## ESE - PRELIMS

# CURRENT ISSUES

## (October 2018 - November 2018 )

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# ESE
## (Prelims)

# Current Issues
## (October and November 2018)

**On**

**Economic & Industrial Development**

**Issues on Social Development**

**International Issues**

**Environment**

**Science & Technology**

**Miscellaneous**

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**11 All India 1st Ranks in ESE**

**43 All India 1st Ranks in GATE**

# Foreword
# Current Issues for ESE

Dear Students,

As we reach towards the end of the calendar year I hope the current issues books has helped you to prepare on various topics related to Socio, Economic, Industrial Development, Energy and Environment and ICT based tools in a holistic manner.

The coverage of news and events given are the most pertinent for ESE Revised pattern. This final issue covers Current Affairs of October - November 2018

**'Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance'. I wish you all success for the upcoming exam.**

With best wishes to all the Students

**Y.V. Gopala Krishna Murthy,**
**M Tech. MIE,**
**Chairman & Managing Director,**
**ACE Engineering Academy,**
**ACE Engineering Publications.**

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ACE ENGINEERING ACADEMY
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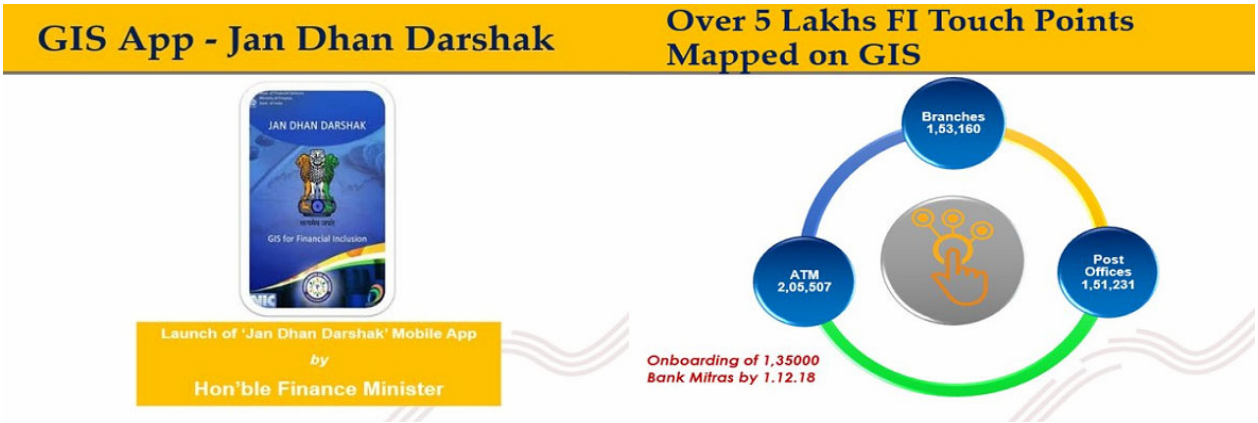
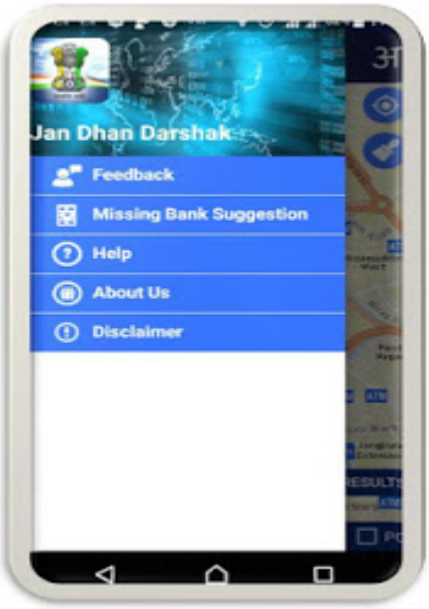
# 1 Economy and Industrial Development

## FINANCIAL MARKETS

### 1. "Jan DhanDarshak"

- Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance and National Informatics Centre (NIC) has jointly developed a mobile app called Jan DhanDarshak as a part of Financial Inclusion (FI) initiative.
- This app will act as a guide for the common people in locating a financial service at a touch point at a given location in the country.



**2. Electoral Bond**

- An Electoral Bond is just like a promissory note that will be payable to bearer on demand and free of interest. It can be purchased by a citizen of India or anybody incorporated in India.
- Electoral bonds will allow donors to pay political parties using banks as an intermediary.

*Benefits of an Electoral bond:*

- Transparent political funding
- Protecting donors from harassment
- No disclosure of information to third parties
- Achieving Digital India vision
- Bringing donations under tax preview

- Electoral Bonds can be purchased by citizens of India only. An individual can buy Electoral Bonds, either singly or jointly with other individuals. The bonds can be encashed by an eligible political party only through a bank account with the authorized bank.
- Electoral Bonds are valid for fifteen calendar days from the date of issue. If the Electoral Bond is deposited after expiry of the validity period, no payment is made to any Political Party. The bonds are issued in multiples of 1000, 10000, 1lakh, 10 lakh, 1 crore. The cash donation has been capped at Rs. 2000 and beyond that donations are via electoral bonds.

**3. 'NSE goBID'**

- The National Stock Exchange (NSE) has launched an app and web-based platform, 'NSE goBID', for retail investors to buy government securities.

## AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY

**4. Soil moisture map**

- With the rabi season around the corner, a countrywide forecast has been prepared. This forecast, following a joint exercise by IIT Gandhinagar and the India Meteorological Department (IMD), for the first time, provides a country-wide soil moisture forecast.
- The experts used the **'Variable Infiltration Capacity'** model to provide the soil moisture prediction.
- The product, termed 'Experimental Forecasts Land Surface Products', is available on the IMD website. It has been developed using the hydrological model that takes into consideration soil, vegetation, land use and land cover among other parameters.
- Based on observed conditions at present, Gujarat, parts of Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh are deficient in terms of soil moisture right now.

*Need for data on soil moisture:*

- Soil moisture is crucial for agriculture since it directly affects crop growth and how much irrigation is required for the area.

- Soil moisture gives us more information on what is needed for crop growth in different parts of the country. Besides, timely soil moisture forecasts will help target interventions, in terms of seed varieties for better planning in agriculture.

