

CURRENT AFFAIRS**1ST TO 15TH AUGUST 2018****CONCESSIONAL FINANCING SCHEME**

The Union Cabinet has approved the first extension of Concessional Financing Scheme (CFS) to support Indian Entities bidding for strategically important infrastructure projects abroad.

Under the CFS, the Govt. of India has been supporting Indian Entities bidding for strategically important infrastructure projects abroad since 2015-16.

Since the objectives of the Scheme continue to be relevant, it is proposed to extend the Scheme for another five years from 2018 to 2023.

BACKGROUND

Prior to the introduction of CFS, Indian entities were not able to bid for large projects abroad since the cost of financing was very high for them and bidders from other countries such as China, Japan, Europe and US were able to provide credit at superior terms, i.e., lower interest rate and longer tenures which works to the advantage of bidders from those countries.

HIGHLIGHTS

- By having projects of strategic interest to India executed by Indian entities, the CFS enables India to generate substantial backward linkage induced jobs, demand for material and machinery in India and also a lot of goodwill for India.
- Under the Scheme, MEA selects the specific projects keeping in view strategic interest of India and sends the same to Department of Economic Affairs (DEA).
- The strategic importance of a project to deserve financing under this Scheme, is decided, on a case to case basis, by a Committee chaired by Secretary, DEA and with members from Department of Expenditure, Ministry of External Affairs, Department of Industrial Promotion and Policy (DIPP), Department of Commerce, Department of Financial Services and Ministry of Home Affairs.
- The Deputy National Security Adviser is also a member of this Committee.
- Once approved by the Committee, DEA issues a formal letter to EXIM Bank conveying approval for financing of the project under CFS.
- The Scheme is presently being operated through the Export-Import Bank of India, which raises resources from the market to provide concessional finance. Government of India (GoI) provides counter guarantee and interest equalization support of 2% to the EXIM Bank.
- Under the Scheme, EXIM Bank extends credit at a rate not exceeding ***LIBOR (avg. of six months) + 100 bps.***
- The repayment of the loan is guaranteed by the foreign govt.

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR DRINKING WATER SANITATION AND QUALITY

International Centre for Drinking Water Quality, to rename as National Centre for Drinking Water, Sanitation and Quality (NCDWS & Q) and to authorize it to work as a receptacle for receiving EBR for SBM(G).

HIGHLIGHTS

- Raising funds up to Rs.15,000 crore as Extra Budgetary Resources (EBR) (Gol Fully Serviced Bonds) for Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin) [SBM(G)] during the financial year 2018-19 through NABARD.
- Expansion of the scope of work of the Society named **International Centre for Drinking Water Quality** to authorise it for receiving EBR funds for SBM(G), disbursement of the same to the States/UTs implementing agencies, and its repayment.
- To change the name of the Society to "**National Centre for Drinking Water, Sanitation and Quality**" in place of "**International Centre for Drinking Water Quality**".

IMPACT

This decision will benefit around 1.5 crore rural households eligible for incentive under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), and also Gram Panchayats for Solid and Liquid Waste Management (SLWM) activities.

The funds will be utilized to achieve and sustain Open Defecation Free (ODF) status in the villages across the country.

SWACHH BHARAT MISSION (GRAMIN)

- SBM(G) was launched with effect from 2nd October, 2014, with the goal to achieve universal sanitation coverage in rural areas by 2nd October, 2019.
- For IHHLs, financial incentive of Rs. 12,000 is provided to the eligible beneficiaries for construction of individual household toilets in the prescribed funding share pattern between the Centre and the States.
- For SLWM activities, the financial assistance is provided with a cap of Rs.7/12/15/20 lakh to Gram Panchayats having up to 150/300/500/more than 500 households respectively.
- The funds sharing pattern for these activities between the Centre and the States (except North-Eastern States, Jammu & Kashmir and Special Category States) is 60:40. For North-Eastern States, Jammu & Kashmir and the Special Category States, the funding pattern is 90:10.

AGRICULTURAL SCIENTIST'S RECRUITMENT BOARD (ASRB)

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for restructuring of Agricultural Scientist's Recruitment Board (ASRB).

HIGHLIGHTS

- The ASRB will now be a 4 Member body instead of 3 Members.
- It will have a Chairperson and 3 Members.
- ASRB would be for a period of three years or till attainment of 65 years of age, whichever is earlier.
- The budget head for ASRB may also be delinked from ICAR and be created under DARE, and the ASRB may have its own cadre of administrative staff in the secretariat and have independent administrative control.

POLICY FRAMEWORK FOR UNCONVENTIONAL HYDROCARBON

The Union Cabinet has approved the policy to permit exploration and exploitation of unconventional hydrocarbons such as Shale oil/gas, Coal Bed Methane (CBM) etc.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Exploration will be carried out under the existing Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs), CBM contracts and Nomination fields to encourage the existing Contractors in the licensed/leased area to unlock the potential of unconventional hydrocarbons in the existing acreages.
- This policy will enable the realization of prospective hydrocarbon reserves in the existing Contract Areas which otherwise would remain unexplored and unexploited.
- With this policy dispensation, new investment in **Exploration and Production (E&P)** activities and chances of finding new hydrocarbon discoveries and resultant increased domestic production thereof is expected.
- Exploration and exploitation of additional hydrocarbon resources is expected to spur new investment, impetus to economic activities, additional employment generation and thus benefitting various sections of society.
- This will lead to induction of new, innovative and cutting-edge technology and forging new technological collaboration to exploit unconventional hydrocarbons.
- After approval of this policy, there will be complete shift from **'One hydrocarbon Resource Type' to 'Uniform Licensing Policy'** which is presently applicable in **Hydrocarbon Exploration & Licensing Policy (HELP) and Discovered Small Field (DSF) Policy.**

NUCLEAR POWER PROJECTS

In the next three years, a capacity of 3300 MW is expected to be added by completion of three projects under construction viz. Kakrapar Atomic Power Project (KAPP) 3&4 (2X700 MW) at Kakrapar, Gujarat, Rajasthan Atomic Power Project RAPP 7&8 (2 X 700 MW) at Rawatbhata, Rajasthan and Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR) (500 MW) at Kalpakkam, Tamil Nadu.

VIABILITY OF NUCLEAR POWER PROJECTS

The capital cost of nuclear power plants is higher than that of other base load electricity generating technologies. However, the energy (fuel) cost is much lower. Thus, the tariff of electricity generated by nuclear power plants is comparable to that of other contemporary base load technologies like coal and gas. Nuclear power projects are thus viable.

- Nuclear power is a clean, environment friendly technology available 24X7.
- It has huge potential and can ensure long term energy security of the country in a sustainable manner. It is thus being pursued along with other technologies.
- The effort to reduce capital cost of nuclear power projects is ongoing. The efforts to optimize the cost include standardization of design, reducing gestation period and adopting appropriate business models to arrive at an optimal cost in case of projects to be set up with foreign cooperation.
- Nuclear power is eco-friendly and does not emit greenhouse gases. The life cycle greenhouse gas emissions of nuclear power are comparable to those of renewable like wind power.

ADVANCE PRICING AGREEMENTS

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has entered into nine more Unilateral Advance Pricing Agreements (UAPAs). With the signing of these Agreements, the total number of APAs entered into by the CBDT has gone up to 232, which includes 20 Bilateral Advance Pricing Agreements (BAPAs).

The UAPAs entered into during this month pertain to various sectors and sub-sectors of the economy like **manufacturing, engineering, media, irrigation, education, healthcare, telecommunications, industrial gases, pharmaceuticals**, etc. and cover international transactions including software development service, manufacturing and sale of engineering good, import of raw materials, payment of royalty and AMP, among others.

Complex issues like capacity utilization adjustment; treatment of AMP expenses etc. have been carefully examined and resolved in some of these agreements.

LEFT-WING EXTREMISM

The Left-Wing Extremism (LWE) situation in the country has been improving consistently and is now well under control. Currently 30 districts in 07 States are most affected by LWE violence. These 30 districts contributed 88% of violent incidents and 94% of deaths in 2017.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Andhra Pradesh (01): Vishakhapatnam.
2. Bihar (04): Aurangabad, Gaya, Jamui, Lakhisarai.
3. Chhattisgarh (08): Bastar, Bijapur, Dantewada, Kanker, Kondagaon, Narayanpur, Rajnandgaon, Sukma.
4. Jharkhand (13): Bokaro, Chatra, Garhwa, Giridih, Gumla, Hazaribagh, Khunti, Latehar, Lohardaga, Palamu, Ranchi, Simdega, West Singhbhum.
5. Maharashtra (01): Gadchiroli.
6. Odisha (02): Koraput, Malkangiri.
7. Telangana (01): Bhadradi-Kothagudem.

A **National Policy and Action Plan** has been put in place that envisages a multi-pronged strategy involving security related measures, developmental interventions and ensuring rights & entitlements of local communities etc.

Security related measures include assistance to LWE affected States by providing CAPF Bns, helicopters, UAVs, construction of fortified police stations, funds for modernization of State Police forces, arms and equipment, training assistance, sharing of intelligence etc.

On development side, apart from flagship schemes of the Central Government in infrastructure, education, health, skill development, agriculture etc, several initiatives have been taken specifically for development of LWE affected areas. These include focused schemes for development of roads, installation of mobile towers, skill development, improving network of banks and post offices, health and education facilities, particularly in the most affected districts.

PRADHAN MANTRI ROJGAR PROTSAHAN YOJANA

Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY) has been initiated by the Ministry of Labour and Employment in the year 2016-17 for incentivizing employers by paying the entire employer's contribution (12 % or as admissible) towards the EPS and EPF for all sectors w.e.f. 01.04.2018 to all eligible new employees and is applicable for all sectors for the next 3 years.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The PMRPY Scheme aims to incentivise employers for employment generation by the Government paying the employers' EPS contribution of 8.33%, for the new employees, for the

first three years of their employment and is proposed to be made applicable for unemployed persons that are semi-skilled and unskilled.

- The scheme is being implemented by the Ministry of Labour and Employment and is operational since August, 2016.

OBJECTIVES

- The Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY) is a scheme to incentivise employers registered with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) for job creation by the Government paying the 8.33% contribution of employers to the Employee Pension Scheme (EPS) in respect of new employees having a new Universal Account Number (UAN).
- For the textile (apparel) sector, the Government will also be paying the 3.67% Employees Provident Fund (EPF) contribution of the eligible employer for these new employees.
- This Scheme has a dual benefit, where, on the one hand, the employer is incentivised for increasing the employment base of workers in the establishment, and on the other hand, a large number of workers will find jobs in such establishments.
- A direct benefit is that these workers will have access to social security benefits of the organized sector.

STATE ENERGY EFFICIENCY PREPAREDNESS INDEX

To develop an action plan for energy conservation initiatives, Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) and Alliance for an Energy Efficient Economy (AEEE) released the 'State Energy Efficiency Preparedness Index', which assesses state policies and programmes aimed at improving energy efficiency across various sectors.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The nationwide Index is a joint effort of the ***NITI Aayog and BEE.***
- The dignitaries also released a set of ***Energy Conversation Guidelines*** for energy intensive industries that are covered under the Government's ***Perform Achieve and Trade (PAT) scheme.***
- Developed by the BEE, these will serve as a standard reference document for energy intensive industries and help them achieve high operational efficiency of energy consuming utilities thereby improving their energy performance.
- The State Energy Efficiency Preparedness Index will help in implementing national energy efficiency initiatives in states and meet both State as well as national goals on energy security, energy access and climate change.
- The State Energy Efficiency Preparedness Index has ***63 indicators*** across Building, Industry, Municipality, Transport, Agriculture and DISCOM with 4 cross-cutting indicators.
- States are categorised based on their efforts and achievements towards energy efficiency implementation, as ***'Front Runner', 'Achiever', 'Contender' and 'Aspirant'.***
- The ***'Front Runner' states*** in the inaugural edition of the Index are: ***Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, and Rajasthan*** based on available data.
- The Index examines states' ***policies and regulations, financing mechanisms, institutional capacity, adoption of energy efficiency measures and energy savings achieved.***
- The required data was collected from the concerned state departments such as DISCOMs, Urban Development Departments, etc., with the help of State Designated Agencies (SDAs) nominated by the BEE.

PAT SCHEME

- With the aim to make the industrial sector energy efficient, India's Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) launched its 'Perform, Achieve and Trade' (PAT) scheme on July 4.
- The scheme has set energy efficiency targets for industries.
- Those that fail to achieve targets will have to pay penalty.
- PAT has been launched under the National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency, one of the eight missions under the umbrella National Action Plan on Climate Change, launched in June 2008.
- In its first cycle of three years, the scheme covers eight energy guzzling sectors—thermal power, aluminium, cement, fertilizer, iron and steel, pulp and paper, textiles and chlor-alkali.
- Together, these sectors account for 40 per cent of India's primary energy consumption.
- PAT is a market-based mechanism in which sectors are assigned efficiency targets. Industries which over-achieve will get incentives in the form of energy saving certificates.
- These certificates are tradeable and can be bought by other industries which are unable to achieve their targets.
- These certificates will be tradeable at two energy exchanges: Indian Energy Exchange and Power Exchange India. The price of these certificates will be determined by the market.

INTEGRATED FARMING SYSTEM

Scientifically designed and tailor-made Integrated Farming Systems (IFS) is being promoted to achieve the vision of "Doubling Farmers' Income by 2022".

OBJECTIVES OF INTEGRATED FARMING SYSTEM

- Livelihood security.
- Enhanced income of the farmers.

CONCERN

High-yielding grain varieties heavily dependent on chemical fertilisers were used to reduce India's dependence on food imports and meet the country's food requirement. However later, due to the use of low fertilizers, productivity fell leading to decline in the income of farmers. Economic Survey of India 2017-18 indicates that over a period of 10 years, the share of income of farmers from crop production increased by only 1% while it increased by 7% for livestock.

HIGHLIGHTS

- IFS can be classified as natural and intentional integrated systems.
- The intentional integrated systems are one which addresses the multiple objectives of increased production, profit, cost-reduction through recycling, family nutrition, sustainability, ecological security, employment generation, economic efficiency and social equity.
- Small farms (up to 2 ha) hold the key to ensuring food and nutritional security of India. Therefore, ***location specific integration of field crops, orchard, floriculture, agro-forestry, livestock such as dairy, poultry, piggery, fishery and other less land requiring activities such as mushroom, apiary, and boundary plantations*** is being done for improving the livelihood of marginal and small households.

