapons and explosives; training in swimming and sailing.
- The targets were carefully chosen for maximum impact, viz. the Taj and Oberoi Hotels, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, the Jewish

centre at Nariman House, and the Leopold Cafe, since these places were frequented by Europeans, Indians and Jews.

- Secrecy was maintained at the highest level. Plans were limited to a mere handful of persons. In the LeT hierarchy, apart from Hafiz Sayeed, only a few like Zakiur Rehman Lakhvi, its chief military commander, Sajid Mir and Zarar Shah, its communications chief, were privy to the operational plans.

India after 26/11 attack

- Although Indian security agencies failed to anticipate such attack but in the wake of the terror attack, several steps were initiated to streamline the security set-up.
- Coastal security was given high priority, and it is with the Navy/Coast Guard/marine police.
- A specialized agency to deal with terrorist offences, the National Investigation Agency, was set up and has been functioning from January 2009.
- The National Intelligence Grid (NATGRID) has been constituted to create an appropriate database of security related information.
- Four new operational hubs for the NSG have been created to ensure rapid response to terror attacks.
- The Multi Agency Centre, which functions under the Intelligence Bureau, was further strengthened and its activities expanded.
- The Navy constituted a Joint Operations Centre to keep vigil over India's extended coastline.
- Author however with increased vigil and streamlining of the counter-terrorism apparatus terror attacks may have declined in recent years, but this does not mean that the situation is better than what existed a decade ago.
- Terrorism remains a major threat, and with modern refinements, new terrorist methodologies and terrorism mutating into a global franchise, the threat potential has become greater. Internet-enabled terrorism and resort to remote plotting is the new threat. Operating behind a wall of anonymity, random terror is likely to become the new terror imperative.
- Some of the new variants of terrorism are
- 'Enabled terror' or 'remote controlled terror', viz. violence conceived and guided by a controller thousands of miles away.
- 'Lone wolf' is, more often than not, part of a remote-controlled initiative, with a controller choosing the target, the nature of the attack and even the weaponry to be used.
- Author suggests that Vigilance is important, but remaining ahead of the curve is even more vital.

3. Reservation system in India: In Brief

Why in news?

Recently the **Maharashtra** Assembly unanimously passed a Bill proposing 16% reservation for Marathas in government jobs and education. With this, 85% of the State's population will be entitled to constitutional benefits under Article 15(4), 16 (4) of the Constitution.

Definition:

- Reservation in Indian law is a form of affirmative action whereby a percentage of seats are reserved in the public sector units, union and state civil services, union and state government departments and in all public and private educational institutions, except in the religious/linguistic minority educational institutions, for the socially and educationally backward communities and the Scheduled Castes and Tribes who are inadequately represented in these services and institutions.
- The reservation policy is also extended for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes for representation in the Parliament of India.

Constitutional Provisions:

The exact necessities for the reservation in services in favour of the members of the SC/STs have been made in the Constitution of India. They are as follows:

- Article 15(4) and 16(4) of the Constitution enabled both the state and Central Governments to reserve seats in public services for the members of the SC and ST, thereby, enshrining impartiality of opportunity in matters of civic service.
- Article 16(4 A): it makes provisions for reservation in the matter of promotion to any class or classes of posts in the services under the State in favour of SCs and STs (Constitutional 77th Amendment, - Act, 1995).
- Article 16 (4 B): It enables the state to fill the unfilled vacancies of a year which are reserved for SCs/STs in the succeeding year, thereby nullifying the ceiling of fifty percent reservation on total number of vacancies of that year (Constitutional 81st Amendment, - Act, 2000).
- Article 330 and 332: It provides for specific representation through reservation of seats for the SCs and the STs in the Parliament (Article 330) and in the State Legislative Assemblies (Article 332), as well as, in Government and public sector jobs, in both the federal and state Governments (Articles 16(4), 330(4) and 335).

Present Status:

- After introducing the provision for reservation once, it got related to vote bank politics and the following governments and the Indian Parliament routinely extended this period, without any free and fair

revisions. Later, reservations were introduced for other sections as well.

- The Supreme Court ruling that reservations cannot exceed 50% (which it judged would violate equal access guaranteed by the Constitution) has put a cap on reservations. The central government of India reserves 27% of higher education for Other Backward Castes, and individual states may legislate further reservations. Reservation in most states is at 50%, but certain Indian states like Rajasthan have proposed a 68% reservation that includes a 14% reservation for forward castes in services and education.
- However, there are states laws that exceed this 50% limit and these are under litigation in the Supreme Court. For example, the caste-based reservation fraction stands at 69% and is applicable to about 87% of the population in the state of Tamil Nadu.

Achievements of Reservation Policy

- 1) Reservations are a political necessity in India, for giving due representation to all sections.
- 2) Although Reservation schemes do undermine the quality of education but still Affirmative Action has helped many if not everyone from underprivileged and/or under-represented communities to grow and occupy top positions in the world's leading industries.
- 3) Reservation schemes are needed to provide social justice to the most marginalized and underprivileged which is their human right.
- 4) Meritocracy is meaningless without equality. First all people must be brought to the same level, whether it elevates a section or decelerates another, regardless of merit.
- 5) Reservations have only slowed down the process of "Forward becoming richer and backward becoming poorer".

Negative fall-outs of Reservation Policy

- 1) Reservation is similar to internal partition because in addition to being a form of ethnic discrimination, it also builds walls against inter-caste and inter-faith marriages.
- 2) Reservations are the biggest enemy of meritocracy. By offering reservation through relaxed entry criteria, we are fuelling inflation of moderate credentials as opposed to the promotion of merit based education system, which is the foundation of many progressive countries. Meritocracy should not be polluted by injecting relaxation of entry barriers, rather should be encouraged by offering financial aids to the underprivileged although deserving candidates only. Today the IITs and IIMs hold a high esteem in the global scenario due to their conservation of merit.
- 3) Caste Based Reservation only perpetuates the notion of caste in society, rather than weakening it as a factor of social consideration, as envisaged

by the constitution. Reservation is a tool to meet narrow political ends, by invoking class loyalties and primordial identities.

- 4) Affirmative Action can be provided at a more comprehensive level taking into account various factors of exclusion such as caste, economic conditions, gender, kind of schooling received etc. A comprehensive scheme of Affirmative Action would be more beneficial than reservations in addressing concerns of social justice.
- 5) The benefits of reservation policy have largely been appropriated by the dominant class within the backward castes, thereby the most marginalized within the backward castes have remained marginalized. It has been observed that mostly the beneficiaries of reservation have been the children of the highest paid professionals and high rank public officials.
- 6) Poor people from “forward castes” do not have any social or economic advantage over rich people from backward caste. In such a case, discriminating against the “forward caste” goes counter to the logic of reservation. It would create another “backward class” some years down the line.

This ‘perceived’ injustice breeds frustration and apathy in the society. The recent protests demanding quotas by some of the forward castes, in Gujarat and Rajasthan, is the testimony to this fact. For example, in Tamil Nadu, forward castes were able to secure only 3% of total seats (and 9% in Open Competition) in professional institutions at Undergraduate level as against their population percentage of 13%. This is a clear case of reverse discrimination.

Supreme Court Judgments

- In a case Balaji v/s State of Mysore (AIR 1963 SC649) it was held that ‘caste of a person cannot be the sole criteria for ascertaining whether a particular caste is backward or not. Determinants such as poverty, occupation, place of habitation may all be relevant factors to be taken into consideration. The court further held that it does not mean that if once a caste is considered to be backward it will continue to be backward for all other times. The government should review the test and if a class reaches the state of progress where reservation is not necessary it should delete that class from the list of backward classes.’
- What is surprising is that our constitution clearly is a reservation-friendly constitution but nowhere in the constitution is the term ‘backward classes defined. What actually constitutes a backward class? What are the determinants of a backward class? These questions remain unanswered and it is only with the help of judicial pronouncements that they have been given some meaning. Question arises how can reservations be made for something that has not been defined?
- Recently, while quashing the previous government’s decision to include Jats in the OBC category, Supreme Court said: “An affirmative action

policy that keeps in mind only historical injustice would certainly result in under protection of the most deserving backward class of citizens, which is constitutionally mandated. It is the identification of these new emerging groups that must engage the attention of the state."

Possible Way Forward

Opportunities for all disadvantaged children, equity, fairness and common sense should be the guiding principles in evolving a more rational model of reservations. What can be done towards this end?

1) De-reservation Policy: While caste may continue to be the mainstay of reservation policies, the benefits should flow to the vast majority of underprivileged children from deprived castes; not to a few privileged children with a caste tag. Families of public officials of a certain rank certain high income professionals and others above a certain income should be de-reserved. In other words, once they have received a significant advantage of reservations, they should be able to ensure opportunities for their children and vacate the space for the truly disadvantaged children in their own caste groups.

2) Affirmative steps: We have to address the anger and aspirations of poor families among unreserved communities. With the Supreme Court ruling of 50 per cent ceiling on reservation quotas, no further reservation is possible. But intelligent, creative, fair and practical ways of giving the poorer children among OBCs a helping hand are possible and necessary. For instance, parental education and the school the child attended, are two sure indicators of poverty and the backwardness of a family. If parents have not had education beyond school, and if the child goes to a government school or a low-end, ramshackle private school, it is a sure sign of a lack of adequate opportunity.

- 3) Make education mandatory and free for all till age of 17
- 4) Instead of introducing reservations for these backward classes what is required is to bring about revolutionary changes in our education system at the grass-root level. When proper education is not provided to children belonging to such categories during the primary stage itself then on what basis are the reservations provided at a subsequent stage.
- 5) Reservations on the basis of caste and not on the basis of other conditions are unacceptable. Fair and just reservations to uplift the people with poor conditions of life, those who don't have meals to eat, clothes to wear and no home to live in. They shall be made on the basis of factors such as gender as women are more disadvantaged than men since primitive times, domicile, family education, family employment, family property, family income and if any disabilities and traumas. The process of reservation should be such that it filters the truly economically deprived individuals and bring them all to justice.

Conclusion

The issue of reservation has remained a cause of disagreement between the reserved and the non-reserved sections of the society. While the unreserved segments keep on opposing the provision, the neediest sections from within the reserved segments are hardly aware about how to get benefited from the provision or even whether there are such provisions.

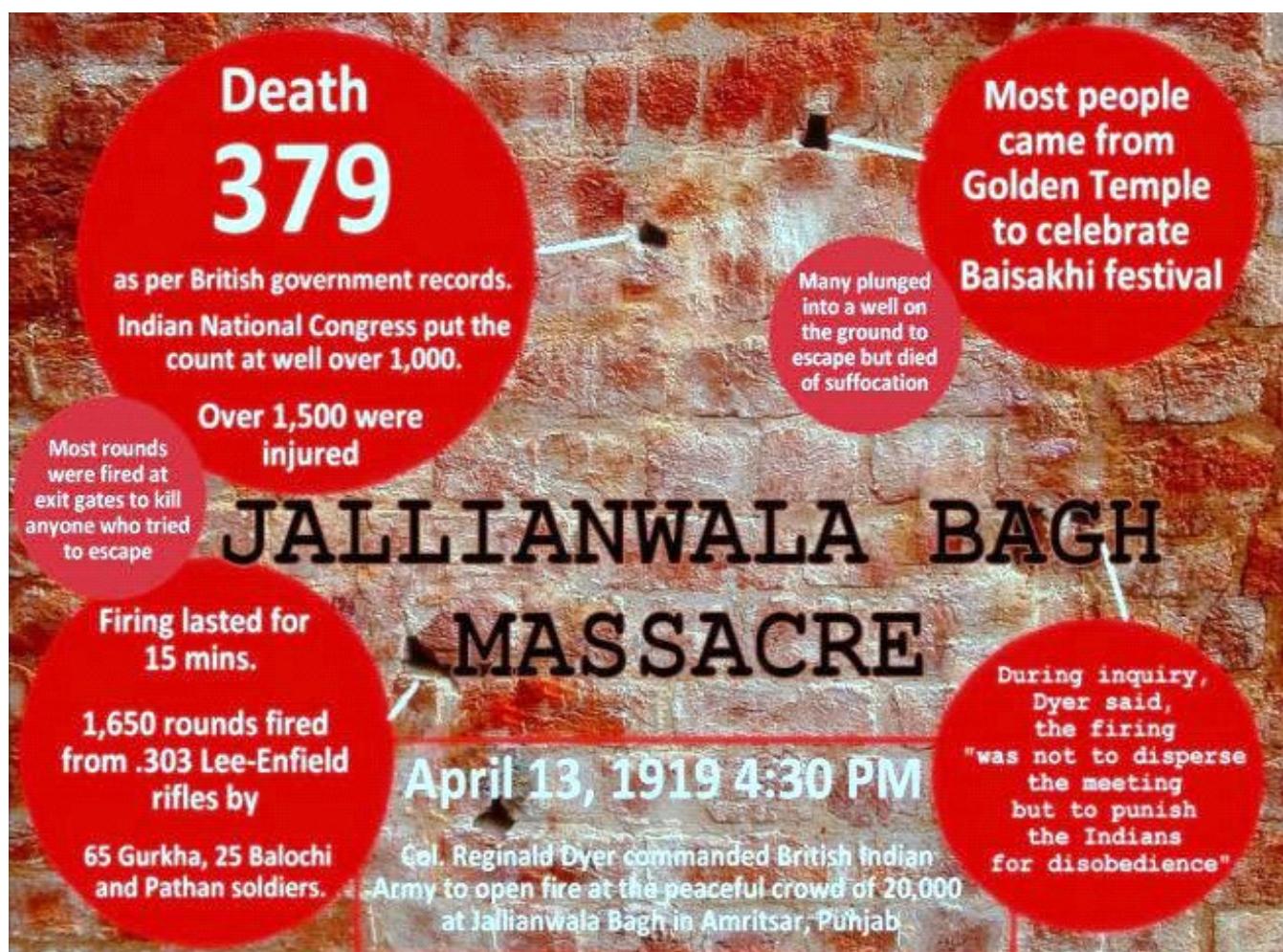
On the contrary, the creamy layer among the same segment is enjoying special privileges in the name of reservation and political factions are supporting them for vote banks. Reservation is no doubt good, as far as it is a method of appropriate positive discrimination for the benefit of the downtrodden and economically backward Sections of the society but when it tends to harm the society and ensures privileges for some at the cost of others for narrow political ends, as it is in the present form, it should be done away with, as soon possible.