## 5. FAO's Future Policy Award 2018

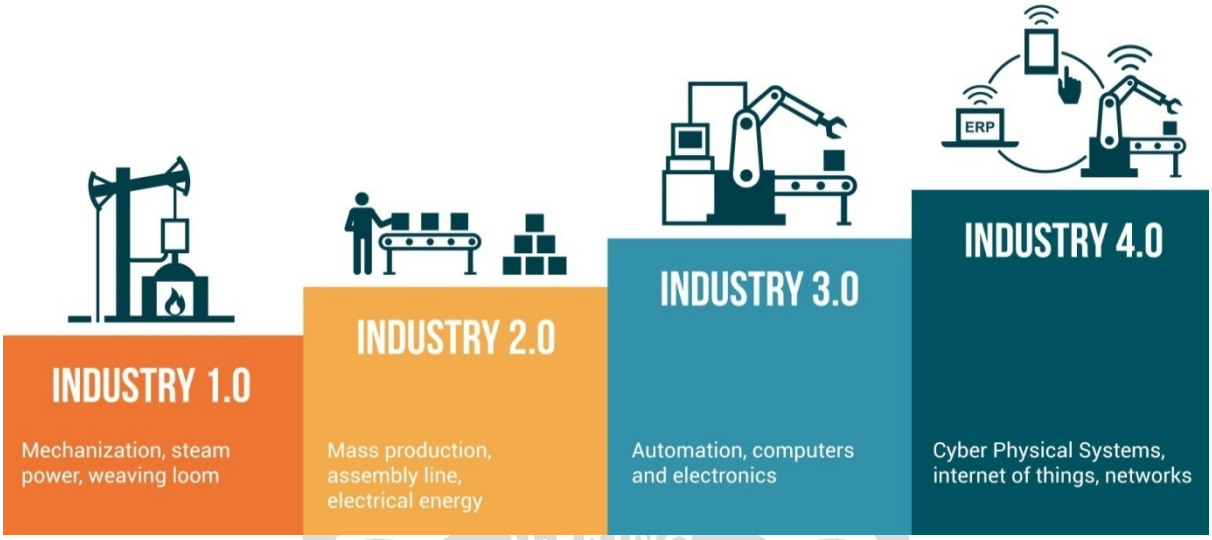
- Sikkim has been awarded UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) Future Policy Gold Award (Gold Prize) for its achievement in becoming the world's first totally organic agriculture state.
- Sikkim became the first fully organic state of India in 2016. Over the years around 75000 hectares of land in the state has been converted into certified organic farms following the guidelines as prescribed by National Programme for Organic Production.
- Organic cultivation doesn't involve the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers and thus helps to maintain a harmonious balance among the various complex ecosystems. Also it improves the quality of the soil which further improves the standards of the crops produced there.
- In the long term, organic farming leads in subsistence of agriculture, bio-diversity health

*Future Policy Gold Award:*

- The prize, nicknamed the "Oscar for best policies", honour exceptional policies adopted by political leaders who have decided to act, no longer accepting widespread hunger, poverty or environmental degradation.
- Previously it was honoured for policies combating desertification, violence against women and girls, nuclear weapons and pollution of the oceans.

## 6. Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution

- The World Economic Forum has announced its new Centre for the Fourth Industrial Revolution in India, which would aim to bring together the government and business leaders to pilot emerging technology policies.
- The centre would be based in Maharashtra and it has selected drones, artificial intelligence and blockchain as the first three project areas.
- As described by the founder and executive chairman of WEF, Klaus Schwab, "the fourth industrial revolution is a technological revolution that will fundamentally alter the way we live, work and relate to one another".




- The 4th revolution will be characterized by the advent of cyber-physical systems which, while being reliant on the technologies and infrastructure of the third industrial revolution, represent entirely new ways in which technology becomes embedded within societies and even our human bodies. Examples include genome editing, new forms of machine intelligence, and breakthrough approaches to governance that rely on cryptographic methods such as blockchain.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

### 7. Strategic Petroleum Reserves

- To ensure energy security, the Government of India had decided to set up 5 million metric tons (MMT) of strategic crude oil storages at three locations namely, Visakhapatnam, Mangalore and Padur (near Udupi). These strategic storages would be in addition to the existing storages of crude oil and petroleum products with the oil companies and would serve as a cushion during any external supply disruptions.
- In the 2017-18 budget, it was announced that two more such caverns will be set up in Chandikhole in Jajpur district of Odisha and in Bikaner in Rajasthan as part of the second phase.
- The construction of the Strategic Crude Oil Storage facilities is being managed by Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Limited (ISPRL), a Special Purpose Vehicle, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Oil Industry Development Board (OIDB) under the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas.

### 8. Carnot Prize:

- Ministry of Railways and Coal will receive the University of Pennsylvania's top prize in energy policy for his leadership in reforming

India's power sector through various initiatives.

- The Carnot Prize is intended to honour those leading revolutions in energy policy to further progress and prosperity.
- The ministry is being recognised for directing a fast-track effort to electrify 18,000 villages in remote parts of India, helping bridge the country's vast energy divide.

The Carnot Prize is named in memory of French scientist Sadi Carnot, who in 1824 published Reflections on the Motive Power of Fire, which is recognised as the first statement of what, is now known as the second law of thermodynamics.

- Carnot recognised that the power of the steam engine would produce a great revolution in human development.

**9. <u>World's highest railway line</u>**

- Indian railways is planning to connect New Delhi with Ladakh region through the world's highest railway line that will run along the India-China border. The national transporter plans to build a strategically-important Bilaspur-Manali- Leh line along the Indo-China border.

At 5360 above sea level, this will be the world's highest railway track .

- The project will include 74 tunnels, 124 major bridges, and 396 minor bridges, according to the first phase. It will be a 465 km long line to be built at a cost of Rs 83,360 crore. The railway line connects four mountain passes, Rohtang La, Barlacha La, Lachung La, and Tangla La.
- The line is strategically important and will provide all-weather surface connectivity to far-flung areas of Ladakh region. It will also boost tourist inflow, which will be beneficial for the local population. Travel time will be reduced by half and the rail project will be executed in a way that it need not close during extreme weather.
- Also, India's first railway station inside a tunnel will come up in Himachal Pradesh.

**10. Train 18**

- India's first engine-less train for inter-city travel is set to hit the tracks very soon. The train is a 100% 'Make in India' project and is the first prototype that has been built by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, in a record time of 20 months.
- T-18 is a self-propelled engine-less train (similar to the Metro trains) and is energy-efficient as its coaches will be fitted with LED lights. Coaches will have automatic doors and retractable footsteps.
- It will be inter-connected with fully sealed gangways along with a GPS-based Passenger Information System. It is provided with Bio toilets.
- The full AC train is equipped to run at a speed of up to 160 kmph as against Shatabdi's 130 kmph which will cut down travel time by 15%.

**11. NCR RASTA and Yatri RASTA:**

- The North Central Railways (NCR) has launched two mobile apps:
  1) NCR RASTA (Railway assets Summerised Tracking Application):
- This app is useful railway officers and staff and has exact mapping of all railway assets. It will enable railway staff to reach desired asset using Google Navigation in case of any emergency.
  2) Yatri RASTA (Railway Approach to Station Tracking Application):
- Yatri RASTA app: It will allow general public to locate railway stations easily. It is already available for smartphones running on Android and can be downloaded free of cost from Google Play Store.

**12. City Gas Distribution (CGD) projects**

- Government of India has put thrust to promote the usage of environment friendly clean fuel i.e. natural gas as a fuel/feedstock across the country to move towards a gas based economy.
- Accordingly, development of City Gas Distribution (CGD) projects across 129 districts has been planned to increase the availability of cleaner cooking fuel (i.e. PNG) and transportation fuel (i.e. CNG) to the citizens of the country.

## INDICES

**13. Financial Inclusion Index**

- Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance releases an Annual Financial Inclusion Index (FII).
- This single composite index gives an idea of financial inclusion that would guide MacroEconomic policy.

The index will have three dimensions:

- Access to financial services.
- Usage of financial services.
- Quality.

## 14. Purchasing Managers Index (PMI)

- India's manufacturing economy recorded an improvement in growth during September amid firmer gains in new orders, output and employment.
- The Nikkei India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose to 52.2 in September from 51.7 in August. A reading above 50 indicates an expansion while one below 50 denotes a contraction.
- PMI or a Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an indicator of business activity — both in the manufacturing and services sectors. It is a survey-based measure that asks the respondents about changes in their perception of some key business variables from the month before. It is calculated separately for the manufacturing and services sectors and then a composite index is constructed.

