ACE ENGINEERING PUBLICATIONS

Since 2011

ACE

ESE - PRELIMS
CURRENT ISSUES
(January - May 2019)

ACE
Engineering Publications

(A Sister Concern of ACE Engineering Academy, Hyderabad)

ESE
(Prelims)

Current Issues

(January - May 2019)

On

Economic & Industrial Development

Issues on Social Development

International Issues

Environment

Science & Technology

Miscellaneous

ACE is the leading institute for coaching in ESE, GATE & PSUs

11 All India 1st Ranks in ESE

48 All India 1st Ranks in GATE

Published at:

ACE Engineering Publications

Sree Sindhi Guru Sangat Sabha Association,
4-1-1236/1/A, King Koti, Abids,
Hyderabad – 500001, Telangana, India.
Phones: 040- 23234419 / 20 / 21
Website: www.aceenggacademy.com
Email: aceenggpublications@aceenggacademy.com
          hyderabad@aceenggacademy.com

Authors:

Subject experts of ACE Engineering Academy, Hyderabad

Foreword

Dear Students,

This book is intended to help students, prepare current affairs on a monthly basis. The topics covered give a comprehensive understanding on issues related to Socio, Economic, Industrial Development, Energy and Environment and ICT based tools.

Apart from technical knowledge, current affairs help an aspirant to understand issues in a multi-dimensional approach and contributes to a holistic personality development. The coverage of news and events given are the most pertinent for ESE Revised pattern.

The key to master current affairs is a 'piece-meal preparation' over a period of time and this material is an endeavor to help students prepare in a systematic manner.

This issue covers Current Issues from January to May 2019 and subsequent issues will be given on a bi-monthly basis.

With best wishes to all the Students

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

CONTENTS

7. Government Schemes

Current affairs (Jan - May 2019)

1 . Economy and Industrial Development

FINANCIAL MARKETS

Panda Bonds:

➢ For the first time in history, the federal cabinet has approved a new financial strategy called Panda-Bonds in Pakistan. These bonds will become the new and favorable method to raise foreign exchange.

➢ A Panda bond is a Chinese renminbi-denominated bond from a non-Chinese issuer, sold in the People's Republic of China. These bonds were first issued in 2005 by the International Finance Corporation and the Asian Development Bank.

➢ The Chinese government had been negotiating for several years about implementation details before permitting the sale of such bonds; they had been concerned about the possible effects on their currency peg.

➢ The bonds will help Pakistan's government to diversify the current investor base in capital market insurance and will also be used as a source of raising Renminbi. Furthermore, the tenor, size and pricing will be determined according to the market response at the time of issuance.

What is a green panda bond?

Panda Bond + Green Feature = Green Panda Bond

Green panda bonds are essentially the same as other panda bonds (RMB-denominated bond issued in mainland China by a foreign entity), except that:

• Issuer labels bonds as "green"

• Proceeds are earmarked for green assets or projects

• Issuer tracks and reports on the use of proceeds to ensure compliance
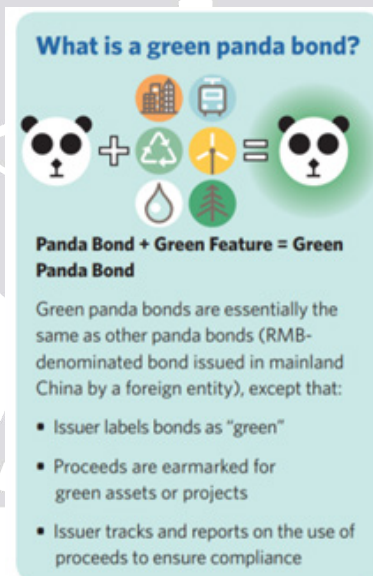
TAXATION:

Angel tax:

➢ Citizens' engagement forum Local Circles has released a report on challenges faced by start- ups in India. The report is based on responses from over 15,000 start-ups, SMEs and entrepreneurs.

Challenge for start- ups:

✓ Corruption
✓ Bureaucratic inefficiencies.
✓ Securing loans.
✓ Funding

Angel tax:

➢ Angel Tax is a 30% tax that is levied on the funding received by startups from an external investor. However, this 30% tax is levied when startups receive angel funding at a valuation higher than its 'fair market value'. It is counted as income to the company and is taxed.

➢ There is no definitive or objective way to measure the 'fair market value' of a startup. Investors pay a premium for the idea and the business potential at the angel funding stage. However, tax officials seem to be assessing the value of the startups based on their net asset value at one point. Several startups say that they find it difficult to justify the higher valuation to tax officials.

➢ Angel tax continued to be a key pain point for start-ups, where the assessing officers in many cases reject the valuation method used by the start-up and instead treat the capital raised as income from other sources, thereby, raising a tax demand and penalty on the start-up.

➢ Several start-ups and angel investors have raised concerns over notices received from the authorities related to taxation of angel funds. The Centre has set up a panel to look into the taxation issues faced by start-ups and angel investors.

Costly Advice

GENESIS OF ANGEL TAX

Tax department claims any investment over and above 'fair market value' is income for the startup and not capital

What does this mean?
Start-ups will have to cough up 30% tax on the premiums paid by investors

Why valuation experts?
The high valuations of start-ups were backed by experts' reports based on projected growth

Questioning valuation experts could be used to strengthen tax department's case against startups

YONO Cash:

➢ The State Bank of India has launched the YONO Cash service for its customers which will allow them to withdraw cash from ATMs without their debit cards.

➢ You Only Need One (YONO) is the cardless cash withdrawal service. The initiative will address concern of using debit card at the ATMs for cash withdrawals by eliminating possible risk associated with it.

➢ SBI customers can use the YONO app on their smartphones to withdraw cash from SBI ATMs, or YONO Cash Points, without using their debit and credit cards.

➢ Once a request for withdrawing cash is placed, a 6-digit code will be sent to the user's phone via SMS, which will then have to be entered into a YONO Cash Point.

Currency chest:
- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has issued guidelines for banks to set up new currency chests.
- Area of the strong room/ vault of at least 1,500 sq ft. For those situated in hilly/ inaccessible places, the strong room/ vault area of at least 600 sq ft.
- The new chests should have a processing capacity of 6.6 lakh pieces of banknotes per day. Those situated in the hilly/ inaccessible places, a capacity of 2.1 lakh pieces of banknotes per day.
- The currency chests should have Chest Balance Limit (CBL) of Rs 1,000 crore, subject to ground realities and reasonable restrictions, at the discretion of the Reserve Bank.
- Currency chests are branches of selected banks authorised by the RBI to stock rupee notes and coins.

Elephant Bonds:
- A high level government-appointed committee on trade and industry has suggested it to issue 'Elephant Bonds' to people for declaring undisclosed income to mandatorily invest 50%.
- Elephant Bonds are the 25-year sovereign bonds in which people declaring undisclosed income will be bound to invest 50 per cent.
- The fund, made from these bonds, will be utilized only for infrastructure projects.

AGRICULTURE AND INDUSTRY
GEF assisted Green – Ag Project:
- The Government has launched the "Green – Ag: Transforming Indian Agriculture for global environmental benefits and the conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes" in association with Global Environment Facility (GEF).
- The project would be implemented in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) in high-conservation-value landscapes of five States namely,

(i) Madhya Pradesh: Chambal Landscape,   (ii) Mizoram: Dampa Landscape,

(iii) Odisha: Similipal Landscape,   (iv) Rajasthan: Desert National Park Landscape and

(v) Uttarakhand: Corbett-Rajaji Landscape.

- The Green-Ag project seeks to integrate biodiversity, climate change and sustainable land management objectives and practices into Indian agriculture.
- The project supports harmonization between India's agricultural and environmental sector priorities and investments to realise the national and global environmental benefits without compromising on India's ability to strengthen rural livelihoods and meet its food and nutrition security.
- The Global Environment Facility was established on the eve of the 1992 Rio Earth Summit to help tackle our planet's most pressing environmental problems.

KALIA Scheme:
- KALIA scheme or Krushak Assistance for Livelihood and Income Augmentation launched by Odisha state government, has completed its first phase of registration.

Features:
- Primary targets are small farmers, cultivators and landless agricultural labourers.

- All farmers will be provided Rs 10,000 per family as assistance for cultivation.
- Each family will get Rs 5,000 separately in the kharif and rabi seasons, for five cropping seasons between 2018-19 and 2021-22.
- Targets 10 lakh landless households, and specifically SC and ST families. They will be supported with a unit cost of Rs 12,500 for activities like goat rearing, mushroom cultivation, beekeeping, poultry farming and fishery.
- A critical trade, dairy production, has deliberately been kept out because keeping a cow is more expensive, while milk production needs to have a collection route or agency that processes and refines this low shelf-life product.
- The scheme includes a life insurance cover of Rs 2 lakh and additional personal accident coverage of the same amount for 57 lakh households. Crop loans up to Rs 50,000 are interest-free.
- This is also going to be an area-specific scheme in the sense that an input support for a particular trade, say mushroom cultivation, will be provided if it is prevalent throughout that locality so that there is aggregation of produce.

Smart Food Executive Council:
- Associations including the Asia-Pacific Association of Agricultural Research Institutions **(APAARI)**, Forum for Agricultural Research in Africa **(FARA)**, West and Central African Council for Agricultural Research and Development **(CORAF)**, Food Agriculture and Natural Resources Policy Analysis Network **(FANRPAN)**, and the International Crops Research Institute for the Semi-Arid Tropics **(ICRISAT)** together have formed the Smart Food Executive Council.
- It is formed under the aegis of the Smart Food Initiative that was launched in 2013.
- Its objective is to diversify staples which can have the strongest impact on nutrition, the environment and farmer welfare.

Smart Foods?

What are smart foods?
Smart foods are those that have been developed through the invention of new or improved processes, for example, as a result of man-made materials/ingredients or human intervention; in other words, not naturally occuring changes.

Smart foods may:
have a function, other than that of providing energy and nutrients;
perform a particular function never achieved by conventional foods;
have been developed for specialised applications, but some eventually become available for general use.

- This would contribute to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for overcoming poverty and hunger (SDG 1 and 2), responsible consumption and production (SDG 12), along with adaptation to climate change (Goal 13). The approach taken will include gender equality (SDG 5) and action through partnerships (SDG 17).

Rashtriya Gokul Mission:
➢ The Finance Minister announced the allotment of ₹750 crore to the Rashtriya Gokul Mission (RGM). The objective is to get native breeds to produce more milk, be more fecund, and to raise the quality of Indian cows and bulls to eventually outdo Jerseys and Holsteins.
➢ To conserve and develop indigenous bovine breeds, government has launched 'Rashtriya Gokul Mission' under the National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development (NPBBD).

The Mission is being implemented with the following objectives:
a) Development and conservation of indigenous breeds
b) Undertake breed improvement programme for indigenous cattle breeds so as to improve the genetic makeup and increase the stock;
c) Enhance milk production and productivity;
d) Upgrade nondescript cattle using elite indigenous breeds like Gir, Sahiwal, Rathi, Deoni, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi and
e) Distribute disease free high genetic merit bulls for natural service.

➢ Funds under the scheme will be allocated for the establishment of Integrated Indigenous Cattle Centres viz "Gokul Gram".
➢ Gokul Grams will be established in: i) the native breeding tracts and ii) near metropolitan cities for housing the urban cattle.
➢ Gokul Gram will act as Centres for development of Indigenous Breeds and a dependable source for supply of high genetic breeding stock to the farmers in the breeding tract.

Millet Village scheme:
➢ With 'superfood' and 'eat smart' strategies forming the main ingredients of the latest dietary mantras, Kerala State Agriculture Department is earmarking farm space in more districts for growing nutrient-rich millets.
➢ The state is also planning to expand its Millet Village scheme to various other districts.
➢ It is a special scheme to promote the cultivation of cereals such as millet, ragi, bajra and maize by setting up a millet village at Attappady. The project aimed at protecting seeds of traditional varieties of millets and ensures food security and livelihood for tribals.
➢ Millet is a common term to categorize small-seeded grasses that are often termed nutri-cereals or dryland-cereals, and includes sorghum, pearl millet, ragi, small millet, foxtail millet, proso millet, barnyard millet, kodo millet and other millets.
➢ Millets are nutritionally superior to wheat & rice owing to their higher levels of protein with more balanced amino acid profile, crude fiber & minerals such as Iron, Zinc, and Phosphorous, millets can provide nutritional security and act as a shield against nutritional deficiency, especially among children and women.
➢ The anaemia (iron deficiency), B-complex vitamin deficiency, pellagra (niacin deficiency) can be effectively tackled with intake of less expensive but nutritionally rich food grains like millets.

Golden rice in Bangladesh:
➢ Bangladesh farmers and environment groups are angry over the government's decision to allow commercial cultivation of the controversial genetically modified (GM) rice, popularly called as the golden rice.
➢ Locals fear that the introduction of golden rice will impact their traditional agriculture system.

➢ Activists fear that commercial cultivation would lead to the loss of Bangladesh's rich bio-diversity. This could further push for public acceptance of genetically-modified crops and erode our food diversity and our local and traditional seeds, as well as increase corporate control on agriculture system.

➢ In 1999, a group of European scientists led by Dr Ingo Potrykus tried to change traditional rice by developing genetically-engineered rice that contains beta-carotene — by inserting bacteria and daffodil and maize genes into it. This is the golden rice, called so because of the golden colour of its grains.

➢ The golden rice was introduced in 2000 and argued to be the panacea for world's malnutrition problem. It was claimed that the rice is bio-fortified, and is supposedly high in Vitamin A, Iron and Zinc.

Technical Textiles:

➢ A Seminar was recently organized by Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation on "Use of Technical Textiles in Water Resources Works".

➢ Technical Textiles are defined as Textile material and products manufactured primarily for their Technical performance and functional properties rather than aesthetic and decorative characteristics.

➢ Technical textiles include textiles for automotive applications, medical textiles (e.g., implants), geotextiles (reinforcement of embankments), agrotextiles (textiles for crop protection), and protective clothing (e.g., heat and radiation protection for fire fighter clothing, molten metal protection for welders, stab protection and bulletproof vests, and spacesuits).

AGROTEX	BUILDTEX	CLOTHTEX	GEOTEX
• Shade-nets • Mulch-matsCrop-covers • Anti-hail nets and bird protection nets • Fishing nets	• Architectural Membranes • Awnings & Canopies • Hoardings nad Signages • Floor and Wall coverings • Scaffolding nets • cotton canvas tarpaulins	• Shoe laces Interlinings • Zip fasteners • Elastic narrow fabrics (Tapes) • Garments • Umbrella cloth	• Geogrids • Geonets • Geocomposites

HOMETEX	INDUTEX	MEDITEX	MOBILTEX
• Fiberfil • Mattress and pillow components • Carpet backing cloth (jute & Synthetic) • Stuff toys • Blinds	• Filtration Products • Comveyor belts • Drive belts • Bolting cloth • Computer printer ribbon • Paper making fabrics	• Diapers • Sanitary napkins • Contact lenses • Surgical products and • artificial implants • Surgical gowns	• Seat belt webbings • Airbags • Helmets • Seat upholstery • Airline Disposables • Nylon tyre cords

DEKOTEX	PACKTEX	PROTEX	SPORTEX
• Environmental Engineering • Environmental protection • Recycling • Waste Disposal	• Polyolefin woven sacks • FIBC • Leno bags • Wrapping fabrics • Jute hessian and sacks	• Bullet Proof Jackets • Fire Retardant apparels • Fire retardant furnishing fabrics • Chemical Protection clothing • High visibility clothing • Industrial gloves	• Sports composites and nets • Artificial turf • Parachute Fabrics • Sport shoes components • Tents • Swimwear

➢ Even while Technical Textiles have been extensively used in developed as well as many developing countries, India has yet to capitalise the technical, economical and environmental benefits on large scale.

➢ Various parts of India are subjected to floods and environmental degradation. In some of the terrains, the flood management and control can rely on Technical Textiles tubes, containers and bags. Technical Textiles have been found to perform better than concrete as water protection component because of permeability, flexibility and ease of underwater placement.

Fall army worm:

➢ First reported in India last year, the Fall Armyworm (FAW) or Spodoptera frugiperda has become a major problem for farmers this year, with the pest hitting the production of the crop.