ENERGY START-UPS

Invest India has joined hands with energy sector companies to offer a unique lab-to-market opportunity for Indian startups through the Integrate to Innovate Programme.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Integrate to Innovate is a 3-month corporate acceleration programme for energy startups housed at the corporate premises.
- The application for the programme is hosted on **Start-up India Hub** – an online platform bringing together all stakeholders of the Indian start-up ecosystem.
- The programme provides an opportunity for collaboration and conversation around valuable energy transitions, offering start-ups an opportunity to bring their ideas to life with the guidance and support from corporates.
- The selected start-ups will receive a cash prize grant of up to ₹ 5 Lakh per start-up along with an opportunity to pilot their product with corporates.
- The corporates would offer them access to technology, technical and commercial mentorship and access to potential customers through the corporate network of partners.
- Entries are invited from innovators across various stages of the energy life-cycle—**generation, transmission and distribution, storage and consumption**—in multiple sectors such as **households, farm, industry, infrastructure, building, utility and transport**.

RASHTRIYA UCHCHATAR SHIKSHA ABHIYAN

During the second phase of RUSA, the focus is on opening new Model Degree Colleges in 'Aspirational Districts' identified by NITI Aayog and in unserved & underserved districts in North Eastern and Himalayan States.

HIGHLIGHTS

- An Expert Committee constituted by the University Grants Commission (UGC) had identified 374 Educationally Backward Districts (EBDs) where Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education was less than the national average of 12.4% based on 2001 census data.
- During the first phase of the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA), being implemented by the **Ministry of Human Resource Development**.
- The aim of RUSA is to promote access, equity and quality, central assistance to States has been provided for creation of one Model Degree College each in 60 EBDs.
- NITI Aayog has identified **117 districts as 'Aspirational Districts'**.
- The districts have been selected on the basis of composite index which includes published data of deprivation enumerated under **Socio-Economic Caste Census, Health & Nutrition, Education and Basic Infrastructure**.

GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO IN HIGHER EDUCATION

*The 12th Plan Document has fixed targets of **25.2 % GER by 2017-18 and 30% GER by 2020-21**. As per All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) 2017-18, the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) in higher education has increased from 24.5% in 2015-16 to 25.8% in 2017-18.*

In order to increase the enrolment in higher educational institutions, various measures have been taken by Government which include:

- Issuing of new UGC regulation for Open and Distance Learning that allows entry of reputed institutions to offer education on the distance mode.
- Using of ICT technology- **SWAYAM portal** to reach out of people and allow them to secure good quality education.
- Opening of more centrally funded institutions.
- Encouraging opening of institutions by State Governments through the **Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA)** which aims to achieve equity, access and excellence in higher education. The scheme supports components such as upgrading autonomous colleges to universities, clustering colleges to establish a university, setting up of new professional colleges in un-served and underserved areas as well as providing infrastructure grants to universities and colleges to scale up capacity.
- More scholarship programmes to supplement the cost of education.
- Moreover, **Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA)** has been established under the Companies Act, 2013 to leverage funds from market to finance improvement in infrastructure in top institutions of education.

WHISTLE BLOWERS PROTECTION ACT

BACKGROUND

The Whistle Blowers Protection Act, 2014 has been notified on 12th May, 2014. As the Act required amendments aimed at safeguarding against disclosures affecting sovereignty and integrity of India, Security of the State, etc., before it is brought into force, the Government introduced the Whistle Blowers Protective (Amendment) Bill, 2015 in the Lok Sabha which has been passed by the Lok Sabha on 13th May, 2015. The said Bill has been transmitted to the Rajya Sabha and is presently pending in the Rajya Sabha.

HIGHLIGHTS

The Bill amends the Whistle blowers Protection Act, 2014.

- The Act provides a mechanism for receiving and inquiring into public interest disclosures against acts of corruption, wilful misuse of power or discretion, or criminal offences by public servants.
- The Bill prohibits the reporting of a corruption related disclosure if it falls under any 10 categories of information.
- These categories include information related to: (i) economic, scientific interests and the security of India; (ii) Cabinet proceedings, (iii) intellectual property; (iv) that received in a fiduciary capacity, etc.
- The Act permits disclosures that are prohibited under the Official Secrets Act (OSA), 1923. The Bill reverses this to disallow disclosures that are covered by the OSA.
- Any public interest disclosure received by a Competent Authority will be referred to a government authorised authority if it falls under any of the above 10 prohibited categories. This authority will take a decision on the matter, which will be binding.

SAANSAD ADARSH GRAM YOJANA

Under the Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY), 478 and 218 Members of Parliament have identified Gram Panchayats, under Phase-II and Phase-III respectively as on 25 July 2018. 32 and 22 union ministers have identified Gram Panchayats, under Phase-II and Phase-III respectively under Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) as on 25 July 2018.

HIGHLIGHTS

Saansad Adarsh Gram Yojana (SAGY) was launched on 11th October 2014 with the aim to translate the comprehensive vision of Mahatma Gandhi about an ideal Indian village into reality, keeping in view the present context.

Under SAGY, each Member of Parliament adopts a Gram Panchayat and guides its holistic progress giving importance for social development at par with infrastructure.

The 'Adarsh Grams' are to become schools of local development and governance, inspiring other Gram Panchayats.

By involving villagers and leveraging scientific tools, a village development plan is prepared under the leadership of Member of Parliament.

OBJECTIVES

- To trigger processes which lead to a holistic development of the identified Gram Panchayats
- To substantially improve the standard of living and quality of life of all section of the population through -

a) Improved basic amenities	e) Reduced disparities
b) Higher productivity	f) Access to right and entitlements
c) Enhanced human development	g) Wider social mobilization
d) Better livelihood opportunity	h) Enriched social capital
- To generate models of local level development and effective local government which can motivate and inspire neighbouring Gram Panchayats to learn and adapt
- To nurture the identified Adarsh Grams as schools of local development to train other gram panchayat

SELECTION OF VILLAGES

- A Gram panchayat would be the basic unit. It will have a population of 3000-5000 in plain areas and 1000-3000 in the hilly, tribal and difficult area.
- The MP would be free to identify a suitable Gram Panchayat to be developed as Adarsh Gram, other than his/her own village or that of his/her spouse.
- The MP will identify one Gram Panchayat to be taken up immediately, and two other to be taken up little later.
- Lok Sabha MP has to choose a Gram Panchayat from within his/her constituency and Rajya Sabha MP a Gram Panchayat from the rural area of a district of his/her choice in the State from which he/she is elected.

SAATHI INITIATIVES

Ministry of Textiles and Ministry of Power have joined hands under the initiative SAATHI (Sustainable and Accelerated Adoption of efficient Textile technologies to Help Small Industries) in order to sustain and accelerate the adoption of energy efficient textile technologies in the powerloom sector and cost savings due to use of such technology.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Under this initiative, Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a public sector entity under the administrative control of Ministry of Power, would procure energy efficient Powerlooms, motors and Rapier kits in bulk and provide them to the small and medium Powerloom units at no upfront cost.
- The SAATHI initiative of the Government will be jointly implemented by EESL and the office of the Textile Commissioner on a pan-India basis.
- For the implementation, cluster wise demonstration projects and workshops will be organized in key clusters such as Erode, Surat, Ichalkaranji, etc.
- The use of these efficient equipment would result in energy savings and cost savings to the unit owner and he would repay in instalments to EESL over a 4 to 5 years period.
- This is the aggregation, bulk procurement and financing model that EESL has successfully deployed in several sectors like LED bulbs, Smart Meters and Electric Vehicles.
- The unit owner neither has to allocate any upfront capital cost to procure these equipment nor does it have to allocate additional expenditure for repayment as the repayments to EESL are made from the savings that accrue as a result of higher efficiency equipments and cost savings.
- The aggregation of demand and bulk procurement will also lead to reduction in capital cost, benefits of which will be passed on to the Powerloom units so that their repayment amount and period would reduce.
- The Powerloom sector in India is predominantly an unorganized sector and has a large number of micro and small units which produce 57 percent of the total cloth in the country.

VAN BANDHU KALYAN YOJANA

During 2014-15, an amount of Rs. 100.00 crore was allocated under Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (VKY), which was released to ten States having Scheduled Areas. During 2015-16, allocation of Rs. 200.00 crores was made for 21 States based on their perspective plan.

BACKGROUND

The Government of India in 1999 (further amended in 2002) has laid down modalities for determining claims for inclusion in and other modifications in the lists of Scheduled Tribes. According to these, only those proposals recommended and justified by State Government / UT Administration concerned and concurred with by Registrar General of India (RGI) and National Commission for Scheduled Tribes (NCST) are considered for amendment of legislation.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Government of India, Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana (VKY) for welfare of Tribals.
- VKY aims at creating enabling environment for need based and outcome oriented holistic development of the tribal people.
- This process envisages to ensure that all the intended benefits of goods and services under various programmes/schemes of Central as well as State Governments actually reach the target groups by convergence of resources through appropriate institutional mechanism.
- It covers all tribal people and all areas with tribal population across the country.

OBJECTIVES

- Improving the quality of life in tribal areas.

- Improving the quality of education.
- Qualitative and sustainable employment for tribal families.
- Bridging infrastructure gaps with focus on quality.
- Protection of tribal culture and heritage

Minor Forest Produce (MFP) is more often than not determined by the traders instead of self-sustained process of demand and supply. Implementing a scheme to ensure that such forest dwellers are not deprived of their due. Under the scheme maximum selling price for MFP is being implemented in schedule V States initially. Web based portal has also been developed which indicate current price of MFPs on real time basis across different mandis of the States.

FLOOD CONTROL SCHEMES

The subject of flood management including erosion control falls within the purview of the States. The flood management & anti-erosion schemes are planned, investigated and implemented by the State Governments with their own resources as per priority within the State. The Union Government renders technical guidance and promotional financial assistance to States.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Ministry had launched "**Flood Management Programme (FMP)**" a State sector Scheme in XI Plan which was continued during XII Plan.
- During XII Plan, a Central Sector Scheme, "**River Management Activities and Works related to Border Areas (RMBA)**" was implemented by the Ministry of Water Resources to cover following major components:
 - a) Hydrological observations and flood forecasting on common border rivers with neighbouring countries.
 - b) Investigation of WR projects in Neighbouring Countries.
 - c) Pre-construction activities for WR projects on common border rivers-Pancheshwar Development Authority(PDA)

Grant- in- Aid to States/UTs for flood management/anti –sea erosion works:

- a) Maintenance of flood protection works of Kosi & Gandak projects (in Nepal), Flood Protection/anti-erosion works in the border areas with Bangladesh and Pakistan by States.
- b) Flood Management/anti-erosion works/anti- sea erosion works in UTs.
- c) Activities of Ganga Flood Control Commission (GFCC).

DAM SAFETY BILL, 2018

Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation (MoWR,RD&GR) has drafted Dam Safety Bill, 2018. The Cabinet has approved the proposal for introduction of Dam Safety Bill, 2018 in the Parliament in its meeting dated 13.06.2018.

BACKGROUND

Central Water Commission (CWC) maintains the **National Register of Large Dams (NRLD)** based on information received from the State Governments. As per NRLD, there are 5264 large dams completed and 437 large dams under construction in India. Number of dam failures reported in India is 36.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Dam Safety Bill, 2018 aims to provide robust legal and institutional framework under Central & State Governments for safety of dams.
- The Bill envisages prevention and mitigation of dam failure related disasters through proper surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of all dams in the country.
- The Bill provides for constitution of a '**National Committee on Dam Safety (NCDS)**' to evolve dam safety policies and recommend necessary regulations.
- NCDS is proposed to be chaired by Chairman, CWC.
- The Bill provides for establishment of '**National Dam Safety Authority (NDSA)**' as a regulatory body to implement the policy, guidelines and standards for dam safety in the country.
- The Bill also provides for constitution of '**State Committee on Dam Safety**' by the State Governments to ensure proper surveillance, inspection, operation and maintenance of all specified dams in the State and to ensure their safe functioning.
- As per Dam Safety Bill 2018, every State has to establish a State Dam Safety Organisation, manned by officers from the field of dam safety preferably from the areas of **dam-designs, hydro-mechanical engineering, hydrology, geo-technical investigation, instrumentation and dam-rehabilitation.**

The NDSA is mandated in the Bill to:

- Maintain liaison with the State Dam Safety Organisations and the owners of dams for standardisation of dam safety related data and practices.
- Provide the technical and managerial assistance to the States and State Dam Safety Organisations.
- Maintain a national level data-base of all dams in the country and the records of major dam failures;
- Examine the cause of any major dam failure.
- Publish and update the standard guidelines and check-lists for the routine inspection and detailed investigations of dams and appurtenances.
- Accord recognition or accreditations to the organisations that can be entrusted with the works of investigation, design or construction of new dams.
- Resolve issue between the State Dam Safety Organisation of states, or between the State Dam Safety Organisation and the owner of a dam in that State.

*In certain cases, such as where a dam is extended over two or more States or dams of one State falling under the territory of another State, the National Authority has to perform the role of State Dam Safety Organization thereby eliminating potential causes for **inter-state conflicts.***

ATAL BHUJAL YOJANA

The World Bank has approved Atal Bhujal Yojana (ABHY), a Central Sector Scheme of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation. The scheme is to be implemented over a period of five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23, with World Bank assistance.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Atal Bhujal Yojana has been formulated by the Ministry to address the criticality of ground water resources in a major part of the country.

- The scheme aims to improve ground water management in priority areas in the country through community participation.
- The funding pattern is **50:50** between Government of India and the World Bank.
- The scheme is to be implemented over a period of five years from 2018-19 to 2022-23.
- The identified over-exploited and water stressed areas for the implementation of the scheme fall in the States of **Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.**
- Ensuring active community participation in groundwater management is among the major objectives of the scheme.
- The scheme envisages active participation of the communities in various activities such as formation of Water User Associations, monitoring and disseminating ground water data, water budgeting, preparation and implementation of Gram-Panchayat wise water security plans and IEC activities related to sustainable ground water management.
- Community participation is also expected to facilitate bottom-up groundwater planning process to improve the effectiveness of public financing and align implementation of various government programs on groundwater in the participating states.

MOVE HACK

NITI Aayog has launched Move Hack, a global mobility hackathon to crowdsource solutions aimed at the future of mobility in India. Envisaged to be one of the largest hackathons globally, Move Hack is focused on 10 themes and structured over three legs: online, followed by Singapore leg, and the finals in New Delhi.

HIGHLIGHTS

Transportation and mobility are emerging as potential drivers of innovation and economic growth of the 21st century. Rapidly evolving technologies and business models for delivering mobility services have dramatic potential to transform the global transportation sector. Mobility that ranges from pedestrian and personal transport to public transit and freight movement is extremely critical and impacts rural and urban daily lives.

- Move Hack aims to bring about innovative, dynamic and scalable solutions to problems pertaining to mobility.
- The hackathon has two-pronged campaign approach:
 - (a) “Just Code It”: aimed at solutions through innovations in technology / product / software and data analysis.
 - (b) “Just Solve It”: innovative business ideas or sustainable solutions to transform mobility infrastructure through technology.

The hackathon is organized in partnership with Government of Singapore and is powered by Hacker Earth. PwC is the Knowledge Partner and NASSCOM is the Strategic Partner.