## 15. Global Hunger Index

- The 2018 Global Hunger Index report has been released. The report is a peer-reviewed publication released annually by Welthungerhilfe and Concern Worldwide.
- The GHI scores are based on a formula that captures three dimensions of hunger
  - insufficient caloric intake
  - child undernutrition,
  - child mortality

The factors that are considered are:

- *UNDERNOURISHMENT:* the share of the population that is under-nourished, reflecting insufficient caloric intake
- *CHILD WASTING:* the share of children under the age of five who are wasted (low weight-for-height), reflecting acute undernutrition.
- *CHILD STUNTING:* the share of children under the age of five who are stunted (low height-for-age), reflecting chronic undernutrition.
- *CHILD MORTALITY:* the mortality rate of children under the age of five.
- India has been ranked at 103 out of 119 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2018, with hunger levels in the country categorized as "serious".
- At least one in five Indian children under the age of five is wasted. The only country with a higher prevalence of child wasting is the war-torn nation of South Sudan.
- Factors that could reduce child stunting in South Asia include increased consumption of non-staple foods, access to sanitation, women's education, access to safe water, gender equality, and national food availability.

## 16. World Bank's Human Capital Index

- The World Bank has released a Human Capital Index (HCI) as part of the World Development Report 2019.
- Theme for the World Development Report (WDR) 2018: "The Changing Nature of Work".
- The HCI has been constructed for 157 countries. It claims to seek to measure the amount of human capital that a child born today can expect to attain by age 18. The HCI index values are contended to convey the productivity of the next generation of workers, compared to a benchmark of complete standard education and full health.

The HCI has three components:

- Survival, as measured by under-5 mortality rates.
- Expected years of Quality-Adjusted School which combines information on the quantity and quality of education.
- Health environment using two proxies of (a) adult survival rates and (b) the rate of stunting for children under age 5.

## 17. Global Competitiveness Index

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) has released the Global Competitiveness Report 2018.
- India was ranked as the 58th most competitive economy on the Global Competitiveness Index 2018. On the list of 140 economies, the United States topped the list with a score of 85.6, followed by Singapore and Germany at the second and the third positions respectively.
- Other countries in the top 10 include Switzerland (4th), Japan (5th), Netherlands (6th), Hong Kong (7th), United Kingdom (8th), Sweden (9th) and Denmark (10th).
- The Global Competitiveness Index (GCI) is prepared on the basis of country-level data covering 12 categories or pillars of competitiveness.
- Institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market development, technological readiness, market size, business sophistication and innovation are the 12 pillars.

# 2 Issues on Social Development

## EDUCATION

### 1. Nobel Prize

*Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine:*

- The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine is awarded once a year for outstanding discoveries in the fields of life sciences and medicine.
- The 2018 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine has been jointly conferred to James P. Allison and TasukuHonjo "for their discovery of cancer therapy by inhibition of negative immune regulation".
- The duo successfully established an entirely new principle for cancer therapy by stimulating the ability of immune system to attack tumour cells. It is called "Immune checkpoint therapy". They showed how different strategies for slowing down the brakes on the immune system can be used in the treatment of cancer. Their discoveries are landmark in fight against cancer.

*Nobel Prize in Chemistry:*

- US scientists Frances Arnold and George Smith and British researcher Gregory Winter have won the 2018 Nobel Prize in Chemistry. They were selected for harnessing power of evolution to develop enzymes and antibodies that have led to new pharmaceuticals and biofuels.

*Nobel Physics Prize:*

- Three scientists Arthur Ashkin (USA), Gerard Mourou (France) and Donna Strickland (Canada) have won the 2018 Nobel Prize in Physics. They were selected for groundbreaking inventions in the field of laser physics.
- Arthur Ashkin: He received prize for optical tweezers and their application to biological systems. His optical tweezers are able to grab particles, atoms, viruses and other living cells with their laser beam fingers, allowing use of radiation pressure of light to move physical objects.
- Gerard Mourou and Donna Strickland: They were jointly awarded for their method of generating high-intensity, ultra-short optical pulses. They have created ultrashort high-intensity laser pulses without destroying amplifying material, thus paving way towards shortest and most intense laser pulses ever created by mankind. Their innovative technique is known as 'chirped pulse amplification' (CPA), has now become standard for high-intensity lasers, including ultra-sharp beams used in corrective eye surgeries.

*Nobel Peace Prize:*

- Dr. Denis Mukwege and Nadia Murad have jointly been awarded the 2018 Nobel Peace Prize. They were given award for their efforts to end use of sexual violence as a weapon of war and armed conflict.
- The Nobel Peace Prize is awarded by a committee elected by the Norwegian Parliament.

# HEALTH

## 2. 'MedWatch'

- It is an innovative mobile health App launched by the Indian Air Force (IAF) to provide health information to the users, including first-aid and other health and nutritional topics. It is the first mobile health app in the three Armed Services.
- It comprises of features like information on basic First Aid, Health topics and Nutritional Facts; reminders for timely Medical Review, Vaccination and utility tools like Health Record Card, BMI calculator, helpline numbers and web links.

# WOMEN AND CHILDREN

## 3. Justice Verma Committee

- Following the #MeToo campaign on social media, the Centre recently announced its plan to set up a panel of judges to look into the legal and institutional framework to curb sexual harassment at workplaces.
- However, as early as 2013, the Justice J.S. Verma Committee, in its landmark report on gender laws, had recommended setting up of an employment tribunal instead of an internal complaints committee (ICC) in sweeping changes to the Sexual Harassment at the Workplace Bill.
- The Committee, chaired by Justice Verma and including Justice Leila Seth and senior lawyer Gopal Subramanium, termed the Sexual Harassment Bill "unsatisfactory" and said it did not reflect the spirit of the Vishakha guidelines — framed by the Supreme Court in 1997 to curb sexual harassment at the workplace.

# WATER AND SANITATION

## 4. LooReview Campaign

- The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, under the aegis of Swachh Bharat Mission – Urban has partnered with Google to launch the Loo Review campaign.
- It is aimed to encourage all local guides in India to rate and review public toilets on Google Maps.
- Local Guides are people who share reviews, photos, and knowledge on Google Maps to help people explore the world.
- The joint campaign to be run throughout October and November 2018 is an effort to increase the awareness and ease of locating public toilets across India. 500+ cities in India with more than 30,000 toilets with the name of "SBM Toilet" are currently live on Google Maps.

- One of the objectives of the SBM- U is to provide sanitation coverage through public toilet facilities across cities in India for achieving Open Defecation Free (ODF) status.

**5. WHO guidelines on sanitation and health**

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has launched the first global guidelines on sanitation and health even as it pitched for higher investments and policy shifts to achieve the goal of universal sanitation coverage by 2032.
- The new WHO Guidelines on Sanitation and Health gives four main recommendations:
  - ensuring that communities have access to toilets;
  - assessing health risks to protect people from exposure to excreta, such as through leaky storage;
  - integrating sanitation into local government planning and service provision;
  - and encouraging the health sector to invest more and coordinate sanitation planning to protect public health.

**6. OneerTM**

- CSIR has developed an affordable Water Disinfection System "OneerTM". The device will go a long way in meeting the requirements of potable water in rural and urban areas.
- It is useful for continuous treatment of water and eliminates all disease causing pathogens such as virus, bacteria, fungi, protozoa and cyst to provide safe drinking water to domestic and communities settings as per National and International standards prescribed for potable water (BIS, WHO etc.)