➢ More than 50% of the country has reported cases of FAW infestation this year.

➢ Ahead of the new kharif season, FAW poses a serious challenge before farmers due to lack of knowledge about the pest and lack of clarity on how to tackle it.

➢ If these problems are not addressed urgently, vast tracts of crops can be laid to waste by this pest.

➢ A native of the tropical and sub-tropical regions of the Americas, FAW was first detected in the African continent in 2016. Since then, it has spread to other countries such as China, Thailand, Malaysia and Sri Lanka.

➢ It was reported in India for the first time last year, when it affected crops in Karnataka. Within a span of only six months, almost 50 per cent of the country, including Mizoram, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and West Bengal, has reported FAW infestations.

INFRASTRUCTURE:-

Bharatmala Pariyojana:

➢ Bharatmala Project is the second largest highways construction project in the country since NHDP, under which almost 50,000 km or highway roads were targeted across the country. Bharatmala will look to improve connectivity particularly on economic corridors, border areas and far flung areas with an aim of quicker movement of cargo and boosting exports.

➢ The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) plans to raise Rs10,000 crore through Bharatmala Taxable Bonds in the ongoing financial year.

➢ As per the internal and extra budgetary resources approved for 2018-19 by the government, a sum of Rs62,000 crore is to be raised by NHAI through various instruments/sources including Bharatmala bonds.

Vande Bharat Express:

➢ India's first indigenously built engineless semi-high speed train, Train 18, has been named Vande Bharat Express.

➢ The train is set to run between Delhi and Varanasi at a maximum speed of 160 kmph.

➢ Train 18 is a flagship train set; the first prototype has been built by the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai, in a record time of 20 months.

➢ The train is a 100% 'Make in India' project and is claimed to be built at half the cost of a similar train set that is imported.

➢ 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 of Bio toilets.

BOLD–QIT project:

➢ Project BOLD-QIT (Border Electronically Dominated QRT Interception Technique) under CIBMS (Comprehensive Integrated Border Management system) has been inaugurated on India-Bangladesh border in Dhubri District of Assam.

➢ BOLD-QIT is the project to install technical systems under the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System (CIBMS), which enables BSF to equip Indo-Bangla borders with different kind of sensors in unfenced riverine area of Brahmaputra and its tributaries.

➢ The concept of CIBMS is the integration of manpower, sensors and command and control to improve situational awareness and facilitate quick response to emerging situations.

Launch of BOLD–QIT project in Dhubri, Assam by Union Home Minister **Shri Rajnath Singh**

| River Brahmaputra in Dhubri district covered with data network generated by Microwave communication, OFC Cables, DMR Communication, day and night surveillance Cameras and intrusion detection system | Provide feeds to BSF Control Rooms and enables Quick Reaction Teams to stop cross border crimes | Earlier on 17th September, 2018 Home Minister had inaugurated two smart fencing projects along International Border in J&K |

➢ Among major components of CIBMS is the 'virtual fence'. The second component is the command and control, which will help in optimum use of resources for border management. Another component is power management to keep CIBMS running.

➢ Border Security Force is responsible for safeguarding of 4,096 Km long International Border with Bangladesh. At various places, it is not possible to erect Border Fence due to the geographical barriers. The 61 Kms of Border area in District Dhubri, Assam where River Brahmaputra enters into Bangladesh is consisting of vast char lands and innumerable river channels thus making border guarding in this area, a daunting task especially during rainy season.

➢ The implementation of this project will not only help BSF to curb all type of cross border crimes but also provide respite to the troops from round the clock human surveillance.

Kaladan Project:

➢ The Indian and Myanmar's armies have, in a coordinated operation, destroyed at least 10 camps belonging to an insurgent group in Myanmar, which had become a threat to India's mega Kaladan Project in the neighbouring country. The operation was also undertaken keeping in view the safety of Indian workers engaged in the project. The military action carried out was codenamed Operation Sunrise.

➢ The Kaladan project connects Sittwe Port in Myanmar to the India-Myanmar border.

➢ The project was jointly initiated by India and Myanmar to create a multi-modal platform for cargo shipments from the eastern ports to Myanmar and to the North-eastern parts of the country through Myanmar.

➢ It is expected to open up sea routes and promote economic development in the North-eastern states, and also add value to the economic, commercial and strategic ties between India and Myanmar. This project will reduce distance from Kolkata to Sittwe by approximately 1328 km and will reduce the need to transport good through the narrow Siliguri corridor, also known as Chicken's Neck.

Sela Tunnel:
➢ Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently laid the foundation stone for the strategically important Sela Tunnel Project in Arunachal Pradesh.
➢ The project, costing Rs 687 crore, is being constructed by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) and would be completed in the next three years.
➢ Once the 12.04-km tunnel is complete it will give a fillip to the overall development of the area as it will provide all-weather connectivity to Tawang and other areas.
➢ It will also reduce the traveling time from Tezpur to Tawang by more than an hour and boost tourism and related economic activities in the region.
➢ Till now, the entry to the area was only through the 13,700-feet Sela Pass, which is covered in snow in the winters making the movement of vehicles difficult.

➢ The development is a part of the Union Government's effort to develop connectivity infrastructure in border areas to secure India's defence. The proposal to build the Sela Pass comes amid concerns in the defence establishment over China's growing assertiveness along the nearly 4,000 km-long Sino-India border.

ENERGY

Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN yojana:

➢ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the "Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN (Jaiv Indhan-Vatavaran Anukool fasal awashesh Nivaran) Yojana".

➢ The scheme provides financial support to Integrated Bioethanol Projects using lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstock.

➢ The scheme focuses to incentivise 2G Ethanol sector and support this nascent industry by creating a suitable ecosystem for setting up commercial projects and increasing Research & Development in this area.

➢ Apart from supplementing the targets envisaged by the Government under EBP programme, the scheme will also have the following benefits:

➢ Meeting Government of India vision of reducing import dependence by way of substituting fossil fuels with Biofuels.

➢ Achieving the GHG emissions reduction targets through progressive blending/ substitution of fossil fuels.

➢ Addressing environment concerns caused due to burning of biomass/ crop residues & improve health of citizens.

➢ Improving farmer income by providing them remunerative income for their otherwise waste agriculture residues.

➢ Creating rural & urban employment opportunities in 2G Ethanol projects and Biomass supply chain.

➢ Contributing to Swacch Bharat Mission by supporting the aggregation of nonfood biofuel feedstocks such as waste biomass and urban waste.

➢ Indigenizing of Second Generation Biomass to Ethanol technologies.

INDICES

Democracy Index:

The Economist released Democracy Index 2018.

The Democracy Index is based on five categories:

✓ electoral process and pluralism;

✓ civil liberties;

✓ the functioning of government;

✓ political participation; and

✓ political culture.

Based on their scores on 60 indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime:

➢ full democracy;

➢ flawed democracy;

➢ hybrid regime; and

➢ authoritarian regime.

➢ India is ranked at 41 and is classified as a 'flawed democracy' according to the index. India achieved a score of 7.23 on the index to maintain its position. This is the lowest ever score attributed to India in the index ever since its publication.

➢ India ranks below the US (ranked 25th in the index) and other so called 'flawed democracies' like Italy, France, Botswana and South Africa.

➢ The report defines a flawed democracy as nations that "have free and fair elections and, even if there are problems (such as infringements on media freedom), basic civil liberties are respected. However, there are significant weaknesses in other aspects of democracy, including problems in governance, an underdeveloped political culture and low levels of political participation."

Corruption Perception Index:

➢ Corruption Perception Index has been released for the year 2018.

➢ It is a composite index that draws from 12 surveys to rank nations around the globe. It has become a benchmark gauge of perceptions of corruption and is used by analysts and investors.

➢ The index is also based on expert opinions of public sector corruption and takes note of range of factors like whether governmental leaders are held to account or go unpunished for corruption, the perceived prevalence of bribery, and whether public institutions respond to citizens' needs.

➢ The index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople.

➢ It uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean.

➢ International Corruption Perception Index make the following observations:

- Denmark is the world least corrupt country scoring 88 out of 100 points. Denmark is followed by New Zealand and Finland.
- Somalia has been ranked last with a score of 10 behind South Sudan and Syria.
- India's ranking increased from 81st in 2017 to 78 in 2018
- More than two-thirds of evaluated countries scored below 50 points, while the average score remained at last year's level of only 43 points.
- For the first time the United States dropped out of the top 20 and it was ranked at 22nd.
- Along with Brazil, US was placed in the watch list by Transparency International.

World Happiness Report:
- The United Nations has released the World Happiness Report- 2019.
- The list is topped by Finland for the second year in a row.
- The US ranks at 19th place despite being one of the richest countries in the world.
- India figures at 140th place, seven spots down from last year.
- People in war-torn South Sudan are the most unhappy with their lives.
- It is based on a questionnaire which measures 14 areas within its core questions: (1) business & economic, (2) citizen engagement, (3) communications & technology, (4) diversity (social issues), (5) education & families, (6) emotions (well-being), (7) environment & energy, (8) food & shelter, (9) government and politics, (10) law & order (safety), (11) health, (12) religion and ethics, (13) transportation, and (14) work. The results are then correlated with other factors, including GDP and social security.

Purchasing Managers Index (PMI):
- 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.
- A figure above 50 denotes expansion in business activity. Anything below 50 denotes contraction. Higher the difference from this mid-point, greater the expansion or contraction. The rate of expansion can also be judged by comparing the PMI with that of the previous month data. If the figure is higher than the previous month's then the economy is expanding at a faster rate. If it is lower than the previous month then it is growing at a lower rate.
- The PMI is usually released at the start of the month, much before most of the official data on industrial output, manufacturing and GDP growth becomes available. It is, therefore, considered a good leading indicator of economic activity. Economists consider the manufacturing growth measured by the PMI as a good indicator of industrial output, for which official statistics are released later. Central banks of many countries also use the index to help make decisions on interest rates.

World Press Freedom Index 2019:
- The Reporters Without Borders (RSF) has released the World Press Freedom Index 2019, reflecting growing animosity towards journalists.
- The index has been topped by Norway again for the third year, followed by Finland and Sweden at second and third positions, respectively.
- Only 24 percent of the 180 countries and territories were classified as "good" or "fairly good", as opposed

➢ to 26 percent last year.

➢ Of all the world's regions, Americas (North and South) suffered the greatest deterioration, falling by 3.6 percent, in its regional score.

➢ The Middle East and North Africa region continues to be the most difficult and dangerous for journalists.

➢ Syria (174th) continues to be extremely dangerous for media personnel and as does Yemen (168th).

➢ The Asia-Pacific region continues to rank third last. The number of murdered journalists was extremely high in Afghanistan, India and Pakistan. Disinformation is becoming a big problem in the region.

➢ India's rank dropped down to 140th from 138th in 2018, two points below the previous year.

➢ As per the Index, one of the most striking features of the current state of press freedom in India is violence against journalists including police violence, attacks by Maoist fighters, criminal groups and corrupt politicians.

➢ The media coverage in the sensitive regions like Kashmir continues to be very difficult. Even the entry of foreign reporters is prohibited in Kashmir and the Internet is often disconnected there.

Major global indices in 2018: India's ranking:

➢ In World Bank's Ease of Doing Business rankings portray, we rank 77th on a list of 190 economies that are doing well for businesses. India improved its rank substantially on the Ease of Doing Business index from 132 in 2016, to 100 in 2017, and further to 77 in 2018.

➢ In the Human Development Index (HDI), compiled by the United Nations Development Program, taking parameters like education, health and income into account, India has done slightly better than the previous year as it climbed up a spot from 131 to 130 out of 189 nations.

➢ In Happiness Index, India slipped 11 spots from 122nd rank of 2017 to become the 133rd happiest nation in the world. It is an annual publication carried out by United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network since 2012.

➢ In the Global Peace Index, India has performed poorly and has done just a shade better than its previous performance of 137 as we rank 136 this time. Iceland, New Zealand, Austria, Denmark and Canada are the most peaceful countries, according to GPI.

➢ Global Hunger Index has also shown a fall in India's ranking from the past year. While India ranked 100th in a list of 119 countries last year, the 2018 performance is worse as now it is on 103rd spot. According to the report, "a ranking below 100 shows that a country's undernourishment, child wasting, child stunting, and child mortality levels are at the highest level."

2 . Issues on Social Development

EDUCATION:

YUva VIgyani KAryakram:

➢ ISRO recently inaugurated the Young Scientist Programme YUVIKA 2019.

➢ It is a special programme for School Children, in tune with the Government's vision "Jai Vigyan, Jai Anusandhan".

➢ The Program is primarily aimed at imparting basic knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science and Space Applications to the younger ones with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of Space activities.

➢ It is proposed to select 3 students each from each State/ Union Territory to participate in this programme covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus.

➢ Those who have just completed 9th standard will be eligible for the online registration. The selection is based on the 8th Standard academic performance and extracurricular activities. Students belonging to the rural area have been given special weightage in the selection criteria. In case there is tie between the selected candidates, the younger candidates will be given priority.

HEALTH:

e-cigarettes:

➢ The Commerce Ministry has asked the Health Ministry to frame a law banning manufacture and sale of e-cigarettes in the country as in the absence of a domestic legislation, it would not be possible to put a blanket ban on its imports.

➢ An electronic cigarette (or e-cig) is a battery-powered vaporizer that mimics tobacco smoking. It works by heating up a nicotine liquid, called "juice."

➢ Nicotine juice (or e-juice) comes in various flavors and nicotine levels. e-liquid is composed of five ingredients: vegetable glycerin (a material used in all types of food and personal care products, like toothpaste) and propylene glycol (a solvent most commonly used in fog machines.) propylene glycol is the ingredient that produces thicker clouds of vapor.

➢ Proponents of e-cigs argue that the practice is healthier than traditional cigarettes because users are only inhaling water vapor and nicotine.

➢ As e-cigarettes contain nicotine and not tobacco, they do not fall within the ambit of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Prohibition of Advertisement and Regulation of Trade and Commerce, Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 2003 (COTPA), which mandates stringent health warnings on the packaging and advertisements of tobacco products.

➢ The current unregulated sale of e-cigarettes is dangerous for a country like India where the number of smokers is on the decline (WHO Global Report, 2015) as it increases the possibility of e-cigarettes becoming a gateway for smoking by inducing nicotine addiction and perpetuating smoking by making it more attractive, thereby encouraging persons to become users of tobacco as well as e-cigarettes.

➢ As per the report, Electronic Nicotine Delivery Systems (ENDS) (also known as e-cigarettes) emits nicotine, the addictive component of tobacco products. In addition to dependence, nicotine can have adverse effects on the development of the foetus during pregnancy and may contribute to cardiovascular disease.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN
Swachh Shakti 2019:
- ➤ The Swachh Shakti Programme is a national event which aims to bring in to focus the leadership role played by rural women in Swachh Bharat Mission.
- ➤ Launched in 2017, the Programme is a part of ongoing activities under the aegis of the Swachh Bharat Mission, launched on October 2, 2014 by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to achieve a clean and Open Defecation Free (ODF) India by October 2, 2019.
- ➤ The programme is attended by women panchayats and sarpanchs from across the country.
- ➤ The first edition of Swachh Shakti programme was launched from Gandhinagar, Gujarat by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi on International Women's Day 2017. The second edition was launched from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.
- ➤ Swachh Shakti 2019 Awards were recently distributed by the PM on the occasion of Swach Shakti 2019 programme.

WATER AND SANITATION
Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan:
- ➤ The government of Gujarat has launched the second edition of the water conservation scheme Sujalam Sufalam Jal Sanchay Abhiyan.
- ➤ The scheme aims to deepen water bodies in the state before monsoon to increase storage of rainwater to be used during times of scarcity.
- ➤ It involves cleaning and desilting of riverfronts, sprucing up of Irrigation canals.
- ➤ The first edition witnessed an increase in the water storage capacity of more than 11,000 lakh cubic feet rainwater through different sources like ponds, reservoirs, check dams, bori bandh and other.
- ➤ The desilting had also generated a huge amount of loose/soil or clay which can be used by farmers to increase agricultural productivity.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT
National Minimum Wage:
- ➤ The Ministry of Labour and Employment had constituted an expert committee in January 2017, under the Chairmanship Dr. Anoop Satpathy to review and recommend methodology for fixation of National Minimum Wage (NMW).
- ➤ Using the nutritional requirement norms as recommended by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) for Indian population, the report has recommended a balanced diet approach which is culturally palatable for fixation of national minimum wage.
- ➤ Accordingly, it has proposed that food items amounting to the level of ± 10 per cent of 2,400 calories, along with proteins ≥ 50 gm and fats ≥ 30 gm per day per person to constitute a national level balanced food basket.
- ➤ It also proposes minimum wage should include reasonable expenditure on 'essential non-food items', such as clothing, fuel and light, house rent, education, medical expenses, footwear and transport, which must be equal to the median class and expenditure on any 'other non-food items' be equivalent to the sixth fractile (25-30 per cent) of the household expenditure distribution as per the NSSO-CES 2011/12 survey data.