It is time we address the challenge of reservations honestly, openly, fairly and innovatively. We cannot bury our heads in the sand forever like an ostrich.

4. 100 years of the historical Jallianwala Bagh massacre

Context:

The commemorative coin and postage stamps will be released on 13th April 2019 (the day the incident took place 100 years ago).



- Ministry of Culture will organize cultural activities like kavi sammelan, plays, exhibition, seminars, etc. across the country.
- A Committee is constituted to ensure timely implementation to Renovate, upgrade and beautify the Jallianwala Bagh Memorial, and Develop Virtual Reality Theme Based show at the Memorial.

Development of Virtual Reality Theme Based show:

- The Ministry of Tourism earmarked an amount of Rs. 8 crore under Swadesh Darshan Scheme for development of Virtual Reality Theme Based show at the Memorial.
- The Ministry of Culture will provide additional funds, if needed.

Background:

- It is also known as the Amritsar Massacre (dated April 13, 1919) at Jallianwala Bagh, Amritsar, Punjab.
- On 13th April 1919, thousands of people were gathered at Jallianwala Bagh. This day marks the beginning of New Year for the Sikhs, also celebrated as Baisakhi festival all over Punjab.
- Colonel Reginald Dyer had announced curfew and a ban on all processions that even prohibited a group of 4 or more people to meet publicly. However, General Dyer sensed the number of people present there and the secret meeting that was about to take place. Thus, he arrived with armed troops and ordered to open fire.
- The troops were ordered to start shooting; this heinous act of violence resulted in extreme mass killing.
- To keep in mind this significance of this place, a trust was founded in 1920 to build a memorial site at Jallianwala Bagh. American architect, Benjamin Polk, built the memorial site which was inaugurated by the then President of India, Rajendra Prasad on 13 April 1961.

5. Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana

Context:

As per the latest data released by the Centre for Digital Financial Inclusion (CDFI) that uses technology for financial inclusion, the government has transferred over Rs 1,600 crore to eligible mothers under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana through direct benefit transfer so far. Rs 16,04,66,63,000 has been transferred through direct benefit transfer to 48.5 lakh women.

CAS (Common Application Software) System:

- CDFI is a non-profit organization. It had conceptualized, designed and implemented the PMMVY-CAS (Common Application Software) System through which disbursements were made.

Saaf Niyat
Sahi Vikas

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YEARS
2014-2018

Government of India
Ministry of Women and Child Development

प्रधानमंत्री मातृ वंदना योजना

**PRADHAN MANTRI
MATRU VANDANA YOJANA**

**Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers
to get upto ₹ 6,000**

**Over 26 lakh
beneficiaries**

**₹ 440 Crore
released to
17.4 lakh
beneficiaries**

**PMMVY-Common
Application Software
(PMMVY-CAS)
launched on
1st September 2017**

**Pan-India expansion
of Maternity Benefit
Programme Since
1st January 2017**

(as on 31.03.18)

wcd.nic.in f/PMOIndia f/MinistryWCD @Manekagandhibjp f/ManekaGandhiOfficial

About PMMVY:

- Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is a maternity benefit rechristened from erstwhile Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahyog Yojana (IGMSY). The IGMSY was launched in 2010.
- The scheme is a conditional cash transfer scheme for pregnant and lactating women of 19 years of age or above for first live birth.
- It provides a partial wage compensation to women for wage-loss during childbirth and childcare and to provide conditions for safe delivery and good nutrition and feeding practices.
- Exceptions:** The maternity benefits under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) are available to all Pregnant Women & Lactating Mothers (PW&LM) except those in regular employment with the Central Government or State Government or Public Sector Undertaking or those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being in force.
- Funding:** The scheme is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under which cost sharing ratio between the Centre and the States & UTs with Legislature is 60:40 while for North-Eastern States & three Himalayan

States; it is 90:10. It is 100% Central assistance for Union Territories without Legislature.

- **Need for special attention:** Under-nutrition continues to adversely affect majority of women in India. In India, every third woman is undernourished and every second woman is anaemic. An undernourished mother almost inevitably gives birth to a low birth weight baby. When poor nutrition starts in-utero, it extends throughout the life cycle since the changes are largely irreversible.
- Owing to economic and social distress many women continue to work to earn a living for their family right up to the last days of their pregnancy. Furthermore, they resume working soon after childbirth, even though their bodies might not permit it, thus preventing their bodies from fully recovering on one hand, and also impeding their ability to exclusively breastfeed their young infant in the first six months.

6. Quadricycles

Context:

The ministry of road transport and highways has approved the sale of quadricycles for personal use.

- Quadricycle – a vehicle of the size of a 3-wheeler but with 4 tyres and fully covered like a car. It has an engine like that of a 3-wheeler.
- Ministry of Road Transport & Highways notified the insertion of ‘Quadricycle’ as a ‘non transport’ vehicle under the Motor Vehicles Act 1988.



- Quadricycles were only allowed for transport usage under the Act, but now has been made usable for non-transport also (Personal use).
- The main aim is to give another mobility option, especially to the middle class who want to upgrade from two-wheelers. Besides, a person cannot carry family members in a three-wheeler, therefore, quadricycles are being allowed in the private category. The move will help them to upgrade to four-wheelers and move around with family.
- **Advantage:** It is cheap and safe mode of transport for last mile connectivity.
- **Exceptions:** Quadricycles will not be allowed for transporting cargo or luggage.
- **Impact on the auto- industry:** Quadricycles will pose a serious challenge to entry level cars. With the centre giving a go-ahead on the sale of quadricycles for personal use, top auto makers will have to revamp their strategy on entry-level cars, given quadricycles are expected to be far cheaper.
- Bajaj Auto Ltd's Qute is the first locally produced quadricycle.
- While the government is trying to improve the safety standards of vehicles for Indian roads, quadricycles may not even meet the basic safety norms. Quadricycles should have been restricted only for commercial purposes since they don't meet the emission and safety norms of passenger cars. The regulators have been lenient and have diluted the norms for vehicles in this segment.

Background:

- Earlier this year, the Indian Government had approved of the Quadricycle as a vehicle category. Similar to all other vehicles sold in India even the Quadricycle vehicles will have to undergo a rigorous crash test and will have to meet the Bharat New Vehicle Safety Assessment Program (BNSVAP) safety norms and also the BS-VI emission norms.
- The government has also approved full electric or hybrid models of Quadricycle vehicles but even those models cannot skip the stringent crash test norms.

7. Article 370

Context:

The Supreme Court has refused to entertain a fresh petition on Article 370, which gives special autonomous status to Jammu and Kashmir, and said that the issues raised in it were already part of the pending pleas.

- The petition sought a declaration that Article 370 of the Constitution had lapsed with the dissolution of constituent assembly of Jammu and Kashmir on January 26, 1957 and it cannot be treated as mandatory for exercise of powers of the President.

- The plea has also sought that the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir be declared as “arbitrary, unconstitutional and void”, claiming that it was against the supremacy of the Indian Constitution and contrary to the dictum of “One Nation, One Constitution, One National Anthem and One National Flag”.
- It has sought declaring as arbitrary some provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir Constitution, which deals with permanent residency and flag of the valley among other issues, for being violative of the Preamble and the Indian Constitution.
- The petition has said that continuance of two parallel constitutions, one for the Centre and other for the state of Jammu and Kashmir, “reeks of a weird dichotomy” as most of the provisions of the Indian Constitution has already been extended to the state.
- It has alleged that due to vote bank politics, successive governments did nothing to repeal Article 370 and Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir was adopted much after the Indian Constitution came into force. It also added that the instrument of accession of October 26, 1947 does not talk about separate Constitution or constituent assembly for the state.

What is Article 370?

- Article 370 of the Indian Constitution is a ‘temporary provision’ which grants special autonomous status to Jammu & Kashmir.
- Under Part XXI of the Constitution of India, which deals with “Temporary, Transitional and Special provisions”, the state of Jammu & Kashmir has been accorded special status under Article 370.
- All the provisions of the Constitution which are applicable to other states are not applicable to J&K.

Important provisions under the article:

- According to this article, except for defence, foreign affairs, finance and communications, Parliament needs the state government’s concurrence for applying all other laws. Thus the state’s residents live under a separate set of laws, including those related to citizenship, ownership of property, and fundamental rights, as compared to other Indians.
- Indian citizens from other states cannot purchase land or property in Jammu & Kashmir.
- Under Article 370, the Centre has no power to declare financial emergency under Article 360 in the state. It can declare emergency in the state only in case of war or external aggression. The Union government can therefore not declare emergency on grounds of internal disturbance or imminent danger unless it is made at the request or with the concurrence of the state government.

- Under Article 370, the Indian Parliament cannot increase or reduce the borders of the state.
- The Jurisdiction of the Parliament of India in relation to Jammu and Kashmir is confined to the matters enumerated in the Union List, and also the concurrent list. There is no State list for the State of Jammu and Kashmir.
- At the same time, while in relation to the other States, the residuary power of legislation belongs to Parliament, in the case of Jammu and Kashmir, the residuary powers belong to the Legislature of the State, except certain matters to which Parliament has exclusive powers such as preventing the activities relating to cession or secession, or disrupting the sovereignty or integrity of India.
- The power to make laws related to preventive detention in Jammu and Kashmir belong to the Legislature of J & K and not the Indian Parliament. Thus, no preventive detention law made in India extends to Jammu & Kashmir.
- Part IV (Directive Principles of the State Policy) and Part IVA (Fundamental Duties) of the Constitution are not applicable to J&K.

8. Minimum Wages Act for domestic workers

Context:

A petition has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking its intervention to bring dignity to “India’s invisible workforce in the informal sector” — the domestic workers.

Demands:

- The petition asked the Supreme Court to lay down guidelines to protect the workers’ rights.
- The petition sought the recognition of domestic work under the Minimum Wages Act, 1948.
- Their work hours should be reduced to eight a day and they should be given a mandatory weekly off as a basic right under Article 21.

Need for guidelines:

- Indian homes have witnessed a 120% increase in domestic workers in the decade post liberalization. While the figure was 7,40,000 in 1991, it has increased to 16.6 lakh in 2001.
- However, latent classism and lack of education make domestic workers prone to violence and abuse at the hands of their employers and placement agencies.
- Worsening their vulnerabilities are the absence of proper documentation, which also increases their reliance on employers to access social security benefits.

- As employment is largely through word of mouth or personal referrals, employment contracts are rarely negotiated, leaving the terms of employment to the whims of the employer.
- Other issues include- Major incidences of violence (physical and sexual) by employers and the lack of redressal machinery for workers in this rapidly developing domestic services industry.

Who is a domestic worker?

- A domestic worker is a person who is involved in domestic work like cleaning, washing, cooking etc. He/she plays an important role in the wellbeing of the family but are often neglected and abused by the members of family and the society.

Way ahead:

- If the domestic workers are taken as assets & human resource, their standard of living will increase if minimum wage is fixed. It is also important to create awareness about the significant role played by the domestic workers in the wellbeing of the members of family and society as a whole, thereby imparting behavioural change.

9. Constitution Day of India

Context:

Constitution day which is also known as the Samvidhan Divas is celebrated every year on November 26 to mark the day on which the Constitution of India was adopted. While the adoption of the Constitution took place on November 26, 1949, it came into effect on January 26, 1950.

- The draft of the constitution was prepared by the drafting committee under BR Ambedkar's aegis. According to the government notification, the Constitution Day was also a tribute to Ambedkar.
- Earlier, this day was commemorated as National Law Day, after a resolution by the Supreme Court Bar Association, a lawyers' body, in 1979.

Celebrations this year:

- With the collective efforts of the Buddhist Association for the blind and the Saavi Foundation and Swagat Thorat, for the first time the constitution will be made available in Braille. As part of the joint project, the constitution will be made available in five parts in Braille for the benefit of visually challenged individuals.

10. International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (IDEVAW)

Context:

International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (IDEVAW) is observed every year across the world on 25 November.