- According to the World Health Organization, "access to safe drinking-water is essential to health, a basic human right and a component of effective policy for health protection".
- However, currently, a large proportion of India's rural community is consuming water that does not meet the WHO drinking water quality standards. And infection through drinking water results in an increase in morbidity and mortality particularly amongst children.
- Oneer developed by CSIR-IITR, will provide access to safe and clean drinking water at a cost of just 2 Paise / Ltr. The Community level model is of 450 LPH capacity which can be scaled up to 5000 to 1 lakh L/day; and is also maintenance and membrane free. The technology will be helpful especially for rural people since it can be solar powered.

# SKILL DEVELOPMENT

**7. Global Skills Park (GSP)**

- Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of India have signed a $150 million Loan Agreement to establish a Global Skills Park (GSP) in Madhya Pradesh.
- It will be the First Multi-Skills Park in India, to enhance the quality of Technical and Vocational Education And Training (TVET) System in the State and create a more skilled workforce.
- The GSP campus will consist of core Advanced Training Institutes including the Center for Occupational Skills Acquisition and the Center for Advanced Agricultural Training as well as other support services focusing on entrepreneurship, training of trainers, and skill-related research.
- The campus will have training facilities focusing on skills for manufacturing, service, and advanced agricultural jobs, benefitting about 20,000 trainees and trainers.

**8. UdyamAbhilasha**

- It is a National Level Entrepreneurship Awareness Campaign launched by Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) on the occasion of Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.
- The campaign has been launched in 115 Aspirational Districts identified by NITI Aayog in 28 States.
- The campaign would create and strengthen cadre of more than 800 trainers to provide entrepreneurship training to the aspiring youths across these districts thus encouraging them to enter the admired segment of entrepreneurs.

**9. National Council For Vocational Education & Training**

- The Cabinet approved the merger of National Council of Vocational Training (NCVT) and National Skill Development Agency (NSDA) into National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) for

improving the outcome of the Skill India mission.

- The various functions of NCVET include:
  - Recognition and regulation of awarding bodies, assessment bodies and skill related information providers.
  - Approval of qualifications developed by awarding bodies and Sector Skill Councils (SSCs).
  - Indirect regulation of vocational training institutes through awarding bodies and assessment agencies.
  - Research and information dissemination.
  - Grievance redressal.

***Benefits:***

- This institutional reform will lead to improvement in quality and market relevance of skill development programs lending credibility to vocational education and training, encouraging greater private investment and employer participation in the skills space.
- This in turn will help achieve the twin objectives of enhancing aspirational value of vocational education and of increasing skilled manpower furthering the Prime Minister's agenda of making India the skill capital of the world.
- This is also expected to facilitate the ease of doing business by providing a steady supply of skilled workforce to the industry and services.

# BILLS AND ACTS

## 10. Sabarimala temple opens to women of all ages

- The Supreme Court has lifted the centuries-old practice of prohibiting women to enter the Lord Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala in Kerala.
- The legend has it that the temple deity Ayyappa followed celibacy all through his life. Therefore, women devotees of menstruating age are considered "impure" by supporters of the ban and are prohibited from entering the temple, on the pretext that they would disturb the celibacy of the deity.

*Views of the court:*

- On one side we pray to goddesses; on the other, women of a certain age are considered 'impure'. This dualistic approach is nothing but patriarchy practised in religion.
- Exclusion on grounds of biological and physiological features like menstruation was therefore unconstitutional as it is violative of the right to equality and dignity of women.
- Hence, Rule 3(b) of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship (Authorisation of Entry) Act of 1965, which mandates the prohibition in Sabarimala temple, ultra vires the Constitution. The Rule violated the fundamental right of a Hindu woman to offer worship at a place of her choice. Right to worship is equally available to men and women.

*Dissenting views:*

- Justice Indu Malhotra, the lone woman judge on the Constitution Bench, dissented from the majority opinion. She held that the determination of what constituted an essential practice in a religion should not be decided by judges on the basis of their personal viewpoints.
- She held that essentiality of a religious practice or custom had to be decided within the religion. It was a matter of personal faith. Constitutional morality in a pluralistic society gave freedom to practice even irrational or illogical customs and usages.
- They have distinct names, properties. Besides, the Sabarimala temple was not funded out of the Consolidated Fund.

*Significance of the verdict:*

- The Supreme Court's ruling establishes the legal principle that individual freedom prevails over purported group rights, even in matters of religion. Devotees of Lord Ayyappa do not constitute a separate religious denomination and that the prohibition on women is not an essential part of Hindu religion.

## 11. Karnataka Good Samaritan Bill

- The president has given his nod to the Karnataka Good Samaritan and Medical Professional (Protection and Regulation during Emergency Situations) Bill, 2016.
- The legislation aims to give protection to good samaritans and ensure immediate medical assistance for road accident victims within the 'golden hour' and encourage people to offer first aid to victims without fear of harassment in the hands of police and investigations.
- Under the new law, the Karnataka government will provide financial help to good samaritans who help victims in a timely manner. They will be exempted from repeated attendance in courts and police stations, in case attendance is mandatory, expenses of such "running around to courts and police stations" will be taken care through the proposed 'Good Samaritan Fund'.
- After admitting the accident victim to the hospital, the good samaritan can leave immediately, all government as well as private hospitals are bound to give first aid to the accident victims.
- With this, Karnataka has become the first state to give legal protection to good samaritans through a legislation amidst the rising incidents of accidental deaths in India, which saw 1,50,785 people getting killed in road accidents in 2016.
- In medical terms, the 'golden hour' is the first hour after a traumatic injury when emergency treatment is very crucial.

# 3 International Issues

**1. International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons:**

- The International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons is observed every year on 26 September across the world.
- Aims:
- To provide an occasion for world community to reaffirm its commitment to global nuclear disarmament as high priority.
- To provide opportunity to educate public and their leaders about real benefits of eliminating such weapons, and the social and economic costs of perpetuating them.

**2. Malaysia abolishes capital punishment**

- The Malaysian Cabinet has decided to abolish the death penalty for all crimes and halt all pending executions. The government has taken the decision to scrap capital punishment following strong domestic opposition to the practice.
- Activists contended that the death penalty is barbarous, unimaginably cruel and pointless, as it has never been proven to deter serious crimes.
- Capital punishment is currently mandatory in Malaysia for a wide range of crimes including murder, drug trafficking, treason, kidnapping, possession of firearms and acts of terror. The sentence is carried out in the nation by hanging, a legacy which has lived on since the British colonial rule.

**3. International Day for Disaster Reduction 2018**

- International Day for Disaster Reduction was observed on October 13th.
- Theme: The theme of the 2018 International Day for Disaster Reduction was 'Reducing Disaster Economic Losses'.
- The 2018 theme continues as part of the "Sendai Seven" campaign, centred on the seven targets of the Sendai Framework. This year focuses on Target C of the Sendai Framework, which is, 'reducing disaster economic losses in relation to global GDP by 2030'.

*Sendai Framework aims to:*

A. Substantially reduce global disaster mortality by 2030, aiming to lower average per 100,000 global mortality rate in the decade 2020-2030 compared with the period 2005-2015;

B. Substantially reduce the number of affected people globally by 2030, aiming to lower average global figure per 100,000 in the decade 2020 -2030 compared to the period 2005-2015

C. Reduce direct disaster economic loss in relation to global gross domestic product (GDP) by 2030;

D. Substantially reduce disaster damage to critical infrastructure and disruption of basic services, among them health and educational facilities, including through developing their resilience by 2030;

E. Substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020;

F. Substantially enhance international cooperation to developing countries through adequate and sustainable support to complement their national actions for implementation of this Framework by 2030; and

G. Substantially increase the availability of and access to multi-hazard early warning systems and disaster risk information and assessments to the people by 2030.