REGION - SPECIFIC MINIMUM WAGES PROPOSED				
REGION 1	**REGION 2**	**REGION 3**	**REGION 4**	**REGION 5**
Rs 342/day or Rs 8,892/month	Rs 380/day or Rs 9,880/month	Rs 414/day or Rs 11,622/month	Rs 447/day or Rs 11,622/month	Rs 386/day or Rs 10,036/month
Assam, Bihar, Jharkand, MP, Odhisa, UP and West Bengal	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Chattisgarh, Rajasthan, J&K and Uttarakhand	Gujarat, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharasthra and Tamil Nadu	Delhi, Goa, HP, Haryana and Punjab	Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Sikkim, Mizoram and Tripura

➢ On the basis of the details mentioned above, the report has recommended to fix the need based national minimum wage for India at INR 375 per day (or INR 9,750 per month) as of July 2018, irrespective of sectors, skills, occupations and rural-urban locations for a family comprising of 3.6 consumption unit.

➢ It has also recommended to introduce an additional house rent allowance (city compensatory allowance), averaging up to INR 55 per day i.e., INR 1,430 per month for urban workers over and above the NMW.

BILLS AND ACTS

Changes in reservations:

➢ The Union Cabinet has approved a proposal for introduction of the Constitution (One Hundred and Twenty-Fourth Amendment) Bill, extending 10% quota to "the economically weaker sections in the general category that are not covered by any of the existing schemes of reservation".

➢ The bill is designed to amend the Constitution to extend 10% reservation in direct recruitment in government jobs and for admissions in higher educational institutions to "economically weaker" sections among all castes and communities, Christians and Muslims included, who are not eligible under the existing quotas.

➢ The proposed amendment Bill will define Economically Weaker Section (EWS) as one having:

✓ Annual household income below Rs 8 lakh.

✓ Agriculture land below 5 acres.

✓ Residential house below 1000 sqft.

✓ Residential plot below 100 yards in notified municipality.

✓ Residential plot below 200 yards in non-notified municipality area.

Are you eligible for EWS Reservation?
- Family Income Less than Rs.8 lakh per annum
- Agricultural land less than 5 acres
- Residential Flat less than 1000 sq.ft
- Residential Plot less than 100/200 sq.yards

Pie chart: Scheduled Tribes (ST) 7.5%, Scheduled Castes (SC) 15%, Merit 40.5%, Other Backward Castes (OBC) 27%, Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) Proposed* 10%
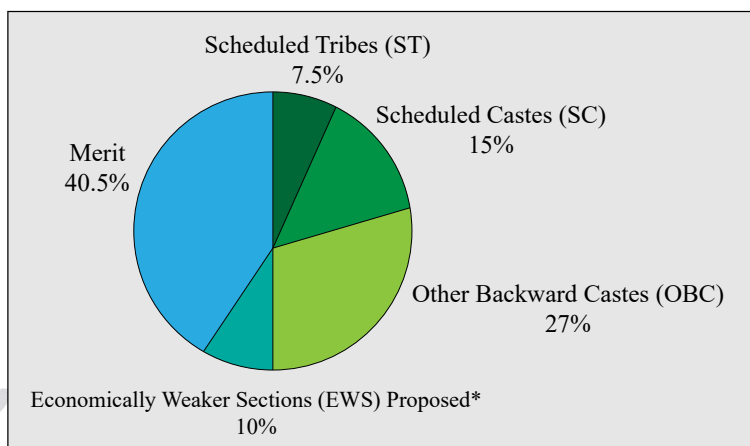
➤ It will need an amendment of Articles 15 (prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth) and 16 (equality of opportunity in matters of public employment) of the Constitution for this act to become a reality.

➤ The 10% reservation will be in addition to the existing cap of 50% reservation for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Classes, taking total reservation to 60%. The quota targets the poor among the upper castes. This will be over and above 50% mandated by Constitution and hence the need for Constitution amendment Bill.

Citizenship Bill:
➤ In recent weeks, Assam has seen many protests over the proposed Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016.

➤ With The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016, the government plans to change the definition of illegal migrants. The Bill, introduced in the Lok Sabha on July 15, 2016, seeks to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955 to provide citizenship to illegal migrants, from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, who are of Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi or Christian extraction. However, the Act doesn't have a provision for Muslim sects like Shias and Ahmediyas who also face persecution in Pakistan.

➤ The Bill also seeks to reduce the requirement of 11 years of continuous stay in the country to six years to obtain citizenship by naturalisation.

➤ Locals in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram are protesting against the contentious Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2016 because it would serve as a legal basis for legitimising the claims of Chakma and Hajong refugees as the indigenous people of State.

➤ Chakmas and Hajongs were originally residents of Chittagong Hill Tracts in the erstwhile East Pakistan. They left their homeland when it was submerged by the Kaptai dam project in the 1960s.

➤ The Chakmas, who are Buddhists, and the Hajongs, who are Hindus, also allegedly faced religious persecution and entered India through the then Lushai Hills district of Assam (now Mizoram). The Centre moved the majority of them to the North East Frontier Agency (NEFA), which is now Arunachal Pradesh.

➤ States sharing borders with Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan are likely to be affected.

The Constitution (125th Amendment) Bill:

➢ The government has introduced Constitution (125th Amendment) Bill in Rajya Sabha to increase the financial and executive powers of the 10 Autonomous Councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of the northeastern region. The amendment will impact one crore tribal people in Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.

➢ The proposed amendments provide for elected village municipal councils, ensuring democracy at the grassroot level.

➢ The village councils will be empowered to prepare plans for economic development and social justice including those related to agriculture, land improvement, implementation of land reforms, minor irrigation, water management, animal husbandry, rural electrification, small scale industries and social forestry.

➢ The Finance Commission will be mandated to recommend devolution of financial resources to them.

➢ The Autonomous Councils now depend on grants from Central ministries and the State government for specific projects. At least one-third of the seats will be reserved for women in the village and municipal councils in the Sixth Schedule areas of Assam, Mizoram and Tripura after the amendment is approved.

India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative:

➢ The Union Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change has signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs to launch the 'India-Norway Marine Pollution Initiative'.

➢ The Initiative will combat marine pollution, which is one of the fastest growing environmental concerns.

➢ Both countries will share experiences, competence and collaborate on efforts to develop clean and healthy oceans.

➢ Both the sides will jointly collaborate for sustainable use of ocean resources and growth in the blue economy.

➢ Through a range of implementing partners, this initiative will seek to support local governments in implementing sustainable waste management practices, develop systems for collecting and analysing information about sources and scope of marine pollution.

➢ They will also work towards beach clean-up efforts, awareness raising campaigns and pilot project using plastic waste as fuel substitution for coal in cement production.

3 . International Issues

Generalised System of Preferences (GSP):

➢ President Trump is planning to withdraw the Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) from India, the world's largest beneficiary of a scheme that has been in force since the 1970s.

➢ With this, India could lose a vital U.S. trade concession, under which it enjoys zero tariffs on $5.6 billion of exports to the United States.

➢ The trigger for the latest downturn in trade ties was India's new rules on e-commerce that restrict the way Amazon. com Inc. and Walmart-backed Flipkart do business in a rapidly growing online market set to touch $200 billion by 2027.

➢ That, coming on top of a drive to force global card payments companies such as Mastercard and Visa to move their data to India and the imposition of higher tariffs on electronic products and smartphones, left a broader trade package the two sides were working on through last year in tatters.

➢ The Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) is a U.S. trade program designed to promote economic growth in the developing world by providing preferential duty-free entry for up to 4,800 products from 129 designated beneficiary countries and territories.

Bolivian Lithium Reserves:
➤ India and Bolivia agreed to forge a mutually beneficial partnership to facilitate Bolivian supplies of lithium Carbonate to India and foster joint ventures for lithium battery/cell production plants in India.
➤ This agreement will make Bolivia, which is known to have one-fourth of the world's lithium reserves, one of the major providers of metal for India's e-mobility and e-storage needs.
➤ India is the second largest manufacturer of mobile phones in the world and has the ambitious goal of 30 per cent electric vehicles by 2030. But India imports all its lithium-ion batteries since India has no known sources of lithium, and zero lithium-ion battery manufacturing capabilities currently.
➤ As a result, India is heavily dependent on China, Taiwan and Japan for import, especially of batteries required for portable electronics.
➤ With this agreement, number of Indian companies setting up production capabilities in Bolivia goes up, as well as the import of lithium to India.
➤ This agreement could also turn out to be the backbone for the recently launched FAME India policy (Faster Adoption and Manufacture of (Hybrid and) Electric Vehicles) and will also give a substantial push to India's ambition to have at least 30 per cent of its vehicles run on electric batteries by 2030.

Agriculture institute in Malawi:
➤ India has signed an agreement with the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Consultancy Service (NABCONS) for setting up the India-Africa Institute of Agriculture and Rural Development (IAIARD) in Malawi, a landlocked country in southeastern Africa.
➤ The agreement is a part of India's efforts to enhance capacity in the areas of agro-financing and entrepreneurship development for African countries.
➤ The entire expenditure on India faculty, their travel, logistics and training course expenses for students from other African countries will be borne by the Indian Government for an initial period of three years.
➤ IAIARD will develop training programmes in the areas of micro-financing and agro-financing, among others.

Exit Visa system and Kafala:
➤ Qatar is set to abolish its controversial exit visa system for all foreign workers by the end of 2019. The new law allows most workers to leave the country without exit permits from their employers.
➤ Qatar has introduced a series of labour reforms since its selection as the 2022 World Cup host, with the event setting in motion a huge construction programme employing foreign workers.
➤ In September 2018, Qatar approved legislation to scrap the "kafala", or sponsorship, system which required that foreign workers obtain permission from their employers to leave the country.
➤ As part of its pledge to reform the labour section, Qatar has also introduced a monthly minimum wage of 750 riyals ($206) and agreed to work closely with the ILO, which now has an office in the capital.
➤ The 'kafala' system is a system that lays down obligations in the treatment and protection of foreign 'guests'. Kafala means 'to guarantee' or 'to take care of' in Arabic.
➤ Under the system, a migrant worker's immigration status is legally bound to an individual employer or sponsor ('kafeel') during the contract period. The migrant worker cannot enter the country, transfer employment nor leave the country for any reason without first obtaining explicit written permission from the kafeel. The media have likened employment conditions under kafala to "modern-day slavery."

UN global terrorist:

➢ The United Nations Security Council has designated JeM Chief, Masood Azhar as a global terrorist after China lifted its technical hold on his listing under the UNSC 1267 sanctions committee.

➢ The proposal to designate Azhar under the 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council was moved by France, UK and the US.

Reasons for listing:

➢ He supported JeM since its founding.

➢ He was associated with the al-Qaeda by recruiting for them.

➢ He participated in the financing, planning, facilitating, preparing, or perpetrating of acts or activities or supplying, selling or transferring arms and related material.

➢ After affects of being labeled Global terrorist:

➢ Asset freeze: All member states of the United Nations are required to freeze without delay the funds and other financial assets or economic resources of designated individuals and entities.

➢ Travel ban: All member states are required to prevent the entry into or transit through their territories by designated individuals.

➢ Arms embargo: All member states are required to prevent the direct or indirect supply, sale and transfer from their territories or by their nationals outside their territories, or using their flag vessels or aircraft, of arms and related material of all types, spare parts, and technical advice, assistance, or training related to military activities, to designated individuals and entities.

➢ Azhar's designation as a global terrorist will force Pakistan to act against him and individuals and entities associated with him. This will effectively mean total immobilisation of Azhar and shutdown of his organisation and its institutions such as terror camps and madrasas.

World Reconstruction Conference (WRC4):

➢ The Fourth edition of the World Reconstruction Conference (WRC4) was held in Geneva. This conference was organized in conjunction with the 6th Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction (GPDRR).

➢ **Theme:** "Inclusion for Resilient Recovery".

➢ Participants: Experts, practitioners and stakeholders from governments, civil society, private sector, academia, international organizations and community-based organizations.

➢ The World Reconstruction Conference is a global forum that provides a platform to collect, assess, and share disaster reconstruction and recovery experiences and take forward the policy dialogue for an effective international disaster recovery and reconstruction framework.

➢ The international frameworks set up by the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development Goals, the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Paris Agreement on climate change all advocate for an increasing focus on resilience and inclusion.

4.Environmental Issues

CCPI:
➢ The 2019 edition of the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) has been released.
➢ On the basis of standardised criteria, the index evaluates and compares the climate protection performance of 58 countries that are, together, responsible for more than 90% of global energy-related CO_2 emissions. 80% of the evaluation is based on objective indicators of emissions trend and emissions level. 20% of the index results are built upon national and international climate policy assessments by more than 200 experts from the respective countries.
➢ The Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) is an instrument covering 58 countries and supposed to enhance transparency in international climate politics.
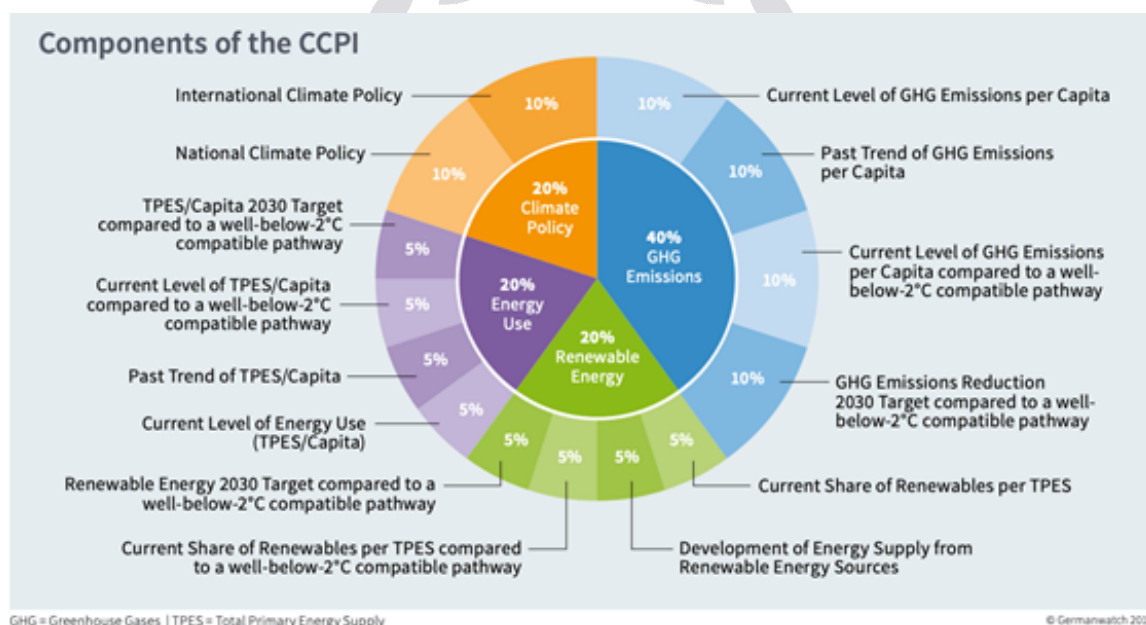
➢ Its aim is to encourage political and social pressure on those countries which have, up to now, failed to take ambitious actions on climate protection as well as to highlight countries with best-practice climate policies.

Highlights of the report:
✓ Only few countries have started working towards limiting global warming below 2°C or even at 1.5°C.
✓ Globally, Sweden is in top position, followed by Morocco and Lithuania in the CCPI 2019.
✓ The bottoms five in the list are Saudi Arabia, U.S., Iran, South Korea and Taiwan.
✓ India ranks 11th in this year's CCPI, improving its standing by three places compared to the previous edition.