- **Aim:** To raise awareness about violence against women and girls, end violence against women. It also seeks to show that prevention is possible against violence of women.
- **Theme and its significance:** "Orange the World: #HearMeToo". It aims to reinforce UNiTE Campaign's commitment to create world free from violence for all women and girls and reaching out to most marginalized people including migrants, refugees, indigenous peoples, minorities and populations affected by natural disasters and conflicts.

Background:

- International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women was instituted by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) in December 1999.
- This day is commemorated in memory of Mirabal sisters who were three political activists from Dominican Republic. They were brutally assassinated during the Rafael Trujillo dictatorship (1930-1961) in 1960.

Why we must eliminate violence against women?

- Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is one of the most widespread, persistent and devastating human rights violations in our world today remains largely unreported due to the impunity, silence, stigma and shame surrounding it.

In general terms, it manifests itself in physical, sexual and psychological forms, encompassing:

- Intimate partner violence (battering, psychological abuse, marital rape, femicide).
- Sexual violence and harassment (rape, forced sexual acts, unwanted sexual advances, child sexual abuse, forced marriage, street harassment, stalking, cyber- harassment).
- Human trafficking (slavery, sexual exploitation).
- Female genital mutilation.
- Child marriage.

Violence against women- definition:

- The Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women issued by the UN General Assembly in 1993, defines violence against women as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life."

Alarming Figures:

- 1 in 3 women and girls experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime, most frequently by an intimate partner
- Only 52% of women married or in a union freely make their own decisions about sexual relations, contraceptive use and health care
- Worldwide, almost 750 million women and girls alive today were married before their 18th birthday; while 200 million women and girls have undergone female genital mutilation (FGM)
- 1 in 2 women killed worldwide were killed by their partners or family in 2012; while only 1 out of 20 men were killed under similar circumstances
- 71% of all human trafficking victims worldwide are women and girls, and 3 out of 4 of these women and girls are sexually exploited
- Violence against women is as serious a cause of death and incapacity among women of reproductive age as cancer, and a greater cause of ill health than traffic accidents and malaria combined.



International Relations

11. THE CRIMEA ISSUE

WHAT IS CRIMEA?

It makes sense to clear this up before we go any further. Crimea is a peninsular region on the coast of Ukraine, on the Black Sea coast, with a population of about 2.3 million people. We've shown this in the map below.

As you may have guessed, the whole Crimean "crisis" is in relation to this territory and a dispute over whether the territory belongs to Russia or Ukraine.



Background:

As you may know, the Soviet Union (or the USSR) broke up into 15 independent states in 1991, two of which were states that are popularly known as Russia and Ukraine. Initially, the Crimean peninsula was a part of Ukraine, but enjoyed an 'autonomous' status within Ukraine (i.e. while it was a part of Ukrainian territory, it governed itself and was not subject to much control by the Ukrainian government). However, even despite its autonomous status within Ukraine, almost 60% of the Crimean population was native Russian, and identified more with Russia. A certain section of the Crimean government also wanted sovereignty (i.e. absolute independence from Ukraine to become an independent country). As a result, Crimea did attempt to declare independence in 1992 - only to meet opposition from the Ukrainian government, which prevented the declaration from

being carried out. At the same time, even Russia had always claimed Crimea as a part of its territory, as mentioned above.

So, to make all of this simpler, let's break it down into three points:

1. Crimea officially became a part of Ukraine following the break-up of the USSR, but a significant portion of the Crimean population was not content with this.
2. Crimea enjoyed autonomous status within Ukraine.
3. A section of the Crimean government wanted absolute independence as a state, and the legislature even declared independence in 1992 - but the independence move was crushed by Ukraine quickly.
4. 60%+ population of Crimea was native Russian, and as a result - even Russia identified it as a part of Russia.

WHY RUSSIA WANT CRIMEA?

- Other than Crimea having a majority of Russian-natives, Russia and Crimea also have a historical connection.
- Crimea was a part of the Russian Empire (which existed prior to the Soviet Union), from 1783 to 1917.
- Ethnic and historical ties, many suggest that Russia also has several political and geopolitical reasons to want Crimea, and can benefit from having control over the peninsula.
- The primary geopolitical interest is perhaps to prevent the expansion of the US-led NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization - an American international alliance) into Ukraine and Crimea.
- In 2014, Ukraine underwent a revolution. Prior to the revolution, Ukraine's President was a man named Viktor Yanukovych, who was pro-Russia.
- After the revolution, however, Yanukovych's government was removed from Ukraine (and Yanukovych was exiled to Russia), and a new government (under a man named Petro Poroshenko) assumed power.
- This new government was more nationalistic (towards Ukraine, obviously), and therefore "less" pro-Russia than the Yanukovych's government (however that may be quantified).
- As a result, Russia perhaps feared that this government may turn to the EU (European Union) and NATO, who might gain control over the Crimean peninsula - something that would not be in the Russian interest.

Events happened:

- Prior to the Ukrainian revolution, Ukraine had agreed that it would establish certain economic relations with the European Union. However, on 21st November, 2013, then President Viktor Yanukovych (yes, the pro-Russia guy) abandoned this deal (not much of a surprise,

is it?), which set in motion a sequence of events that ultimately led to the Ukrainian revolution.

- After the revolution, the Crimean legislature decided to hold a referendum (i.e. a popular vote where all people vote for or against a particular decision to be taken by the government) on whether Crimea should become a part of Russia.
- In the referendum, an apparent 97% of the Crimean people voted to join Russia. Following the declaration of the results of this referendum, the Crimean Parliament requested Russia to admit it to the Russian Federation, and hence Russia annexed Crimea. (Annexation is the process of adding region/regions to the existing territory of a country).

Current issue:

- The whole annexation process took place in a democratic manner (with a referendum) and that there's no apparent problem with it: but that's not the case.
- On March 27, 2014, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution which declared the referendum (held in Crimea) invalid, and questioned the legitimacy of the referendum.
- As a result, to this day, only 11 UN Member States (10 + Russia) recognize Crimea as a part of Russia, with all the others not recognizing it as a part of Russia - claiming that the referendum was illegitimate.

Therefore, the entire Crimean issue stems out of this disagreement on who Crimea rightfully belongs to, and whether the referendum held in 2014 was valid and legitimate.

12. Along the new Silk Roads

Context:

The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), also known as the One Belt One Road (OBOR) or the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st-century Maritime Silk Road, intends to unify global market system.

Vision of Belt and Road initiative

- To construct a unified large market and make full use of both international and domestic markets, through cultural exchange and integration, to enhance mutual understanding and trust of member nations, ending up in an innovative pattern with capital inflows, talent pool, and technology database.
- The initial focus has been infrastructure investment, education, construction materials, railway and highway, automobile, real estate, power grid, and iron and steel. Already, some estimates list the Belt and Road Initiative as one of the largest infrastructure and investment projects in history, covering more than 68 countries, including 65% of the world's population and 40% of the global GDP as of 2017.

- The Belt and Road Initiative addresses an “infrastructure gap” and thus has potential to accelerate economic growth across the Asia Pacific area and Central and Eastern Europe

Infrastructure Networks:

- The Belt and Road Initiative is geographically structured along several land corridors, and the maritime silk road. Infrastructure corridors encompassing around 60 countries, primarily in Asia and Europe but also including Oceania and East Africa will cost an estimated US\$4–8 trillion.
- The initiative has been contrasted with the two US-centric trading arrangements, the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership. These programmes aimed at encompassing countries, financially, receive the support of Silk Road Fund and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank; technically, are guided by B&R Summit Forum.

China-Pakistan Economic Corridor:

- CPEC is seen as the main plank of Chinese President Xi Jinping’s Belt and Road Initiative. It is a collection of infrastructure projects that are currently under construction throughout Pakistan. Originally valued at \$46 billion, the value of CPEC projects is worth \$62 billion as of 2017
- CPEC is intended to rapidly modernize Pakistani infrastructure and strengthen its economy by the construction of modern transportation networks, numerous energy projects, and special economic zones. On 13 November 2016, CPEC became partly operational when Chinese cargo was transported overland to Gwadar Port for onward maritime shipment to Africa and West Asia, while some major power projects were commissioned by late 2017.

Impact of BRI on Regional and Global Level:

- China’s discourse on a new “connected” multilateralism, through the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), is building upon the same inclusive project now led by a non-Western and non-democratic superpower.
- The BRI is included in the Constitution of an officially socialist China. The BRI “shared interest” and “shared growth” hence coexist with Marxism-Leninism and “capitalism with Chinese characteristics” in a country now said to be more trade-friendly than its protectionist American rival, the U.S. Beijing has never been afraid of contradictions in terms and this capacity to ‘Sinicise’ concepts is a signature trait.

Normative yet not legal

- These norms manifest themselves in the form of guiding principles, declarations, general agreements and other communication tools including the hardly studied “Digital Silk Road” envisaging “innovation

action plans for e-commerce, digital economy, smart cities and science and technology parks”.

- They constitute a normative discourse, a form of behavior, a standard to abide by, but are not legally binding yet. The BRI indeed develops without any dedicated law, nor is it a comprehensive trade or economic partnership.
- It is different from conventional trade agreements that seek to eliminate market access barriers, harmonize regulations and impose preconditions for entry.
- The only legal texts one could refer to are to be found in the network of foreign trade agreements, bilateral investment treaties and other international investment agreements China is a party to.
- The absence of law is actually partial and temporary, China is preparing for the domestic resolution of BRI disputes with the creation by the Supreme People’s Court of two dedicated branches of the China International Commercial Court, one in Shenzhen to tackle the Maritime Road disputes, and one in Xi’an to settle overland Belt issues.
- In addition, the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre has specific BRI arbitration clauses and administered arbitration rules. Naturally, investor-state disputes could also be settled on the basis of China’s investment agreements, nationally or internationally, in a given arbitration forum — for example, the World Bank-sponsored International Centre for Settlement of Investment Dispute (ICSID).
- The BRI as it stands is not conceived as a tool for economic integration, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) negotiations between the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and six countries is better equipped to deal with market access and integration goals within the Asia-Pacific region.
- Again, the BRI’s dispute resolution will be predominantly on commercial disputes, involving either projects or contractual obligations. However, with the world trading system passing through turmoil, the possibility of regional trade agreements or amorphous legal devices such as the BRI embracing greater trade liberalization goals cannot be entirely ruled out.
- A failure to resolve the WTO Appellate Body crisis or any consequent weakening of the multilateral dispute resolution process could present an opportunity for purely nationalistic initiatives to transmute and assume larger objectives.

Why India Concerned about BRI?

- India should be wary of China’s geopolitical ambitions, which are being channeled through its Belt and Road Initiative, China is increasingly investing in ports in the Indian Ocean to secure passage of energy imports from West Asia.

- The increase in Chinese-built ports raises naval security concerns for India, which is worried that these ports could be converted into naval bases in the future. A notable example is Hambantota port in Sri Lanka, built with Chinese loans and leased to the Chinese for 99 years after the Sri Lankan government failed to repay its debts.
- CPEC passing through Pakistan occupied Kashmir which is against sovereign interest of India.

Way Forward

- India should deepen ties with other allies to build and upgrade its infrastructure, creating an alternative to Chinese-led connectivity corridors and that it should move away from a reactive policy to China and create a coherent policy framework to secure its strategic interests in the region.

13. Corridor of hope

Context:

As Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu and Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh together unveil a foundation stone for a six-km route leading from Dera Baba Nanak in Punjab to Kartarpur in Pakistan's Punjab

Strategic importance of the corridor:

- The announcement by India and Pakistan of plans to operationalise a visa-free corridor between Dera Baba Nanak in Indian Punjab and Kartarpur Sahib in Pakistan's Punjab heeds a longstanding plea of Sikh pilgrims.
- That demand had gathered pace in 1995, when Pakistan renovated the Kartarpur gurdwara, situated on the site on the bank of the Ravi where the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak, spent his last 18 years.
- Leaders from both sides, including Prime Ministers Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Benazir Bhutto, had pushed for it.
- In their effort to facilitate travel by Sikhs to important shrines on both sides of the border, they were also alert to the potential of such a move to heal ties amongst their people, and promote dialogue between the two governments.
- The 4-km-long Kartarpur corridor is a low-hanging fruit as a meaningful confidence-building measure.
- The announcement now is particularly timely, with the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak falling in November 2019.
- The initiative can also become a template for cross-border exchanges based on faith, which could provide a balm for many communities such as Kashmiri Pandits, who have long asked for access to visit the Sharda Peeth in the Neelum Valley in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir; Sufis in Pakistan who wish to visit the dargah of Khwaja Moinuddin

Chishti in Ajmer, Rajasthan; and Sikhs in India and Pakistan wanting to visit important shrines on both sides of the border

Way forward:

- It is important that issues related to the corridor are managed in a non-political manner and details left to diplomats and officials to sort out the Kartarpur project will compel India and Pakistan to engage in a positive and purposeful manner, at a time when few other avenues for engagement exist.
- It is a reminder that dialogue and search for areas of concord are the only way forward for both countries.



Economy

14. RBI eases ECB hedging norms for companies

Context:

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has eased hedging norms for companies that raise funds through external commercial borrowings (ECB), a move that will lower the cost of hedging.