## 4. Currency monitoring list

- In its latest report, the US has said that it could remove India from its currency monitoring list of major trading partners citing certain developments and steps taken by New Delhi, which address some of its major concerns.
- India was for the first time, in April, placed by the US in its currency monitoring list of countries with potentially questionable foreign exchange policies along with five other countries — China, Germany, Japan, South Korea and Switzerland.

*'Currency manipulator':*

The three pre-conditions for being named currency manipulator are:

- First, a country has to run a significant trade surplus of over $20 billion with the US.
- Second, it is judged not by the amount of currency intervention but whether such an operation is a one-sided attempt to keep the exchange rate down, measured in terms of additional foreign exchange reserves as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
- Third, a country should have a large current account surplus with the rest of the world.

## 5. Agreement between India and Bangladesh

- The two countries have signed an agreement to use Chattogram and Mongla Ports in Bangladesh for movement of goods to and from India. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has also been signed for movement of passenger and cruise services.
- An addendum to 'Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade' (PIWTT) between India and Bangladesh has been signed for inclusion of Dhubri in India and Pangaon in Bangladesh as new Ports of Call.
- A port of call is an intermediate stop for a ship on its sailing itinerary.
- The two sides have also agreed to consider inclusion of Rupnarayanriver (National Waterway-86) from Geonkhali to Kolaghat in

the protocol route and to declare Kolaghatin West Bengal as new Port of Call.

- Both sides agreed to declare Badarpur on river Barak (NW 16) as an Extended Port of Call of Karimganj in Assam and Ghorasal of Ashuganj in Bangladesh on a reciprocal basis.
- Both sides have also agreed for development of Jogighopa as a hub/trans-shipment terminal for movement of cargo to Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Bhutan and notifying Munsiganj River terminal by Bangladesh Customs for routing third party Exim cargo through Kolkata Port.

## 6. Chabahar Port

- India, Afghanistan and Iran recently held their first trilateral meeting on Chabahar port project during which they reviewed its implementation. The meeting assumes significance as the strategically-located port on the energy-rich Iran's southern coast was coming under the ambit of US sanctions on Tehran.

## 7. BALI FINTECH AGENDA

- The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank launched the Bali Fintech Agenda.
- The agenda is a set of 12 policy elements aimed at helping member countries to harness the benefits and opportunities of rapid advances in financial technology that are transforming the provision of banking services, while at the same time managing the inherent risks.
- The Agenda proposes a framework of high-level issues that countries should consider in their own domestic policy discussions and aims to guide staff from the two institutions in their own work and dialogue with national authorities.

- Fintech (financial technology) is used to describe new tech that seeks to improve and automate the delivery and use of financial services.
- At its core, fintech is utilized to help companies, business owners and consumers better manage their financial operations, processes and lives by utilizing specialized software and algorithms that are used on computers and, increasingly, smartphones.

## G20 SUMMIT

The 2018 G20 Summit was held in the city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. Nineteen leaders of the world's biggest economies and a representative of the European Union held a meeting on November 30 as part of the G20 summit.

It was the 13th meeting of Group of Twenty (G20) and the first G20 summit to be hosted in South America.

Agenda:

- G20 Argentina has put forth three agenda priorities for the G20 dialogue in 2018: the future of work, infrastructure for development and a sustainable food future.
- A number of attending countries have said they focus on the regulation of crypto-currencies at this meeting.
- Talks between the U.S. and China related to resolving the escalating 2018 China–United States trade war were a central issue of the summit.
- All G-20 leaders called for reforming the World Trade Organization and the issue will be discussed during the group's next summit in Osaka, Japan, in June.
- The final communique signed by all 20 member nations said 19 of them reaffirmed their commitment to the Paris climate accord. The only holdout was the U.S., which has withdrawn from the pact under Trump.
- On Friday 30 November, ahead of the formal start of the summit, Presidents Peña Nieto and Donald Trump and Prime Minister Trudeau signed the United States–Mexico–Canada Agreement (USMCA), the successor treaty to the 1994 North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). After two years of negotiations, Trump signed a revised North American trade pact. The deal is meant to replace the North American Free Trade Agreement, which Trump long denigrated as a "disaster." (The goal of NAFTA was to eliminate barriers to trade and investment between the U.S., Canada and Mexico.)

# 4 Environmental Issues

## 1. UN Champions of the Earth Award 2018:

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been awarded with the UN's highest environmental honour- Champions of the Earth Award.
- French President Emmanuel Macron and PM Narendra Modi have been jointly recognised in the Policy Leadership category for their pioneering work in championing the International Solar Alliance and promoting new areas of levels of cooperation on environmental action, including Macron's work on the Global Pact for the Environment and Modi's unprecedented pledge to eliminate all single-use plastic in India by 2022.
- Cochin International Airport has also been honoured this year with the award for Entrepreneurial Vision, for its leadership in the use of sustainable energy.

*Champions of the Earth Award:*

- The Champions of the Earth award, the UN's highest environmental recognition, was founded in 2005.
- The award celebrates exceptional figures from the public and private sectors and from civil society, whose actions have had a transformative positive impact on the environment.
- The award also recognises the efforts for promoting new areas of levels of cooperation on environmental action.

## 2. Eurasian Otter:

- Researchers have confirmed the presence of the elusive Eurasian Otter, one of the least-known of India's three Otter species in the Western Ghats after more than 70 years. While the species is widespread across Europe, northern Africa and several south Asian countries, it is not as frequently seen as smooth-coated or small-clawed otters in India.

## 3. Naming of Cyclones

- Recently, Cyclonic storm 'TITLI' and then 'GAJA' has hit the Bay of Bengal and another cyclonic storm 'LUBAN' has hit the Arabian sea.

- In September 2004, an international panel on tropical cyclones decided that countries from the region would each put in names, which would be assigned to storms in the Bay of Bengal and Arabian Sea.
- Eight countries — India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Sri Lanka and Thailand – participated and came up with a list of 64 names.
- The purpose of the move was also to make it easier for "people easily to understand and remember the tropical cyclone/hurricane in a region, thus to facilitate disaster risk awareness, preparedness, management and reduction.

**4. Forest fires in India and its impact**

- A report titled "Strengthening Forest Fire Management in India", jointly prepared by the MoEFCC and the World Bank, has been released.