“Move Hack is the first platform in the world which has enmeshed ***public transport, private transport, road safety, multimodal connectivity, and new age transport technologies*** such as zero emission vehicles and intra city aerial transport in a hackathon platform spearheaded by a Government.

PRADHAN MANTRI FASAL BIMA YOJANA

*The scheme provides for setting up of **Technical Support Unit (TSU)** with crop insurance expert to track and evaluate the scheme implementation. Initially, the **Agriculture Insurance Company of India Ltd. (AIC)** and subsequently the **GIC Re** were designated as TSU. Government has recently engaged a team from **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** to set up **Project Monitoring Unit (PMF)/TSU**.*

CONCERN

Issues faced by stakeholders in adopting the new technology regimen, in following seasonality discipline along with the fact that claim settlement is primarily dependent on receipt of clear yield data from States as well as timely payment of their share of premium subsidy to insurance companies are some of the major challenges in implementing PMFBY.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) is a scheme involving several stakeholders including State Governments, financial institutions, insurance companies and farmers, both loanee and non-loanee.
- It also envisages adoption of technology for integration of all stakeholders on the **National Crop Insurance Portal** for scheme administration and in capturing crop loss assessment etc.
- There is two-pronged strategy for use of technology in PMFBY.
 - (a) The scheme will be administered through **National Crop Insurance Portal** on which all stakeholders have been integrated to facilitate real time information flow and service delivery through better coordination, transparency and auto-administration of the scheme.
 - (b) For accurate assessment of yield loss, risk classification, rationalization of Crop Cutting Experiments etc cutting edge technology VIZ. **Remote sensing Imagery through satellites and Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV/DRONE), Smartphone/CCE Agri App** are being deployed.

MARKET INTERVENTION SCHEME

*All the agricultural and horticultural commodities for which **Minimum Support Price (MSP)** are not fixed and are generally perishable in nature are covered under **Market Intervention Scheme (MIS)**.*

BACKGROUND

In order to give benefits to small and marginal farmers of the country including Jharkhand and Gujarat, the Government has implementing various schemes viz., **Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme, Neem Coated Urea (NCU), Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY), Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), National Agriculture Market scheme (e-NAM), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Minimum Support Price (MSP) operation, Mission for integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH), Sub-Mission on Seed and Planting Material (SMSP), Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY) etc.** In addition, schemes relating to tree plantation (**Har Medh Par Ped**), **Bee Keeping, Dairy and Fisheries** are also implemented.

HIGHLIGHTS

Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) is a price support mechanism implemented on the request of State Governments for procurement of perishable and horticultural commodities in the event of a fall in market prices.

- The Scheme is implemented when there is at least 10% increase in production or 10% decrease in the ruling rates over the previous normal year.
- Market Intervention Scheme works in a similar fashion to Minimum Support Price based procurement mechanism for food grains, but is an adhoc mechanism.
- Its objective is to protect the growers of these horticultural/agricultural commodities from making distress sale in the event of bumper crop during the peak arrival period when prices fall to very low level. Thus, it provides remunerative prices to the farmers in case of glut in production and fall in prices.
- Proposal of MIS is approved on the specific request of State/Union Territory (UT) Government, if the State/UT Government is ready to bear 50% loss (25% in case of North-Eastern States), if any, incurred on its implementation.
- Further, the extent of total amount of loss shared is restricted to 25% of the total procurement value which includes cost of the commodity procured plus permitted overhead expenses.

IMPLEMENTATION

- The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation is implementing the scheme.
- Under MIS, funds are not allocated to the States. Instead, central share of losses as per the guidelines of MIS is released to the State Governments/UTs, for which MIS has been approved, based on specific proposals received from them.
- Under the Scheme, in accordance with MIS guidelines, a pre-determined quantity at a fixed Market Intervention Price (MIP) is procured by NAFED as the Central agency and the agencies designated by the state government for a fixed period or till the prices are stabilized above the MIP whichever is earlier.
- The area of operation is restricted to the concerned state only.

E- PASHUDHAN HAAT SCHEME

Government has launched e-Pashu Haat portal for connecting breeders and farmers of indigenous breeds.

HIGHLIGHTS

For the first time in the country under ***National Mission on Bovine Productivity***, E Pashudhan Haat portal has been developed.

- Through the portal farmers can obtain information on location of quality indigenous germplasm in the form live animals, semen doses and embryos.
- This portal is playing crucial role in development and conservation of indigenous breeds.
- Through this portal farmers will be aware about breed wise information on indigenous breeds.
- Farmers/breeders can sale animals of indigenous breeds through this portal. Information on all forms of germplasm has been uploaded on the portal.
- Immediately farmers can obtain benefits of the portal.

- This portal is giving new dimensions to development and conservation of indigenous breeds as at present information on availability of germplasm of indigenous breeds is not available with the farmers.

POLLUTED CITIES IN INDIA

Stating that 14 cities of India - namely Kanpur, Faridabad, Gaya, Varanasi, Patna, Delhi, Lucknow, Agra, Gurgaon, Muzaffarpur, Srinagar, Jaipur, Patiala & Jodhpur are included in the list of 20 cities, which have recorded high levels of PM2.5.

BACKGROUND

World Health Organization (WHO) ***Global Ambient Air Quality Database (update 2018)***, which consists of mainly annual means for ***PM10 and/or PM2.5***, covering more than 4000 human settlements in 108 countries for the years from 2008 to 2016.

Out of the 14 cities listed in the WHO database, 8 cities are in the list of 94 Non-attainment cities (2011-2015). The Non-attainment cities have been identified primarily on the basis of ***PM10***. Under ***National the Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Program (NAMPP)***, the parameters monitored are mainly ***PM10, SO2 and NO2***.

NCAP

- Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) has formulated ***National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)*** for abatement of air pollution in the country.
- NCAP aspires to strengthen the ongoing government initiatives targeted towards prevention, control and mitigation of air pollution.
- It lays down a comprehensive framework for management of air quality in the country by augmentation of existing air quality monitoring network, introduction of rural monitoring stations and devising air quality management plans for non-attainment cities based on detailed source apportionment (identification of pollution sources) studies for each city.

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Emphasising that India's emission intensity of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has reduced by 12% between 2005 and 2010 (as per India's first BUR) in line with our voluntary goal of reducing emission intensity of GDP by 20-25% by 2020 over 2005 level.

- The ***greenhouse gases (GHG) emission inventory*** for the country is prepared according to the requirements under the ***United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC)***.
- These estimates are based on the ***Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC)*** guidelines.
- State or city level greenhouse gas inventories are not required to be submitted and hence not prepared by Government of India.
- National Communications (***NATCOMs***) are submitted periodically followed by an update called the ***Biennial Update Report (BUR) every 2 years***.
- The commitments under Paris Agreement, called "***Nationally Determined Contributions***" (NDC), are to be implemented in post 2020 period.

- These contributions would be achieved through the schemes of various missions under the ***National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC)*** and actions under the ***State Action Plan on Climate Change (SAPCC)***.

E-WAY BILL SYSTEM

BACKGROUND

The E-way Bill System has been introduced nation-wide for inter-State movement of goods with effect from 1st April, 2018 while the States were given the option to choose any date till 3rd June, 2018 for the introduction of the E-way bill system for intra-State supplies. Consequently, all the States have notified the E-way bill system for intra-State supplies, the last being the National Capital Territory of Delhi which introduced it with effect from 16th June, 2018.

OBJECTIVES

- Single and unified E-way bill for inter-State and intra-State movement of goods for the whole country in self-service mode.
- Enabling paperless and fully online system to facilitate seamless movement of goods across all the States.
- Improve service delivery with quick turnaround time for the entire supply chain and provide anytime anywhere access to data/services.
- To facilitate hassle free movement of goods by abolishing inter-State check posts across the country.

INVESTMENT FUND UNDER NIIF

Department for International Development (DFID), an arm of the UK government, has committed to invest GBP 120 million (equivalent to INR 1,080 crore) in GGEF and NIIF Fund of Funds-I also committed to invest an equivalent amount.

BACKGROUND

Three funds have been established by the Government under the NIIF platform and registered with SEBI as Category II Alternative Investment Funds and National Investment and Infrastructure Fund II (“Strategic Fund”) is one of those three funds. The other two funds are National Investment and Infrastructure Fund (or Master Fund) and NIIF Fund of Funds – I.

OBJECTIVES

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

NIIF

- NIIF was set up in 2015 as an investment vehicle for funding commercially viable greenfield, brownfield and stalled projects in the infrastructure sector. NIIF will invest in areas such as energy, transportation, housing, water, waste management and other infrastructure-related sectors in India.

- The NIIF Funds work on a model whereby equity participation from strategic partners (including overseas sovereign / quasi-sovereign / multilateral / bilateral investors) is invited, alongside Government's contribution.
- The corpus of the fund is proposed to be around Rs40,000 crore, with the government investing 49% and the rest to be raised from third-party investors such as sovereign wealth funds, insurance and pension funds, endowments etc.
- The whole of 49% would be contributed by the Government of India directly.
- NIIF Fund of Funds-I's first investment has been in the **Green Growth Equity Fund (GGEF)**.

VIDYA LAKSHMI PORTAL

Vidya Lakshmi Portal was launched by the Government to ensure that students can avail loans easily through single window system of banks for education loans.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Vidya Lakshmi Portal provides a single window for students to access information and make application for Educational Loans provided by Banks.
- Students can view, apply and track the education loan applications to banks anytime, anywhere by accessing the portal.
- The portal also provides linkages to National Scholarship Portal.
- This portal has been developed under the guidance of **Department of Financial Services (Ministry of Finance), Department of Higher Education (Ministry of Human Resource Development) and Indian Banks Association (IBA)**.

FEATURES

- Information about Educational Loan Schemes of Banks.
- Common Educational Loan Application Form for Students.
- Apply to multiple Banks for Educational Loans.
- Facility for Banks to download Students Loan Applications.
- Facility for Banks to upload loan processing status.
- Facility for Students to email grievances/queries relating to Educational Loans to Banks.
- Linkage to National Scholarship Portal for information and application for Govt Scholarships.

REFORM IN BANKS

Government has taken note of Standard & Poor's (S&P) Global Ratings, a prominent global rating agency, which states, inter-alia, that "the worst is almost over for India's banks".

HIGHLIGHTS

- It states that India is at the tail-end of its bad-loan recognition problem as a stringent non-performing loan recognition coupled with tighter yet faster resolution under India's new bankruptcy law and rebounding corporate profits, will help banks gradually recover from a protracted bad-debt cycle and the Government's ongoing recapitalisation programme of Rs 2.1 lakh crore will help shore up depleted capital positions of the banks.
- It also states that the Government is working on a **four-pronged strategy** to improve the health of the banking sector: **recognition, resolution, recapitalisation and reform ("4Rs")**, and that

their stable outlook on the banks reflect their view that the “**4Rs**” and other initiatives taken by the Government and RBI will strengthen the banking system over the next couple of years.

PRADHAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA

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

States of Uttar Pradesh (87 lakh), West Bengal (67 lakh), Bihar (61 lakh), Madhya Pradesh (45 lakh), Rajasthan (37 lakh) and Odisha (30 lakh) have accounted for nearly 65% of the connections provided. 47% of the beneficiaries are from the weaker sections of the society i.e., SC/STs.

BACKGROUND

Government launched Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) on 1st May, 2016 and it is implemented by ***Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas*** through its Oil Marketing Companies i.e., IOC, BPCL and HPCL through their network of distributors across the country.

- Through PMUY, initially, ***5 crore BPL households*** were targeted for providing deposit free LPG connections to BPL households by 31st March,2019.
- PMUY has been recognised by ***World Health Organisation*** as one of the decisive interventions by the Government to address the Indoor Air Pollution which accounts for nearly 10 lakh deaths in a year in the country.
- PMUY aims at providing ***clean-cooking fuel*** to the poor households, which are otherwise vulnerable to various health hazards associated with indoor air pollution and bringing in qualitative changes in the living standards.
- PMUY is under implementation in the all the States/UTs.
- Beneficiaries are identified through Socio-Economic Caste Census List-2011 and in such cases where names are not covered under SECC list, beneficiaries are identified from seven categories which includes SC/ST households, beneficiaries of PMAY(Gramin), Antyodaya Anna Yojana, Most Backward Classes, Forest Dwellers, Resident of Islands/River Islands and Tea Garden & Ex-tea Garden Tribes.

PARYATAN PARV

The Ministry of Tourism, in collaboration with other Central Ministries, State Governments and Stakeholders is organizing a “Paryatan Parv” across the country from the 16th to 27th September 2018. Paryatan Parv shall conclude with the World Tourism Day celebrations on 27th September 2018.

- The Parv is being organized with the objective of drawing focus on the benefits of tourism, showcasing the cultural diversity of the country and reinforcing the principle of ***“Tourism for All”***.
- The Paryatan Parv will have three main components:
 - a) Dekho Apna Desh.
 - b) Tourism for All.
 - c) Tourism & Governance.

IMPRINT 2

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

IMPRINT

- **IMPRINT** is the first of its kind **MHRD** supported **Pan-IIT + IISc joint initiative**, now open for private institutions too, to address the major science and engineering challenges that India must address and champion to enable, empower and embolden the nation for inclusive growth and self-reliance.
- **IMPRINT** provides the overarching vision that guides research into areas that are predominantly socially relevant.

INITIATIVES

- Developing new engineering education policy.
- Creating a road map to pursue engineering challenges.
- It also provides the overarching vision that guides research into areas that are predominantly socially relevant.

JAL MARG VIKAS PROJECT

The IWAI is constructing multi modal terminal at Sahibganj in Jharkhand besides a proposed ship repair facility and a freight village.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The project is going to benefit the four states i.e. **UP, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal.**
- The IWAI is working with State Livelihood Missions for imparting necessary skill training for the youth, boatmen and other community members so that they could benefit from the employment opportunities.
- The multi-modal terminal at Sahibganj is an important component of the development of the **National Waterway-1 from Varanasi to Haldia**, a distance of 1390 km.
- A **Roll-on Roll-off (Ro-Ro) terminal** at Sahibganj will provide critical connectivity with Bihar at Manihari.

JAL MARG VIKAS PROJECT

Implementation of the Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) for capacity augmentation of navigation on National Waterway-1 (NW-1) at a cost of Rs 5369.18 crore with the technical assistance and investment support of the World Bank. The Project is expected to be completed by March, 2023.

IMPACT

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

- NW-1 development & operations will lead to direct employment generation to the tune of 46,000 and indirect employment of 84,000 will be generated by vessel construction industry.

States: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal

BACKGROUND

One of the major problems for a commercially viable and safe navigation on NW-1 is low depth upstream of Farakka due to low discharges from tributaries and difficult hydro morphological characteristics of river Ganga.