External Commercial Borrowings or ECBS:

- **ECB** is the financial instrument used to borrow money from the foreign sources of financing to invest in the commercial activities of the domestic country.
- Simply, borrowing money from the non-resident lenders and investing it in the commercial activities of India is called as external commercial borrowings.
- External Commercial Borrowings (ECBs) includes commercial bank loans, buyers' credit, suppliers' credit, securitized instruments such as Floating Rate Notes and Fixed Rate Bonds etc., credit from official export credit agencies and commercial borrowings from Multilateral Financial Institutions.
- ECBs are being permitted by the Government as a source of finance for Indian Corporate for expansion of existing capacity as well as for fresh investment. Following are the advantages of ECBs.
- The government of India seeks investment in the infrastructure and core sectors such as power, coal, railways, roads, telecom, etc. which are directly related to economic development of the country.

Significance of ECBS:

- The ECBs have emerged as a major form of foreign capital called as FDI. The contribution of ECBs is 20 to 35 per cent in our total capital inflows.
- PSUs and corporates they use this ECB as a major platform for the source of investment. In our country large amount of ECBs are obtained by private sector corporates.

RBI norms on ECB:

- A notification issued by the central bank said mandatory hedge coverage has been reduced from 100% to 70% under Track I of the ECB framework.
- The RBI also clarified that the ECBs raised prior to this circular would be required to mandatorily roll over their existing hedge only to the extent of 70% of outstanding ECB exposure.
- According to the RBI, Track I refers to medium-term foreign currency-denominated ECBs with a minimum average maturity of 3-5 years. The move will help reduce costs for companies that raise foreign funds.

15. Prompt corrective action (PCA) framework

Context:

The 11 state-run banks, which are under the RBI's prompt corrective action (PCA) framework, have seen a 400 basis points increase in their share of retail loans at 19% in the four years ending September 2018.

- The RBI began to place state-run banks under the PCA framework for the first time in September 2016, when their NPAs soared beyond the regulatory tolerance levels.

Negative effects:

- Banks under the PCA have lost market share to private sector banks in corporate loans and unsecured personal loans, and it will be a Herculean task for the affected banks to claw this back. The PCA framework puts restrictions on weaker banks on many aspects, including fresh lending and expansion, and salary hikes, among others.
- The 11 banks under the PCA are: Allahabad Bank, United Bank of India, Corporation Bank, IDBI Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of India, Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce, Dena Bank and Bank of Maharashtra. These banks together control over 20 per cent of the credit market.

What is PCA?

- PCA norms allow the regulator to place certain restrictions such as halting branch expansion and stopping dividend payment. It can even cap a bank's lending limit to one entity or sector. Other corrective action that can be imposed on banks include special audit, restructuring operations and activation of recovery plan. Banks' promoters can be asked to bring in new management, too. The RBI can also supersede the bank's board, under PCA.

When is PCA invoked?

- The PCA is invoked when certain risk thresholds are breached. There are three risk thresholds which are based on certain levels of asset quality, profitability, capital and the like. The third such threshold, which is maximum tolerance limit, sets net NPA at over 12% and negative return on assets for four consecutive years.

What are the types of restrictions?

- There are two type of restrictions, mandatory and discretionary. Restrictions on dividend, branch expansion, directors compensation, are mandatory while discretionary restrictions could include curbs on lending and deposit. In the cases of two banks where PCA was invoked after the revised guidelines were issued — IDBI Bank and UCO Bank — only mandatory restrictions were imposed. Both the banks breached risk threshold 2.

What will a bank do if PCA is triggered?

- Banks are not allowed to renew or access costly deposits or take steps to increase their fee-based income. Banks will also have to launch a special drive to reduce the stock of NPAs and contain generation of fresh NPAs. They will also not be allowed to enter into new lines of business. RBI will also impose restrictions on the bank on borrowings from interbank market.

Impact:

- Small and medium enterprises will have to bear the brunt due to this move by RBI. Since the PCA framework restricts the amount of loans banks can extend, this will definitely put pressure on credit being made available to companies especially the MSMEs.
- Large companies have access to the corporate bond market so they may not be impacted immediately. It has been predicted that if more state-owned banks are brought under PCA, it will impact the credit availability for the MSME segment.

16. NBFC Mudra loans grew faster than banks in FY18

Context:

According to the 2017-18 annual report of Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY), though NBFCs sanctioned only over ₹ 27,000 crore of Mudra loans in FY18 against Rs. 92,492.68 crore by public sector banks, their year-on-year growth was faster. While NBFC Mudra loan sanctions increased Rs. 21,562.63 crore from a year ago, state-run banks could raise their Mudra loans by only Rs. 20,539.01 crore in the same period.

- Impressively, NBFCs not only met their Mudra target of ₹ 9,050 crore for FY18, but their sanctions for the year were a five-fold jump from the previous year.



About the Pradhan Mantri MUDRA Yojana (PMMY) scheme:

- The PMMY Scheme was launched in April, 2015. The scheme's objective is to refinance collateral-free loans given by the lenders to small borrowers.
- The scheme, which has a corpus of Rs 20,000 crore, can lend between Rs 50,000 and Rs 10 lakh to small entrepreneurs.
- Banks and microfinance institutions (MFIs) can draw refinance under the MUDRA Scheme after becoming member-lending institutions of MUDRA.
- Mudra Loans are available for non-agricultural activities upto Rs. 10 lakh and activities allied to agriculture such as Dairy, Poultry, Bee Keeping etc, are also covered.
- Mudra's unique features include a Mudra Card which permits access to Working Capital through ATMs and Card Machines.

There are three types of loans under PMMY:

- Shishu (up to Rs.50,000).
- Kishore (from Rs.50,001 to Rs.5 lakh).
- Tarun (from Rs.500,001 to Rs.10,00,000).

Stage	Maximum amount	Particulars
Sishu	₹50 thousand	This stage caters to entrepreneurs who are about to start their business, or are in the first stages of the business.
Kishor	₹5 lakh	Caters to business owners requiring funds between ₹50 thousand to ₹5 lakh. Those who have been already running their business for some time and now requires funds for further expansion, would come under this category.
Tarun	₹10 lakh	Subject to the meeting of the eligibility criteria, a business owner can apply for a maximum loan of up to ₹10 lakh. Suitable for those who want to carry out a major expansion in their business.

mymoneysage.in

Objectives of the scheme:

- Fund the unfunded:** Those who have a business plan to generate income from a non-farm activity like manufacturing, processing, trading or service sector but don't have enough capital to invest can take loans up to Rs 10 lakh.
- Micro finance institutions (MFI) monitoring and regulation:** With the help of MUDRA bank, the network of microfinance institutions will be monitored. New registration will also be done.
- Promote financial inclusion:** With the aim to reach Last mile credit delivery to micro businesses taking help of technology solutions, it

- **Reduce jobless economic growth:** Providing micro enterprises with credit facility will help generate employment sources and an overall increase in GDP.
- **Integration of Informal economy into Formal sector:** It will help India also grow its tax base as incomes from the informal sector are non-taxed.

17. RBI can transfer Rs 1 lakh crore of excess reserves to govt Context:

According to Bank of America Merrill Lynch report, the Reserve Bank has “more than adequate” reserves and it can transfer over Rs 1 trillion to the government after a specially constituted panel identifies the “excess capital”.

- The report notes that the central bank can transfer Rs 1 trillion to the government if the transfer is limited to passing excess contingency reserve and can go up to Rs 3 trillion if the total capital is included.

How does a central bank like the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) make profits?

- The RBI is a “full service” central bank — not only is it mandated to keep inflation or prices in check, it is also supposed to manage the borrowings of the Government of India and of state governments; supervise or regulate banks and non-banking finance companies; and manage the currency and payment systems. While carrying out these functions or operations, it makes profits.
- Typically, the central bank’s income comes from the returns it earns on its foreign currency assets — which could be in the form of bonds and treasury bills of other central banks or top-rated securities, and deposits with other central banks.
- It also earns interest on its holdings of local rupee-denominated government bonds or securities, and while lending to banks for very short tenures, such as overnight. It claims a management commission on handling the borrowings of state governments and the central government.
- Its expenditure is mainly on the printing of currency notes and on staff, besides the commission it gives to banks for undertaking transactions on behalf of the government across the country, and to primary dealers, including banks, for underwriting some of these borrowings.

What is the nature of the arrangement between the government and RBI on the transfer of surplus or profits?

- Although RBI was promoted as a private shareholders’ bank in 1935 with a paid up capital of Rs 5 crore, the government nationalised it in January 1949, making the sovereign its “owner”. What the central bank does, therefore, is transfer the “surplus” — that is, the excess of

income over expenditure — to the government, in accordance with Section 47 (Allocation of Surplus Profits) of the Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

Does the RBI pay tax on these earnings or profits?

- No. Its statute provides exemption from paying income-tax or any other tax, including wealth tax.

How does the government build this surplus into its Budget early in the year?

- Well before the annual Budget is unveiled, senior RBI and government officials discuss the likely amount which could be transferred. Typically, the government pitches for a higher share of the surplus while the central bank sometimes prefers to set aside funds for contingencies. Based on these talks, and calculations such as likely income and earnings, an indicative figure is given to the government, which it puts under the head 'non-tax revenue' in the receipts budget.

Is there an explicit policy on the distribution of surplus?

- No. But a Technical Committee of the RBI Board headed by Y H Malegam, which reviewed the adequacy of reserves and a surplus distribution policy, recommended, in 2013, a higher transfer to the government.
- Earlier, the RBI transferred part of the surplus to the Contingency Fund, to meet unexpected and unforeseen contingencies, and to the Asset Development Fund, to meet internal capital expenditure and investments in its subsidiaries in keeping with the recommendation of a committee to build contingency reserves of 12% of its balance sheet. But after the Malegam committee made its recommendation, in 2013-14, the RBI's transfer of surplus to the government as a percentage of gross income (less expenditure) shot up to 99.99% from 53.40% in 2012-13.

18. The benefits of having a DigiLocker account

Context:

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) asked the mutual funds industry, registrar and transfer agents (R&Ts) and online distributors to discontinue with Aadhaar-based know your customer (KYC) verification, and companies are trying to explore other digital solutions to continue paperless KYC. In this light a few companies are considering using DigiLocker accounts as an alternative.

Digilocker:

- DigiLocker is a facility provided by the government, as part of its Digital India initiative, which allows you to avail dedicated cloud storage space up to 1 GB free of cost.

- 12-digit Aadhaar number to open the account, the Aadhaar ISTOCK data will not reside with the asset management company.
- The DigiLocker account allows you to store the scanned copies of all your documents on the cloud and provides access to these when required.
- Once you have the account, you can either upload the documents yourself or contact companies and organizations registered with DigiLocker and they can directly push electronic copies of documents such as driving licence, voter ID, school and university certificates and PAN card into your account.
- It makes sense to get organizations to put your documents in the account directly, as that assures the authenticity of documents.

Benefits of DigiLocker:

- Access the documents anywhere any time through the DigiLocker app on your smartphone or by signing into your account on your laptop
- Can also save the relevant document on a device and get a printout, if required.
- DigiLockers also allow account holders to electronically sign their documents using the eSign facility making self-attestation easier.
- For mutual fund companies or other organizations willing to do online verification, DigiLockers can make the processing faster.
- The facility keeps your documents secure. The documents reside in the cloud and are secured by a 4-digit personal identification number to prevent unauthorized access.
- DigiLocker app has adopted the Aadhaar OTP feature which means each time you wish to log into your account, you have to enter an OTP sent to your mobile phone.
- The facility is useful but it's still in its early stages. According to the DigiLocker website, the facility currently provides access to 3.36 billion digital documents

Geography and Environment

19. Andaman & Nicobar Islands: home to a tenth of India's fauna species

Context:

The Andaman & Nicobar Islands, comprising only 0.25% of country's geographical area, has 11,009 species, according to a publication by the Zoological Survey of India.

Species found only on the island:

- The Narcondam hornbill, its habitat restricted to a lone island;
- The Nicobar megapode, a bird that builds nests on the ground;
- The Nicobar treeshrew, a small mole-like mammal;
- The Long-tailed Nicobar macaque and
- The Andaman day gecko

These are among the 1,067 endemic faunal species found only on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and nowhere else.

Zoological Survey of India (ZSI):

A recent publication by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) titled "Faunal Diversity of Biogeographic Zones": Islands of India has for the first time come up with a database of all faunal species found on the island, putting the number at 11,009. The documentation proves that the islands, comprising only 0.25% of India's geographical area, are home to more than 10% of the country's fauna species.

Cautions mentioned in the report:

- Tourism, illegal construction and mining are posing a threat to the islands' biodiversity.
- Some of the species in A&N Islands are restricted to a very small area and thus more vulnerable to any anthropogenic threat.
- The population of the islands, which includes six particularly vulnerable tribal groups (PVTGs) — Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa, Sentinelese, Nicobarese and Shompens — is not more than 4 lakh. The number of tourists visiting the islands has crossed the number of people residing in them, with latest data showing 4.87 lakh tourists visiting the islands annually.

Restricted Area Permit

Some of the islands removed from the RAP list have no habitation except PVTG like Sentinelese in case of North Sentinel Island, and there is nothing other than a police outpost on the Narcondam Island

Most vulnerable species:

Of the ten species of marine fauna found on the islands, the dugong/sea cow, and the Indo-Pacific humpback dolphin, are both classified as Vulnerable under the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature) Red List of Threatened Species.