Elephant corridors:
➢ Asian Elephant Alliance, an umbrella initiative by five NGOs, has come together to secure 96 out of the 101 existing corridors used by elephants across 12 States in India.
➢ NGOs Elephant Family, International Fund for Animal Welfare, IUCN Netherlands and World Land Trust have teamed up with Wildlife Trust of India's (WTI) in the alliance.
➢ The alliance joined hands to raise the mammoth sum as money was the main constraint in securing the land.

- Elephant corridors are narrow strips of land that connect two large habitats of elephants. Elephant corridors are crucial to reduce animal fatalities due to accidents and other reasons. So fragmentation of forests makes it all the more important to preserve migratory corridors.
- Nearly 40% of elephant reserves are vulnerable, as they are not within protected parks and sanctuaries. Also, the migration corridors have no specific legal protection.
- 'Gaj Yatra', a nationwide campaign to protect elephants, was launched on the occasion of World Elephant Day in 2017. The campaign is planned to cover 12 elephant range states. The elephant is part of India's animal heritage and the Government celebrates this day to spread awareness about the conservation of the species.

Atmospheric Water Generator (AWG):

- Navratna Defence PSU Bharat Electronics Ltd (BEL) has unveiled its new product, the Atmospheric Water Generator (AWG), an innovative solution to meet the ever-increasing need for drinking water worldwide, today at Aero India 2019.
- The Atmospheric Water Generator is being manufactured by BEL in collaboration with CSIR-IICT and MAITHRI, a start-up company based in Hyderabad.
- BEL's Atmospheric Water Generator employs a novel technology to extract water from the humidity present in the atmosphere and purify it.
- It uses heat exchange for condensing the atmospheric moisture to produce pure, safe and clean potable water.
- The AWG comes with a Mineralisation Unit, which is used to add minerals which are required to make the water potable.
- The AWG is configurable in static and mobile (vehicular) versions and is available in 30 litres/day, 100 litres/day, 500 litres/day and 1,000 litres/day capacities.
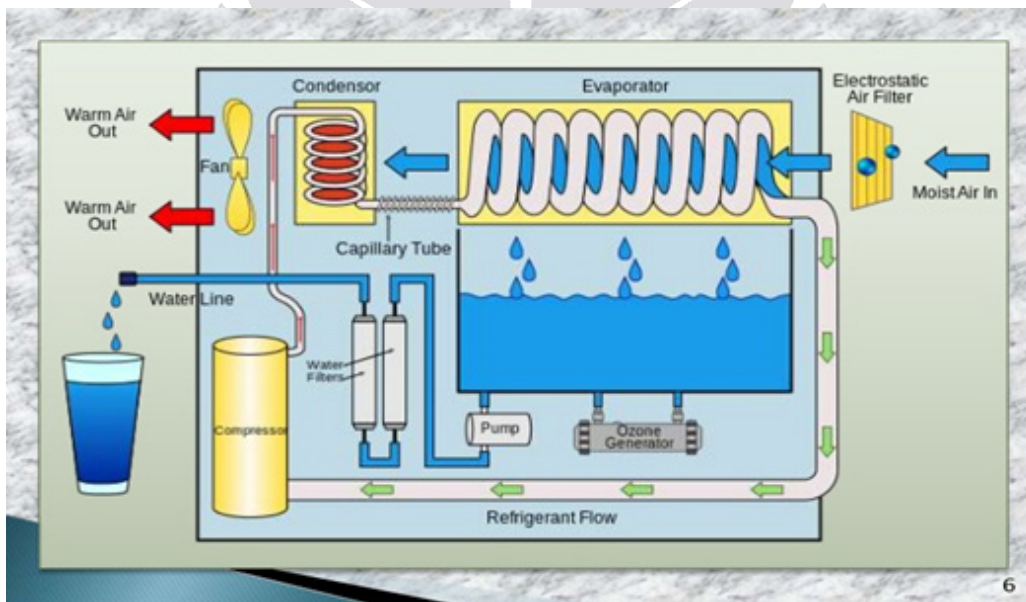
- The Atmospheric Water Generator can be used to provide drinking water in community centres and public places like health care centres, schools, colleges, offices, railway stations, bus stands, airports, sea ports, off-shore oil rigs, military establishments, remote field areas and remote establishments and residential complexes.

MSP for minor forest produce:

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs (MoTA) has added nine minor forest produce (MFP) items to its minimum support price (MSP) for MFP scheme. The total number of MFPs covered under the list is 49.

The nine new items are:

- → Bakul (dried bark),
- → Kutaj (dried bark),
- → Noni/Aal (dried fruits),
- → Sonapatha/Syonak pods,
- → Chanothi seeds, Kalihari (dried tubers),
- → Makoi (dried fruits),
- → Apang plant and
- → Sugandhrnantri roots/tubers.

World Wildlife Day:

➢ World Wildlife Day was celebrated on March 3rd.

➢ Theme: 'Life below Water: for People and Planet'.

➢ The theme aligns with goal 14 of UN Sustainable Development Goals.

➢ The ocean contains nearly 200,000 identified species, but actual numbers may be in the millions.

➢ Globally, the market value of marine and coastal resources and industries is estimated at US$3 trillion per year, about 5% of global GDP.

➢ Over three billion people depend on marine and coastal biodiversity for their livelihoods. Marine wildlife has sustained human civilization and development for millennia, from providing food and nourishment, to material for handicraft and construction. It has also enriched our lives culturally, spiritually, and recreationally in different ways.

Stubble burning:

➢ Stubble burning is a common practice followed by farmers to prepare fields for sowing of wheat in November as there is little time left between the harvesting of paddy and sowing of wheat. Stubble burning results in emission of harmful gases such carbon dioxide, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide along with particulate matter.

➢ Even though farmers are aware that the burning of straw is harmful to health, they do not have alternatives for utilising them effectively.

➢ The farmers are ill-equipped to deal with waste because they cannot afford the new technology that is available to handle the waste material.

➢ According to a study by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), the burning of agricultural residue which is a contributor to north India's winter pollution increases the risk of respiratory illnesses threefold for those who experience it. It may also be responsible for an annual $30 billion (approximately ₹2 trillion) loss in terms of days of work lost in States affected by crop burning.

➢ The findings were based on a study of the health records of 250,000 people in Haryana (which sees a spike in crop burning episodes in winter), and Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, which don't see similar burning episodes. The study is to appear in the peer-reviewed International Journal of Epidemiology.

➢ In Haryana, 5.4% of surveyed individuals reported suffering from ARI (Acute Respiratory Infection) whereas the reported ARI symptoms in southern States were only 0.1%.

➢ Among those who reported suffering from ARI, 83% also reported receiving treatment for ARI at a private or public medical facility.

➢ Whereas high-intensity fire exposure was virtually absent in south India, 17.5% of individuals in Haryana lived in a district where 100 or more fires per day were observed by the satellite.

➢ Unless Financial assistance is to be provided by the Centre for boosting farm mechanisation, it is difficult to completely stop stubble burning.

➢ States needs to make alternative arrangements for consumption of paddy straw into the soil as per the directions of the NGT.

Pacific decadal oscillation:

➢ Northeast India, one of the wettest places on the Earth has been experiencing rapid drying, especially in the last 30 years. The decreasing monsoon rainfall is associated with natural changes in the Pacific decadal oscillation (PDO).

➢ The "Pacific Decadal Oscillation" (PDO) is a long-lived El Niño-like pattern of Pacific climate variability. The PDO is detected as warm or cool surface waters in the Pacific Ocean, north of 20°N.

➢ Both PDO and ENSO(El Nino) have similar spatial climate fingerprints yet the major difference is that PDO persists for 20-30 years while the typical ENSO persists for 6 to 18 months.

➢ The primary climatic fingerprints of the PDO are most visible in the North Pacific/North American sector, while secondary signatures exist in the tropics. On the contrary, the primary climatic fingerprints of the ENSO are visible in tropics while secondary are visible in North Pacific/North American sector.

➢ The PDO has two cycles, viz. Cold Cycle and Warm Cycle, very much similar to La Nina and El Nino of the ENSO cycle.

International Day for Biological Diversity:

➢ United Nations (UN) has adopted May 22 as The International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB) to increase understanding and awareness of biodiversity issues. Objective of observing this day is to spread awareness about species turning endangered or going to extinct.

➢ 2019 theme is – "Our Biodiversity, Our Food, Our Health."

➢ First Biological Diversity International Day was observed by Second Committee of the UN General Assembly on December 29, 1993. Few years later in year 2000, UN General Assembly adopted 22 May as International Day for Biological Diversity (IDB).

5. Science and Technology

National Science Day 2018:

➢ National Science Day is celebrated on 28th of February every year in order to commemorate the invention of the Raman Effect in India by the Indian physicist, Sir Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman on the same day in the year 1928.

➢ For his great success in the field of science in India, Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman was awarded and honored with the Nobel Prize in the Physics in the year 1930.

➢ **Theme:** "Science for the People and the People for Science."

EMISAT MISSION:

➢ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has launched the country's first electronic surveillance satellite, EMISAT.

➢ It was launched on-board PSLV-C45. As many as 28 small satellites of international customers were also put in space as secondary riders.

> EMISAT is an advanced electronic intelligence (ELINT) satellite jointly developed by ISRO-DRDO. It is meant for electromagnetic spectrum measurements. Space-based electronic intelligence or ELINT from the 436-kg spacecraft will add teeth to situational awareness of the Armed Forces as it will provide location and information of hostile radars placed at the borders.

> The main capability of EMISAT is in signal intelligence. It intercepts signals broadcasted by communication systems, radars, and other electronic systems. The Ka-band frequency that EMISAT is sensitive to, allows India's newest spy in the sky to scan through ice, rain, coastal zones, land masses, forests and wave heights with ease.

Poly (Diketoenamine):

> US researchers have designed a fully recyclable plastic which can be disassembled into its constituent

> Unlike conventional plastics, the monomers of PDK plastic could be recovered and freed from any compounded additives simply by dunking the material in a highly acidic solution.

> It can be fully recycled into new materials of any form, shape or colour without any loss of its performance or quality.

> Not only does acid break down PDK polymers into monomers, but the process also allows the monomers to be separated from entwined additives.

> The new material takes recycling into consideration from a molecular perspective. It means that this recyclable plastic can be disassembled into its constituent parts at molecular level.

6. Miscellaneous

Kushi scheme:

➢ Khushi is a female health and hygiene program run by the Government of Odisha to provide free sanitary pads to girl students in Odisha. It was launched on February 26, 2018, by the Chief Minister of Odisha Naveen Patnaik. The Government of Odisha will spend 70 Crore Indian rupees annually for running this program in the state.

➢ Under this scheme, the Health Department of Odisha Government aims to provide free sanitary pads to 1.7 million girl students from grade 6th to 12th in government and government-aided schools. Also, it aims to promote health and hygiene among school going girls and higher retention of girls in school.

OSIRIS-Rex:

➢ NASA's OSIRIS-Rex spacecraft has set a new milestone in cosmic exploration by entering orbit around an asteroid, Bennu, the smallest object ever to be circled by a human-made spaceship.

➢ OSIRIS-Rex is the first-ever US mission designed to visit an asteroid and return a sample of its dust back to Earth.

➢ The plan is for OSIRIS-REx to orbit Bennu through mid-February, using a suite of five scientific instruments to map the asteroid in high resolution to help scientists decide precisely where to sample from.

➢ OSIRIS-Rex stands for Origins, Spectral Interpretation, Resource Identification, Security-Regolith Explorer.

➢ Bennu is a primitive asteroid, meaning it hasn't significantly changed since the beginning of the Solar System (over 4 billion years ago). It is also very carbon-rich, meaning it may contain organic molecules, which could have been precursors to life on Earth.

➢ Additionally, Bennu is of interest as it is a Potentially Hazardous Asteroid (PHA). Every 6 years, Bennu's orbit brings it within 200,000 miles of the Earth, which means it has a high probability of impacting Earth in the late 22nd Century.

Samwad:

➢ Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO) launched a new platform named "Samwad with Students" (SwS) in Bengaluru.

➢ ISRO aims to engage youngsters across India to capture their scientific temperament.

➢ The new conversation mission will inspire students cutting across schools and colleges.

➢ The first SwS event saw 40 wards and 10 teachers from select schools interact with ISRO Chairman Dr K Sivan at the Anthariksh Bhavan.

NALSA:

➢ President Ram Nath Kovind has nominated Justice AK Sikri as Executive Chairman of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA).

➢ NALSA has been constituted under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987, to provide free legal services to weaker sections of society. The aim is to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reasons of economic or other disabilities.

➢ Services provided by the agency include free legal aid in civil and criminal matters for the poor and marginalised people who cannot afford the services of a lawyer in any court or tribunal.

➢ Free legal services include provision of aid and advice to beneficiaries to access the benefits under the welfare statutes and schemes and to ensure access to justice in any other manner.

'Prayagraj':

➢ The Union Home Ministry has approved the proposal of the Uttar Pradesh Government to rename Allahabad as Prayagraj.

➢ 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 Kumbh Mela, continued to be called Prayag.

Women's Wall:

➢ Kerala government organised the Women's Wall or Vanitha Mathil to "protect renaissance values.

➢ Around thirty lakh women formed a human chain across the National Highway from Kasargod to Thiruvananthapuram, around 620-kilometre long, extending their support to the state government's resolve to implement the Supreme Court's verdict allowing women of all ages access to Sabarimala and to protect the secular and progressive values of Kerala.

➢ Organised by the government and supported by various social organisations having links with the renaissance movement, the Women's Wall is an attempt by the government to defend the state from communal forces.

Parivesh (Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous and Environmental Single-window Hub):

➢ It is an environmental single window hub for Environment, Forest, Wildlife and CRZ clearances. This Single-Window Integrated Environmental Management System has been developed in pursuance of the

spirit of 'Digital India' initiated by the Prime Minister and capturing the essence of Minimum Government and Maximum Governance.

➤ It seeks to give various types of clearances (e.g. Environment, Forest, Wildlife and Coastal Regulation Zone Clearances) from Central, State and district-level authorities.

➤ The system has been designed, developed and hosted by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, with technical support from National Informatics Centre, (NIC).

➤ PARIVESH offers a framework to generate economic growth and strengthens Sustainable Development through e- Governance. With automatic highlighting of non-compliance by the system, PARIVESH helps in improving the overall performance and efficiency of the whole appraisal process.

➤ It also helps the processing authorities, as it has a Single Window System for Central, State and District level clearances.

Asia Reassurance Initiative Act:

➤ U.S. President Donald J. Trump has signed into law the Asia Reassurance Initiative Act (ARIA), which has already been passed by the U.S. Senate.

➤ The ARIA Act calls for America's increased engagement in the Indo-Pacific region and strengthened support, including arms sales, for U.S. allies in the region.

➤ Authorizes US$ 1.5 billion annually for 5 years to enhance U.S. presence in the Indo-Pacific.

➤ Reaffirms U.S. security commitments to allies in the Indo-Pacific, including Japan, South Korea, and Australia and builds security partnerships with nations in Southeast Asia.

➤ Establishes a policy goal to peacefully denuclearize North Korea though the campaign of maximum pressure and engagement.

➤ Enforces U.S. freedom of navigation and overflight rights in the Indo-Pacific.

➤ Authorizes bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations with Indo-Pacific nations.

➤ Provides for robust U.S. commercial presence throughout the Indo-Pacific region to promote U.S. exports and additional trade facilitation efforts.

➤ Authorizes the imposition of penalties on entities and governments engaged in the theft of United States intellectual property.

Organizations Banned Under UAPA:

➤ The Central Government under Section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA) has declared the following Organizations as Unlawful Associates during the last three years:

✓ Islamic Research Foundation (IRF)

✓ National Liberation Front in Tripura (NLFT)

✓ All Tripura Tiger Forum (ATTF)

➤ Under Section 35 of UAPA, the Government on being satisfied that the organization is involved in terrorism had added the following organizations to the First Schedule of UAPA during the last three years:

✓ Al-Qaida in Indian Sub-continent (AQIS) and all its manifestations.

✓ Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP)/ISIS Wilayat Khorasan/Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham-Khorasan (ISIS-K) and all its manifestations.