A pilot study on the Allahabad-Ghazipur stretch was commissioned by Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) to find solutions to this problem.

GOVERNMENT E-MARKETPLACE

All the State Governments are utilising the services offered by Government e-Marketplace. In addition, 22 States namely, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Telengana, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Punjab, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Nagaland, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Odisha, Maharashtra, Meghalaya and West Bengal have signed Memorandum of Understanding for making procurement through GeM portal mandatory in their state.

HIGHLIGHTS

- As an initiative to improve transparency in procurement, Government has set up Government e-Marketplace as a 100% Government owned company registered under the Companies Act, 2013 for providing online platform for procurement of common use goods and services by government organizations.
- Government e- Marketplace (GeM) is an online platform for government users which was launched on 9th August, 2016.
- It leverages technology to enhance transparency, efficiency and speed in public procurement.
- It provides the tools of e-bidding, reverse e-auction and demand aggregation to facilitate the government users, achieve the best value of their money.
- It is paperless, cashless and contactless platform giving end to end solution.

START UP INDIA'S ACADEMIA ALLIANCE PROGRAMME

Start-up India launched the Start-up Academia Alliance programme, a unique mentorship opportunity between academic scholars and start-ups working in similar domains.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Start-up Academia Alliance aims to reduce the gap between scientific research and its industrial applications in order to increase the efficacy of these technologies and to widen their impact.
- By creating a bridge between academia and industry, the Alliance strives to create lasting connections between the stakeholders of the start-up ecosystem and implement the third pillar on which the Start-up India Action Plan is based - ***Industry Academia Partnerships and Incubation.***

- The first phase of Start-up Academia Alliance was started through partnering with **Regional Centre for Biotechnology, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI), Council on Energy, Environment and Water, and TERI School of Advanced Studies.**
- Fields such as **renewable energy, biotechnology, healthcare and life sciences** were taken on board to provide mentorship and guidance to start-ups working in relevant arenas.

PROJECT MAUSAM

An amount of Rs 60,039,297/- has been approved and allocated for Project Mausam up till 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Project 'Mausam' is the initiative of **Ministry of Culture** to be implemented by the **Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)** as the nodal agency with research support of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA) and National Museum as associate bodies.
- This project aims to explore the multi-faceted Indian Ocean 'world' – collating archaeological and historical research in order to document the diversity of cultural, commercial and religious interactions in the Indian Ocean.
- The main objective of the project is to inscribe places and sites identified under Project Mausam as trans-national nomination for inscription on UNESCO's World Heritage List.
- The list of 39 countries identified under Project Mausam is below

Action Plan for the year 2018-19 and 2019-20 has been initiated which includes certain activities such as holding an international workshop, event at UNESCO HQ, Creation of web platform, regional training programme and tentative list preparation for the Trans border nomination.

NEW DEFENCE PRODUCTION POLICY

In the Budget Speech 2018, Government has announced that it will bring out an industry friendly Defence Production Policy 2018 to promote domestic production by public sector, private sector and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

HIGHLIGHTS

Consequent to this, a draft **Defence Production Policy 2018** has been prepared which provides a focused, structured and significant thrust to development of defence design and production capabilities in the country. The draft policy has been shared with all concerned stakeholders for their views before notification.

- Creation of a dynamic, robust and competitive defence and aerospace industry as an important part of the 'Make in India' initiative.
- Creation of a tiered defence industrial ecosystem in the country.
- Reducing current dependence on imports and strive to achieve self-reliance in development and manufacture of weapon systems / platforms.
- The Policy mandates for Transfer of Technology or enhanced Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) for domestic production in the event of non-availability of manufacturing capabilities in the country.
- The policy envisages that Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) should focus on system integration, design and development, and actively engage domestic vendors in the private sector for other assembly work.

DRAFT FOREST POLICY AND TRIBALS

The basic thrust of the draft National Forest Policy of 2018 is for conservation, protection and management of forests along with addressing other issues associated with forest and forest management.

HIGHLIGHTS

- To protect the interest of tribals, the Draft Policy of 2018 proposes to launch **Community Forest Management Mission** for management of community forest resources through a participatory forest management approach.
- Moreover, specific provisions have been made in the draft policy to ensure that the interests of local communities are protected and also provisions are made to consider them as partner in management of forests.
- In addition, forest rights of tribals and others traditional forest dwellers are safeguarded under a separate Act, namely, **“The Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Right) Act, 2006” (Forest Rights Act, 2006)** which recognizes and vests the forest rights of the Scheduled Tribes and other traditional forest dwellers who have been residing in such forests for generations but whose rights could not be vested”.

WATER POLLUTION IN THE CITIES

No study has been carried out by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to assess pollution of water bodies from application of synthetic fertilizers.

CONCERNS

Water bodies in the country are polluted due to discharge of untreated sewage, industrial effluent, agricultural run-off containing fertilizers, pesticides, etc. However, CPCB is monitoring the water quality of both surface and ground water under the National Water Monitoring Programme (NWMP) through a network of monitoring stations in the country.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The water quality is assessed for various parameters, including physico-chemical, bacteriological, heavy metals, pesticides, etc.
- The steps taken by the Government to check the pollution of water bodies includes:
 - a) Formulation and notification of standards for effluents from industries, operations or processes.
 - b) Enforcing of these standards by State Pollution Control Boards (SPCBs)/Pollution Control Committees (PCCs) through consent mechanism and regular monitoring.
 - c) Setting up of monitoring network for assessment of water quality.
 - d) Installation of Online Continuous Effluent Monitoring systems (OCEMS) to check the discharge of effluent directly into water bodies.
 - e) Promotion of cleaner production processes.
 - f) Installation of Common Effluent Treatment Plants for cluster of Small-scale Industrial units;
 - g) Issuance of directions for implementation of Zero Liquid Discharge in certain categories of highly polluting industries.
 - h) Issuance of directions under **Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986** and under **Section 18(1)(b) of Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974**, etc.

TACKLING OF DUST POLLUTION

*The government has formulated **National Clean Air Programme (NCAP)** as a long-term time bound national level strategy to tackle the increasing air pollution problem across the country in comprehensive manner.*

OBJECTIVE

The overall objective is to augment and evolve effective ambient air quality monitoring network across the country, besides ensuring comprehensive management plan for prevention, control and abatement of air pollution.

NCAP

- The NCAP focuses on collaborative and participatory approach comprising all sources of pollution and coordination between relevant Central Ministries, State Governments, local bodies and other stakeholders.
- Hundreds (102) non-attainment cities have been selected for formulation and implementation of city specific action plan under NCAP.
- In addition, NCAP has many other components viz. Technical Assessment Cell, technology support, sharing of international best practices, awareness and capacity building, source apportionment studies, plantation drive, intensive inspection drive etc to support the time bound implementation of NCAP.

The Government has taken several steps to address air pollution which:

- Notification of **National Ambient Air Quality Standards**.
- Setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality.
- Introduction of cleaner / alternate fuels like gaseous fuel (CNG, LPG etc.).
- Ethanol blending, launching of **National Air Quality index**.
- Universalization of BS-IV from 2017; leapfrogging from BS-IV to BS-VI fuel standards by 1st April, 2020.
- Notifications regarding '**Mandatory Implementation of Dust Mitigation Measures for Construction and Demolition Activities for projects requiring EC**' and '**Mandatory Implementation of Dust Mitigation Measures for all Construction and Demolition Activities**'.
- Notification of Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules.
- Banning of burning of biomass.
- Promotion of public transport network.
- Streamlining the issuance of Pollution Under Control Certificate.
- Issuance of directions under Section 18(1)(b) of Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981 and under Section 5 of Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.
- Installation of on-line continuous (24x7) monitoring devices by major industries; etc.
- Further, two pilot projects namely "To demonstrate the effectiveness of air pollution mitigation by **Pariyayantara filtration**" to **Manav Rachna Innovation and Incubation Centre** to install Pariyayantara filtration on the roof top of 30 buses and "**Deployment and Evaluation of air purification units** (for traffic junction pollution abatement) in Delhi" to National Environmental Engineering Research Institute (NEERI) to install **Wind Augmentation and Air Purifying Unit (WAYU)** devices at 7 traffic intersections have been sanctioned **to tackle dust pollution**.

FUNDS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Funds have been deposited in various Special Purpose Vehicles (SPV) created in states in compliance of various Supreme Court Orders in various Interlocutory Applications (IA) filed in T.N. Godavarman Thirumalpad vs Union of India &Ors. in Writ Petition of 1995 and other environment related cases filed in the Supreme Court.

These funds are utilised as per the guidelines framed as per the Supreme Court directions. The funds deposited in these SPVs including the **Compensatory Afforestation Fund**, funds released and utilised and balance funds available in these SPVs.

HIGHLIGHTS

- These funds are managed by special Committees constituted by the State Government as per the direction of the Supreme Court.
- The Compensatory afforestation Fund (CAF) is managed by the Adhoc Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) constituted by Supreme Court to manage CAF.
- The CAF is used as per the CAMPA guidelines.
- The Central Government has now enacted Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act 2016 for utilising the Compensatory Afforestation Fund (CAF) managed so far by the Adhoc CAMPA.

ISHAN VIKAS & ISHAN UDAY SCHEMES

Ishan Vikas and Ishan Uday schemes are being implemented for the students of North Eastern region.

Ishan Vikas

- It is coordinated by IIT, Guwahati and under the programme, selected school children from North Eastern States are brought in close contact with the Indian Institute of Technology (IITs), Indian Institutes of Science Education and Research (IISERs) and National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS) during the vacation period to motivate them to pursue science, technology, engineering and mathematics and to facilitate internship opportunities for the engineering college students in various institutes of national importance.
- Annual target is to provide visit of 96 school children to premier institutes and summer internships to 250 engineering students.

Ishan Uday Scholarship Scheme

- It is administered by University Grants Commission (UGC).
- Under the scheme, scholarship is provided to the economically backward students from the North East Region for pursuing general degree courses, technical and professional degree courses. It is envisaged to provide 10000 scholarships annually.

HEFA

The Government has approved the authorised equity capital expansion of Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) to Rs. 10,000 crore with Government equity of Rs. 6000 crore.

HIGHLIGHTS

- An amount corresponding to 10% of the Government equity would be contributed by the partner institution, Canara Bank.
- All Centrally Funded Educational Institutions in Higher Education, School Education and Medical Education sectors are eligible to avail of loans through HEFA.
- Presently HEFA has been sanctioned Government equity of Rs. 1000 crore, with an additional Rs. 2000 crore budgeted for current year.
- The Government would take steps to mobilize additional resources in future, based on requirement.
- It is envisaged by 2022, to fund projects worth Rs 1,00,000 Crore by year 2022 as per the Budget Announcement of 2018-19 to various categories of educational institutions.

MODEL SHOPS AND ESTABLISHMENTS (REGULATION OF EMPLOYMENT & CONDITIONS OF SERVICE) BILL, 2016

The salient features of the Model Shops and Establishments (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Bill, 2016 are:

- The Model Bill applies to shops and establishments employing ten or more workers except manufacturing.
- Freedom to operate 365 days in a year and opening/closing of establishments.
- Women to be permitted during night shift, if the provisions of shelter, rest room, ladies toilet, adequate protection of their dignity and transportation etc. exist.
- No discrimination against women in the matter of recruitment, training, transfer or promotions.
- Online one common Registration through a simplified procedure.
- Power to appropriate Government to make rules regarding adequate measures to be taken by the employer for the safety and health of workers, clean and safe drinking water, first aid, lavatory, crèche and canteen by group of establishments, in case it is not possible due to constraint in space or otherwise by individual establishments.
- Five paid festival holidays in addition to national holidays etc.

OTHER PROVISIONS

A shop or an establishment may work on all days in a week subject to the conditions that every worker shall be allowed weekly holiday of at least twenty four consecutive hours of rest. If workers is denied weekly holiday, the compensatory leave in lieu thereof shall be given within two months and if the workers is required to work on a day of rest, he shall be entitled to wages at the rate of twice his ordinary rate of wages.

No Adult workers shall be required or allowed to work in a shop or establishment for more than 48 hours in any week and nine hours in a day and no worker shall be asked to work continuously for more than 5 hours unless he has been given a break of not less than half an hour. Sufficient penalty provisions have been made in the Bill for non-compliance of these provisions.

No women shall be required or allowed to work in a shop or establishment for more than 48 hours in any week and except between hours of 6 A.M. and 9 P.M. Women workers to be permitted to work during night shift if the State Government is satisfied that adequate provisions of shelter, rest room, ladies toilet, night crèche, adequate protection of their dignity, honour and safety and transportation etc. exist.

GANGA CLEANING PROJECTS

National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) is using Geographic Information System (GIS) technology for improving planning, execution and monitoring of projects as well as providing platform for central repository of all data related to Ganga river basin including Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) / Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP), water quality monitoring location, afforestation, ghats and crematorium, river front development.

This assists NMCG in improving its effectiveness in pollution abatement and river rejuvenation work.

Government has approved Namami Gange Programme in May 2015 for conservation of river Ganga with total outlay of Rs.20,000 Crores. Namami Gange Programme is an umbrella programme which integrates previous and currently ongoing initiatives by enhancing efficiency, extracting synergies and supplementing them with more comprehensive & better coordinated interventions.

The following corrective measures have been taken up under Namami Gange Programme for Ganga Clean up in Uttar Pradesh and other states in the last 3 years include:

- Condition assessment study taken up to know the sewage generation and sewage treatment gap in towns along main stem of river Ganga for sanctioning of sewerage infrastructure projects in holistic and scientific manner.
- Rehabilitation of existing STPs and their Operation & Maintenance (O&M).

NAMAMI GANGE

- The Namami Gange Programme have been made 100% central sector scheme to ensure sufficient availability of funds to the state government, reduction in time loss for collection of state share thereby faster approval of contracts and effective implementation of the projects
- The Operation and Maintenance period have been increased from 5 to 15 years to ensure performance of STPs for a longer period.
- Formation of NMCG as an authority and enhanced financial power for faster sanctioning of projects and award of contracts; formation of state and district Ganga Committee for effective monitoring of works at the grass root levels.
- Implementation of projects under ***Hybrid Annuity Mode (HAM)*** to address issues such as sub-optimal design, lesser O&M support and lack of ownership.
- HAM will also ensure ownership and distinct accountability for continuous acceptable performance in the long term of the STPs.
- Recycling and reuse of treated waste water is being promoted; Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed with Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) for using of treated waste water for their Mathura Refinery.
- Drain treatment by use of innovative technology and modular STPs.
- Creation of Rural Sanitation facilities in identified villages along river Ganga in support from Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation.

ORGANIC FARMING

The current position of organic farming w.r.t. area covered across the country is 23.02 lakh hectares under the schemes Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY), Mission Organic Value Chain Development for North Eastern Region (MOVCDNER) and National Programme of Organic Production (NPOP).