Among the 46 terrestrial mammalian species found, three species have been categorised as Critically Endangered

- Andaman shrew (*Crocidura andamanensis*)
- Jenkin's shrew (*C. jenkinsi*)
- Nicobar shrew (*C. nicobarica*).

Five species are listed as Endangered, nine species as Vulnerable, and one species as Near Threatened, according to the IUCN.

Another unique feature of the islands' ecosystem is its marine faunal diversity, which includes coral reefs and its associated fauna. In all, 555 species of scleractinian corals (hard or stony corals) are found in the island ecosystem, all which are placed under Schedule I of the WPA.

20. Coral transplant raise Barrier Reef survival hopes

Context:

In an Australian project, Coral bred in one part of the Great Barrier Reef was successfully transplanted into another area, hoping they could restore damaged ecosystems around the world.

The trial:

- In a trial at the reef's Heron Island off Australia's east coast, the researchers collected large amount of coral spawn and eggs late last year, grew them into larvae and then transplanted them into areas of damaged reef.
- When they returned eight months later, they found juvenile coral that had survived and grown, aided by underwater mesh tanks.

Global significance

- The success of the research not only applies to the Great Barrier Reef but has potential global significance.
- The results are very promising and the work shows that adding higher densities of coral larvae leads to higher numbers of successful coral recruits.

Contrasting approach

- It showcases that one can start to restore and repair damaged coral populations where the natural supply of coral larvae has been compromised.
- Although the larval-restoration approach contrasts with the current

“coral gardening” method of breaking up healthy coral and sticking healthy branches on reefs, scientists hope that they will regrow coral in nurseries before transplantation.

- The same approach was earlier successfully trialled in the Philippines in an area of reef highly degraded by blast fishing, which helped reefs recover on a larger scale.
- The Great Barrier Reef is reeling from an unprecedented second-straight year of coral bleaching because of warming sea temperatures linked to climate change.

21. Protect indigenous people

Context:

The debates following the recent alleged killing of an American national, John Allen Chau, by the Sentinelese have put the spotlight on the vulnerability of an indigenous community that has lived for thousands of years with little contact with outsiders.

About Sentinelese:

- The Sentinelese, also known as the Sentineli and the North Sentinel Islanders, are an indigenous people who inhabit North Sentinel Island in the Bay of Bengal in India. As North Sentinel Island is part of the Andaman Islands, the Sentinelese are considered to be one of the Andamanese peoples. They are designated as a Scheduled Tribe and are considered one of the world's last uncontacted people. Unlike other tribes in the Andamanese Islands, the Sentinelese appear to have consistently refused any interaction with the outside world. The Sentinelese is hostile to outsiders and have killed people who approached or landed on the island.
- There are four ancient Negrito tribal communities in the Andaman Islands (the Great Andamanese, Onge, Jarawa and Sentinelese) and two Mongoloid tribal communities in the Nicobar Islands (the Shompen and Nicobarese).

India's policy towards these tribals:

- Jawaharlal Nehru's Tribal Panchsheel were the guiding principles after Independence to formulate policies for the indigenous communities of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- The Andaman and Nicobar Islands (Protection of Aboriginal Tribes) Regulation (ANPATR), 1956: This Regulation protected the tribals from outside interference, specified the limits of reserved areas and said no land in a reserved area shall be allotted for agricultural purposes or sold or mortgaged to outsiders. Those violating the land rights of the tribals were to be imprisoned for one year, fined ¹ 1,000, or both.
- A policy of non-intervention: The committee recommended protecting the Jarawas from harmful contact with outsiders, preserving their

cultural and social identity, conserving their land and advocated sensitising settlers about the Jarawas.

- Ammendment of ANPATR: The term of imprisonment as well as the fine were increased.
- The Andaman Trunk Road: had already ensured increased interaction with the tribals. In the case of the Jarawas, this had led to the spread of diseases, sexual exploitation, and begging.

Nehru's Tribal Panchsheel

Panchsheel is five fundamental principles for tribal development in India laid down by Jawaharlal Nehru.

The Five Principles are as follows:

1. First, the tribals should develop along the lines of their own genius; there should be no imposition or compulsion from outside.
2. Second, tribal rights in land and forests should be respected and no outsider should be able to take possession of tribal lands. The incursion of the market economy into tribal areas had to be strictly controlled and regulated.
3. Third, it was necessary to encourage the tribal languages which 'must be given all possible support and the conditions in which they can flourish must be safeguarded'.
4. Fourth, for administration, reliance should be placed on the tribal people themselves, and administrators should be recruited from amongst them and trained.
5. Fifth, there should be no over-administration of the tribal areas. The effort should be to administer and develop the tribals' through their own social and cultural institutions.

International policy:

- While the Indigenous and Tribal Populations Convention, 1957, of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) insisted on an integrationist approach towards tribal communities.
- The 1989 convention insisted on a policy of non-intervention, "recognising the aspirations of these peoples to exercise control over their own institutions, ways of life and economic development."

Conclusion:

- Considering the significance of the indigenous tribes of the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, the government needs to reorient its priorities towards protecting them from outside influence. India needs to sign the 1989 convention of the ILO, and implement its various policies to protect the rights of the indigenous population. It should also make efforts to sensitise settlers and outsiders about them. That Chau was helped in his journey shows a lack of understanding about the

Sentinelese. Only concrete efforts can prevent such an incident from happening again.

22. How the Antarctic Circumpolar Current helps keep Antarctica frozen?

Context:

The Antarctic Circumpolar Current or ACC is changing as the world's climate warms. Scientists are studying the current to find out how it might affect the future of Antarctica's ice sheets, and the world's sea levels.

It's significance:

- The Antarctic Circumpolar Current, or ACC, is the strongest ocean current on our planet. It extends from the sea surface to the bottom of the ocean, and encircles Antarctica. It is vital for Earth's health because it keeps Antarctica cool and frozen.
- The ACC carries an estimated 165 million to 182 million cubic metres of water every second (a unit also called a "Sverdrup") from west to east, more than 100 times the flow of all the rivers on Earth. It provides the main connection between the Indian, Pacific and Atlantic Oceans.
- The tightest geographical constriction through which the current flows is Drake Passage, where only 800 km separates South America from Antarctica. While elsewhere the ACC appears to have a broad domain, it must also navigate steep undersea mountains that constrain its path and steer it north and south across the Southern Ocean.

What is the Antarctic Circumpolar Current?

- Antarctica is a frozen continent surrounded by icy waters. Moving northward, away from Antarctica, the water temperatures rise slowly at first and then rapidly across a sharp gradient. It is the ACC that maintains this boundary.
- The ACC is created by the combined effects of strong westerly winds across the Southern Ocean, and the big change in surface temperatures between the Equator and the poles.
- Ocean density increases as water gets colder and as it gets more salty. The warm, salty surface waters of the subtropics are much lighter than the cold, fresher waters close to Antarctica. The depth of constant density levels slopes up towards Antarctica. The westerly winds make this slope steeper, and the ACC rides eastward along it, faster where the slope is steeper and weaker where it's flatter.

Fronts and bottom water:

- In the ACC there are sharp changes in water density known as fronts. The Subantarctic Front to the north and Polar Front further south are the two main fronts of the ACC (the black lines in the images). Both are known to split into two or three branches in some parts of the

Southern Ocean, and merge together in other parts. Scientists can figure out the density and speed of the current by measuring the ocean's height, using altimeters.

- The path of the ACC is a meandering one, because of the steering effect of the sea floor, and also because of instabilities in the current. The ACC also plays a part in the meridional (or global) overturning circulation, which brings deep waters formed in the North Atlantic southward into the Southern Ocean. Once there it becomes known as Circumpolar Deep Water, and is carried around Antarctica by the ACC. It slowly rises toward the surface south of the Polar Front.
- Once it surfaces, some of the water flows northward again and sinks north of the Subarctic Front. The remaining part flows toward Antarctica where it is transformed into the densest water in the ocean, sinking to the sea floor and flowing northward in the abyss as Antarctic Bottom Water. These pathways are the main way that the oceans absorb heat and carbon dioxide and sequester it in the deep ocean.

Changing current:

- The ACC is not immune to climate change. The Southern Ocean has warmed and freshened in the upper 2,000 m. Rapid warming and freshening has also been found in the Antarctic Bottom Water, the deepest layer of the ocean.
- Waters south of the Polar Front are becoming fresher due to increased rainfall there, and waters to the north of the Polar Front are becoming saltier due to increased evaporation. These changes are caused by human activity, primarily through adding greenhouse gases to the atmosphere, and depletion of the ozone layer. The ozone hole is now recovering but greenhouse gases continue to rise globally.
- Winds have strengthened by about 40% over the Southern Ocean over the past 40 years. Surprisingly, this has not translated into an increase in the strength of the ACC. Instead there has been an increase in eddies that move heat towards the pole, particularly in hotspots such as Drake Passage, Kerguelen Plateau, and between Tasmania and New Zealand.
- Scientists have observed much change already. The question now is how this increased transfer of heat across the ACC will impact the stability of the Antarctic ice sheet, and consequently the rate of global sea-level rise.

23. The sociology of air pollution

Context:

The continuing debate on Delhi's air quality underlines that we are dealing with the symptoms and not the causes of the problem.

Middle class population shift in cities raises three policy questions:

- First, since much of air pollution is caused by activities that lead to climate change, there should be a comprehensive plan for cities.
- Second, the West, with one-fifth of the population, uses four-fifths of the natural resources. We should identify and modify, not adopt their wasteful trends.
- Third, the courts with their reliance on regulation and bans will not change behavior.

Well-being and resource use:

- Industrialization, infrastructure development and urban consumption contribute to well-being as three distinct but related trends.

The dynamics of each of the three drivers of pollution have different characteristics:

- 1.industrialization is the transformation of a natural resource
- 2.infrastructure supports economic growth and standards of living
- 3.Consumption of the urban middle class is focused on well-being.

Changing behavior:

- Currently, four-fifths of the global net primary energy supply comes from fossil fuels. It will not be technologically possible to meet the growing energy needs while maintaining comparable levels of well-being in the next few decades with renewable.
- Energy efficiency has the potential to reduce total demand in 2050 relative to current levels by one-third per unit of economic output, or well-being, without affecting the service provided and a cheap option.
- Buildings account for one-third of final energy demand and one-fifth of emissions, their pattern of use is dependent on their density and size, which are shaped by behavioural norms, culture and practices of convenience, just as in the case of transport.
- Transport is the fastest growing and soon to be the largest source of pollution.

Conclusion:

Instead of following Western priorities of technological solutions for the consequences of human behaviour, we should really consider how to change that behaviour itself.

Well-being within ecological limits requires a societal transformation redefining 'happiness' in accordance with our own rather than Western values.

24. HIV infected children likely to suffer cognitive Impairment study

Context:

Children infected with the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) have to endure a significant adverse impact on their neurodevelopment and cognitive functioning, a new study has revealed.

HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS

- The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) is a lentivirus (a subgroup of retrovirus) that causes HIV infection and over time acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). AIDS is a condition in humans in which progressive failure of the immune system allows life-threatening opportunistic infections and cancers to thrive.

AIDS

- Human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/**AIDS**) is a spectrum of conditions caused by infection with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

How HIV/AIDS Transmitted?

- Sexual transmission** — it can happen when there is contact with infected sexual fluids (rectal, genital, or oral mucous membranes).

This can happen while having sex without a condom, including vaginal, oral, and anal sex, or sharing sex toys with someone who is HIV-positive.

- Prenatal transmission** — a mother can transmit HIV to her child during childbirth, pregnancy, and also through breastfeeding.

- Blood transmission** — the risk of transmitting HIV through blood transfusion is extremely low in developed countries, thanks to meticulous screening and precautions.

However, among people who inject drugs, sharing and reusing syringes contaminated with HIV-infected blood is extremely hazardous.

Findings from the study:

- Analyzing resting state functional MRIs the study, published recently in the online journal Neuro Image Clinical, reveals that HIV-infected children have lower neuropsychological test scores thus reflecting

reduced memory span, attention deficit and decreased visual-motor coordination among other conditions.

- Highlighted significant fluctuations in regions of the brain that are associated with auditory, language, sensory and motor functional networks of HIV infected children.
- Decline of mental processes has been commonly observed in HIV infected adults. The common condition we see in adult patients is dementia, which broadly refers to a decline in memory or thinking skills and encephalopathy, a condition that affects the structure or function of the brain.
- This new study asserts similar impact on HIV infected children, the neuropsychological assessment was carried out through a specially designed test for children to detect memory span, verbal meaning, mazes, learning names, quantity, discs, hidden figure, closure and exclusion. For example, in exclusion, children were given geometrical forms that have common characteristic except one and asked to pick the one that is different.

Larger Studies:

- HIV is a virus that attacks the immune system and is known to affect almost every organ in the human body.
- Nearly 60,000 children in India are currently taking Anti-Retroviral Therapy (ART) for HIV. Doctors treating these children commonly observe slackened physical as well as mental growth.

ANTI RETROVIRAL THERAPY (ART)

- ART are medications that treat HIV. The drugs do not kill or cure the virus. However, when taken in combination they can prevent the growth of the virus. When the virus is slowed down, so is HIV disease. Antiretroviral drugs are referred to as ARV.