*Highlights of the report:*

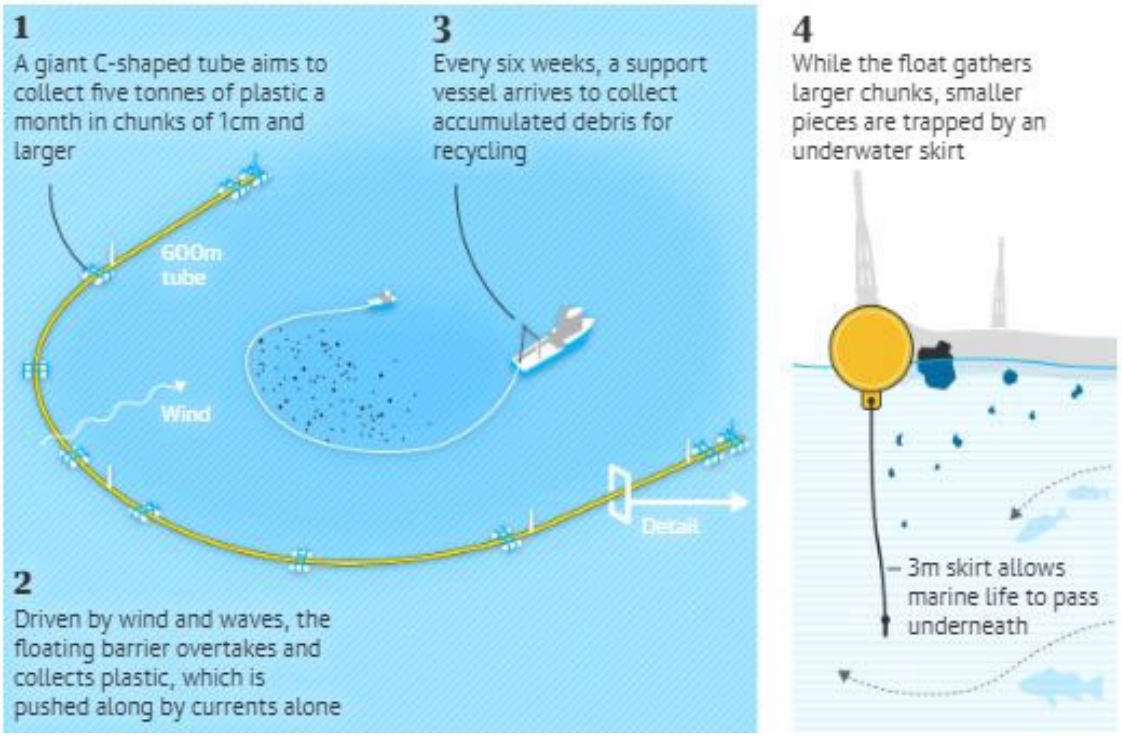
- North-eastern states account for the biggest share of fire detections, with at least 55% of fire incidents reported during 2003-2016.
- The report calls for a national plan for the prevention of forest fire.
- Repeated fires in short succession reduce diversity of species and harm natural regeneration, while posing a risk to over 92 million in India who live in areas of forest cover.
- The findings are significant since preventing forest fires is crucial to meet Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) in order to limit global warming. As per the Fifth Assessment Report of IPCC, forest fires globally contribute 2.5 billion to 4.0 billion tonnes of $CO_2$ to carbon emissions every year.
- Tackling forest fires is even more important in India as the country has committed to bringing 33% of its geographical area under forest cover by 2030, as part of NDCs.

**5. 'Minimum river flows' for the Ganga**

- In a first, the National Mission for Clean Ganga has mandated the minimum quantity of water (or ecological flow) that various stretches of the Ganga must necessarily have all through the year.
- The new norms would require hydropower projects located along the river to modify their operations so as to ensure they are in compliance. Power projects that don't meet these norms as yet would be given three years to comply and "mini and micro projects" would be exempt from these requirements.
- The notification is issued in the backdrop of ongoing 'fast unto death' by environmentalist and former IIT Kanpur faculty member GD Agarwal at Haridwar on issue of Ganga conservation. The octogenarian has been observing hunger strike since June 22 for pollution free and uninterrupted flow in the Ganga.

## 6. Ocean cleanup project

- Recently, the Ocean Cleanup project was started in the Pacific Ocean. Ocean Cleanup is a non-profit organisation which is developing advanced technologies to rid the world's oceans of plastics.
- It is observed that, more than 8 million tonnes of plastic leaks into the ocean every year which is equal to dumping a garbage truck of plastic every minute. About 60-90 per cent of marine litter is made up of plastic polymers, plastic bags, fishing gear and food and beverage containers.
- According to Litterbase database, seas near Mumbai, Kerala and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands are among the worst polluted in the world.
- The Great Pacific Garbage Patch is the largest collection of marine debris in the North Pacific Ocean.
- The Great Pacific Garbage Patch (GPGP) is a zone between Hawaii and California. About 1.8 Trillion pieces of plastic float the surface of the GPGP.
- The garbage patch is so large, it is easily detectable from space via satellites and covers roughly 1.6 million square kilometers and 1.8 trillion pieces of debris. The trash is collected and trapped within a circulating ocean current, called a gyre. This prevents the distribution of the garbage patch, a benefit when creating a system to collect the plastic.



- The floating boom system will be towed out 1,400 miles to the garbage patch for collecting trash. The floating boom drifts along with the local currents, creating a U-shaped formation. As the boom floats, it collects trash in the U shaped system, which has 10 feet of netting below it to collect smaller fragments of plastic. Once the boom is full, a vessel will meet the boom to collect the plastic and transport it to land for sorting and recycling.

## 7. Eco-sensitive zones

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has asked the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) to consider declaring all elephant corridors in the country as eco-sensitive zones.
- NGT has given two weeks time to the Ministry to look into the issue and to proceed in the matter for declaration of such areas as eco sensitive zones.
- The observations came while the green panel was hearing a plea that highlighted the increasing number of unnatural elephant deaths taking place in the state. The petition said, "Owing to the increased denudation and loss of their forest habitats, elephants have come increasingly into conflicts with humans and faced deliberate retaliatory killings and accidents at railway crossings, high tension power lines, power fences and trenches."

## 8. International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (STAPCOR – 2018)

- The International Conference on Status and Protection of Coral Reefs (STAPCOR – 2018) is being held at Bangaram coral Island of Territory of Lakshadweep.
- Theme: "Reef for Life"
- Organizers: It was jointly organized by Department of Environment and Forest, Union Territory of Lakshadweep Administration with the technical support of Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) and in association with Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Environmental Information System (ENVIS) in consonance with declaration of year 2018 as 3rd decadal International year of Reefs.

***STAPCOR:***

The effect of climate change and global warming along with El-Nino on the corals has lead to heavy bleaching internationally during the year 1998. This led to the foundation of STAPCOR with a decision to have an international conference in every 10 years to review the status and progress of coral reefs all over the world.

- The goals of the 3rd IYOR – 2018 are to:
- Strengthen awareness about ecological, economic, social and cultural value of coral reefs and associated ecosystems.
- Improve understanding of the critical threats to reefs and generate both practical and innovative solutions to reduce these threats.
- Generate urgent action to develop and implement effective management strategies for conservation and sustainable use of these ecosystems.

## 9. Mammals of India (MaOI)

- Scientists and researchers from the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS) in Bangalore have come up with a new citizen-science repository on Indian mammals, called Mammals of India (MaOI). MaOI is a part of the Biodiversity Atlas (India project).
- The initiative aims to develop individual species pages for all Indian mammals with information on identification, variation, distribution, breeding and non-breeding ecology and species conservation.