HIGHLIGHTS

- Under PKVY and MOVCNDR schemes enough assistance is provided to Farmer Producer Companies (FPCs)/ entrepreneurs for development of value chains/ marketing of organic produce.
- The guidelines for providing assistance for various post-harvest management/ value chain development activities including infrastructure development, branding, marketing are given.
- Government of India under the schemes- PKVY & MOVCNDR is supporting the production and marketing of organic produce in the country to reduce their costs and prices.
- Use of organic inputs like PROM, vermicompost, organic/bio-fertilizers, city compost, waste decomposer had been promoted under these schemes which will further reduce the costs of production in organic farming.

ORGANIC AGRICULTURE

- Cost of organic agriculture largely depends on on-farm generation of inputs.
- When on-farm organic inputs are used, cost of production per unit area is less by 13 % under organic agriculture than inorganic management. However, if organic inputs from outside the farm are purchased and utilized, the cost of production increases by about 15-20 % depending on the nature of inputs used.
- ***Integrated Organic Farming System (IOFS)*** models being developed under NPOF promises to meet 70-80 % of organic inputs within the farm thus reducing the market input cost considerably.
- During the conversion period of initial two to three years, yield levels are expected to be low till soil system regains to respond to organic production system especially in the intensive agriculture areas.

UMANG PLATFORM

TRAI has now integrated its Mobile Apps namely DND 2.0 & MyCall with UMANG Platform.

UMANG PLATFORM

- UMANG (***Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance***) is developed by National e-Governance Division (NeGD), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY).
- UMANG provides a single platform for all Indian Citizens to access pan India e-Gov services ranging from Central to Local Government bodies and other citizen centric services.
- It provides a unified approach where citizens can install one application to avail multiple government services.
- From now onwards, TRAI's Mobile Apps namely '***DND 2.0***' & '***My Call***' shall also be available on Umang Platform.

(a) TRAI My Call App

TRAI My Call is an intuitive and user-friendly application for Crowdsourced Voice Call Quality Monitoring. The Application helps Mobile phone users to rate their experience about voice call quality in real time and help TRAI gather consumer experience data along with Network data.

(b) DND 2.0 App

DND (Do Not Disturb) Services App enables smart phone users to register their mobile number under DND and report spam messages or calls to avoid Unsolicited Commercial Communication (UCC)/Telemarketing Calls/SMS.

CLIMATE CHANGE FINANCE UNIT

The functions of Climate Change Finance Unit:

- To prepare chapter on Climate Change and Sustainable Development for the Economic Survey.
- To serve as the nodal point on all Climate Change Finance matters in the Ministry of Finance, to participate in the discourse on climate finance issues in the multilateral climate change regime and other international fora such as G20.
- Provide analytical inputs for the National Climate Policy Framework.

RASHTRIYA VAYOSHRI YOJANA

Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been implementing a scheme for providing physical aids and Assisted Living Devices for Senior Citizens belonging to BPL category named "Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana (RVY)" since 1st April, 2017.

OBJECTIVES

Providing Senior Citizens, belonging to BPL category and suffering from age related disabilities/ infirmities, with such physical aids and assisted living devices which can restore near normalcy in their bodily functions.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Under the Scheme, assisted living devices such as Walking Sticks, Elbow Crutches, Walkers/ Crutches, Tripods/ Quadpods, Hearing Aids, Wheelchairs, Artificial Dentures and Spectacles are provided free of cost to the beneficiary senior citizens.
- The Scheme is being implemented through the "***Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation (ALIMCO)***", a Public Sector Undertaking under this Ministry, as the sole Implementing Agency.
- The devices are distributed in the camp mode.
- The beneficiaries are identified through Assessment Camps organised in collaboration with the respective State Government/District Administration and the devices are distributed in Distribution Camps organised in the selected districts.
- The Scheme is being funded from ***Senior Citizens' Welfare Fund (SCWF)***.

ADOPT A HERITAGE SCHEME

No sites have been adopted by any private institute in Assam under the 'Adopt a Heritage' scheme. Any monument/heritage site/natural site for whose inclusion, the concerned asset owner (ASI, State Government etc) agrees can be considered under the Adopt a Heritage Scheme. Kaziranga National Park is not covered under the scheme yet.

OBJECTIVES

- To develop basic and advanced tourism infrastructure in and around heritage monuments and any other tourist sites in collaboration with the public/private sector.
- To promote cultural and heritage value of the country to generate livelihoods of local communities of respective heritage site/monument/tourist site.

- To develop sustainable tourism infrastructure and ensuring proper Operations and Maintenance therein and thus increase the attractiveness of the tourist destinations.

HIGHLIGHTS

- ‘Adopt a Heritage’ project focusses on providing basic public conveniences and amenities which include cleanliness, drinking water, ease of access for differently abled and senior citizens, standardized signage, illumination and advanced amenities such as surveillance system, night viewing facilities, tourism facilitation centre etc.
- It aims to involve public sector companies, private sector companies and corporate citizens/individuals to take up the responsibility for making our heritage and tourism more sustainable through development, operation and maintenance of world-class tourist infrastructure and amenities at ASI/State heritage sites and other important tourist sites in India.

APP NIRYAT MITRA

Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Aviation Suresh Prabhu launched Niryat Mitra – mobile App in New Delhi.

HIGHLIGHTS

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

KHANHCHEZONGA BIOSPHERE INCLUDED IN WORLD NETWORK OF BIOSPHERE RESERVES

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

BACKGROUND

The decision to include ***Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve in WNBR*** was taken at the ***30th Session of International Coordinating Council (ICC) of Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme of UNESCO*** held at ***Palembang, Indonesia***, from July 23-27, 2018.

India has 18 Biosphere Reserves and with the inclusion of Khangchendzonga, the number of internationally designated WNBR has become 11, with 7 Biosphere Reserves being domestic Biosphere Reserves.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Khangchendzonga Biosphere Reserve in Sikkim is one of the highest ecosystems in the world, reaching elevations of 1, 220 metres above sea-level.
- It includes a range of ecoclines, varying from sub-tropic to Arctic, as well as natural forests in different biomes, that support an immensely rich diversity of forest types and habitats.

- The core zone – Khangchendzonga National Park was designated a World Heritage Site in 2016 under the ‘mixed’ category.
- Over 118 species of the large number of medicinal plants found in ***Dzongu Valley*** in north Sikkim are of ethno-medical utility.
- The transition zone is targeted for eco-development activities, afforestation, plantation of medicinal herbs and soil conservation measures.

Biosphere reserves:

Launched in 1971, ***UNESCO’s Man and the Biosphere Programme (MAB)*** is an Intergovernmental Scientific Programme that aims to establish a scientific basis for the improvement of relationships between people and their environments.

- MAB combines the natural and social sciences, economics and education to improve human livelihoods and the equitable sharing of benefits, and to safeguard natural and managed ecosystems, thus promoting innovative approaches to economic development that are socially and culturally appropriate, and environmentally sustainable.
- Its World Network of Biosphere Reserves currently counts more than 600 sites in 122 countries all over the world, including 20 transboundary sites.
- The first of India’s reserves to make it to UNESCO’s list was Tamil Nadu’s Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve in 2000.
- Protection is granted not only to the flora and fauna of the protected region, but also to the human communities who inhabit these regions, and their ways of life.

SBM ODF PLUS & ODF PLUS PLUS PROTOCOL

Under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), urban areas of 18 states, and a total of 3,223 cities have become Open Defecation Free, and 2,712 cities among them have been certified as ODF through an independent third party.

HIGHLIGHTS

- SBM ODF Plus protocol focuses on sustaining community/ public toilet usage by ensuring their functionality, cleanliness and maintenance, the SBM ODF Plus Plus will focus on achieving sanitation sustainability by addressing complete sanitation value chain, including safe containment, processing and disposal of fecal sludge and septage.
- The ***ODF+ and ++ protocol and toolkit*** to be launched will detail out the necessary conditions to be achieved by cities for declaring themselves as ODF+ and ODF++, along with the detailed steps required for third party certifications.
- The third initiative to be launched under the SBM will be the ***Swachh Manch, a web-based platform*** which aims to bring together every stakeholder contributing to the Swachh Bharat Mission under a common platform.
- The Swachh Manch will also be integrated with the existing Swachhata App to act as a citizens’ grievance redressal platform.

EASE OF LIVING INDEX

The Ease of Living Index will be launched along with an Ease of Living Index dashboard.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Apart from presenting the overall national ranking of 111 cities, the dashboard will present ranking of the cities across pillars, category, geographical zone and population classifications.
- Ease of Living framework comprises **four pillars** namely ***Institutional, Social, Economic and Physical*** which are further broken down into **15 categories and 78 indicators**.
- The dashboard will also have a comparison feature that will allow users to analyse the performance across cities on various liveability parameters.
- The Ease of Living Index is an initiative of the **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** to help cities assess their liveability vis-à-vis global and national benchmarks and encourage cities to move towards an **'outcome-based' approach** to urban planning and management.
- The Ease of Living assessment standards are closely linked to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and will provide a strong impetus to India's effort for systematic tracking progress of SDGs in the urban areas.

NITI AAYOG & CII PARTNERSHIP ON SDGs

NITI Aayog and CII Partnership on SDGs launched at the Government and Business Partnership Conclave in New Delhi on 8 August 2018, organised by NITI Aayog, Confederation of Indian Industry and UN.

HIGHLIGHTS

- CII-NITI Aayog have entered into a three-year partnership and an MoU was signed.
- This partnership focuses on specific activities that seeks to develop:
 1. Vision and Action Agenda for businesses and industries to contribute to SDGs;
 2. Annual Status Reports;
 3. Sector-specific Best Practise Documents.
- CII launched the report—***Indian Solutions for the World to Achieve SDGs***.
- The report deep-dives into each of the SDGs, targets and business implications thereof.
- In sustainable development three things matter the most: ***energy, water and circular economy/green industry***.
- The only way to grow and develop sustainably is to use technology to leapfrog: use new and renewable energy and push for R&D and innovation to generate demand for electric vehicles, hydrogen cars, etc. and to find local solutions for 7 billion strong population around the world.

WORLD BIOFUEL DAY 2018

The Prime Minister attended an event to mark World Biofuel Day, at Vigyan Bhawan in New Delhi on August 10, 2018.

BIOFUELS

- Biofuels can help reduce import dependency on crude oil.
- They can contribute to a cleaner environment, generate additional income for farmers, and generate employment in rural areas.
- Therefore, biofuels have synergies with various Government initiatives, including enhancing farmers' incomes, and Swachh Bharat.
- The Government also approved the ***National Policy on Biofuels*** in June 2018.

Rajasthan has become the first State in the country to implement the national policy on biofuels unveiled by the Centre in May this year.

The policy lays emphasis on increasing production of oilseeds and establish a Centre for Excellence in Udaipur to promote research in the fields of alternative fuels and energy resources.

NATIONAL POLICY ON BIOFUELS 2018

- The Policy categorises biofuels as “Basic Biofuels” viz. First Generation (1G) bioethanol & biodiesel and “Advanced Biofuels” – Second Generation (2G) ethanol, Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) to drop-in fuels, Third Generation (3G) biofuels, bio-CNG etc. to enable extension of appropriate financial and fiscal incentives under each category.
- The Policy expands the scope of raw material for ethanol production by allowing use of Sugarcane Juice, Sugar containing materials like Sugar Beet, Sweet Sorghum, Starch containing materials like Corn, Cassava, Damaged food grains like wheat, broken rice, Rotten Potatoes, unfit for human consumption for ethanol production.
- Farmers are at a risk of not getting appropriate price for their produce during the surplus production phase. Taking this into account, the Policy allows use of surplus food grains for production of ethanol for blending with petrol with the approval of National Biofuel Coordination Committee.
- With a thrust on Advanced Biofuels, the Policy indicates a viability gap funding scheme for 2G ethanol Bio refineries of Rs.5000 crore in 6 years in addition to additional tax incentives, higher purchase price as compared to 1G biofuels.
- Boost to biodiesel production: The Policy encourages setting up of supply chain mechanisms for biodiesel production from non-edible oilseeds, Used Cooking Oil, short gestation crops.

CLASSIFICATION OF BIOFUELS

1st generation biofuels are also called conventional biofuels. They are made from things like sugar, starch, or vegetable oil. Note that these are all food products. Any biofuel made from a feedstock that can also be consumed as a human food is considered a first-generation biofuel.

2nd generation biofuels are produced from sustainable feedstock. The sustainability of a feedstock is defined by its availability, its impact on greenhouse gas emissions, its impact on land use, and by its potential to threaten the food supply. No second-generation biofuel is also a food crop, though certain food products can become second generation fuels when they are no longer useful for consumption. Second generation biofuels are often called “advanced biofuels.”

3rd generation biofuels are biofuel derived from algae. These biofuels are given their own separate class because of their unique production mechanism and their potential to mitigate most of the drawbacks of 1st and 2nd generation biofuels.

PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for continuation of Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) beyond 12th Five Year Plan period.

Habitation (population 250+) would be covered by March, 2019. PMGSY-II and habitations under identified LWE blocks (100-249 population) would be covered by March 2020.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Initially the targets of PMGSY were to be achieved by March 2022, however, the sunset date of achievement of PMGSY-I was pre-poned to March, 2019.

- With enhanced fund allocation and changed funding pattern i.e. in the ratio **of 60:40** between the Centre and State for all States except for 8 North Eastern and 3 Himalayan States (Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh & Uttarakhand) for which it is **90:10**.

BACKGROUND

- Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) was launched on 25th December, 2000 with the objective to provide All-Weather road connectivity to the eligible unconnected habitations in rural areas of Country.
- The programme envisages connecting all unconnected habitations with a population of 500 persons (as per 2001 Census) and above in plain areas.
- Also eligible are the unconnected habitations with 250 persons and above (Census 2001) in Special Category States' namely North-East, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Uttarakhand, the Desert areas (as identified in Desert Development Programme) and 88 Selected Tribal and Backward districts as identified by the Ministry of Home Affairs/Planning Commission.
- For Most intensive Integrated Action Plan (IAP) blocks as identified by Ministry of Home Affairs, the unconnected habitations with population 100 and above (as per 2001 census) is eligible to be covered under PMGSY.

STATE OF THE ART SATELLITES

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has planned to launch more numbers of state-of-the-art satellites to further enhance operational applications and cater to the needs of emerging applications.

The details of the state-of-the-art satellites approved for launch till 2019-20 are:

- Third generation CARTOSAT series satellite for very high-resolution mapping.
- Second generation stereo imaging satellite for Digital Elevation Model.
- Geostationary Imaging Satellite (GISAT) for Earth observation from Geostationary Orbit.
- Third generation Ocean imaging satellite for ocean colour, sea surface temperature mapping and ocean surface wind vector mapping.
- Third generation Resource-Sat series of satellite with improved spatial resolution and swath.
- C-band microwave imaging satellite for all weather and day & night imaging.
- Constellation of high-resolution imaging satellites for frequent revisit.
- Nanosatellite for Aerosol monitoring.
- Satellite for monitoring chlorophyll fluorescence and radiation environment.