Suggestions:

- The key to achieving overall growth in HIV infected children is a good diet, 100% medicine compliance and regular physical activity. This ensures that their viral load is low and CD-4 (immune cells) count is high. However, a large majority of children fail to achieve this.
- Doctors say such studies highlight the need for a holistic approach to HIV programmes. The emphasis should not only be on medication, but also nutritional, psychological and neurodevelopment support.

25. Hog deer

Context:

Indian scientists have discovered in India an endangered sub-species of hog deer (*Axis porcinus annamiticus*), earlier believed to be confined to the eastern part of central Thailand.

- Researchers reported the presence of a small population of hog deer in Keibul Lamjao National Park (KLPN), Manipur. The population genetically resembles *A. p. annamiticus*. The study indicates that the western limit of hog deer is Manipur; not central Thailand as believed.

Significance:

- Since hog deer is losing habitat in other countries, the genetically distinct and evolutionarily significant population found in KLPN—considered a biodiversity hotspot on the India-Myanmar border—is significant for conservation.
- The hog deer or Pada is an endangered species in the IUCN Red List and is protected under Schedule I of the Indian Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. The species has lost ground in most of its distribution range. A small and isolated population of under 250 was reported from Cambodia. However, it was widely distributed throughout the Southeast Asian countries at the beginning of the 20th century.
- Two sub-species of hog deer have been reported from its range. The western race is distributed from Pakistan and the terai grasslands (along the Himalayan foothills, from Punjab to Arunachal Pradesh), while the eastern race of hog deer is found in Thailand, Indo-China, Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam.

26. Titli cyclone is ‘rarest of rare’

Context:

The Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for Africa and Asia has termed ‘Titli’, the severe cyclonic storm that devastated Odisha in October, as ‘rarest cyclone’.

- More than 200 years of cyclone track history in the Odisha coast reveals that the Titli cyclone is the rarest of rare in terms of its characteristics such as recurvature after landfall and retaining its destructive potential after landfall and recurvature away from the coastal areas for more than two days.
- Earlier, India Meteorological Department had called the formation of Titli as a ‘rarest of rare’ occurrence. The severe cyclone had changed its path after landfall.

What can we learn from this?

- The Odisha State Disaster Management Authority faced challenges in anticipating and managing Titli’s impact due to lack of impact-based actionable early warning information and prior experience not only in India but also elsewhere. The OSDMA, by learning the lessons from Titli cyclone, could evolve measures to minimize impacts in both coastal and non-coastal regions more effectively in future.
- The RIMES has recommended that a detailed risk assessment has to be carried out for Odisha to understand the risks in the light of the Titli devastation.

About RIMES:

- RIMES, an inter-governmental body registered under the United Nations. It is being owned and managed by 45 collaborating countries in Asia Pacific and Africa Region. The programme unit of the agency is located in Thailand. At present, India is chairing RIMES.
- RIMES evolved from the efforts of countries in Africa and Asia, in the aftermath of the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami, to establish a regional early warning system within a multi-hazard framework for the generation and communication of early warning information, and capacity building for preparedness and response to trans-boundary hazards.

27. Scientists mull stratospheric barrier to curb global warming

Context :

Scientists have found that spraying sun-dimming chemicals high above the earth to slow global warming could be remarkably inexpensive costing about \$2.25 billion a year over a 15-year period.

- This geo-engineering technique known as stratospheric aerosol injection (SAI) could limit rising temperatures that are causing climate change.

What are Stratospheric Sulphur Aerosols?

- Stratospheric sulfur aerosols are sulfur-rich particles which exist in the stratosphere region of the Earth's atmosphere. The layer of the atmosphere in which they exist is known as the Junge layer, or simply the stratospheric aerosol layer.
- These particles consist of a mixture of sulfuric acid and water. They are created naturally, such as by photochemical decomposition of sulfur-containing gases, e.g. carbonyl sulfide.
- Sulfur aerosols are common in the troposphere as a result of pollution with sulfur dioxide from burning coal, and from natural processes.
- Volcanoes are a major source of particles in the stratosphere as the force of the volcanic eruption propels sulfur-containing gases into the stratosphere.

What is Stratospheric Aerosol Injection (SAI)?

- Under SAI delivery of precursor sulfide gases such as sulfuric acid, hydrogen sulfide (H_2S) or sulfur dioxide (SO_2) are sprayed by artillery, aircraft and balloons.
- It would involve the use of huge hoses, cannons or specially designed aircraft to spray large quantities of sulphate particles into the upper layer of the atmosphere to act as a reflective barrier against sunlight.
- Total costs estimated to launch a hypothetical SAI effort 15 years from now would be \$3.5 billion and average annual operating costs would

be about \$2.25 billion a year over 15 years.

- Discounting other methods of deployment because of cost and feasibility, the research assumes a special aircraft can be designed to fly at an altitude of about 20 km and carry a load of 25 tonnes.

Significance:

- This proposed method could counter most climatic changes, take effect rapidly, have very low direct implementation costs, and be reversible in its direct climatic effects.

Benefits of the SAI:

- Mimics a natural process.
- It is technologically feasible.
- The method is economically feasible and efficient.

Possible side effects:

- Tropospheric Ozone depletion.
- Whitening of the sky.
- Tropopause warming and the humidification of the stratosphere.
- Involves Health effects.
- Stratospheric temperature rise and circulation change.

28. Impact Based Forecasting Approach

Context:

A new technology called ‘Impact Based Forecasting Approach’ has been developed by IMD to assess the rise of water level in rivers and reservoirs by rain and can help state governments to minutely monitor the impact of rainfall.

- The technique is designed to forecast the expected impact as a result of expected weather. Hazard (a geophysical or human-induced element that poses a level of threat to life, property or environment) and vulnerability (susceptibility of exposed elements such as human beings and their livelihood and property) are taken into consideration in this forecast approach.
- The heavy downpour had led to floods in Kerala and was result of climate change. State Government had blamed IMD for lapses in its part for wrong rain forecast. IMD had forecasted estimated 98.5 mm rain in the state between 9 and 15 August, 2018 but Kerala received was 352.2 mm of rainfall resulting in severe flooding.

Significance:

- Pre-event scenario will help state governments authorities to minutely monitor impact of rainfall and take real-time decisions. It will help to avoid disastrous situation similar to Kerala floods. It can generate

scenario to help take decisions to release water or not from reservoirs after heavy downpour. It will be helpful for every state authority to take decision. This system can be run in pre-event scenario.

India Meteorological Department (IMD):

- It is national meteorological service of the country and chief government agency dealing in everything related to meteorology, seismology and associated subjects. It was formed in 1875. It functions under Ministry of Earth Sciences. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

Mandate:

- Undertake meteorological observations and provide current information and forecasting information for most favorable operation of weather-dependent activities such as irrigation, agriculture, aviation, shipping etc.
- Offer warning against severe weather phenomenon such as tropical cyclones, norwesters, dust storms, heat waves, cold waves, heavy rains, heavy snow, etc.
- Provide met-related statistics needed for agriculture, industries, water resources management, oil exploration, and any other strategically important activities for the country.
- Engage in research in meteorology and allied subjects.
- Detect and locate earthquakes and evaluate of seismicity in various parts of the country for developmental projects.



Science and Technology

29. India to study marijuana-derived drugs

Context:

Three major science administrators in India — The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, the Indian Council for Medical Research and the Department of Biotechnology — are getting together to promote research in herbal drugs, some of which involve deriving new drugs from marijuana.

Marijuana:

- Marijuana is a psychoactive drug from the Cannabis plant used for medical, recreational & religious purposes.
- Cannabis can be used by smoking, vaporization, within food, or as an extract.
- It creates mental and physical effects, such as a “high” or “stoned” feeling, a general change in perception, and an increase in appetite.
- Short term side effects may include a decrease in short-term memory, dry mouth, impaired motor skills, red eyes, and feelings of paranoia or anxiety.



- Long term side effects may include addiction, decreased mental ability and behavioural problems in children whose mothers used cannabis during pregnancy.

Legal status of marijuana:

- The possession, use, and sale of cannabis are illegal in most countries as a result of an agreement in the 'International Opium Convention' (1925).
- Indian government banned the use of cannabis by passing the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act-1985.
- Canada, Belgium, Australia, the Netherlands, Spain, and several U.S. states are some territories where medical use of cannabis is legal.
- Netherlands (1976) & some US states (recently) have allowed for the recreational use of marijuana.

Therapeutic potential of marijuana:

- The researchers will test whether strains of marijuana grown at the CSIR-IIIM campus in Jammu could be effective in the treatment of breast cancer, sickle-cell anaemia as well as be “bio-equivalent” (similar in make-up and effect) to marijuana-derived drugs already approved by the United States Food and Drug Administration (U.S. FDA)

- The effects of bhaang (marijuana consumed orally) have been known to induce a state of bliss effects in the brain travel all the way into the cancerous cell and can change its profile.
- The studies into the therapeutic potential of marijuana is part of a larger governmental thrust to making new drugs derived from herbs and plants that find mention in Ayurvedic and other traditional-medicine knowledge systems.
- Uttarakhand, Jammu and — as of this month Uttar Pradesh — have allowed restricted cultivation of the plant for medical research.

Legalization of marijuana for recreational and medical purposes in Colorado has created 10,000 new jobs in the area. There are a plethora of jobs that can be created by the marijuana industry and help reduce India's unemployment rate. The full extent of long-term health risks of chronic cannabis use is currently unknown. There is no determining who will develop serious physical, psychological, or other unwanted reactions.

30. GROWTH-India Telescope

Context:

The 0.7 m GROWTH-India telescope at the Indian Astronomical Observatory located in Hanle, Ladakh, has made its first science observation which is a follow-up study of a nova explosion.

Background:

- Stars and galaxies in the universe may appear to be static to us as they are located millions of light years away.
- But the universe is actually dynamic with events occurring in timescales much shorter – years, days and even hours.
- India is now joining a global network to monitor the dynamic cosmos.
- A lot of interesting objects and events occur in the universe which needs to be caught very young and soon after they happen, such as supernovae, gamma ray bursts, active galactic nuclei, and many more.
- They are called transients because electromagnetic signature radiated as a result is transient in nature. Gravitational wave events too fall in this category
- The facility will also track asteroids. “Near-earth asteroids are not transients in the sense of their light emitting capability, but they do come close to the earth and that is when you need to track them.

First science observation

- The GROWTH-India telescope was commissioned six months ago soon after which it saw first light, on the night of June 12. “The telescope has been taking readings since then, and this is the first ‘follow-up’ work. We are happy to see this first science observation,” said G C Anupama, who Professor-in-Charge of the Indian Astronomical

Observatory and is based at Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIAP), Bengaluru.

- The celestial object was first noticed by a different group which saw the nova explosion. “We then pointed our telescope in that direction and measured the brightness. We found that it was fading at the rate expected for such events. This is a small step in astronomy but a big leap for us, because it is the first scientific result obtained by this telescope,” said Varun Bhalerao a faculty member at IIT Bombay and a Principal Investigator of the project along with Professor Anupama.
- This recurrent nova, named M31N-2008, has been observed to erupt several times, the most recent eruption happening in November 2018. Recurrent nova systems are interesting because they are candidates for progenitors of Type Ia supernovae. “We took follow-up images with the GROWTH-India telescope. The observations were made in different optical bands. The nova was seen to decline rapidly in brightness, by 1 - 1.5 magnitudes in the span of 2 days,” says Shubham Srivastav, post-doctoral fellow at the physics department of IIT Bombay (IITB)

Robotic eye

- The telescope is potentially fully robotic and can operate on its own, but the way these readings were taken has only partly used its potential for automation. “The group sitting in IIT Bombay worked through Bengaluru’s IIAP to control the telescope. While the IITB-IIAP link was through regular internet connection, the one from IIAP to the telescope in Ladakh was through a satellite link,” said Professor Bhalerao. A typical professional telescope has a field of about 0.1 square degrees.
- This telescope has a field that is five to six times larger. It can ‘slew’ or move its focus from one part of the sky to another in just about 10-15 seconds and its camera can view stellar objects that are thousands to millions of light years away.

Threefold goals

- The GROWTH-India telescope is part of the Global Relay of Observatories Watching Transients Happen. Its goals are threefold: (1) Search for explosions in the optical regime whenever LIGO group detects a Binary Neutron Star merger (2) study nearby young supernova explosions. (3) Study nearby asteroids.
- Transient phenomena such as supernovae are important parts of time-domain astronomy which is a less-explored frontier in astronomy. “Such an explosion is when the inner material of the star is thrown out. There is no other way we can actually see what is inside a star,” explains Prof. Bhalerao.
- The Rs 3.5 crore telescopes is a joint project of the Bangalore-based Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA) and the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay (IITB).

- Transient events in the universe are caused due to several factors such as relatively benign flares on stars, accretion of matter on compact objects, stellar mergers and explosions. All this results in a flash in the sky for a period and then slowly fades away.
- By capturing these electromagnetic signatures, astronomers try to gain an insight about cosmic objects as well as physical processes that govern their evolution. Finding such objects requires continuous monitoring of large areas of the sky. Telescopes deployed for ‘transient surveys’ are usually small, wide-field instruments but they can’t see very faint objects.
- The new 70 cm telescope is much smaller than the 2 meter Himalayan Chandra Telescope at Hanle. “HCT is already over-booked, while the new telescope will be purely for observing transients. It is different from HCT in the sense that it will only be an imaging telescope and all spectroscopy will happen at HCT,”
- The new telescope will be programmed to directly communicate with various ground-based and space-based surveys that are searching for transient sources.