## 10. Global Stocktake

- Ahead of the UN climate conference in Poland, the BASIC (Brazil, South Africa, India and China) group recently met to put pressure on developed countries to meet pre-2020 climate efforts, and to "progressively" and "substantially" scale up their financial support for future action.
- Global stocktake refers to a proposed five-yearly review of the impact of countries' climate change actions.
  - Under the Paris Agreement, every country must present a climate action plan in five-yearly cycles. It is supposed to be similar to the plan countries submitted in the run-up to the talks that concluded last week.
  - Under the Paris Agreement, the first global stocktake will happen in 2023. It will assess whether the net result of the climate actions being taken was consistent with the goal of keeping the increase in global average temperature from pre-industrial times to within 2 degree Celsius. The stocktake will help the world determine whether it needs to do more — and how much more.
  - While every country is required to participate in the global stocktake, the exercise will not assess whether actions of any individual country are adequate or not. It will only make an assessment of the "collective" efforts of the world.
  - In accordance with the demands of developing countries, the stocktake will cover not only the results of actions to reduce greenhouse gas emissions but of actions being taken to adapt to the effects of climate change as well.

- It will also include an assessment of whether developed countries are offering adequate help to developing countries by providing money and technology, as mandated by the Paris Agreement.

- BASIC countries are bloc (geopolitical alliance) of four large newly industrialized countries – Brazil, South Africa, India and China. It was formed by agreement in November 2009. They were committed to act jointly at Copenhagen climate summit 2009, including possible united walk-out if their common minimum position was not met by developed nations during climate talks.

# 5 Science and Technology

## 1. Gaganyaan 2022

- Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and Russia's Roscosmos State Corporation for Space Activities (ROSCOSMOS) have signed an MoU to work together for Gaganyaan.
- As per the MoU, ROSCOSMOS has offered ride to Indian astronaut, a visit to International Space Station (ISS) on board Soyuz spacecraft for short training mission in 2022.
- Gaganyaan is India's first manned space mission. Under it, India is planning to send three humans (Gaganyatris) into space i.e. in low earth orbit (LEO) by 2022 i.e. by 75th Independence Day for period of five to seven days.

## 2. National Policy on Electronics 2018'

- Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) has issued draft 'National Policy on Electronics 2018' (NPE 2018) for Electronics System Design and Manufacturing (ESDM) Sector of India.
- ***Aim:*** To promote domestic manufacturing in entire value-chain of ESDM sector for spur economic development in the country. Create $400 billion electronics manufacturing industry by 2025. It also aims to double the target of mobile phone production from 500 million units in 2019 to 1 billion by 2025 to meet objective.

## 3. GROWTH-India telescope

- 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.
- The GROWTH-India telescope is part of a multi-country collaborative initiative – known as the Global Relay of Observatories Watching Transients Happen (GROWTH) – to observe transient events in the universe.
- The fully robotic telescope is designed to capture cosmic events occurring over relatively shorter periods of the cosmological timescale: years, days and even hours.
- Universities and research institutes from the US, the UK, Japan, India, Germany, Taiwan and Israel are part of the initiative.
- Their primary research objective is time-domain astronomy, which entails the study of explosive transients and variable sources (of light and other radiation) in the universe.

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## 4. Definition of kilogram changed

- Scientists have changed the way the kilogram is defined. The decision was made at the General Conference on Weights and Measures. The new definitions will come into force on 20 May 2019.

- Currently, it is defined by the weight of a platinum-based ingot called "Le Grand K" which is locked away in a safe in Paris.
- The master kilogram and its copies were seen to change ever so slightly as they deteriorated.
- The fluctuation is about 50 parts in a billion, less than the weight of a single eyelash. But although it is tiny, the change can have important consequences.
- In a world where accurate measurement is now critical in many areas, such as in drug development, nanotechnology and precision engineering those responsible for maintaining the international system had no option but to move beyond Le Grand K to a more robust definition.
- It will be replaced by the Planck constant -- the fundamental constant of quantum physics.
- In principle, scientists can define a kilogram, or any other weight, in terms of the amount of electricity needed to counteract the weight (gravitational force acting on a mass).

**Planck's constant:**

- There is a quantity that relates weight to electrical current, called Planck's constant – named after the German physicist Max Planck and denoted by the symbol '*h*'.
- But '*h*' is an incredibly small number and to measure it, the research scientist Dr Bryan Kibble built a super-accurate set of scales. The Kibble balance, as it has become known, has an electromagnet that pulls down on one side of the scales and a weight – say, a kilogram – on the other. The electrical current going through the electromagnet is increased until the two sides are perfectly balanced.
- By measuring the current running through the electromagnet to incredible precision, the researchers are able to calculate h to an accuracy of 0.000001%. This breakthrough has paved the way for Le Grand K to be deposed by "die kleine h"

# 6 Defence

**1. ParakramParv:**

- To showcase the courage, valour and sacrifice of Armed Forces during Surgical Strikes conducted in 2016, 'ParakramParv' is being observed from 28-30 September 2018.
- Indian Army conducted surgical strikes in 2016 which had strategic ramifications and were aimed to dissuade inimical adversary from adopting the path of violence and to ensure an environment of peace for the Nation.

**2. Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)**

- India and Russia have concluded the contract for five S-400 'Triumf' missile systems, one of the biggest defence deals in recent times.
- However, the U.S. has warned the deal would invoke sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) law.
- CAATSA is a US federal law that imposed sanctions on Iran, North Korea and Russia. It includes sanctions against countries that engage in significant transactions with Russia's defence and intelligence sectors.
- However, any imposition of sanctions on India, which is now a major defence partner, could be disastrous for the bilateral relationship.
- S-400 is an air defence missile system that can take down enemies' aircraft in the sky from the surface itself.
- The S-400 is known as Russia's most advanced long-range surface-to-air missile defence system, capable of destroying destroying hostile strategic bombers, jets, missiles and drones at a range of 380-km.

# 7 Miscellaneous

**1. Supreme Court allows live streaming of cases**

- The Supreme Court has given its nod to live-streaming of court proceedings, which brings more transparency, accountability and enhance the rule of law.
- As per the court's order, this project must be implemented in a progressive, structured and phased manner, with certain safeguards to ensure that the purpose of live-streaming of proceedings is achieved holistically and that it does not interfere with the administration of justice or the dignity and majesty of the court.

**2. 'World Peace Monument' dome:**

- The world's largest dome has been inaugurated at the Maharashtra Institute of Technology (MIT)'s World Peace University (MIT-WPU) campus at LoniKalbhor on the occasion of the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

- The World Peace Monument dome has a diameter of 160 feet, compared with the Vatican Dome's 139.6 feet, and stands 263 feet tall with a bell hanging from the centre, and the prayer hall is of around 30,000 sq ft.
- It is supported by 24 massive columns, each 63 feet tall, at the periphery of the dome and

underneath — inside and outside — stand imposing bronze statues of 54 of the biggest names in world history stand, irrespective of nationality or religion.

- The dome is built atop the MIT World Peace Library and the World Peace Prayer Hall, which are named after the 13th century poet-saint and philosopher Dnyaneshwar — a pivotal figure of the Bhakti movement in Maharashtra.

**3. First woman Chief Economist at IMF:**

- India-born Gita Gopinath has been appointed as the Chief Economist of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- She has become the first woman to hold the position. Gita Gopinath has also become the second Indian to hold the position, after former RBI Governor RaghuramRajan.

**4. GI Tag for Alphonso**

- Alphonso from Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg, Palghar, Thane and Raigad districts of Maharashtra, is registered as Geographical Indication (GI).
- The king of mangoes, Alphonso, better known as 'Hapus' in Maharashtra, is in demand in domestic and international markets not only for its taste but also for pleasant fragrance and vibrant colour. It has long been one of the world's most popular fruit and is exported to various countries including Japan, Korea and Europe. New markets such as USA and Australia have recently opened up.