The areas requiring enhancement of operational applications, include monitoring of ***natural resources, crop acreage estimation & production forecasting, monitoring of surface water spread, potential fishing zone forecasting, near-real time monitoring of disasters, high resolution digital elevation model of the country, infrastructure planning & monitoring***, and so on.

PROJECT SWAYAM

The Ministry of HRD has embarked on a major and new initiative Project called 'Study Webs of Active Learning for Young Aspiring Minds' (SWAYAM), which will provide one integrated platform and portal for online courses.

HIGHLIGHTS

- This covers all higher education subjects and skill sector courses.
- The objective is to ensure that every student in our country has access to the best quality higher education at the affordable cost.
- Academicians from hundreds of institutions throughout the country are involved in developing & delivering MOOCs through SWAYAM in almost all disciplines from senior schooling to Post Graduation wherein it is intended to develop world class content.
- At present about 1550+ MOOCs courses are listed on SWAYAM of which 800+ courses are already delivered.
- It is intended to host about 2000 courses and 80000 hours of learning material, within two years: **covering school, under-graduate, post-graduate, engineering, law and other professional courses.**

NATIONAL ENERGY STORAGE MISSION

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

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- India's Energy Storage Mission has proposed three stage solution approach i.e. **creating an environment for battery manufacturing growth; scaling supply chain strategies; and scaling of battery cell manufacturing.**
- Energy Storage is one of the most crucial & critical components of India's energy infrastructure strategy and also for supporting India's sustained thrust to renewables.
- Key areas for energy storage application include:
 - a) Integrating renewable energy with distribution and transmission grids.
 - b) Setting Rural micro grids with diversified loads or stand-alone systems.
 - c) Developing Storage component of electric mobility plans.

Draft National Energy Storage Mission (NESM):

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

SC/ST (PREVENTION OF ATROCITIES) AMENDMENT BILL, 2018

The Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Bill, 2018 which was passed by the Lok Sabha on 6th August 2018, has been passed by the Rajya Sabha also.

ISSUE

On March 20, the Supreme Court issued a slew of guidelines to protect people against arbitrary arrests under the Act, directing that public servants could be arrested only with the written permission of their appointing authority, while in the case of private employees, the Senior Superintendent of Police concerned should allow it. A preliminary inquiry should be conducted before the FIR was registered to check if the case fell within the ambit of the Act, and whether it was frivolous or motivated, the court ruled.

The ruling was greeted by a storm of protest from Dalit groups, which said the order diluted the law. However, the court refused to stay its ruling, leading to the demand from Dalit groups that the government introduce an ordinance or an Amendment Bill to restore the provisions.

HIGHLIGHTS

Section 18A has been inserted to nullify conduct of a preliminary enquiry before registration of an FIR, or to seek approval of any authority prior to arrest of an accused, and to restore the provisions of Section 18 of the Act.

Section 18A, inserted in the Act, states that:

(1) For the purpose of the PoA Act-

- (a) preliminary enquiry shall not be required for registration of a First Information Report against any person; or
- (b) the investigating officer shall not require approval for arrest, if necessary, of any person, against whom an accusation of having committed an offence under the PoA Act has been made and no procedure other than provided under the PoA Act or the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, shall apply.

(2) The provision of section 438 of the Code shall not apply to a case under the Act, notwithstanding any judgment or order or direction of any Court.

SC/ST ACT

- The **Scheduled Castes and Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act** is popularly known as POA, the SC/ST Act, the Prevention of Atrocities Act, or simply the Atrocities Act. The SC/ST Act was enacted on September 9, 1989. The rules for the Act were notified on March 31, 1995.
- The SC/ST Act lists 22 offences relating to various patterns or behaviours inflicting criminal offences and breaking the self-respect and esteem of the scheduled castes and tribes community. This includes denial of economic, democratic and social rights, discrimination, exploitation and abuse of the legal process.
- According to the SC/ST Act, the protection is provided from social disabilities such as denial of access to certain places and to use customary passage, personal atrocities like forceful drinking

or eating of inedible food sexual exploitation, injury etc, atrocities affecting properties, malicious prosecution, political disabilities and economic exploitation.

- For speedy trial, Section 14 of the SC/ST Act provides for a Court of Session to be a Special Court to try offences under this Act in each district.
- The prime objective of the SC/ST Act is to deliver justice to marginalised through proactive efforts, giving them a life of dignity, self-esteem and a life without fear, violence or suppression from the dominant castes.

INTER – STATE RIVER WATER SHARING DISPUTE

The Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2017 was introduced in Lok Sabha by the Minister for Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation (MoWR, RD & GR) by amending the existing ISRWD Act, 1956.

The Bill was referred to Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources for examination. The Standing Committee has submitted its recommendation on the Bill vide Lok Sabha Secretariat letter dated 11.08.2017 in the form of 'Nineteenth Report of Standing Committee on Water Resources on The Inter- State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2017'. Accordingly, the Ministry has prepared draft Cabinet Note for Official Amendments to Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2017.

BACKGROUND

The Parliament has enacted ***Inter-State River Water Disputes (ISRWD) Act, 1956*** for adjudication of disputes relating to waters of inter-State rivers and river valley thereof. When any request under the said Act is received from any State Government in respect of any water dispute on the inter- State rivers and the Central Government is of the opinion that the water dispute cannot be settled by negotiations, the Central Government constitutes a Water Disputes Tribunal for the adjudication of the water dispute. Currently, 5 water disputes Tribunals are active.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Bill envisages to constitute a ***standalone Tribunal*** with permanent establishment and permanent office space and infrastructure so as to obviate with the need to set up a separate Tribunal for each water dispute which is invariably a time- consuming process.
- In the Bill, there is a provision for establishment of a ***Dispute Resolution Committee (DRC)*** by the Central Government for resolving amicably, the inter- State water disputes within a maximum period of one year and six months.
- Any dispute, which cannot be settled by negotiations shall be referred to the Tribunal for its adjudication.
- The dispute so referred to the Tribunal shall be assigned by the Chairperson of the Tribunal to a Bench of the Tribunal for adjudication.
- The proposed amendments in the Bill will speed up the adjudication of water disputes referred to it.

GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX 2018

Launch of Global Innovation Index 2018 in New Delhi on Wednesday 8th August 2018.

The event was organized by the ***Confederation of Indian Industry (CII)*** – one of the founding partners of GII along with the ***World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)***, in collaboration with the ***Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP)***.

HIGHLIGHTS

India's rank on the Global Innovation Index (GII) has improved from 60 in 2017 to 57 in 2018.

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

There is a need to:

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

GII 2018:

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

CAGE FARMING

The Government of Karnataka reported the installation of 8 marine cages for Seabass and Cobia culture. Besides, National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB), Hyderabad has also sanctioned 500 brackish-water cages to the Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI) for installation in the selected District of Karnataka.

BACKGROUND

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme (CSS) on Blue Revolution: Integrated Development and Management of Fisheries approved by the Government in December 2015 inter-alia provides financial assistance for:

- a) open sea cage culture and
- b) installation of cages/pens in reservoirs and other open water bodies.
- c) Insurance Cover for Damage of Crops by Animals.

INSURANCE COVER FOR DAMAGE OF CROPS BY ANIMALS

Government has not conducted any such Survey since 2013. However, the National Statistical Commission (NSC) has decided to conduct the next Situation Assessment Survey (SAS) of Agricultural Households in the NSS 77th round (January 2019- December 2019) with reference to the agricultural year July 2018 – June 2019.

BACKGROUND

The latest available estimates of average income per agricultural household in the country are based on the "Situation Assessment Survey of Agricultural Households" conducted by National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) during its 70th round (January 2013 – December 2013). As per the survey results, the average monthly income per agricultural household from all sources is estimated to be Rs. 6,426/.

ISSUES

Under SAS 2013, among other things, the reasons for the crop loss with respect to each major crop were ascertained. As per the Survey results, during the first half of the agricultural year (July 2012- Dec 2012), inadequate rainfall/ draught was the most reported reason for crop loss for all the selected crops, except coconut and urad, wherein 'disease/insect/animal' was reported as the major reason for crop loss.

During the period (Jan 2013-June 2013), 'disease/insect/animal' was the most reported reason for crop loss for most of the crops. For crops like gram, potato, rapeseed/ mustard, other natural calamities was one of the major reasons reported by households.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Under the ***Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY)***, a comprehensive risk insurance package is provided to cover yield losses due to non-preventable risks, viz., natural fire and lightning, storm, hailstorm, cyclone, typhoon, tempest, hurricane, tornado, flood, inundation and landslide, drought, dry spells, pests/diseases, etc.
- The losses to crops due to wild animals are preventable in nature and therefore, not covered. Further, due to the involvement of issue of moral hazard at the time of assessing the loss/risk, insurance companies are at present not providing cover for this risk.
- However, there are systems in place, both at the Centre and State level, for compensation for losses to farmers in the country due to destruction of crops by wild animals.
- The Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change provides financial assistance to State/UTs under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of ***"Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats", "Project Tiger" and "Project Elephant"*** for management of wildlife and its habitats in the country.
- It includes compensation for depredation by wild animals including cattle lifting, crop damage, loss of life and property. State Governments also provide relief from their own funds for damage to crops by wild animals.

PARIVESH

The Prime Minister launched PARIVESH (Pro-Active and Responsive facilitation by Interactive, Virtuous and Environmental Single-window Hub) on the occasion of World Biofuel Day.

HIGHLIGHTS

- PARIVESH is a ***Single-Window Integrated Environmental Management System***.
- It automates the entire process of submitting the application and tracking the status of such proposals at each stage of processing.
- It is a work flow-based application, based on the concept of web architecture.
- 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), New Delhi.
- PARIVESH include - single registration and single sign-in for all types of clearances (i.e. Environment, Forest, Wildlife and CRZ), unique-ID for all types of clearances required for a particular project and a single Window interface for the proponent to submit applications for getting all types of clearances (i.e. Environment, Forests, Wildlife and CRZ clearances).

NEW PENSION SCHEME

National Pension System (NPS) has been designed giving utmost importance to the welfare of the subscribers. Government has made a conscious move to shift from the defined benefit Pension Scheme to defined contribution pension scheme i.e. NPS, due to rising and unsustainable pension bill.

HIGHLIGHTS

- NPS is a well-designed pension system managed through an unbundled architecture involving intermediaries appointed by the ***Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA)*** viz. pension funds, custodian, central record keeping and accounting agency, National Pension System Trust, trustee bank, points of presence and Annuity service providers.
- It is prudently regulated by PFRDA which is a statutory regulatory body established to promote old age income security and to protect the interest of subscribers of NPS.
- The pension wealth which accumulates over a period of time till retirement grows with a compounding effect. The all-in-costs of the institutional architecture of NPS are among the lowest in the world.
- Subscribers can withdraw up to 25% of their own contributions before attaining age of superannuation, subject to certain conditions.
- Further, PFRDA vide “PFRDA (Exits and Withdrawals under the NPS) (First Amendment) Regulations, 2017” dated 10.08.2017 has liberalized norms for partial withdrawals which also include reduction of requirement of minimum years of being enrolled under NPS from 10 years to 3 years from the date of joining.
- PFRDA has increased the maximum age limit from 60 years to 65 years for joining NPS-All Citizen Model and Corporate Sector Model, vide “PFRDA (Exits and Withdrawals under the NPS) (Second Amendment) Regulations, 2017” dated 06.10.2017.
- PFRDA vide “PFRDA (Exits and Withdrawals under the NPS) (Third Amendment) Regulations, 2018” dated 02.02.2018 has facilitated easy exit & withdrawal in case of disability and incapacitation of the subscriber covered under NPS.

MISSION INDRADHANUSH

Mission Indradhanush aims to increase full immunization coverage in India to atleast 90% children by December 2018.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The salient feature of Mission Indradhanush is to cover unvaccinated and partially vaccinated children in areas with low immunization coverage, in both urban and rural areas.
- No separate funds are allocated for Mission Indradhanush.
- Funds allocated for Routine Immunization under part 'C' of Programme Implementation Plan (PIP) are being utilized by the states to carryout activities under Mission Indradhanush.
- No Mission Indradhanush does not targets to reduce post-natal death rate but targets to reduce diseases and death due to vaccine preventable diseases.
- Routine Immunization which is implemented across country has been further strengthened through Mission Indradhanush.
- Mission Indradhanush has been implemented in low coverage pockets and has been expanded during (i) Intensified Mission Indradhanush (ii) Gram Swaraj Abhiyan and (iii) Expanded Gram Swaraj Abhiyaan.

ERADICATION OF POLIO

India has been certified Polio free by the Regional Polio Certification Commission on the 27th March 2014. Last case of Wild poliovirus in the country was reported on 13th January, 2011 from Howrah, West Bengal and no wild poliovirus case have been reported thereafter from any State/UT of the country

GOVERNMENT MEASURES

- Population immunity against polio is being maintained by observing polio campaigns every year.
- In the year 2018, two ***National Immunization Days (NID)*** have been conducted and two ***sub-national polio immunization rounds (SNID)*** are planned, in addition to polio vaccination through routine immunization.
- ***Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)*** has also been introduced across the country to further boost the population immunity as additional protection against polio.
- Vaccination to international travellers to and from 8 other countries and continuous vaccination at the international borders of India are being carried out throughout the year to mitigate risk of importation.
- Sensitivity of polio surveillance is maintained through ***Acute Flaccid Paralysis (AFP) surveillance*** in human and environment surveillance to detect any polio threat as early as possible and respond quickly to mitigate the risk of circulation.

SILK WORM SEEDS

Central Silk Board (CSB) has notified recently developed races of silkworm seed of mulberry and Vanya silk for increasing the productivity of cocoons and to increase the income of the farmers engaged in sericulture.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Silk worm breeds for specific agro-climatic condition are essential for increasing the productivity of cocoons.
- Tropical ***Tasar Silkworm (BDR-10)*** race developed by the CSB have 21% more productivity than the traditional ***Daba breed***.
- This silk worm breed will help the tribal farmers of ***Jharkhand, Chattishgarh, Odisha, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh***.
- ***Multivoltine x Bivoltine Mulberry hybrid (PM x FC2) race*** of silkworm can produce 60 kg per 100 Dfls and the race is better than earlier race PM x CSR.
- Due to high quality silk and significant egg recovery, this race is suitable for the farmers of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Maharashtra.
- ***Eri Silkworm (C2) race*** has been found better than local breed and it can produce 247 numbers of Eri cocoons per 100 Dfls.
- This race is suitable for the farmers in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Odisha, Sikkim, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and West Bengal.

POSHAN ABHIYAN

POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission - NNM) set up by Government on November, 2017 aims to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anemia and low birth weight babies.