Conclusion:

- India’s newest telescope has started observing the skies.
- The telescope located at the Indian Astronomical Observatory (IAO) at Hanle in Ladakh is the country’s first robotic telescope and the first one designed to observe dynamic or transient events in the universe.
- The Global Relay of Observatories Watching Transients Happen (GROWTH) program is an international collaborative network of astronomers and telescopes dedicated to the study of short-lived cosmic transients and near-earth asteroids.

31. Gene editing Technology

Context:

A Chinese scientist who stoked criticism over his claim that he had created the world’s first genetically-edited babies faced mounting pressure as China ordered a halt to his scientific activities and warned he may have broken the law.

Gene editing:

- Genome editing (also called gene editing) is a group of technologies that give scientists the ability to change an organism’s DNA. These technologies allow genetic material to be added, removed, or altered at particular locations in the genome.

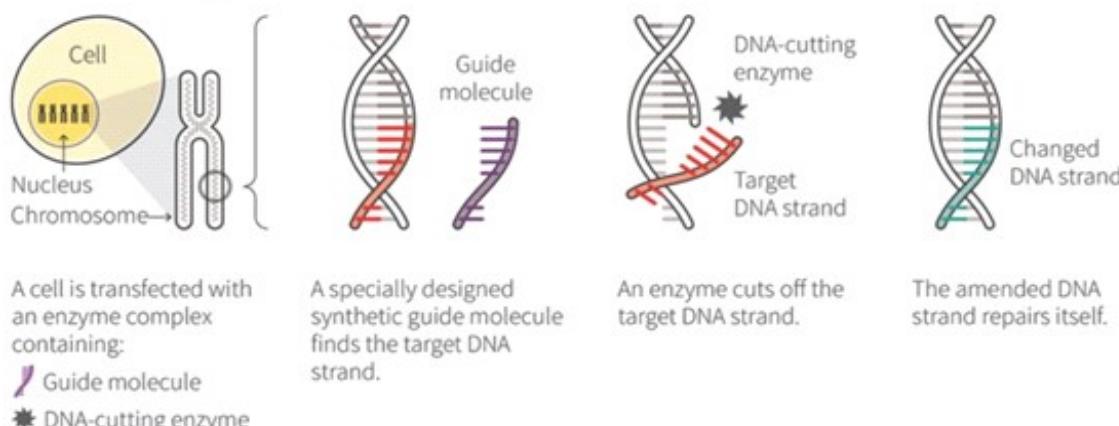
CRISPR-Cas9

- It is basically a gene-editing technology that can be used for the purpose of altering genetic expression or changing the genome of an organism.

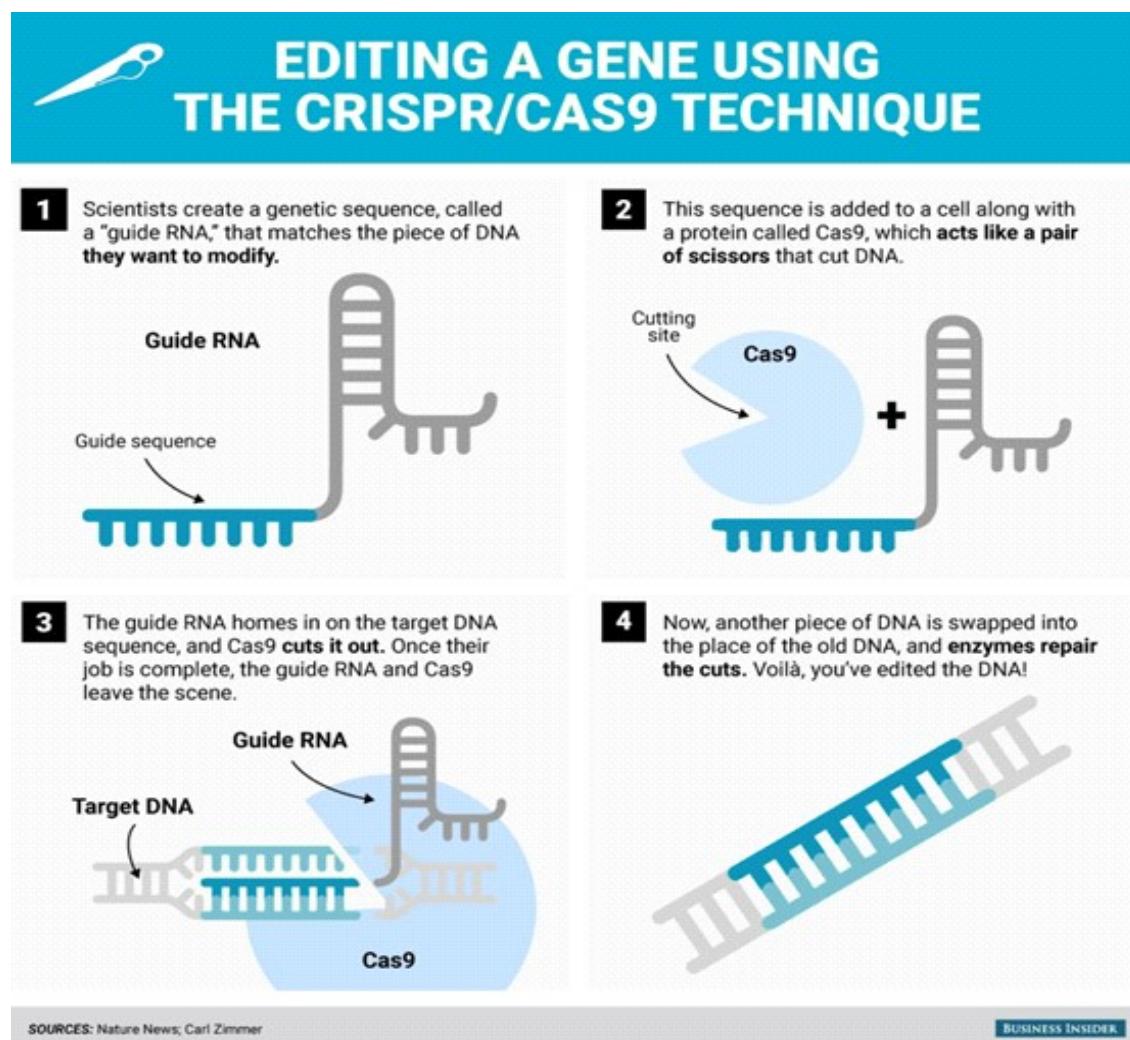
Gene editing

A DNA editing technique, called CRISPR/Cas9, works like a biological version of a word-processing programme's "find and replace" function.

HOW THE TECHNIQUE WORKS



- The technology can be used for targeting specific stretches of an entire genome or editing the DNA at particular locations. It is a simple yet powerful tool for editing genomes. It allows researchers to easily alter DNA sequences and modify gene function. Its many potential applications include correcting genetic defects, treating and preventing the spread of diseases and improving crops. However, its promise also raises ethical concerns.



Mechanism of CRISPR-Cas9

- CRISPR-Cas9 technology behaves like a cut-and-paste mechanism on DNA strands that contain specific information.
- The specific location of the gene that need to be changed, or “edited”, is identified on the DNA strand, and then, using the Cas9 protein, which acts like a pair of scissors, that location is cut off from the strand.
- When a DNA strand is broken it has a natural tendency to repair itself.
- Scientists intervene during this auto-repair process, supplying the desired sequence of programmed DNA that binds itself with the broken DNA strand.

China's Perception:

- China's National Health Commission has ordered an investigation into He Jiankui's experiment, which was condemned by the scientific community in China and abroad.
- Chinese science and technology Vice Minister Xu Nanping said the “gene-edited babies incident as reported by media blatantly violated our country's relevant laws and regulations”.
- The claims were “shocking and unacceptable” and breached “the bottom line of morality and ethics that the academic community adheres to”, he told CCTV.
- The Science and Technology Ministry “firmly opposes” the experiment and “has already demanded that the relevant organisation suspend the scientific activities of relevant personnel.

Concerns involved

- Tampering with the genetic code in human beings is quite contentious and is topic of debate in scientific community. Leading scientists in the field have for long been calling for a “global pause” on clinical applications of the technology in human beings, until internationally accepted protocols are developed.
- Study by Stanford University, U.S.A, found that the CRISPR-Cas9 system introduces unexpected off-target (outside of the intended editing sites) effects in mice. The fear that the CRISPR system is being prematurely rushed for clinical use exists.
- Three recent reports have exacerbated this fear even further. Studies highlighted that CRISPR-Cas9-edited cells might trigger cancer. May increase the risk of mutations elsewhere in the genome in those cells.
- Although, CRISPR-Cas9 technology has been successfully used to cure several diseases but many things are not clear like how should we determine which diseases or traits are appropriate for gene editing.
- In addition, there are ethical concerns about manipulating human embryos for own selfish interests and trying to create “Designer babies.”

Way Forward

- This CRISPR technology is indeed a path-breaking technology, to alter genes in order to tackle a number of conventional and unconventional problems, especially in the health sector. However, experiments and tests to validate its use must be subjected to appropriate scrutiny by the regulators, and their use must be controlled to prevent commercial misuse.

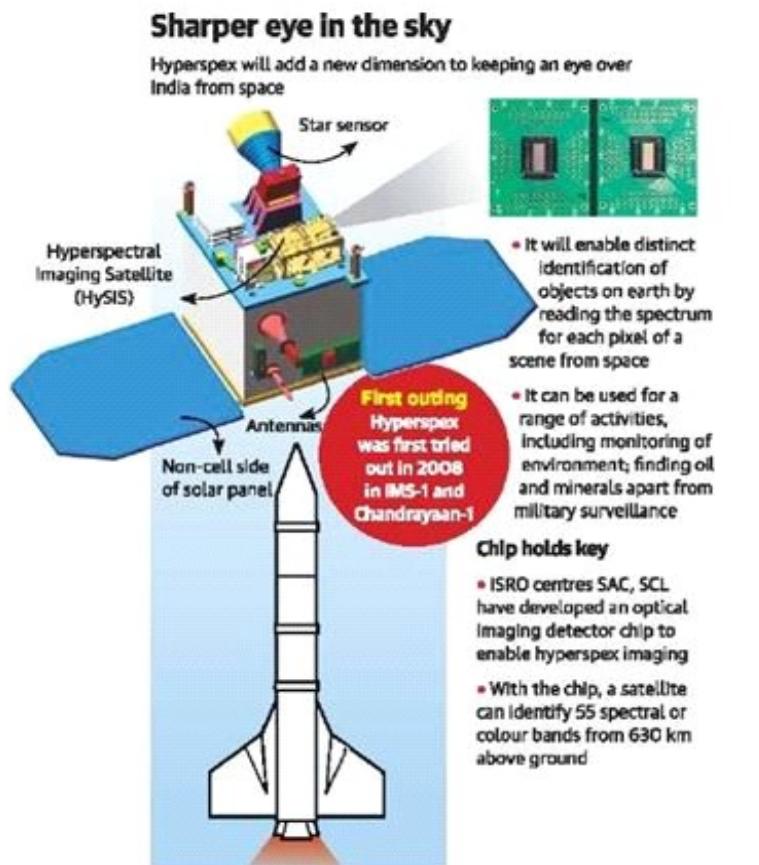
32. ISRO to launch new imaging satellite HysIS on Thursday

Why in news?

ISRO's workhorse rocket PSLV-C43 will carry India's earth observation satellite HysIS and 30 co-passenger satellites, including 23 from the US, from Sriharikota on November 29.

About the launch:

- HysIS, the country's first hyperspectral imaging satellite for advanced Earth observation will be launched from Sriharikota.
- It is the primary satellite of the PSLV-C43 mission.
- The satellite will be placed in 636 km polar sun synchronous orbit (SSO) with mission life of five years.
- The co-passengers of HysIS include one micro and 29 nano satellites from eight different countries, the agency said, adding, all these satellites will be placed in a 504 km orbit by PSLV-C43.
- The countries comprise United States of America (23 satellites), Australia, Canada, Columbia, Finland, Malaysia, Netherlands and Spain (one satellite each).
- HysIS will be the third longest mission of PSLV.
- The longest mission, C-40 in 2018, lasted two hours and 21 minutes and put 31 satellites to orbit.



- In September 2016 and C-35 lifted eight satellites in a flight lasting two hours and 15 minutes.

Significance of the launch:

- The technology will be an added advantage of watching over India from space for a variety of purposes such as defence, agriculture, land use, minerals and so on.
- It can also be highly useful in marking out a suspect object or person and separate it from the background which could aid in detecting transborder or other stealthy movements.

About hyperspectral imaging camera (HysIS)

- The primary goal of HysIS is to study the Earth's surface in visible, near-infrared and shortwave infrared regions of the electromagnetic spectrum.
- HysIs in space can provide well-defined images that can help to identify objects on Earth far more clearly than regular optical or remote sensing cameras.