✓ Khalistan Liberation Force and all its manifestations.

Monuments of national importance:

➢ The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) recently declared that it has added six structures to the list of monuments of national importance, taking the total number to 3,693.

➢ With 506 monuments under its belt, Karnataka continues to top the list in South India, followed by Tamil Nadu (413). Nationally, Karnataka is in the second place after Uttar Pradesh, which has 745 such monuments.

➢ The six monuments declared as Monuments of national importance in 2018 are:

✓ Old High Court Building in Nagpur, Maharashtra.

✓ Haveli of Agha Khan in Agra.

✓ Haveli of Hathi Khana in Agra.

✓ Neemrana Baori in Rajasthan's Alwar district.

✓ Group of Temples at Ranipur Jharail in Odisha's Bolangir district.

✓ Vishnu Temple in Kotali, Pithoragarh district, Uttarkhand.

Chief economist of IMF:

➢ Gita Gopinath has joined International Monetary Fund as its chief economist. She is the first woman to occupy the post of chief economist of IMF. She is the 11th chief economist of the IMF.

➢ The Chief Economist is also the Director of the Fund's Research Department and is responsible for providing independent advice to the Fund on its policy issues, integrating ideas of the research in the design of policies, conveying these ideas to the policymakers inside and outside the fund and managing all research done at IMF.

➢ The Chief Economist is part of the senior leadership team of the IMF and directly advises the Managing Director.

Byorung Bridge:

➢ India's longest single-lane steel cable suspension bridge has been inaugurated over Siang River in Upper Siang district of Arunachal Pradesh.

➢ The bridge is 300-metre-long and is also known as byorung bridge. The bridge will reduce the distance between Yingkiong and Tuting in Arunachal Pradesh by almost 40 km.

➢ Siang River: The Tsangpo river, which originates in the Angsi Glacier in the Himalayas, enters India through Arunachal Pradesh where it is called by name Siang. The river is also called as Dihang in the plain regions. It is joined by the rivers Dibang and Lohit.

Rajasthan panchayat polls:

➢ The Rajasthan Assembly has passed two Bills, Rajasthan Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill, 2019 and the Rajasthan Municipality (Amendment) Bill, 2019 which seek to end the minimum education criterion for panchayat and civic poll candidates.

➢ The education criteria was introduced by the previous government, which stipulated that for contesting the zila parishad or panchayat samiti polls, a contestant must have a minimum qualification of secondary education (Class X).

➢ To contest the sarpanch elections, an aspirant from the general category must have passed Class VIII and a SC/ST aspirant must have passed Class V.

➢ Few experts are of the opinion that the requirement of minimum qualification for contesting elections is against the very spirit of 73rd and 74th amendments.

➢ It also violates the right of every citizen to vote and to contest elections, which form the basic structure of the constitution.

➢ It may be noted here that due to these restrictions, many able candidates were debarred from contesting elections. In one way, it can be said that this law has prevented many people from coming to the mainstream.

➢ Even Haryana had passed a similar law mandating minimum education qualification for those contesting in Panchayat Raj Institutions. The constitutional validity of this law of Haryana was questioned in the Supreme Court.

➢ The Supreme Court had upheld the constitutional validity of the law enacted by Haryana government to bar the illiterate from contesting panchayat polls in the state. The Supreme Court had ruled that "it is only education which gives a human being the power to discriminate between right and wrong, good and bad".

➢ The Supreme Court's interpretation is based on the fact that uneducated or illiterate people getting elected to the local bodies can easily be misled by officials if they don't know to write and read. In such cases, administrative actions that they are going can pose many challenges.

GI tag:

1) The Marayoor Jaggery, the traditional and handmade product from Idukki district of Kerala, has received the Geographical Indication (GI) tag from the Central Government.
   The Jaggery is produced in Marayoor, a town in Idukki district of Kerala. It is made from sugarcane and no chemicals are added during the manufacturing process.
   It is not produced in modern factories or using modern equipment. It is prepared in sheds located on the sugarcane farm.

2) For the first time in the arecanut sector, 'Sirsi Supari' grown in Uttara Kannada has received the Geographic Indication (GI) tag. It is cultivated in Yellapura, Siddapura and Sirsi taluks. Totgars' Cooperative Sale Society Ltd., Sirsi, is the registered proprietor of the GI.
   The arecanut grown in these taluks have unique features such as a round and flattened coin shape, particular texture, size, cross-sectional views, taste, etc. These features are not seen in arecanut grown in any other regions. Its average dry weight is 7.5 g and average thickness is 16 mm. This particular variety has a unique taste due to differences in chemical composition.

3) Kandhamal Haldi- The golden yellow spice, named after the district where it is produced, has been cultivated since time immemorial and is known for its medicinal value.
   Turmeric is the main cash crop of tribal people in Kandhamal. Apart from domestic use, turmeric is also used for cosmetic and medicinal purposes.

➢ More than 60,000 families (nearly 50% of Kandhamal population) are engaged in growing the variety. The crop is sustainable in adverse climatic conditions.

4) Coffee varieties that have received the GI recognition:
   ✓ Coorg Arabica coffee: grown specifically in the region of Kodagu district in Karnataka.
   ✓ Wayanaad Robusta coffee: grown specifically in the region of Wayanad district which is situated on the eastern portion of Kerala.
   ✓ Chikmagalur Arabica coffee: grown specifically in the region of Chikmagalur district and it is situated in the Deccan plateau, belongs to the Malnad region of Karnataka.
   ✓ Araku Valley Arabica coffee: grown in hilly tracks of Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh and Odisha

region. The coffee produce of Araku, by the tribals, follows an organic approach in which they emphasise management practices involving substantial use of organic manures, green manuring and organic pest management practices.

✓ Bababudangiris Arabica coffee: grown specifically in the birthplace of coffee in India and the region is situated in the central portion of Chikmagalur district. This coffee is also called high grown coffee which slowly ripens in the mild climate and thereby the bean acquires a special taste and aroma.

Kazakhstan renames its capital:

➢ Kazakhstan has renamed its capital Astana to Nursultan to honour outgoing leader Nursultan Nazarbayev.

➢ Mr Nazarbayev served nearly 30 years as leader of the oil-rich nation.

Reiwa:

➢ Japan on April 1, 2019 declared 'Reiwa' as the name of its new imperial era that will begin on May 1, 2019 once the new Crown Prince Naruhito ascends the Chrysanthemum Throne.

➢ Crown Prince Naruhito will succeed his father Emperor Akihito, who will abdicate the empire on April 30, 2019, putting an end to three decades long 'Heisei' era.

➢ The new era will be the 248th in the history of Japan.

➢ Japan's emperor has no political power, but remains a highly symbolic figure.

Service Voter:

➢ The soldiers of Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) were the first to cast their vote for the 2019 Lok Sabha elections in Arunachal Pradesh as Service Voters.

➢ Service voter belonging to defence and paramilitary forces have the option of either voting through postal ballot or through a proxy voter duly appointed by him/her.

➢ There are roughly 30 lakh service voters including defence and paramilitary forces who (in many cases with families at family stations) will cast their votes through service voter facility.

➢ Service voter is a voter having service qualification. According to the provisions of sub section (8) of Section 20 of Representation of People Act, 1950, service qualification means:

✓ Being a member of the armed Forces of the Union ; or

✓ Being a member of a force to which provisions of the Army Act, 1950 (46 of 1950), have been made applicable whether with or without modification ;

✓ Being a member of an Armed Police Force of a State, and serving outside that state; or

✓ Being a person who is employed under the Government of India, in a post outside India.

✓ A service voter who opts for voting through a proxy is called Classified Service Voter (CSV).

UN awards:

➢ West Bengal's Utkarsh Bangla and Sabuj Sathi schemes have won the prestigious World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) awards under the United Nations.

➢ Utkarsh Bangla and Sabuj Sathi were selected out of 1,062 nominations and they also topped the list in their respective categories.

➢ Utkarsh Bangla got the topmost award and emerged a winner in the Capacity Building category.

➢ Sabuj Sathi ranked in the first five as a champion project under the ICT application: E-Government category.

➢ Under Utkarsh Bangla, skill development training is given to youths. Several centres have been opened and

youths are being given training there. The trained youths are then absorbed in different industries.

➢ Sabooj Sathi is a scheme for distribution of bicycles to the students of class IX to XII studying in Govt. run and Govt. aided Schools and Madrasas.

Melamine:

➢ The government has extended the ban on import of milk and its products, including chocolates, from China till laboratories at ports for testing presence of toxic chemical melamine are upgraded.

➢ The ban was first imposed in September 2008 and extended subsequently from time to time.

➢ India is the world's largest producer and consumer of milk. It produces around 150 million tonne milk annually.

➢ Uttar Pradesh is the leading state in milk production followed by Rajasthan and Gujarat.

➢ Although India does not import milk, milk products from China, it has imposed the ban as a preventive measure.

➢ Melamine is an organic base chemical most commonly found in the form of white crystals rich in nitrogen.

➢ In China, where adulteration has occurred, water has been added to raw milk to increase its volume. As a result of this dilution the milk has a lower protein concentration. Companies using the milk for further production (e.g. of powdered infant formula) normally check the protein level through a test measuring nitrogen content. The addition of melamine increases the nitrogen content of the milk and therefore its apparent protein content.

➢ Addition of melamine into food is not approved by the FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius (food standard commission), or by any national authorities.
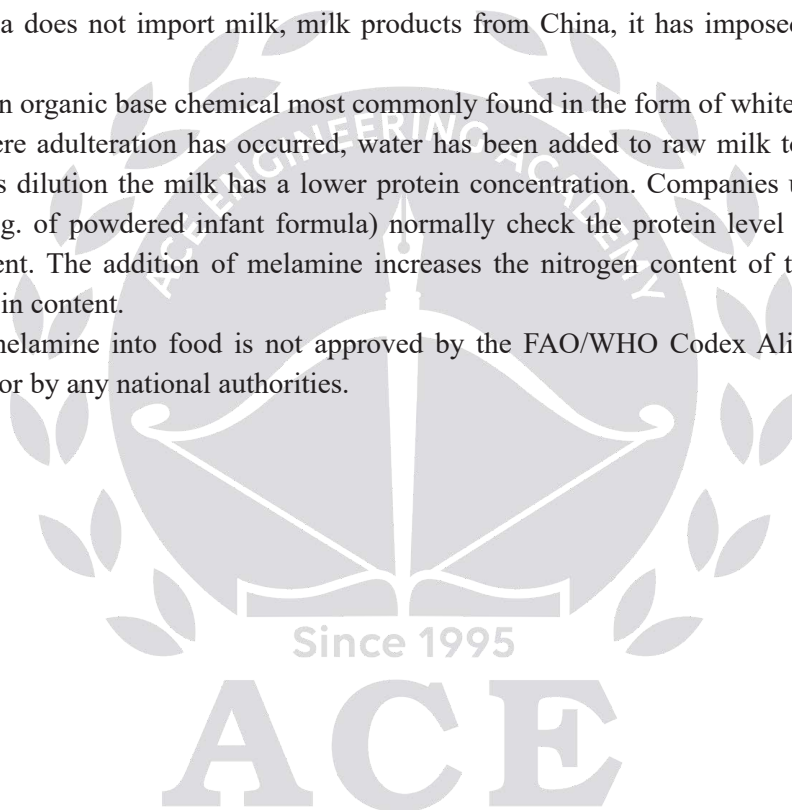
Government Schemes

I. SOCIAL SECURITY:

01. Atal Pension Yojna (APY)

Objective

➢ The subscribers would receive the fixed minimum pension at the age of 60 years, depending on their contributions.

Intended beneficiary:

➢ Open to all Indians between the age of 18 and 40

➢ Any bank account holder who is not a member of any statutory social security scheme can avail of the scheme.

➢ It is mainly focused on citizens in unorganized sector

Salient features:

➢ The central government would also co- contribute 50% of the total contribution or Rs. 1000 per annum, whichever is lower, to each eligible subscriber, for a period of 5 years.

➢ Will not be able to exit the scheme before the age of 60.

➢ In case of death of subscriber, the spouse of the subscriber shall be entitled for the same amount of pension till his or her death.

02. Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana

➢ The scheme will be implemented through Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).

➢ It aims to provide social security during old age and protect elderly persons aged 60 years and above against a future fall in their interest income due to uncertain market conditions.

➢ The scheme is meant to provide an assured pension based on a guaranteed rate of return of 8% per annum for ten years, with an option to opt for pension on a monthly/quarterly/half-yearly or annual basis.

➢ The difference between the return generated by LIC and the assured return of 8% per annum would be borne by Government of India as subsidy on an annual basis.

➢ VPBY-2017 is proposed to be open for subscription for a period of one year from the date of launch.

03. Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima yojana

Objective

Aimed at covering the population not covered under any accidental insurance cover at an highly affordable premium of just Rs.12 per year

Intended beneficiary

➢ Available to people in the age group 18 to 70 years

➢ Having a savings bank account

Salient Features

➢ Risk coverage available will be Rs. 2 lakhs for accidental death and permanent total disability

➢ Rs. 1 lakhs for permanent partial disability

04. Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana

Objective

➢ A one year life insurance scheme offering coverage for death due to any reason

Intended beneficiary

➢ Available to people in the age group of 18 to 50 years

Salient features

➢ It provides coverage of Rs. 2 lakh in case of death due to any reason. It charges an annual premium of Rs. 330.

II. AGRICULTURE and FARMER'S WELFARE:

01. PM Fasal Bima Yojana

Under the new scheme, farmers will have to pay a uniform premium of 2% for all kharif crops and1.5% for all Rabi crops.

➢ For annual commercial and horticultural crops, farmers will have to pay a premium of 5 %.

➢ The remaining share of the premium will continue to be borne equally by the Centre and the respective state governments.

➢ Under PMFBY, there will no upper limit on government subsidy and even if balance premium is 90%, it will be borne by the government.

➢ Earlier, there was a provision of capping the premium rate which resulted in low claims being paid to farmers.

➢ It is compulsory for farmers availing crop loans for notified crops in notified areas and voluntary for non-loanee farmers.

➢ Use of technology will be encouraged to a great extent.

➢ Smart phones will be used to capture and upload data of crop cutting to reduce the delays in claim payment to farmers.

➢ Remote sensing will be used to reduce the number of crop cutting experiments.

➢ Farm level assessment for localised calamities including hailstorms, unseasonal rains, landslides and inundation.

02. Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana

Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchai Yojana (PMKSY) is a national mission to improve farm productivity and ensure better utilization of the resources in the country.

➢ The primary objectives of PMKSY are to attract investments in irrigation system at field level, develop and expand cultivable land in the country, minimize wastage of water, enhance crop per drop by implementing water- saving technologies and precision irrigation.

➢ The goal is to open the doors for optimal water budgeting in all sectors. Tagline for PMKSY is "more crop per drop".

➢ PMKSY has been conceived amalgamating ongoing schemes:

➢ Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme (AIBP)

➢ Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP)

➢ On Farm Water Management (OFWM)

➢ States to draw up their own irrigation development plans based on District Irrigation Plan (DIP) and State Irrigation Plan (SIP).

➢ PMKSY funds would be given to states as 75 per cent grant by the central government and the remaining 25 per cent share is to be borne by the state government. But, for the north-eastern region and hilly states, the funding pattern would be 90:10.

- Har Khet ko Pani:
- This component mainly focuses on creation of new water sources through minor irrigation that includes both surface and groundwater.
- It also encompasses the repair, restoration and renovation of water bodies;
- Strengthening carrying capacity of traditional water sources, Construction of rain water harvesting structures under its Jal Sanchay sub-component.

03. Neeranchal Watershed Program:

Objective:

- To further strengthen and provide technical assistanceto the Watershed Component of PMKSY
- Access to irrigation to every farm (Har Khet Ko Pani) and efficient use of water (Per Drop More Crop)

Features:

- World Bank assisted National Watershed Management Project.
- Bring about institutional changes in watershed and rainfed agricultural management practices in India
- Build systems that ensure watershed programmes and rainfed irrigation management practices are better focussed, and more coordinated, and have quantifiable results
- Devise strategies for the sustainability of improved
- Watershed Management practices in programme areas, even after the withdrawal of project support
- Through the watershed plus approach, support improved equity, livelihoods, and incomes through forward linkages, on a platform of inclusiveness and local participation.

04. Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana:

Objective:

- To support and promote organic farming and thereby improving soil health.
- Reduce farmer's dependence on fertilizers and agricultural chemicals to improve yields
- Motivate the farmers for natural resource mobilization for input production.
- Government plans to form around 10 thousand clusters in three years and cover an area of 5 Lakh hectares under organic farming

Features:

- "Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana" is an elaborated component of Soil Health Management (SHM) of major project National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA).
- Cluster Approach: cluster approach. Fifty or more farmers form a cluster having 50 acre land to take organic farming. Each farmer will be provided Rs. 20000 per acre in three years for seed to harvesting crops and to transport them to market.
- Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) and Quality control
- Training and Online Registration of farmer
- Soil sample collection and testing
- Process documentation of conversion into organic methods, inputs used, cropping pattern followed, organic manures and fertilizer used etc., for PGS certification
- Inspection of fields of cluster member
- Adoption of organic village for manure management and biological nitrogen harvesting
- Integrated Manure Management
- Packing, Labelling and Branding of organic products of cluster

05. National Agricultural Market (NAM):

- National Agriculture Market portal eNAM is to connect e-mandis in several States.
- eNAM is an online inter-connectivity of e-mandis, aimed at ushering agriculture marketing reforms to enable farmers to get better price of their produce.
- Funded by Agri-Tech Infrastructure Fund (ATIF) which is set up through the Small Farmers Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC).
- Farmers can showcase their produce online from their nearest market and traders can quote price from anywhere.
- It will result in increased numbers of traders and greater competition. It will also ensure open price discovery and better returns to farmers.
- To integrate a wholesale mandis across the country with the online platform, the state governments have to amend their Agriculture Produce Market Committee (APMC) Act.

06. Krishi Vigyan Kendras:

Objective:

- To be a frontline extension in agriculture, and to serve as a single window mechanism for addressing the technology needs of farmers
- To Demonstrate of location specific technologies.
- To serve as links between research and extension and also with farmers.

Features:

- Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) has created a network of 642 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in the country
- Directorate of Extension in State Agriculture Universities
- also helps KVKs in its activities.
- KVKs lay strong emphasis on skill development training of rural youth, farm women and farmers
- KVKs provide latest technological inputs like seeds, planting materials and bio-products.
- KVKs advise farmers on timely crop/enterprise related recommendations, including climate resilient technologies
- KVKs diagnose and solve problems emerging from district agro-ecosystems and are perfectly located to lead adoption of innovations.

07. Mera Gaon-Mera Gaurav:

- Scientists to "select villages as per their convenience and remain in touch with the selected villages and provide information to the farmers on technical and other related aspects in a time frame through personal visits or on telephone.

Features:

- This scheme involves 6,000 scientists functioning at the various centres and institutes of the Indian Council of Agriculture Research (ICAR) and over 15,000 scientists working with state agricultural universities.
- Groups of four multidisciplinary scientists each will be constituted at these institutes and universities. Each group will "adopt" five villages within a radius of maximum 100 km.
- Scientists may perform the functions with the help of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) and Agriculture Technology Management Agency (ATMA).

08. National Gokul Mission:

Objective:

➤ To Conserve and Develop, and enhance the productivity of Indigenous Breeds

➤ To undertake breed improvement programme for indigenous cattle breeds so as to improve the genetic makeup and increase the stock;

➤ Enhance milk production and productivity;

➤ Upgrade nondescript cattle using elite indigenous breeds like Gir, Sahiwal, Rathi, Deoni, Tharparkar, Red Sindhi

Features:

➤ Rashtriya Gokul Mission is a focussed project under National Programme for Bovine Breeding and Dairy Development

➤ Establishment of Integrated Indigenous Cattle Centres or Gokul Grams in the native breeding tracts of indigenous breeds.

➤ Enhance the productivity of the indigenous breeds of India through professional farm management and superior nutrition

➤ Distribution of disease free high genetic merit bulls for natural service.

09. Sampada Yojana:

The Ministry of Food Processing Industries has been implementing several schemes under the umbrella of the 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana' (formerly known as SAMPADA - Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters).

They are –

1. Mega Food Parks (on going)
2. Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure (on going)
3. Creation/Expansion of Food Processing & Preservation Capacities (new)
4. Infrastructure for Agro-processing Clusters (new)
5. Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages (new)
6. Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure (on going)
7. Human Resources and Institutions (on going)

Objective:

The objective of PMKSY is to supplement agriculture, modernize processing and decrease Agri-Waste.

Impact:

➤ The implementation of PMKSY will result in creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet.

➤ It will provide a big boost to the growth of food processing sector in the country.

➤ It will help in providing better prices to farmers and is a big step towards doubling of farmers' income.

➤ It will create huge employment opportunities especially in the rural areas.

➤ It will also help in reducing wastage of agricultural produce, increasing the processing level, availability of safe and convenient processed foods at affordable price to consumers and enhancing the export of the processed foods.

10. Operation Greens:

The idea behind Operation Greens is to double the income of farmers by the end of 2022. 'Operation Greens' is launched on the lines of Operation Flood.

Objective:

Operation Greens aims to promote farmer producers organisations, agri-logistics, processing facilities and professional management.

The operation aims to aid farmers and help control and limit the erratic fluctuations in the prices of onions, potatoes and tomatoes.

'Operation Greens' promotes Farmer Producers Organizations (FPOs), agri-logistics, processing facilities and professional management. A sum of Rs 500 crore allotted for this project in 2018-19 Budget.

11. Soil health card scheme:

Objective: To issue soil health cards every 3 years, to all farmers of the country, so as to provide a basis to address nutrient deficiencies in fertilization practices.

Salient features:
- It is a centrally sponsored scheme launched by the Government of India in 2015.
- It is being implemented through the Department of Agriculture of all the State and Union Territory Governments.
- Soil Health Card issued to farmers carry crop-wise recommendations of nutrients and fertilizers required for the individual farms.
- The experts will analyze the strength and weaknesses (micro nutrients deficiency) of the soil collected from farms and suggest measures to deal with it.
- It will contain the status of his soil with respect to 12 parameters, namely N,P,K (Macro-nutrients); S (Secondary- nutrient); Zn, Fe, Cu, Mn, Bo (Micro - nutrients); and pH, EC, OC (Physical parameters).
- Based on this, the SHC will also indicate fertilizer recommendations and soil amendment required for the farm.

12. Kisan Credit Card:

Objective: To provide adequate and timely credit support from the banking system under single window.

Salient features:
- The loan disbursed under KCC is broad based and may be used for short term credit requirements for cultivation of crops, post-harvest expenses, produce marketing loan, consumption requirement of farmer household etc.
- Commercial Banks, RRBs and cooperatives are the implementing agency.

13. Kisan Urja Suraksha Evam Utthaan Mahaabhiyan (KUSUM) Scheme:

Objective: To provide financial and water security to farmers.

Features: It aims to add a solar capacity of 25,750 MW by 2022. The proposed scheme consists of three components:

Component-A: 10,000 MW of Decentralized Ground Mounted Grid Connected Renewable Power Plants.

Component-B: Installation of 17.50 lakh standalone Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps

Component-C: Solarisation of 10 Lakh Grid-connected Solar Powered Agriculture Pumps.
- The Scheme will have substantial environmental impact in terms of savings of CO_2 emissions.

III. DIGITAL INITIATIVES:

01. Bharat Net Project:

Objective: To provide broadband connectivity to Gram Panchayats (GP) through optical fibre network.

Salient features: It aims to provide a minimum bandwidth of 100 Mbps to each of the 2.5 lakhs GPs.

- ➢ It will facilitate delivery of e-governance, e-health, e-education, e-banking, public internet access, G2C, B2B, P2P, B2C etc., weather, agricultural and other services to rural India.
- ➢ It is the new brand name of NOFN (National Optic Fibre Network) which is being implemented in three phases.
- ➢ It is being funded by the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF).

02. Digital India:

9 PILLARS OF DIGITAL INDIA

- **Broadband** Highways
- **Universal Access** to Phones
- **Public Internet** Access Programme
- **e-Governance** Reforming government through Technology
- **e-Kranti – Electronic** delivery of services
- **Electronics Manufacturing** Target NET ZERO Imports
- **IT for Jobs** Highways
- **Information** for All
- **Early Harvest** Programme
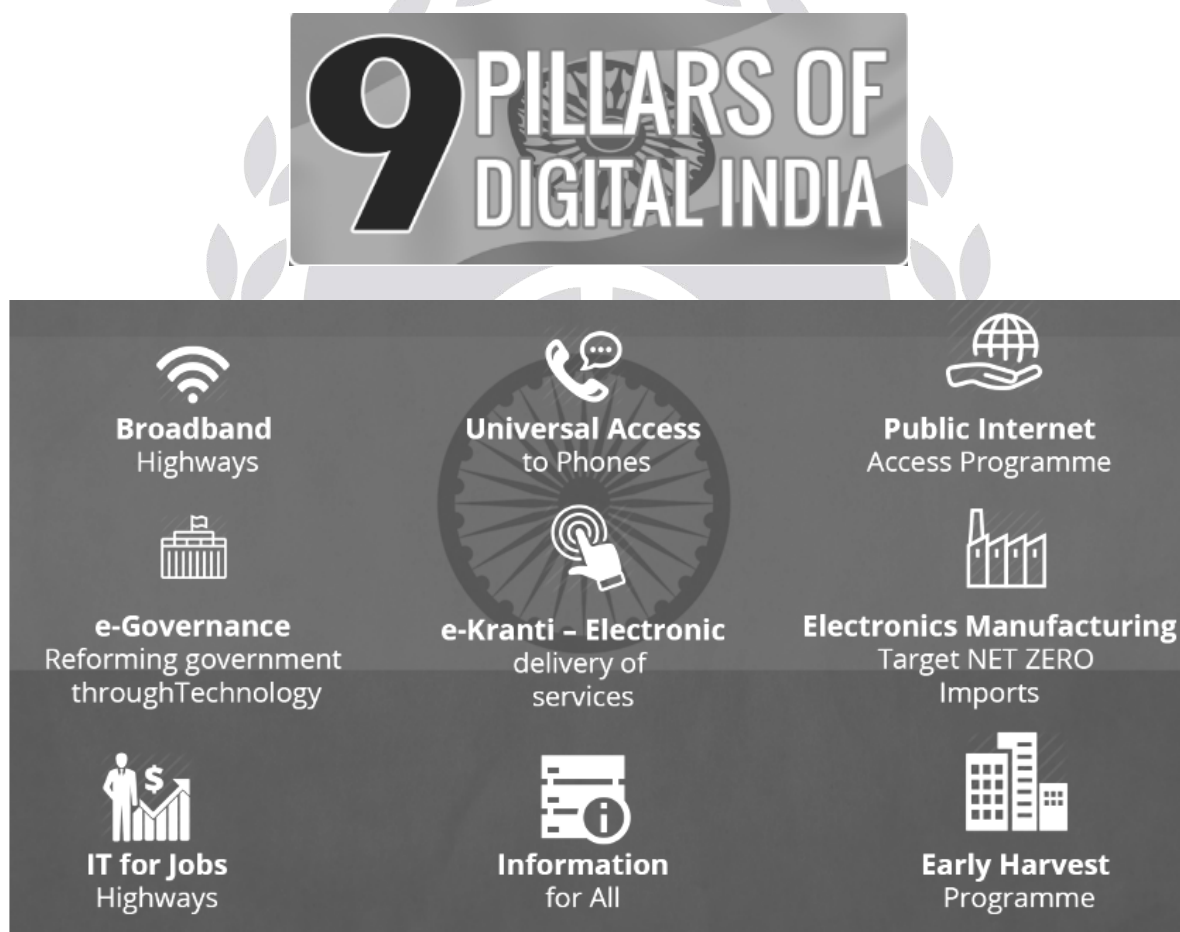
Objective: To transform India into a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy.

Salient features:

- ➢ The Digital India programme is centred on three key vision areas:
- ➢ Digital Infrastructure as a Utility to Every Citizen,
- ➢ Governance & Services on Demand,
- ➢ Digital Empowerment of Citizens.

➢ It aims to provide the much needed thrust to the nine pillars of growth areas, namely: Broadband Highways, Universal Access to Mobile Connectivity, Public Internet Access Programme, e-Governance: Reforming Government through Technology, e-Kranti: NeGP 2.0, Information for All, Electronics Manufacturing, IT for Jobs, Early Harvest Programmes.

03. SWAYAM (Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds):

➢ SWAYAM is a programme initiated by Government of India and designed to achieve the three cardinal principles of Education Policy viz., access, equity and quality.

➢ This is done through an indigenous developed IT platform that facilitates hosting of all the courses, taught in classrooms from 9th class till post-graduation to be accessed by anyone, anywhere at any time at free of cost to the residents in India.

Objective:

➢ To take the best teaching learning resources to all, including the most disadvantaged.

➢ SWAYAM seeks to bridge the digital divide for students (9th class till post-graduation) who have hitherto remained untouched by the digital revolution and have not been able to join the mainstream of the knowledge economy.

The courses hosted on SWAYAM are in 4 quadrants –

(1) video lecture,

(2) specially prepared reading material that can be downloaded/printed

(3) self-assessment tests through tests and quizzes and

(4) an online discussion forum for clearing the doubts

Nine National Coordinators have been taken for best quality content: They are

➢ AICTE for self-paced courses,

➢ NPTEL for under-graduation engineering and Post-graduation engineering.

➢ UGC for post-graduation education,

➢ CEC for under-graduate education,

➢ NCERT & NIOS for school education,

➢ IGNOU for out of the school students

➢ IIMB for management studies.

04. Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMGDISHA):

Objectives: To make 6 crore rural households digitally literate and reaching around 40% of rural households by covering one member from eligible household by 31st March 2019.

➢ Citizens of India between the age group of 14 to 60 years are the intended beneficiaries.

Salient features:

➢ It will empower the citizens to operate computer or digital access devices, thus, enabling them to use IT and related services especially Digital Payments.

➢ It aims to bridge digital divide by targeting the rural population including marginalised sections (SC, ST, BPL, women, differently-abled persons and minorities).

05. Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation (PRAGATI):

Objective: Addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.

Salient features:

➢ A multi-purpose and multi-modal platform that uniquely bundles three latest technologies:

➢ Digital data management,

➢ video-conferencing and

➢ Geo-spatial technology

➢ It ensures cooperative federalism as it brings on one stage the Secretaries of Government of India and the Chief Secretaries of the States.

➢ It will strengthen and re-engineer the data bases of the CPGRAMS for grievances, Project Monitoring Group (PMG) and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

➢ It is not a public web platform.

06. Sugamaya Pustakalaya

➢ It is an online library that makes accessible content available to print- disabled people.

➢ The library houses publications across diverse subjects and languages and multiple accessible formats.

➢ It has been created by Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment in collaboration with member organizations of Daisy Forum of India and powered by TCS Access.

➢ Books are available in Accessible formats for people with visual impairment and other print disabilities.

IV. SKILL DEVELOPMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

01. Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY):

Objective

➢ Imparting skill training to youth, focussing on improved curricula, better pedagogy and trained instructors.

➢ The training includes soft skills, personal grooming, behaviour al change

➢ To make industrial training institutes (itis) to start skill development training under the scheme

Intended beneficiary

➢ Any candidate of Indian nationality who undergoes a skill development training in an eligible sector by an eligible training provider.

➢ Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) and traditional skill holders

Salient features

➢ Implemented through the national skill development corporation (NSDC). Public private partnership (PPP) entity,

➢ Skill training would be done based on the national skill qualification framework (NSQF) and industry led standards.

➢ A monetary reward is given to trainees on assessment and certification by third party assessment bodies.

➢ The average monetary reward would be around Rs.8000 per trainee.

➢ Mobilization would be done through skill Melas organized at the local level with participation of the state governments, municipal bodies, Pachayati Rai institutions and community based organizations.

The target for skilling would be aligned to demand from other flagship programmes launched in recent imes such as make in India, digital India, national solar mission and Swachh Bharat abhiyan.

02. National Apprenticeship Promotion Scheme:

➢ The main objective of the scheme is to promote apprenticeship training and to increase the engagement of apprentices from present 2.3 lakh to 50 lakh cumulatively by 2020.