Coverage of districts in a phased manner is 315 districts in 2017-18, 235 districts in 2018-19 and remaining districts in 2019-20.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Under POSHAN Abhiyaan, the Government has fixed targets to reduce ***stunting, under-nutrition, anemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2%*** per annum respectively.
- Mission also strives to achieve reduction in Stunting from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022 (Mission 25 by 2022).
- A single unified technical set-up, namely a National Nutrition Resource Centre – Central Project Management Unit (NNRC-CPMU) at the national level and similarly State Nutrition Resource Centre – State Project Management Unit (SNRC-SPMU) in all States/ UTs ensures regular monitoring and review of all sectoral programmes especially those directly affecting malnutrition and.
- ***Monitoring*** is done under POSHAN Abhiyaan through ***ICDS-CAS*** aimed to augment system strengthening including improving the coverage and quality of nutrition services.

LABORATORY FOR CONSERVATION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES

The Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES), a dedicated facility of CSIR's Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad uses modern biotechnologies for conservation of endangered wildlife.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The efforts of scientists at CCMB in producing off-springs of blue rock pigeon, spotted deer and blackbuck, which were on the verge of extinction, through artificial insemination of cryopreserved sperm.

- CCMB scientists in collaboration with Nehru Zoological Park, Hyderabad have now rescued Indian Mouse Deer from extinction through successful conservation breeding programme.
- CCMB-LaCONES is the only laboratory in India that has developed methods for collection and cryopreservation of semen and oocytes from wildlife and successfully reproducing endangered blackbuck, spotted deer and Nicobar pigeons.
- Through this work, it has established **Genetic Resource Bank for Indian wildlife**.
- This facility would increase the collection of genetic resources from wildlife through collaboration with zoos in India.
- It would also facilitate exchange of genetic material between the Indian zoos for maintaining genetic diversity and conservation management made accessible to scientists and wildlife managers for implementing conservation programs.

Despite being one of the most biodiverse countries in the world, nearly 14% of all species in India face serious threat of extinction. It is therefore, important to carry out conservation breeding and assisted reproductive strategies for conservation and management of threatened species. Long-term storage of gametes, primary cells and tissues collected from threatened species could be an important step in establishing genetic resource for reproductive technologies in conservation breeding programmes.

STAR RATING OF GARBAGE FREE CITIES

Certification (Star Rating of Garbage Free Cities and Open Defecation Free Protocols).

MoHUA has introduced an important component of 'Certification' of the city on two different aspects:

- Star Rating of Garbage Free Cities:** The cities would be evaluated on the basis of the star rating achieved by them as per the protocol released by MoHUA.
 - The Star Rating protocol is based on **12 parameters** and follows a **SMART framework – Single metric, Measurable, Achievable, Rigorous verification mechanism and Targeted** towards outcomes – and has been devised in a holistic manner including components such as cleanliness of drains & water bodies, plastic waste management, managing construction & demolition waste, etc. which are critical drivers for achieving garbage free cities.
 - In order to give added impetus to cities to accelerate their journey towards a garbage-free status, the Swachh Survekshan 2019 has allocated 20% weightage of marks to the star rating certifications.
- Open Defecation Free Protocols:** A 5% weightage has been allotted in the Swachh Survekshan to ODF certifications.

COMPENSATORY AFFORESTATION FUND BILL

Government introduced CAF Bill in 2015, the Bill was passed in 2016 and the CAF Act was published on August 3, 2016. Now, the Act could be implemented after framing of Rules after wider consultations with various stakeholders & CAF Act will come into force from September 30, 2018.

AIM

The release of fund to States will boost the efforts of the Government towards restoration and enhancement of forest wealth, enhance bio-richness, water availability and secure ecological

security of the country, adding that this effort will help in creating the additional carbon sink to meet the nation's ***Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by the year 2030.***

HIGHLIGHTS

- The CAF Rules were finally published & paved the way for smooth transfer of funds worth about Rs. 52, 000 crore to the States.
- The fund will be kept in the interest-bearing ***Public account of the Centre and States*** and will be used only for ***compensatory afforestation, soil moisture conservation, wildlife management and catchment area treatment.***
- These activities will be managed by statutory body called ***National Authority and State Authority*** and has a strong monitoring mechanism.
- CAF Act has been enacted to manage the funds collected for compensatory afforestation and net present value of forest land diverted for non-forestry use under ***Forest Conservation Act 1980***, which had till now been managed by ***ad hoc Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA).***
- The release of the fund was restricted to only 10% of principal amount from interest accrued over it.
- Now, the Fund will be managed as per the CAF Act and Rules, unlocking the use of funds collected for the purpose of ***forest ecosystem restoration and water security.***
- Act provides that the Compensatory Afforestation will be compulsorily undertaken from the funds deposited for compensatory afforestation only on priority.
- The legislation will provide funds to the State Governments, which will get 90% of their share of funds – about Rs. 52, 000 crore to plan better and utilize the fund for compensatory ***afforestation, conservation of wild flora and fauna, wildlife habitat management and regeneration of degraded forest and restoration of ecosystem services.***

PITCH TO MOVE

“Pitch to MOVE” is organised by NITI Aayog in collaboration with Invest India and Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) as a part of a series of engaging featured events in the run up to the main event. The Summit held on 7th and 8th Sep 2018 at Vigyan Bhawan, in New Delhi.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The competition aims to identify and reward the start-ups offering innovative solutions for shared, connected, and environment friendly mobility.
- The Start-ups can be from the domain of Public Mobility, Electric Vehicles, Shared Transport, Last Mile Connectivity, Passenger Transportation, Battery Technology, Automotive IoT, Freight & Logistics, Powertrain/Drivetrain, Experiential, Travel, Mobility Infrastructure and Automotive Electronics etc.

NATIONAL REGISTER OF CITIZENS

Assam released the draft of an updated National Register of Citizens (NRC) leaving out 40 lakh of 3.29 crore applicants for inclusion.

How is citizenship determined in India

Indian citizenship can be acquired by ***birth, descent, registration and naturalisation***. A person domiciled in India as on November 26, 1949 — the date when the Constituent Assembly adopted the Constitution — automatically became a citizen if he or either of his parents was born in India, or if he had been in India for at least five years until that date.

For those born in India after the Constitution came into effect, the ***Citizenship Act, 1955***, grants citizenship by birth based on birth dates.

- Anyone born between January 26, 1950 and July 1, 1987 is a citizen by birth;
- a person between July 1, 1987 and December 3, 2004 is a citizen by birth if either of his parents is a citizen of India at the time;
- those born on or after December 3, 2004 is a citizen by birth if both parents are citizens of India at the time,
- if one parent is a citizen and the other is not an illegal migrant — defined as a foreigner who entered India without valid documents, or stayed beyond the allowed period

Citizenship by registration can be acquired by persons of Indian origin who have lived in India ***for 7 years*** before applying, persons of Indian origin who live in any country outside undivided India, persons married to a citizen of India and who have lived in India for 7 years before the application. Any minor child can be registered as a citizen if the government is satisfied that there are special circumstances.

Is it possible for a foreigner with no connection to India (marriage, descent etc) to become a citizen of India?

This is citizenship by naturalisation. Any foreigner, provided he is not an illegal migrant, can acquire citizenship, provided he has stayed in India for ***12 consecutive months*** preceding the date of application, and for 11 years out of the preceding the 14 years.

Is citizenship permanent?

Under Section 9(1) of the 1955 Act, a person ceases to be a citizen if he or she voluntarily acquires the citizenship of another country or renounces Indian citizenship. India does not allow dual citizenship.

Under Section 10, anyone who has become a citizen of India by naturalisation or by registration due to marriage to an Indian citizen can be deprived of the citizenship by the Home Ministry for certain reasons.

How is Assam different? Why a separate National Register of Citizens?

This is because of a history of migration. During British rule, Assam was merged with Bengal Presidency for administrative purpose. From 1826 to 1947, the British continuously brought migrant workers to Assam for cheap labour in tea plantations. Two major waves of migration came after British rule — ***first after Partition, from East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), and then in the aftermath of the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971***. This eventually led to an agitation during 1979-85, led by the All Assam Students' Union. It culminated in the 1985 Assam Accord signed with the Rajiv Gandhi government, under which illegal migrants were to be identified and deported. ***Clause 6A was inserted in the Citizenship Act with special provisions for Assam.***

What are those provisions

This take into account two cut-off dates — January 1, 1966 and March 25, 1971.

- Anyone who was a resident of Assam before the first date is a citizen.
- Migrants who entered on any day between these two dates, and remained there, would need to register with a Foreigners Tribunal.
- For 10 years, they would have all rights of a citizen except the right to vote, which would be granted at the end of 10 years.
- Finally, migrants who entered Assam on or after March 25, 1971, are not eligible for citizenship.

Is this not the cut-off date for NRC, too

Yes. For inclusion, applicants need to prove that they — or their parents, grandparents etc — were citizens before March 25, 1971. Those who could not prove this, as well as their offspring, have been excluded. Assam already has an NRC, prepared in 1951 with 80 lakh citizens, on the basis of that year's Census. In 2003, the Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules were amended for updating the NRC in order to identify genuine citizens.

Before the NRC update, Assam was witnessing protests over the Citizenship Amendment Bill.

In 2016, the Centre introduced amendments to the Citizenship Act to grant citizenship to religious minorities (mostly Hindus and including other non-Muslims) from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan who took shelter in India. The Bill relaxes norms for granting them citizenship by decreasing the residency requirement from 11 years to six years. In Assam, where the agitation was against migrants irrespective of religion, this has led to protests. The Bill is currently pending with a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

Is there a similar situation for migrants in any other state

In Arunachal Pradesh, a demand for citizenship to Chakmas has been pending for decades. While the Centre is keen to grant them citizenship, it is being opposed by the state government. In Kashmir, West Pakistan refugees are allowed to vote in national elections but not in Assembly elections.

CURRENCY WAR

Reserve Bank of India warned that trade wars among various countries may lead to a currency war.

BACKGROUND

Worried about their individual growth prospects, some countries turned protectionist in due course by introducing non-tariff barriers, and also occasionally imposing higher duties on imports.

A potent weapon wielded by many countries was to either devalue their currencies, or deliberately keep the value suppressed so that their exports remained cheaper and competitive in the world market. The US and key European countries adopted several measures to keep interest rates low and stoke demand. China, the fourth largest economy and a major global exporter even in 2008, deliberately kept the renminbi value low, and Japanese and South Korean central bankers stepped into the currency markets to keep their currencies low too. Then finance minister of Brazil (also a G20 member) Guido Mantega described such competitive lowering of currency values using monetary and exchange rate instruments as "international currency wars".

CURRENCY WAR AT PRESENT

Global trade skirmishes have intensified since ***US threatened to slap tariffs on Chinese goods***. The US tariffs on Chinese imports that are actually in effect are less than 10% of total \$506 billion US imports of Chinese products. Higher tariffs make Chinese products more expensive, but a weakening of the yuan partly offsets the impact. In the last three months, the yuan has depreciated almost 8% vis-à-vis the US dollar

Similarly, a war between the ***US and Europe*** too has escalated after US imposed tariffs on European steel and aluminium and the EU retaliated. Such protectionist measures (higher customs duties on EU steel and aluminium make these expensive in the US and protect domestic US producers) entail the risk of countries using various exchange rate and monetary policy instruments competitively to weaken or devalue their currencies.

ROADS IMPACTING WILDLIFE

Wild animals are vulnerable to vehicular traffic passing through forests, especially at night when, blinded by bright headlights, even swift species like Cats freeze.

CONCERNS

Over time, as animals learn to avoid roads, busy multilane highways become barriers that hinder wildlife movement, fragment populations, and restrict gene flow. By blocking access to potential habitats, roads, railway lines and irrigation canals act as a major contributor to habitat loss.

INDIA'S POLICY

- In September 2013, the ***National Board for Wildlife (NBWL)***, the apex advisory body to the central government on all wildlife-related matters, said no to new roads through protected forests, but was open to the widening of existing roads with adequate mitigation measures irrespective of the cost, only if alternative alignments were not available.
- The government accepted this as policy in December 2014.
- In February 2018, the NBWL made it mandatory for every road/rail project proposal to include a wildlife passage plan as per guidelines framed by Wildlife Institute of India, an autonomous wildlife research body under the Environment Ministry.
- However, features like underpasses are unlikely to suffice in dense wildlife-rich forests where too many animals compete for space.

US SANCTIONS ON IRAN

United States withdrawn itself from the nuclear deal between Iran and the P5+1 — formally the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) reached in July 2015 and implemented from January 2016 — and announced a phased re-imposition of sanctions at the end of two “wind-down” periods of 90 and 180 days.

HIGHLIGHTS

US sanctioned IRAN on the areas such as:

- On Iran buying/acquiring US dollars.
- On Iran's trade in gold/precious metals.

- On direct or indirect sale or supply from or to Iran of graphite, aluminum, steel, coal, software for integrating industrial processes.
- On “significant transactions” related to purchase or sale of Iranian rials, or maintenance of “significant funds or accounts” in rials outside Iran.
- On buying or facilitating the issuance of Iranian sovereign debt.
- On Iran’s automotive sector.
- The import of Iranian carpets and foodstuffs will also be stopped.

The second wind-down window of 180 days closes on November 4. The additional three months are available to companies in Iran’s energy, infrastructure and financial sectors. Thereafter, sanctions will return on:

- Iranian port, shipping and shipbuilding operations.
- Purchase of petroleum and petroleum products from Iran.
- Transactions by foreign financial institutions with the Iranian central bank and financial institutions.
- Providing underwriting, insurance, or reinsurance services in Iran.
- Iran’s energy sector.

IMPACT OF SANCTIONS

- The sanctions re-imposed are “extraterritorial” — they apply to not just American individuals and businesses, but to non-American businesses or individuals as well. Their aim is to penalise trade and investment activity related to Iran by everyone who is not specifically excluded from the sanctions.

OXYTOCIN

The central drug regulator ordered a “strict vigil” to stop oxytocin imports, and to ensure imported stocks were not used “in any form or name”. The government has banned production of oxytocin for domestic use by private companies, and its sale by private chemists from September 1.

OXYTOCIN

- Oxytocin is naturally secreted by the pituitary glands of mammals during sex, childbirth, lactation or social bonding, and is sometimes called “love hormone”.
- It is chemically synthesised and sold by pharmaceutical companies across the world.
- It is used as a drug during childbirth because it can contract the uterus and induce delivery, control bleeding, and promote the release of breast milk.
- Oxytocin can be administered to humans as an injection or a nasal solution.

CONCERNS

In October 2014, Union Women and Child Development Ministry wrote to the Health Ministry to flag the “loss of livestock in the country” due to illegal use of oxytocin. On March 15, 2016, Himachal Pradesh High Court passed an order listing the grave dangers oxytocin posed to humans. This judgment forms the basis of the Centre’s clampdown on oxytocin production, import, and sale.