**5. Universal Postal Union (UPU)**

- World Post Day is observed every year on October 9 to spread awareness about the postal services and their role in the everyday lives of people and businesses. The day is celebrated to mark anniversary of the establishment of the Universal Postal Union (UPU) in 1874 in the Swiss Capital, Bern.
- The 2018 theme is: "Imagine you are a letter travelling through time. What message do you wish to convey to your readers?"

*Universal Postal Union (UPU):*

- It is a specialized agency of United Nations that coordinates postal policies among member nations, in addition to worldwide postal system.
- It was established in 1874 and is second oldest international organization worldwide after International Telecommunication Union (ITU) which was established in 1865. It is headquartered in Berne, Switzerland.
- It has 192 member countries.

**6. Allahabad is now 'Prayagraj':**

- The Uttar Pradesh Cabinet has approved the proposal of the state government to rename the city of 'Allahabad' as 'Prayagraj'. The decision has been vehemently opposed by the opposition parties.
- The city of Allahabad was originally known as Prayag in ancient times. Between 1574 and 1583, the 16th-century Mughal emperor Akbar founded a fort near the confluence of

the Ganga and the Yamuna, known as Sangam, as he was impressed with its strategic position.

- Hence, Akbar named the fort and its neighbourhood as Ilahabad, which meant the "Abode of God", inspired by the religion he had founded, Din-i-Illahi. In the later years, Akbar's grandson Shah Jahan renamed the entire city as Allahabad. However, the area near the Sangam, which is the site of the KumbhMela, continued to be called Prayag.

## 7. Kerala the first smoke-free State

- Kerala is now set to become the first smoke-free State in the country with public sector oil companies eyeing 100% LPG penetration there.
- LPG is being supplied beyond commercial considerations with the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana initiated by the Ministry of Petroleum.
- With three bottling plants at Kochi, Kozhikode, and Kollam, LPG is being brought to 49.79 lakh customers through 308 distributors.
- Kerala is one of the States with the highest penetration of LPG, which is transforming lifestyles. The target has almost been achieved in most villages, towns and cities in the Kerala.
- LPG consumption was 933.3 TMT (thousand tonnes) in the Kerala in 2017-18. It is estimated that one crore tonnes of emissions, from poisonous gases like firewood cooking, have been contained and 25 lakh trees have been saved.

## 8. Man Booker Prize:

- Northern Irish writer- Anna Burns has won the 2018 Man Booker Prize for her third full-length novel- "Milkman".

*About Man Booker Prize:*

- The leading literary award in English, The Man Booker Prize was launched in 1969. It aims to promote the 'finest in fiction' and is awarded each year to the book adjudged as the best novel of the year written in English and published in the United Kingdom.
- The winner of The Man Booker Prize receives £50,000. Sponsored by Man Group, the foundation also awards £2,500 and a designer bound copy of their book to each of the six shortlisted authors. The winner and shortlisted authors are also guaranteed a worldwide readership as well as a dramatic spike in book sales.

## 9. Bihar's 'Shahi Litchi' Gets GI tag

- Bihar's Shahi litchi has got the Geographical Indication (GI) tag and has become an exclusive brand in the national and international market.
- The famous Shahi litchi, which is famous for its sweet, juicy, unique flavour and aroma, is mostly grown in Muzaffarpur and neighbouring districts including East

Champaran, Vaishali, Samastipur and Begusarai.

- The GI registration was done in the name of Litchi Growers Association of Bihar, which had applied for the tag.
- Bihar produces 40% of the litchi grown in the country on 38% of the area. The GI tag to Shahi litchi will boost up its demand in the market and will minimise the fear of fake and poor quality litchis. The GI tag for the fruit will help and benefit thousands of litchi growers who will gain access to more markets and get better price in the country and abroad.

**10. India's First Elephant Hospital Opens In Mathura:**

- India's first specialized hospital for elephants has been opened in Mathura.
- The unique medical centre offers wireless digital X-ray, laser treatment, dental X-ray, thermal imaging, ultrasonography, hydrotherapy and quarantine facilities.
- Located close to the elephant conservation and care centre, the hospital is designed to treat injured, sick or geriatric elephants and is equipped with a medical hoist for lifting elephants, as also an elephant restraining device with a dedicated indoor treatment enclosure for long duration medical procedures.

**11. "AadiMahotsav"**

- "AadiMahotsav" a National Tribal Festival is being organized in New Delhi by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED to celebrate, cherish and promote the spirit of tribal craft, culture, cuisine and commerce.
- The theme of the festival is: "A Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Culture, Craft, Cuisine and Commerce".
- The Mahotsav will comprise of display and sale of items of tribal art and craft, tribal medicine & healers, tribal cuisine and display of tribal folk performance, in which tribal artisans, chefs, folk dancers/musicians from 23 States of the country shall participate and provide glimpse of their rich traditional culture.

**12. Statue of Unity**

- The Statue of Unity is a statue of Indian statesman and founding father, SardarVallabhbhai Patel (1875–1950) in the state of Gujarat, India. It is located on a river island facing the SardarSarovar Dam on the river Narmada in Kevadiya colony, 100 kilometres (62 mi) southeast of the city of Vadodara.
- The statue depicts Vallabhbhai Patel, one of the most prominent leaders of the Indian independence movement, the first Deputy Prime Minister of India, and responsible for the unification of hundreds of princely states to form the modern political boundary of India.

- The Statue of Unity is the world's tallest statue at 182 metres (597 ft). It rises 54 metres (177 ft) higher than the previous record holder, the Spring Temple Buddha in China's Henan province. Within India, the record was earlier held by the 41 m (135 ft) statue of Hanuman at the ParitalaAnjaneya Temple near Vijayawada in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
- The monument is constructed on an island named Sadhu Bet, 3.2 km (2.0 mi) away from and facing the Narmada Dam downstream. The statue and its surroundings occupy more than 2 hectares (4.9 acres), and are surrounded by a 12 km2 (4.6 sq mi; 3,000 acres) artificial lake formed by Garudeshwar dam on the Narmada river downstream.
- Local tribals belonging to the Tadvi tribe opposed land acquisition for the development of tourism infrastructure around the statue. They have been offered cash and land compensation, and have been provided jobs.

## 13. Seoul Peace Prize

- PM Modi has been selected for this award in recognition of his dedication for improving international cooperation, raising global economic growth, accelerating Human Development of people in India by fostering economic growth and furthering development of democracy through anti-corruption and social integration efforts.
- Seoul Peace Prize was established in 1990 to commemorate success of the 24th Olympic Games held in Seoul, South Korea.
- It was established to crystallize Korean people's yearning for peace on Korean Peninsula and in the rest of the world.
- It is awarded biennially to those individuals who have made their mark through contributions to harmony of mankind, reconciliation between nations and world peace.

## 14. UNESCO Global Geopark Network status

- Geological Survey of India has chosen heritage locations in Maharashtra and Karnataka for UNESCO Global Geopark Network status.
- Lonar Lake in Maharashtra and St. Mary's Island and Malpe beach in coastal Karnataka are the GSI's candidates for UNESCO Global Geopark Network status.
- Lonar Lake is an ancient circular lake created by a meteorite strike in Maharashtra. It is the only known meteorite crater in basaltic rock. Lonar crater became a geo-heritage site in 1979. It is relatively young geologically, at just 50,000 years old.
- Mary's Island, declared a national geo-heritage site in 1975, and is estimated to be an 88-million-year-old formation that goes back to a time when Greater India broke away from Madagascar.

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