➢ NAPS is implemented by Director General of Training (DGT) under the aegis of Union Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE).

➢ Under the scheme, the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship will share 25% of the total stipend payable to an apprentice with employers.

➢ The government will also fund 50% of the total expenditure incurred by the employer in providing basis training to apprentices.

➢ All transactions including registration by employers, apprentices, registration of contract and payment to employers will be made in online mode.

➢ This scheme will cover all categories of apprentices except the Graduate, Technician and Technician (Vocational) apprentices which are covered by the scheme administered by Ministry of Human Resource Development.

➢ The National Policy of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, 2015 focuses on apprenticeship as one of the key components for creating skilled manpower in India.

03. Pradhan Mantri Yuva Yojana:

• The Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship has launched Pradhan Mantri Yuva Yojana to scale up an ecosystem of entrepreneurship for youngsters.

Highlights of the scheme:

• The scheme spans over five years (2016-17 to 2020-21) with a project cost of Rs 499.94 crore.

• It will provide entrepreneurship education and training to over 7 lakh students in 5 years through 3,050 institutes.

• It will also include easy access to information and mentor network, credit, incubator and accelerator and advocacy to create a pathway for the youth.

• The institutes under the PM's Yuva Yojana include 2,200 institutes of higher learning (colleges, universities, and premier institutes), 300 schools, 500 ITIs and 50 entrepreneurship development centres through Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).

04. Indian Institute of Skills

• Aimed at making India the Skill Capital of the World, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation stone of the country's first Indian Institute of Skills (IIS) at Kanpur.

• The IIS was conceptualised by Modi during his visit to Singapore's Institute of Technical Education.

• The institute is being opened by the Skill Development Ministry in partnership with the Institute of Technical Education, Singapore.

The Ministry has decided to have six such institutes.

05. START-UP INDIA:

Objective:

➤ To build a strong eco-system for nurturing innovation and startups in the country which will drive economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities

➤ Simplification and Handholding: With the intention of reducing regulatory burden on start-ups, they have been exempted from six labour laws and three environmental laws for a period of three years.

➤ Start-ups will also be provided free legal support in filing intellectual property rights (IPR). Patent applications filed by startup will be fast tracked at lower costs.

Funding support and Incentives:

1. Funding support of worth 10,000 crore rupees for next four years.

2. Credit Guarantee Fund - The initiative provides for creating a credit guarantee fund for startups through Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) with a Corpus of Rs.500 crore per year for the next four years.

   Government to set up a Startup India Hub which will be a single-point of contact for Startups.

06. STAND-UP INDIA:

Objective:

➤ To leverage the institutional credit structure to reach out to these underserved sectors of the population by facilitating bank loans in the non-farm sector.

➤ To facilitate at least two such projects per bank branch (scheduled commercial bank) on an average one for each category of entrepreneur.

Features:

➤ Creation of a credit guarantees mechanism through the National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company (NCGTC), with corpus of 5000 crore.

➤ Hand holding support for borrowers both at the pre loan stage and during operations. This would include.

➤ The loan under the scheme would be appropriately secured and backed by a credit guarantee through a credit guarantee scheme for which Department of Financial Services would be the settler and National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Ltd. (NCGTC) would be the operating agency.

07. GREEN SKILL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME:

Objective: Skilling the youth of India, especially dropouts and in increasing the availability of skilled workforce.

Features:

➤ It is initiative for skill development in the environment and forest sector to enable India's youth to get gainful employment and/or self-employment.

➤ All courses will be National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) compliant.

➤ After a pilot project in 2017, ministry has taken following steps to expand it: o Increased budget allocation for ENVIS in budget 2018-19 by 33%. Out of this, the training courses under GSDP will be funded.

➤ Increased target: A total of 5.5 lakh people will be imparted training by 2021.

More green skills now: The government has identified 35 courses including pollution monitoring (air/water/noise/soil), effluent treatment plant operation, forest management, water budgeting etc.

➤ GSDP-ENVIS is a mobile app that will help boost employability and entrepreneurship of the youth in the country.

08. Skill Strengthening For Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE):

Objectives: Improving the relevance and efficiency of skills training provided through Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs) and apprenticeships.

Salient features:

➢ It is a Rs. 2,200 crore - central sector scheme, with half of the scheme outlay as World bank loan assistance.

➢ It is an outcome focused schemes marking shift in government's implementation strategy in vocational education and training from inputs to results.

It covers 4 result areas:

➢ Improved performance of ITI.

➢ Increased Capacities of State Governments to support ITIs and Apprenticeship Training

➢ Improved Teaching and Learning.

➢ Improved and Broadened Apprenticeship Training.

09. Skills Acquisition And Knowledge Awareness For Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP):

Objective:

➢ To strengthening institutional mechanisms at both national and state levels

➢ To build a pool of quality trainers and assessors,

➢ To create convergence among all skill training activities at the state level,

➢ To establish robust monitoring and evaluation system for skill training programs.

Skills Acquisition and Knowledge Awareness for Livelihood Promotion (SANKALP) project aims to implement the mandate of the National Skill Development Mission (NSDM).

SANKALP is an outcome oriented project supported by World Bank.

Under SANKALP four key result areas have been identified viz:

(i) Institutional Strengthening;

(ii) Quality Assurance;

(iii) Inclusion; and

(iv) Expanding Skills through PPPs.

The project is funded by three major parts:

1. World Bank Loan

2. States leverage

3. Industry leverage

10. Atal Innovation Mission:

Objective: It is envisaged as an umbrella innovation organization that would play an instrumental role in alignment of innovation policies between central, state and sectoral innovation schemes.

Salient features:

It has two core functions:

➢ Entrepreneurship promotion through Self-Employment and Talent Utilization (SETU), wherein innovators would be supported and mentored to become successful entrepreneurs.

➢ Innovation promotion: to provide a platform where innovative ideas are generated

➢ The holistic framework includes

➢ Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs) where students from Class 6th to Class 12th learn innovation skills and develop ideas.

➢ **Atal Tinkering Marathon:** The marathon puts nation-wide challenge in 6 thematic areas namely Clean Energy, Water resources, Waste management, Healthcare, Smart mobility, and Agri-tech to find out the best student innovators of India.

➢ Atal Incubation Centres (AICs) & Atal Community Innovation Centers (ACIC): They will be set up at the university, NGO, SME and Corporate industry levels for promoting entrepreneurship in universities and industry.

➢ Atal New India Challenges and Atal Grand Challenges – To promote technology driven innovations and product creation for social and commercial impact

➢ Mentor India Campaign: It's a strategic nation building initiative to engage leaders who can guide and mentor students. Industry, Academia, Government, Global Collaborations as a key to success

V. HEALTH

01. Mother's Absolute Affection (MAA):

Objective: It is a nation-wide programme to promote breastfeeding and counselling related to it to prevent malnutrition at early stages.

Salient Features:
➢ Community awareness generation
➢ Strengthening inter personal communication through ASHA.
➢ Skilled support for breastfeeding at delivery points in public health facilities.
➢ Monitoring and award/recognition for various lactating mothers.

02. Mission Indradhanush:

Objective: The ultimate goal is to ensure full immunization with all available vaccines for children up to two years and pregnant women.

Salient features:
➢ All vaccines are available free of cost under 'universal immunization programme'.
➢ 7 vaccine preventable diseases which include diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, tuberculosis, measles and hepatitis B.
➢ Technical support to be given by WHO, UNICEF, Rotary International etc.
➢ Intensified Mission Indradhanush was launched in October 2017, to cover low performing areas in the selected districts and urban areas.
➢ It is one of 12 best practices from around the world to be featured in a special issue of the British Medical Journal.

03. National Nutrition Mission (POSHAN ABHIYAAN):

➢ It is a flagship programme which would be executed with the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) as the nodal ministry along with Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation and Ministry of Health and Family Welfare which ensures convergence with various programmes.

➢ The mission has a target to reduce stunting, under nutrition, and low birth weight by 2 per cent per annum, and anemia by 3 per cent annually.

➢ It aims to focus mainly on children up to the age of 6 years, pregnant and lactating women, and adolescent girls.

➢ It would also strive to achieve reduction in stunting from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022 (Mission 25 by 2022).

VI. URBAN DEVELOPMENT

01. Atal Mission For Rejuvenation And Urban Transformation (AMRUT):
Objective: The Mission will focus on the following Thrust Areas:
- ➢ water supply,
- ➢ sewerage facilities and septage management,
- ➢ storm water drains to reduce flooding,
- ➢ pedestrian, non motorized and public transport facilities, parking spaces, and
- ➢ enhancing amenity value of cities by creating and upgrading green spaces, parks and recreation centers, especially for children.

Salient Features:
- ➢ The total outlay for AMRUT is Rs. 50,000 crore for five years from FY2015-16 to FY2019-20 and the Mission will be operated as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme.
- ➢ Central assistance will be released in three instalments in the ratio of 20:40:40 based on achievement stated in State Annual Action Plans.
- ➢ It makes States equal partners in planning and implementation of projects, thus actualizing the spirit of cooperative federalism.

02. National Heritage City Development And Augmentation Yojana (HRIDAY):
Objectives: Focus on holistic development of heritage cities and to preserve and revitalise soul of the heritage city.
Salient features:
- ➢ It is a central sector scheme, where 100% funding will be provided by Government of India.
- ➢ The scheme will broadly focus on four theme areas i.e. Physical Infrastructure, Institutional Infrastructure, and Economic Infrastructure & Social Infrastructure.
- ➢
- ➢ The 12 cities selected for the scheme are Ajmer, Amritsar, Amravati, Badami, Dwarka, Gaya, Warangal, Puri, Kanchipuram, Mathura, Varanasi and Velankanni.
- ➢ Bring urban planning, economic growth and heritage conservation together for heritage cities.
- ➢ Beautification of heritage cities in an inclusive and integrated manner with prime focus on livelihoods, skills, cleanliness, security, safety, accessibility and faster service delivery.
- ➢ Guide conservation, restoration, future use and development of heritage cities.
- ➢ Create improved connectivity platform and access to tourists.

03. Shyama Prasad Mukherji Rurban Mission:
Objective: To stimulate local economic development, enhance basic services, and create well planned urban clusters.
Salient features: A 'Rurban cluster', would be a cluster of geographically contiguous villages with a population of about 25000 to 50000 in plain and coastal areas and with a population of 5000 to 15000 in desert, hilly or tribal areas.
It aims to create 300 rural growth clusters across the country to:
- ➢ Bridge the rural urban divide- economic, technological and those related to facilities and services.
- ➢ Spread development in the region.
- ➢ Attract investment in the rural areas.
- ➢ Stimulate local economic development with emphasis on reduction of poverty and unemployment in rural areas.

04. SWADESH DARSHAN:

Objectives: To position tourism as a major engine of economic growth and job creation.

Salient features:

➢ It is central sector scheme in which Ministry of Tourism is developing critical tourism infrastructure in the country in a sustainable and inclusive manner to make India into a world class tourist destination.

➢ The focus under the scheme is to develop public facilities like last mile connectivity, Tourist reception Centers, Way side Amenities, Solid Waste Management, Illumination, Landscaping, parking etc. where Private Sector is not willing to invest.

➢ The Scheme is 100% centrally funded.

➢ Under the scheme, fifteen thematic circuits have been identified, for development namely: North-East India Circuit, Buddhist Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit, Heritage Circuit, Sufi Circuit and Tirthankar Circuit.

➢ Tourist Circuit is defined as a route having at least three major tourist destinations which are distinct and apart.

VII. RURAL DEVELOPMENT

01. Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana:

Objective

➢ Construct two crore houses across the nation. Covers the entire urban area consisting of 4041 statutory towns with initial focus on 500 Class I cities

➢ **Intended beneficiary**

➢ Poor people (BPL) and People living under EWS 0and LIG categories in urban establishments of the country.

➢ People under MIG (with annual incomes in the range of Rs.12 lakh to Rs.18 lakh)

➢ **Salient features**

➢ Ownership of houses will be in the name of woman or jointly with husband

➢ Flexibility to States for choosing best options to meet the demand of housing in their states

➢ Central grant of Rs. one lakhs per house, on an average, will be available under the slum rehabilitation programme

➢ Implemented in three phases as follows, viz. a. Phase-I (April 2015 - March 2017) to cover 100 Cities to be selected from States/UTs as per their willingness; b. Phase - II (April 2017 - March 2019) to cover additional 200 Cities and c. Phase-III (April 2019 - March 2022) to cover all other remaining Cities.

➢ Geo-tagging for monitoring the progress of construction of houses, Public Financial Management System (PFMS) to ensure electronic fund flow and Technology Sub-Mission to implement new construction technologies, have been introduced.

02. National Rural Livelihoods Mission:

Objective

➢ Focus on the primary issues pertaining to urban poverty such as imparting skill training, enabling entrepreneurship develop, providing wage employment and self- employment opportunities to the urban poor.

➢ Addressing the livelihood concerns of urban poor including urban homeless.

Intended beneficiary
➢ Urban poor
➢ Street Vendors
➢ Slum dwellers
➢ Homeless
➢ Rag pickers
➢ Unemployed
➢ Differently abled

Salient features
➢ It replaces the existing Swarna Jayanti Shahari Rozgar Yojana
➢ Organizing urban poor in Self Help Groups (SHGs)
➢ Creating opportunities for skill development for urban poor leading to market based employment
➢ Providing shelter equipped with essential services in phased manner to urban poor including urban homeless

03. Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY):
• Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) was launched on 25th December, 2000 as a Centrally Sponsored Scheme with the objective to provide all-weather road connectivity to all eligible unconnected habitations in rural areas of the country.
• The programme envisages connecting all eligible unconnected habitations with:
• Population of 500 persons and above (as per 2001 Census) in plain areas.
➢ 250 persons and above (as per 2001 Census) in Special Category States.
➢ Tribal (Schedule-V) areas.
➢ In Select Tribal and Backward Districts (as identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs).
➢ The Desert Areas (as identified in Desert Development Programme).
➢ For most intensive Integrated Action Plan (IAP) blocks as identified by Ministry of Home Affairs the unconnected habitations with population of 100 and above (as per 2001 Census) are eligible to be covered under PMGSY.

04. Jal Kranti Abhiyan:
Objective: Strengthening grass root involvement of all stakeholders including Panchayati Raj Institutions and local bodies in the water security.
Salient Features:
➢ The program involves use of modern technologies along with traditional wisdom for devising area/region specific innovative measures for increasing water security.
➢ **Jal Gram Yojana:** two villages in every district, preferably facing acute water scarcity are being selected as "Jal Grams".
➢ From each Jal Grams, one elected representative of Panchayat and one representative of the Water Users Association are being identified as Jal Mitra/ Neer Nari and training is being imparted to them to create mass awareness.
➢ A card known as Sujalam Card (with the logo "Water Saved, Water Produced) is being prepared for every Jal gram which would provide the yearly status/information on availability of water for the village from all sources.

➢ Central Water Commission (CWC) and Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) are the nodal agencies for implementation.

Aspirational Districts Programme:

Objective: To quickly and effectively transform some of the most underdeveloped districts of the country.

Salient features:

➢ It focuses on transforming 115 districts across 28 states that have witnessed the least progress along certain development parameters.

➢ Broad contours of the programme include convergence (of central and state schemes), collaboration (of central, state level 'Prabhari' officers & district collectors), and competition among districts.

➢ 49 indicators across five core dimensions have been identified: health and nutrition, education, financial inclusion, agriculture and water resources, skill development and basic infrastructure.

➢ **Cooperative Federalism:** Local, state and central governments work together to design, implement and monitor measures to drive development in the districts.

VIII. EDUCATION

01. Sarva Shiksha Abhiyaan:

Objective

➢ Universal elementary education access and retention.

➢ Bridging of gender and social category gaps in education and Enhancement of learning levels of children.

Beneficiaries

Children between 6- 12 years of age –from all backgrounds.

Salient features

➢ Variety of interventions, including opening of new schools, construction of toilets (Swach Vidyalaya Scheme – separate toilets for girls and boys in all schools), periodic teacher training and academic resource support etc.