Background:

- In 2008, a small 83-kg demonstration microsatellite called IMS-1 (Indian Mini Satellite-1) was launched as a secondary passenger with Cartosat-2A.
- In the same year, it put a HysSI or Hyperspectral Imager on the first lunar mission Chandrayaan-1 and used it to scan Moon's surface for minerals.

About PSLV:

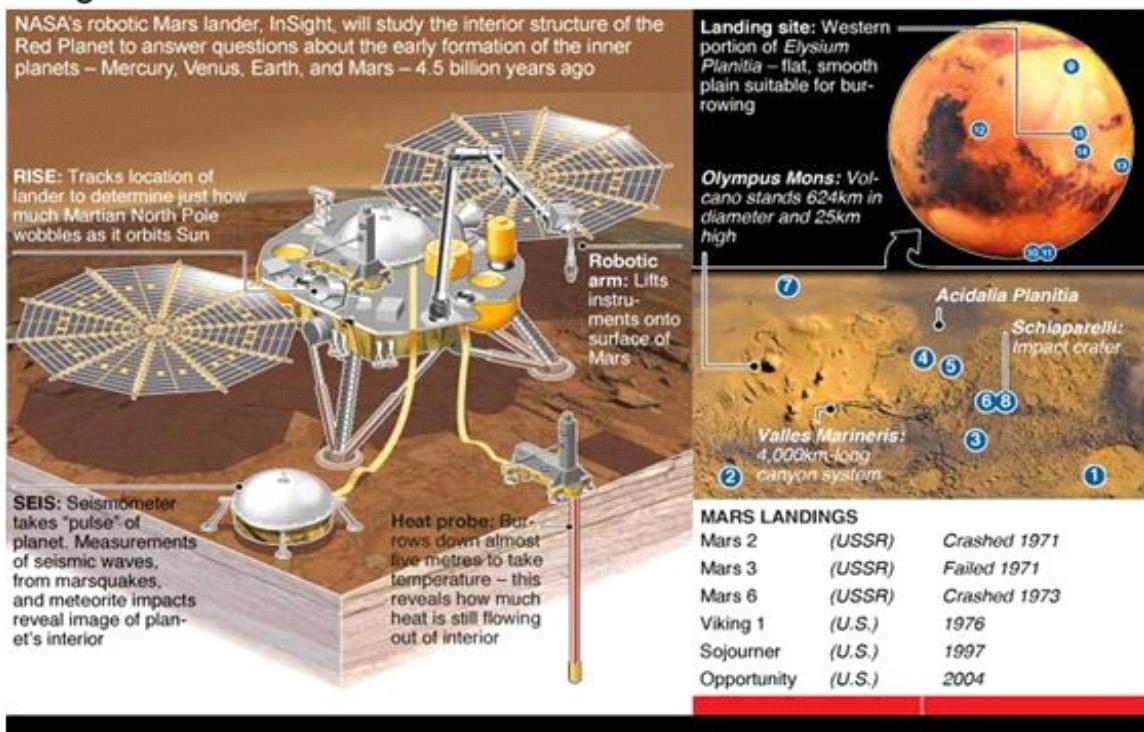
- PSLV is ISRO's third generation launch vehicle and is a four-stage launch vehicle with alternating solid and liquid stages and engines.
- It can carry upto 1,750 kg of payload into polar SSO of 600 km altitude.
- Additionally, PSLV has been used to launch planetary missions and also satellites into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit.

33. NASA's InSight spacecraft lands on red planet after six-month journey

NASA's robotic InSight lander designed to dig into the rocky Martian surface to reveal its secrets successfully touched down on the Red Planet recently.

- The plan called for the spacecraft to go from 12,300 mph (19,800 kph) to zero in six minutes flat as it pierced the Martian atmosphere and settled on the surface.
- The stationary 800-pound (360-kilogram) lander will use its 6-foot (1.8-metre) robotic arm to place a mechanical mole and seismometer on the ground.

InSight's mission to Mars



- The self-hammering mole will burrow 16 feet (5 metres) down to measure the planet's internal heat, while the seismometer listens for possible quakes.

NASA's InSight mission

- Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport (INSIGHT), is a Mars lander designed by NASA to study the deep interior of Mars, taking the planet's vital signs, its pulse and temperature.
- It is the first outer space robotic explorer to study in-depth the “inner space” of Mars: its crust, mantle, and core, since the planet formed 4.5 billion years ago.
- InSight has three Science Instruments, namely a seismometer, a heat flow probe and a radio science experiment to analyse MARS interior.

Previous landing attempts on Mars:

- It was NASA's ninth attempt to land at Mars since the 1976 Viking probes. NASA last landed on Mars in 2012 with the Curiosity rover.
- Mars has been the graveyard for a multitude of space missions.
- Up to now, the success rate at the red planet has been only 40 percent, counting every attempted flyby, orbital flight and landing by the U.S., Russia and other countries since 1960.
- The U.S., however, has pulled off seven successful Mars landings in the past four decades, not counting InSight, with only one failed touchdown.
- No other country has managed to set and operate a spacecraft on the dusty red surface.

34. Open Transit Data platform

Context:

To increase transparency and build transport solutions, the transport department of the Delhi government has launched the Open Transit Data platform which provides real-time datasets free of cost.

About the Open Transit Data Platform:

- Through this the government aims to provide real-time data which can be used by third party app developers and researchers. This includes geo-coordinates of all bus stops, route maps, timetables as well as the real time GPS feeds of bus locations which will be updated every 10 seconds.
- The portal was designed and developed by IIIT Delhi on behalf of the Delhi government. The government believes that application developer and researchers would be able to use the data for bringing out transport solutions.

Significance:

- It is a major step to promote collaboration and co-creation of innovative and inclusive transport solutions for the people of Delhi. This initiative will provide a lot of useful information at the fingertips of citizens and encourage more and more people to switch to public transport, thereby impacting pollution.

35. Human Microbiome Project

Context: From November 19 to 22, Pune hosted an international conference on microbiome research — a field of study that is still in its initial stages in India.

Background

- The human body carries diverse communities of microorganisms. These are referred to as “human microbiome”. It is the genetic material of all the microbes – bacteria, fungi, protozoa and viruses that live on and inside the human body.
- The bacteria in the microbiome help digest our food, regulate our immune system, protect against other bacteria that cause disease, and produce vitamins including B vitamins B12, thiamine and riboflavin, and Vitamin K, which is needed for blood coagulation.

Importance of research on Human Microbiome Project:

1. A person's microbiome may influence their susceptibility to infectious diseases and contribute to chronic illnesses of the gastrointestinal system like Crohn's disease and irritable bowel syndrome. Some collections of microbes determine how a person responds to a drug treatment.
2. The microbiome of the mother may affect the health of her children.

Researchers mapping the human microbiome are discovering previously uncharted species and genes. Genetic studies that measure the relative abundance of different species in the human microbiome have linked various combinations of microbe species to certain human health conditions.

3. A more complete understanding of the diversity of microbes in the human microbiome could lead to new therapies, perhaps treating a bacterial infection caused by a “bad” bacteria by growing more “good” bacteria. The research serves as a roadmap for discovering the role of the microbiome in health, nutrition, immunity, and disease.
4. Research on the human microbiome has thrown light on various aspects — how different parts of the human body are occupied by characteristic microbial communities and how various factors contribute in shaping the composition of the microbiome, including the genetics, dietary habits, age, geographic location and ethnicity.

These studies laid a strong foundation to decipher the microbiome’s implications on health and a wide range of diseases.

Research in India

- Scientists at NCSS have conducted a meta-analysis on gut microbiota of healthy Indian individuals and compared it with that of individuals from other parts of the world. It shows that the Indian population harbours a distinct gut microbial community, which, scientists say, calls for an in-depth investigation of the Indian microbiome.
- India has a large number of tribal populations largely unaffected by “modern” diet and lifestyle. The prevalence of lifestyle-related disorders such as obesity and diabetes has been known to be significantly lower compared to the non-tribal (urbanised) populations across the globe.

Hence, scientists say, a study on the tribal population would help improve knowledge of evolution of the mutualism between gut microbiota and the host.

Way Ahead

- India has proposed a project that would study and map the human microbiome across the country. The Rs 150-crore project will get approval soon. The project will include collection of saliva, stool and skin swabs of 20,000 Indians across various ethnic groups from different geographical regions. India provides for a wide range of research with more than 4,500 ethnic groups and presence of two global biodiversity hotspots (Himalayan range and Western Ghats).

Miscellaneous

36. International Geological Congress

Context:

- International Geological Congress (IGC) is the prestigious global platform for advancement of Earth Science.

Why in news

- A high level delegation of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) recently visited India to discuss the preparatory aspects of the 36th International Geological Congress (IGC) to be held in Delhi, India in the year 2020.

Facts:

- The first session of IGC assembled in 1878 in France with an aim to provide the global geological community with an opportunity to create an organizational frame work for meeting at regular intervals.
- Described as the Olympics of Geosciences, the IGCs are held quadrennially under the aegis of the IUGS through a process of global bidding.
- India won the bid in 2012 at Brisbane, Australia to host the Congress in 2020.
- The event is being jointly funded by the Ministry of Mines and Ministry of Earth Sciences with the active support of the Indian National Science Academy (INSA), and the Science Academies of the other neighboring co-host countries, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

37. INSPIRE 2017

Context:

- INSPIRE 2017 is an International Conference that brings together various stakeholders such as policy makers, innovators, financiers, influencers to showcase best practices in the sector.

Why in the news?

- The first edition of the International Symposium to Promote Innovation & Research in Energy Efficiency (INSPIRE 2017) was kicked off in Jaipur recently
- The five-day symposium is being organized by Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) in partnership with The World Bank, and Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE).

38. Global Conference on Cyber Space

Context

- PM Modi calls for sharing of information and coordination among nations and creation of cyber warriors to ensure safety.

Backdrop

- The Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS), attended by delegates from 131 countries

UMANG

- Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG) mobile app was launched, after nearly a year it was announced
- The application will provide over a hundred e-government services to citizens
- Developed by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and National e-Governance Division (NeGD) to drive Mobile Governance in India.
- UMANG service has been made available on multiple channels like mobile application, web, IVR and SMS which can be accessed through smartphones, feature phones, tablets and desktops

39. World Antibiotic Awareness Week celebrated

Context

- Article talks about the World Antibiotic Awareness Week, a World Health Organisation campaign to focus attention on antibiotic resistance

What is AMR?

- Antibiotic drug resistance is developed in the micro-organisms.
- AMR is the ability of a microorganism such as bacteria, viruses etc., to render the anti-microbial such as antibiotics, antivirals and anti-malarials ineffective against them.
- It results in failure of standard treatments and the spread of infections
Similarities b/w climate change & Antibiotic resistance issues
- In both cases, the actions of people in one region have consequences across the globe. Also, tackling both requires collective action across multiple focus areas.
- For resistance, this means cutting the misuse of antibiotics in humans and farm animals, fighting environmental pollution, improving infection control in hospitals, and boosting surveillance

National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance

- Finalization of India's National Action Plan on AMR (Anti-Microbial resistance) was announced at the 'Inter-Ministerial Consultation on

AMR containment' held at New Delhi. The ministers present also signed a 'Delhi Declaration' to contain AMR

- A draft national action plan prepared by the National Centre for Disease Control, under MoHFW was released in March 2017. It called for surveillance of antibiotic use in humans and animals and surveillance of antibiotic resistance in humans, animals and environment
- In 2015, the WHO released a global action plan on AMR and passed a resolution urging member countries to develop national action plans by May 2017

Delhi Declaration

- It calls on the World Health Organization (WHO) and Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) of the United Nations to help implement the national and state action plans on AMR

AMRRSN

- In order to strengthen the surveillance of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in the country, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has set up a National Anti-Microbial Resistance Research and Surveillance Network (AMRRSN) to enable compilation of National Data of AMR at different levels of Health Care
- Government of India formulated a National policy for containment of antimicrobial resistance in 2011

National Programme for Containment of AMR

- A National Programme for Containment of AMR has also been initiated in 12th Five Year Plan with the following objectives.
- To establish a laboratory based surveillance system by strengthening laboratories for AMR in the country and to generate quality data on antimicrobial resistance for pathogens of public health importance
- To generate awareness among healthcare providers and in the community regarding rational use of antibiotics
- To strengthen infection control guidelines and practices and promote rational use of antibiotics

40. Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendras (PMMMSK) Scheme

Context:

- This scheme will empower rural women through community participation to create an environment so that they can realize their full potential.
- This scheme will perform under the patronage of Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- The government plans to reach the 115 most backward districts in the country with 920 Mahila Shakti Kendra.

- The government plans to reach the 115 most backward districts in the country with 920 Mahila Shakti Kendra.

Objectives

- This is a welfare scheme especially for care, protection, and development of women.
- The central government will establish Mahila Shakti Kendra in the 115 most backward districts of the country.
- The government will establish One Stop Centers (OSCs) in 150 additional districts during this period that would be connected with women helpline and will provide 24 hour emergency and non-emergency response to women.
- All the supporters of the scheme will provide technical support to the government regarding any issues related to women.
- The central government will also establish additional Swadhar Greh to provide relief and rehabilitation to approximately 26,000 beneficiaries
- Under the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) scheme, the government will intensify the campaign nation-wide.

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OUR RESULTS - 2017

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