02. Mid-Day Meal Scheme:

Objective

➢ To enhance enrolment, retention and attendance

➢ Improve nutritional levels among children,

Intended beneficiary

➢ Every child in every government and government aided primary school

➢ Scheme also available in government aided and local body Schools, Schools under education guarantee scheme (EGS) and alternative & innovative education (AIE) centers, recognized as well as unrecognized Madarsas / Maktabs supported under SSA.

Salient features

➢ Minimum content of 300 calories of energy and 8- 12 gram protein per day for a minimum of 200 days.

➢ For upper primary stage was fixed at 700 calories and 20 grams of protein.

➢ It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme which will be fully sponsored by the Union Government.

➢ Aadhaar linking: The schools and Anganwadis have been asked to collect the Aadhaar number of the children beneficiaries.

➢ Recently, TSR Subramniam Committee has also recommended extending Mid-Day meal scheme to students of secondary level.**03. Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat:**

Objective
- Special focus on improving language development and to create interest in mathematics.
- To improve learning outcomes

Beneficiaries
- Focus on children in classes 1 and 2 to improve learning outcomes.
- Reading Initiative: upto class 8

Salient Features
- The two tracks of Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat are: Early reading and writing with comprehension (ERWC) and Early mathematics (EM).
- As a follow up: National Reading Initiative was launched to develop and promote the habit of reading among students in elementary schools, thereby extending the programme upto class 8.

04. Vidyanjali:

Objectives
- Creating an ecosystem, wherein education will be attached with imbibing knowledge and improving learning output.

Beneficiaries
- School going children of Government school, Government Aided school etc.,

Salient Features
- To involve volunteers from different walks of life to strengthen the co-scholastic activities in government schools.,
- Performing arts and life skills also to be included

05. Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA):

Objective
- Correct regional imbalances in access to higher education by setting up institutions in unserved & underserved areas.
- Providing funding to eligible state higher educational institutions.
- Improve the overall quality of state institutions.

Intended beneficiary
- Higher education or college going students.
- Eligible state higher educational institutions.

Salient features
- It is proposed to improve the gross enrolment ratio from 19% at present to 30% by 2020.
- TRANSFORMATIVE REFORMS IN THE STATE HIGHER education system by:
  - (a) Norms and standards and adopt accreditation as a mandatory quality assurance framework.
  - (b) Promoting autonomy in state universities.
  - (c) Ensure reforms in the affiliation, academic and examination systems.
  - (d) Ensure adequate availability of quality faculty.

06. Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA):

Objective

➢ To enhance access to secondary education and to improve its quality through making all secondary schools conform to prescribed norms, removing gender, socio-economic and disability barriers, providing universal access to secondary level education

Intended beneficiary

➢ Students and schools at secondary level

Salient features

➢ Important physical facilities provided under the scheme are: Additional class rooms, Laboratories, Toilet blocks, Residential Hostels for Teachers in remote areas etc.

➢ Important quality interventions provided under the scheme are: appointment of additional teachers to reduce PTR to 30:1, focus on Science, Math and English education, training of teachers, etc.

➢ Important equity interventions provided in the scheme are: preference to Ashram schools for upgradation, preference to areas with concentration of SC/ST/Minority for opening of schools etc.

07. Unnat Bharat:

Objective

➢ Building institutional capacity in Institutes of higher education in research & training relevant to the needs of rural India.

Intended beneficiary

➢ Villages and their population

Salient features

➢ Connecting institutions of higher education, including IITs, NITs and Indian Institutes of Science Education & Research (IISERs) etc. with local communities to address the development challenges through appropriate technologies.

08. Yuva Vigyani Karyakram (YUVIKA):

Objective: Aimed at imparting basic knowledge on Space Technology, Space Science and Space Applications to the young students with the intent of arousing their interest in the emerging areas of Space activities.

➢ Help students to appreciate what they are being taught in the school and its real application in Space Science & Technology.

➢ 3 students from each State/ Union Territory to be selected to participate in this programme every year covering CBSE, ICSE and State syllabus. Those who have finished 8th standard and currently studying in 9th standard will be eligible for the programme.

➢ Chief Secretaries of the respective States/ Administrators of Union Territories in India to arrange for the selection of three students from each of their State/UT and communicate the list to ISRO.

➢ Students belong to the rural area have been given special weightage in the selection criteria.

IX. INFRASTRUCTURE: POWER

01. Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY):

Objective:

- For the financial turnaround and revival of Power Distribution companies (DISCOMs),
- To ensure a sustainable permanent solution to the problem.
- In long term - affordable and accessible 24x7 Power for All.

Features:

- Ambitious target of making all DISCOMs profitable by 2018-19.
- This is through four initiatives
  - (i) improving operational efficiencies of DISCOMs;
  - (ii) reduction of cost of power;
  - (iii) reduction in interest cost of DISCOMs;
  - (iv) enforcing financial discipline on DISCOMs through alignment with state finances.
- States shall take over 75% of DISCOM debt as on 30 September 2015 over two years i.e 50% of DISCOM debt shall be taken over in 2015-16 and 25% in 2016-17.
- Government of India will not include the debt taken over by the states as per the above scheme in the calculation of fiscal deficit (for FRBM) of respective states in the financial years 2015-16 and 2016-17.
- States will issue non-SLR including SDL bonds in the market or directly to the respective banks / financial institutions (FIs) holding the DISCOM debt to the appropriate extent.
- DISCOM debt not taken over by the state shall be converted by the banks / FIs into loans or bonds.

02. Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for all (UJALA) scheme:

Objective:

- To promote efficient lighting
- To reduce electricity bills and help preserve environment.

Features:

- UJALA scheme is the LED-based efficient lighting programme.
- Overall target of number of incandescent bulbs to be replaced - 200 million
- Expected annual cost reduction of consumer bills - Rs. 40,000 crore
- Annual estimated greenhouse gas emission reductions - 79 million tonnes of CO_2

03. GARV-II App

a. The government has launched GARV- II app to track Rural Household Electrification.

b. This is the next step in Government of India's aim to provide access to electricity to all households in the country.

c. GARV-II mobile app has incorporated village-wise; habitation-wise base line data on household electrification for all states.

d. It also has mapped village-wise works sanctioned under Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) to monitor progress of works in each village.

e. GARV-II allows peoples participation for rural electrification work.

f. It opens rural electrification work to public scrutiny and input about rural electrification programme.

g. It also has a citizen engagement window 'SAMVAD' to enhance participation.

04. Coal Mitra

➢ Coal Mitra is a web portal for allowing flexibility in utilization of domestic Coal.

➢ It has been designed for transferring the coal reserves to more cost efficient State/Centre owned or Private sector generating stations, leading to lower generation costs and ultimately lesser cost of electricity for the consumers.

05. 24x7 Power for All

➢ Power for All' is a joint initiative of the Centre in collaboration with State governments for supply of quality and reliable 24 x 7 power to agricultural, industrial and domestic consumers.

➢ The scheme is aimed at addressing all the key aspects and activities to be undertaken across generation, transmission and distribution, including achieving 100% household electrification.

➢ The plan aims to provide each household access to electricity, 24×7 reliable power supply and adequate supply to agricultural consumers as per state policy by 2019.

➢ The plans for each State/UT envisions reduction of AT&C losses by increasing the collection efficiency and effective metering so as to achieve financially viable 24×7 Power Supply.

➢ It also emphasizes on the development of transmission and sub transmission network which plays vital role in providing round the clock power supply.

06. Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DUGJY)

a. The project aims to provide 24×7 uninterrupted electricity supply to each rural household across the country by 2022.

b. Major components of the scheme:
   i. Strengthening of sub-transmission and distribution network,
   ii. Feeder separation,
   iii. Metering at all levels including at input poin ts, feeders and distribution transformers.

c. It also seeks to strengthen Micro grid and off grid distribution network of rural electrification.

d. This scheme replaces Rajiv Gandhi Grameen Vidyutikaran Yojana (RGGVY).

07. Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Gharyojana – 'Saubhagya'

Objective:

The objective of the 'Saubhagya' is to provide energy access to all by last mile connectivity and electricity connections to all remaining un-electrified households in rural as well as urban areas to achieve universal household electrification in the country.

Beneficiaries:

➢ All the people of India who are not having access of electricity.

➢ Poor households would be provided electricity connections free of cost. Other households would also be provided electricity connections under the scheme on payment of Rs.500.

➢ Deendayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) envisages creation of basic electricity infrastructure in villages.

➢ Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS) provides for creation of necessary infrastructure to provide electricity access in urban areas.

➢ Target under Subhagya Scheme: 4 crore un-electrified households (rural and urban)

Features:

➢ Access to electricity to all willing households
➢ Substitution to Kerosene
➢ Improvement in Health Services
➢ Improvement in Communications
➢ Improvement in Public Safety
➢ Increased Job Opportunities
➢ Better Quality of Life, especially for Women, in Daily Chores

The electricity connection to households include release of electricity connections by drawing a service cable from the nearest pole to the household premise, installation of energy meter, wiring for a single light point with LED bulb and a mobile charging point. In case the electricity pole is not available nearby from household for drawing service cable, the erection of additional pole along with conductor and associated accessories shall also be covered under the scheme.

08. New and Renewable Energy

(i). National Wind-Solar Hybrid Policy

➢ The Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE), has come up with a draft National Wind Solar Hybrid Policy.
➢ The policy lays down the framework for promoting large grid connected wind-solar photovoltaic system.
➢ The goal of the policy is to reach wind-solar hybrid capacity of 10 GW by 2022.
➢ Optimal and efficient utilisation of transmission infrastructure and land, reducing the variability in renewable power generation, thus, achieving better grid stability.
➢ The draft policy proposes hybridisation of existing solar photovoltaic (PV) and wind power plants.
➢ Providing a guideline towards setting up of new hybrid wind-solar PV power plants.
➢ Providing fiscal and financial incentives for hybridisation through financial institutions like Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency Limited (IREDA) and multilateral banks.

(ii). Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI)

➢ Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) is a company of the Indian Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, established to facilitate the implementation of Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission.
➢ It is the only Public Sector Undertaking dedicated to the solar energy sector.
➢ The company's mandate has recently been broadened to cover the entire renewable energy domain and the company renamed to Renewable Energy Corporation of India (RECI).
➢ The company is responsible for implementation of a number of government schemes, major ones being the VGF schemes for large-scale grid-connected projects under JNNSM, solar park scheme and grid-connected solar rooftop scheme, along with specialised schemes such as defence scheme, canal-top scheme, Indo-Pak border scheme etc.
➢ SECI is the leading PSU in the rooftop solar segment, and has already commissioned over 54 MW capacity of rooftop solar projects under multiple government schemes.

(iii). Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects

➢ The scheme for "Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects" has been rolled out by Ministry of New & Renewable Energy on 2014.
➢ The Scheme has been conceived on the lines of the "Charanka Solar Park" in Gujarat which is a first-of-its-kind large scale Solar Park in India.

➢ This scheme envisages supporting the States in setting up solar parks at various locations in the country
➢ This scheme will facilitate and speed up installation of grid connected solar power projects for electricity generation on a large scale.
➢ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has approved the enhancement of capacity from 20,000 MW to 40,000 MW of the Scheme for Development of Solar Parks and Ultra Mega Solar Power Projects.
➢ The solar parks will be developed in collaboration with State Governments/UTs.
➢ All the States and UTs are eligible for benefits under the scheme.
➢ Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI) will administer the scheme under the direction of MNRE.
➢ The total capacity when operational will generate 64 billion units of electricity per year which will lead to abatement of around 55 million tonnes of CO_2 per year over its life cycle.

OTHERS

National Clean Air Programme (NCAP):

Objective: Stringent implementation of mitigation measures for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution.

Features:
➢ It is a pollution control initiative to cut the concentration of particles (PM10 & PM2.5) by 20-30% by 2024.
➢ It will have 2017 as the base year for comparison and 2019 as the first year.
➢ It is to be implemented in 102 non-attainment cities. These cities are chosen on the basis of Ambient Air Quality India (2011-2015) and WHO report 2014/2018.
➢ Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) shall execute the nation-wide programme for the prevention, control, and abetment of air pollution within the framework of the NCAP.

Faster Adoption And Manufacturing Of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles-Ii (FAME):

Objective: To encourage faster adoption of electric & hybrid vehicle by the way of market creation and indigenization.

Salient features:
➢ FAME Phase II builds over the Phase 1 of the scheme (which began in 2015 & has been extended till March, 2019) with greater focus on demand-creation by pushing adoption of EVs in public transport/commercial segment (in comparison to consumer segment).
➢ It will be implemented over the period of 3 years from 2019-20 to 2021-22.

Electrification of the public & shared transport:

➢ It is planned to support 10 Lakhs e-2W (electric – 2 Wheeler), 5 Lakhs e-3W, 55000 4Ws and 7000 Buses.
➢ Demand incentives on operational expenditure mode for electric buses will be delivered through State/city transport corporation (STUs).
➢ Incentives will be given to 3-wheeler/4 wheeler vehicles used for public transport or registered for commercial purposes.
➢ In e-2Ws segment, the focus will be on the private vehicles

Border Area Development Programme (BADP):

Objectives: To meet the special developmental needs and well being of the people living in remote and inaccessible areas situated near the international border.

Salient features:

➢ It is an important intervention of the Central Government to bring about development of border areas by supplementing the State Plan Funds to bridge the gaps in socioeconomic infrastructure on one hand and improving the security environment in border areas on the other.

➢ The States covered are Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Punjab, Rajasthan, Sikkim, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

➢ Under this programme priority is given to the areas closer to the border. The implementation of BADP is on participatory and decentralized basis through the Panchayati Raj institutions, Autonomous Councils and local bodies.

➢ For comprehensive and all-round development of border villages, it has been decided to develop 61 model villages.

➢ Each model village will provide all basic facilities like primary health centre, primary education, community centre, connectivity, drainage, drinking water, etc. to enable sustainable living in border areas.

Pradhan Mantri Ji-Van (Jaiv Indhan- Vatavaran Anukool Fasal Awashesh Nivaran) YOJANA:

Objective: To create Second Generation (2G) Ethanol capacity in the country and attract investments in this new sector.

Features:

➢ It will provide financial support to Integrated Bioethanol Projects using lignocellulosic biomass and other renewable feedstock.

➢ The scheme focuses to incentivise 2G Ethanol sector and support this nascent industry by creating a suitable ecosystem for setting up commercial projects and increasing Research & Development in this area.

➢ The ethanol produced by the scheme beneficiaries will be mandatorily supplied to Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) to further enhance the blending percentage under Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) Programme.

➢ Under EBP programme, OMCs are to blend upto 10% of ethanol in Petrol.

➢ The present policy allows procurement of ethanol produced from molasses and non-food feed stock like celluloses and lignocelluloses material including petrochemical route.

Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan/ Accessible India Campaign:

Objective: For achieving universal accessibility for Persons with Disabilities (PWDs).

Salient features: For creating universal accessibility for Persons with Disabilities, the campaign has been divided into three verticals: Built Environment Accessibility; Transport System Accessibility and Information & Communication ecosystem accessibility.

Other initiatives under the scheme are

➢ Organisations, both public and private are encouraged to use their CSR funds for building accessible infrastructure.

➢ 'Inclusiveness and Accessibility Index' is to be used by the government to assess the effort of various industries on how they are making their workplace ready for Persons with Disabilities (PwD).

➢ "Sugamya Pustakalaya" is an online library for Persons with print disabilities as part of the Accessible India (Sugamya Bharat) Campaign.

➢ Divyang Sarathi Mobile App- For easy information dissemination to Divyangjans (Persons with disabilities) pertaining to the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD), including its various acts, rules, regulations and guidelines, etc.

Swadhar Greh Scheme:

The objective is: To setup Swadhar Greh in every district with capacity of 30 women:

➢ To cater to the primary need of shelter, food, clothing, medical treatment and care of the women in distress and who are without any social and economic support.

➢ To provide them with legal aid and guidance to enable them to take steps for their readjustment in family/society.

➢ To rehabilitate them economically and emotionally

➢ To enable them to start their life afresh with dignity.

➢ Women(above 18 years) who are deserted, survivors of natural disasters, Women prisoners released from jail, victims of domestic violence, family tension or discord, Trafficked women/girls rescued or runaway from brothels or other places are the intended beneficiaries.

➢ Children accompanying women in the above categories would also be allowed to stay in the Swadhar Greh with their mothers (Girls upto age of 18 and boys upto age of 8).