- There is a grave misuse of Oxytocin by farmers and dairy owners. It is not only the health of the animals, which is a matter of concern, but a greater concern lies in the fact that it is this very

milk and vegetables which have been injected with Oxytocin to increase its size, that is being consumed by all of us.

- Oxytocin filters into the milk and has been held responsible for breast and uterine cancers, male impotence.
- Its use is also considered harmful for eyes, especially in children.
- The hormone affects the reproductive ability of woman.
- Consumption of Oxytocin infected milk by pregnant woman increases risk of haemorrhage. It is also responsible for high spike in tuberculosis cases.

GOVERNMENT MEASURES

Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) — a Health Ministry body that advises central and state governments on technical matters related to the provisions of The ***Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940*** — “agreed on a draft notification for regulating, restricting the Oxytocin formulations for human use to be supplied only to registered hospitals and clinics in public and private sector”.

- Private companies would not be allowed to manufacture oxytocin for domestic use, and private retail chemists would not be allowed to sell it.
- The government subsequently pushed the deadline back to September 1. The import of oxytocin was banned by a separate notification on April 24.

MAHADAYI WATER DISPUTE

The Mahadayi Water Disputes Tribunal which has been hearing the issue over sharing of the Mahadayi or Mandovi river between Goa, Karnataka and Maharashtra, has delivered its final verdict.

ISSUE

The Mahadayi river basin drains an area of 2032 square kilometres of which 375 square km lies in Karnataka, 77 sq km in Maharashtra and the remaining in Goa.

The dispute arose since Goa was opposed to Karnataka’s plans to divert waters from the tributaries of the river, which Karnataka justified was for drinking water purposes. The tribunal was constituted in November 2010.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The tribunal has allowed Karnataka access to 13.4 tmc of water for its consumptive use (5.4 tmc) and power generation (8.02 tmc).
- The share of Goa was pegged at 24 tmc with the Tribunal allowing it for the state’s municipal water needs, irrigation water requirements and industrial water demands.
- Maharashtra got the lowest share of 1.33 tmc for meeting its in-basin needs with respect to five projects.
- The tribunal also directed the Centre to set up the Mahadayi Water Management Authority to implement its report and final decision.

INDIA - AUSTRALIA

The Government of Australia has decided to recommence the Adoption Programme with India, as per Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption.

BACKGROUND

The adoptions from India had earlier been put on hold by the Government of Australia eight years ago, on the reported charges of trafficking of children for Inter-country adoption by some of the recognized Indian placement agencies (the Adoption agencies mandated to place children in Inter-country adoption at that point of time).

HIGHLIGHTS

- The recommencement of the adoption programmes will now enable large number of prospective adoptive parents including those of Indian origin settled in Australia in fulfilling their desire of adopting a child from India.
- The regulation of Inter-country adoptions has been made strict by the Government of India with the enactment of Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and notification of Adoption Regulations, 2017.
- The Ministry of Women & Child Development along with Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) have been constantly monitoring the implementation of these laws.

HAGUE CONVENTION

- The Hague Convention protects children and their families against the risks of illegal, irregular, premature or ill-prepared adoptions abroad.
 - Safeguards in place to make sure that all intercountry adoptions are in the best interests of the child and respects their human rights,
 - A system in place of cooperation among countries to guarantee that these safeguards are respected, and to prevent the abduction of, sale of, or traffic in children.
- For Hague adoptions, the authorities in both countries must agree to go ahead with the adoption. For non-Hague adoptions, requirements may vary from one country to another.
- The Hague Convention does not allow private adoptions in the child's home country.
- Adoption is a handled by the provinces and territories, and they all have and follow laws implementing the Hague Convention.

CARA

- Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) is a statutory body of Ministry of Women & Child Development, Government of India.
- It functions as the nodal body for adoption of Indian children and is mandated to monitor and regulate in-country and inter-country adoptions.
- CARA is designated as the Central Authority to deal with inter-country adoptions in accordance with the provisions of the Hague Convention on Inter-country Adoption, 1993, ratified by Government of India.

The Government of Australia has decided to recommence the Adoption Programme with India, as per Hague Convention on Inter-Country Adoption.

SWADESH DARSHAN SCHEME

First project under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme the 'North East Circuit: Imphal & Khongjom' in Manipur has been inaugurated.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The project covers two sites i.e. Kangla Fort and Khongjom.
- Kangla Fort is one of the most important historic and archaeological site of Manipur located in the heart of the Imphal city. It served as the seat of Manipur's power till 1891. Kangla has a special place in the hearts and minds of the people of Manipur.
- The old Govindajee Temple, outer and inner moat and other relics are perfect reflections of the rich art and architectural heritage of Manipur.

SWADESH DARSHAN SCHEME

- The Tourism Ministry had launched 'Swadesh Darshan' scheme with an objective to develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country.
- These tourist circuits will be developed on the principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner.
- The scheme is 100% centrally funded for the project components undertaken for public funding.
- To leverage the voluntary funding available for Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and corporate sector.
- Funding of individual project will vary from state to state and will be finalised on the basis of detailed project reports prepared by PMC (Programme Management Consultant).
- A National Steering Committee (NSC) will be constituted with Minister in charge of M/O Tourism as Chairman, to steer the mission objectives and vision of the scheme.
- A Mission Directorate headed by the Member Secretary, NSC as a nodal officer will help in identification of projects in consultation with the States/ UTs governments and other stake holders.
- PMC will be a national level consultant to be appointed by the Mission Directorate.

ARBITRATION & CONCILIATION (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2018

The Lok Sabha has passed the Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2018. It will amend the Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996. The Act contains provisions to deal with domestic and international arbitration, and defines the law for conducting conciliation proceedings.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Bill seeks to establish an independent body called the ***Arbitration Council of India (ACI)*** for the promotion of arbitration, mediation, conciliation and other alternative dispute redressal mechanisms.
- **Its functions include:**
 - a) Framing policies for grading arbitral institutions and accrediting arbitrators.
 - b) Making policies for the establishment, operation and maintenance of uniform professional standards for all alternate dispute redressal matters.
 - c) Maintaining a depository of arbitral awards (judgments) made in India and abroad.
- **The ACI will consist of a Chairperson who is either:**
 - a) a Judge of the Supreme Court; or
 - b) a Judge of a High Court; or
 - c) Chief Justice of a High Court; or
 - d) an eminent person with expert knowledge in conduct of arbitration.
 - e) Other members will include an eminent arbitration practitioner, an academician with experience in arbitration, and government appointees.

- Under the 1996 Act, parties were free to appoint arbitrators. In case of disagreement on an appointment, the parties could request the Supreme Court, or the concerned High Court, or any person or institution designated by such Court, to appoint an arbitrator.
- Under the Bill, the ***Supreme Court and High Courts*** may now designate arbitral institutions, which parties can approach for the appointment of arbitrators. For international commercial arbitration, appointments will be made by the institution designated by the Supreme Court. For domestic arbitration, appointments will be made by the institution designated by the concerned High Court. In case there are no arbitral institutions available, the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court may maintain a panel of arbitrators to perform the functions of the arbitral institutions. An application for appointment of an arbitrator is required to be disposed of within 30 days.
- Under the 1996 Act, arbitral tribunals are required to make their award within a period of 12 months for all arbitration proceedings. The Bill proposed to remove this time restriction for international commercial arbitrations.
- Currently, there is no time limit to file written submissions before an arbitral tribunal. The Bill requires that the written claim and the defence to the claim in an arbitration proceeding, should be completed within six months of the appointment of the arbitrators.
- The Bill provides that all details of arbitration proceedings will be kept confidential except for the details of the arbitral award in certain circumstances. Disclosure of the arbitral award will only be made where it is necessary for implementing or enforcing the award.

ARBITRATION

Arbitration is a settlement of dispute between two parties to a contract by a neutral third party i.e. the arbitrator without resorting to court action. The process can be tailored to suit parties' particular needs.

Arbitrators can be chosen for their expertise. It is confidential and can be speedier and cheaper than court. There are limited grounds of appeal. Arbitral awards are binding and enforceable through courts.

'ONE DISTRICT ONE PRODUCT' SUMMIT

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

BACKGROUND

ODOP is basically a Japanese business development concept, which gained prominence in 1979. It is aimed at promoting a competitive and staple product from a specific area to push sales and improve the standard of living of the local population. Over time, it has been replicated in other Asian countries as well.

HIGHLIGHTS

The ODOP Summit is stated to be the first of its kind in the country and is expected to give a big boost to the MSME and handicraft in the state.

The summit, which aims to give boost to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME), will be a corollary of the UP Investors Summit held in the state capital in February this year, followed by the ceremony for the launch of 81 projects in July.

ODOP

- ODOP is aimed at giving a major push to traditional industries synonymous with the respective districts of the state.
- The objective of the ODOP is to optimise production, productivity and income, preservation and development of local crafts, promotion of art, improvement in product quality and skill development.
- Under this, one product indigenous to every district would be showcased at the three-day UP Diwas event. This will boost economic development of the state, and also help in generation of five lakh new jobs annually.

UP is uniquely famous for product-specific traditional industrial hubs across 75 districts, including Varanasi (Banarasi silk sari), Bhadohi (carpet), Lucknow (chikan), Kanpur (leather goods), Agra (leather footwear), Aligarh (locks), Moradabad (brassware), Meerut (sports goods) and Saharanpur (wooden products).

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

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

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

Theme: '*Indigenous peoples' migration and movement*'.

BACKGROUND

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

INTACH - RAJASTHAN

The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has called for transforming heritage buildings in Rajasthan into "economic assets" for the society.

Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH):

- The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) is a non-profit charitable organisation registered under the Societies' Registration Act, 1860.
- It was founded in 1984 with the vision to create a membership organisation to stimulate and spearhead heritage awareness and conservation in India.
- Since 1984, INTACH has pioneered the conservation and protection of India's natural and cultural heritage and is today the largest membership organisation in the country dedicated to conservation.
- In 2007, the United Nations awarded INTACH a special consultative status with United Nations Economic and Social Council.

SCRUB TYPHUS

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

Scrub Typhus

- Scrub typhus is an infectious disease with symptoms similar to any viral fever. However, it is not caused by a virus, but by a parasite called *Orientia tsutsugamushi*, which is transmitted by the bite of infected mite larvae in soil containing scrub vegetation.
- The disease is also known as bush typhus because the mites (*Leptotrombidium deliense*, commonly known as trombiculid mite) that cause it reside in vegetation predominantly comprising small shrubs.
- The disease is more common during the wet season when the mites lay eggs. Incubation period (time between bite and beginning of symptoms) is 10 – 14 days.
- It is usually transmitted by mites that are found in the shrubs in hilly areas. It can also be transmitted by lice, ticks and fleas.

RESTRICTED AREA PERMIT (RAP) REGIME

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

HIGHLIGHTS

The list of the islands permitted for foreigners visit includes ***East Island, North Andaman, Smith Island, Curfew Island, Stewart Island, Land Fall Island, Ayes Island, Middle Andaman, Long Island, Strait Island, North Passage, Baratang, South Andaman, Havelock, Neil Island, Flat Bay, Little Andaman, Chowra, Tillang Chong Island, Teresa, Katchal, Nancowry, Kamorta, Pulomilo, Great Nicobar, Little Nicobar, Narcondam Island and Interview Island.***

- Foreigners will also be allowed to visit 11 uninhabited Islands, to be notified by Andaman and Nicobar Islands Administration, only for day visits.
- Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals having their origin in these countries would continue to require RAP to visit Andaman & Nicobar Islands. In such cases, RAP may be granted only after obtaining prior approval of the ministry of home affairs.
- For visiting Mayabunder and Diglipur, citizens of Myanmar will continue to require RAP which shall be issued only with the prior approval of the MHA.

RAP REGIME

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

- Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals of Pakistani origin are exception and are not allowed to enter such areas.

'8888' UPRISING

It was a series of nationwide protests, marches and civil unrest in Burma (Myanmar) that peaked in August 1988. Key events occurred on 8 August 1988 and therefore it is known as the 8888 Uprising.

August 8 marks the 30th anniversary of this uprising.

BACKGROUND

'8888' was a people's movement that challenged the then ruling Burma Socialist Programme Party's grip on political, economic and social affairs which led the country into extreme poverty.

The objective of '8888' was two-fold: to push for the transfer of power from the military to a civilian leadership and a change in the political system from an authoritarian regime to a multi-party democracy.

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

BHOOMI RASHI

The government has proposed to integrate Bhoomi Rashi with Public Financial Management System (PFMS).

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

BHOOMI RASHI SYSTEM

- Bhoomi Rashi, the portal developed by MoRTH and NIC, comprises the entire revenue data of the country, right down to 6.4 lakh villages.
- The portal, created for expediting the process of publication of notifications for LA, is now being fully utilised for issuing the notifications.
- Bhoomi Rashi portal has been instrumental in reducing the time taken for approval and publication of notifications pertaining to land acquisition.

PFMS

- The Public Financial Management System (PFMS) is an end-to-end solution for processing payments, tracking, monitoring, accounting, reconciliation and reporting.
- It is administered by the Department of Expenditure.
- It is implemented by the Controller General of Accounts.
- It provides scheme managers a unified platform for tracking releases and monitoring their last mile utilisation.
- It provides platform for efficient management of funds through tracking of funds and real time reporting of expenditure and receipts through treasury and bank interface.

- The line ministries/departments utilise this platform to monitor the utilisation of funds provided to the implementing agencies and state governments.
- PFMS is also used for DBT payments under MGNREGA and other notified schemes of the Government of India.

DIGITAL LITERACY LIBRARY BY FACEBOOK

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Library aims to help young people build the skills they need to safely enjoy online technology.
- The library is a collection of lessons to help young people think critically and share thoughtfully online.
- Divided into themes such as privacy and reputation, identity exploration, security, safety and well-being, the lessons reflect the voices of young people from diverse socio-economic backgrounds, ethnicities, geographies, and educational levels.
- The lessons can be found on Facebook's Safety Center as well as on Berkman Klein's Digital Literacy Resource Platform.

ASIA PACIFIC INSTITUTE FOR BROADCASTING DEVELOPMENT

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

Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)

- The Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD) was established in 1977 under the auspices of UNESCO.
- It is a unique regional inter-governmental organisation servicing countries of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) in the field of electronic media development.
- It is hosted by the Government of Malaysia and the secretariat is located in Kuala Lumpur.
- The AIBD is mandated to achieve a vibrant and cohesive electronic media environment in the Asia-Pacific region through policy and resource development.
- The Institute seeks to fulfill this mandate by mobilizing the intellectual and technological resources available within the national broadcasting organizations of its member countries as well as regional and international bodies through a well-established infrastructure and networking mechanism which includes government agencies, non-governmental organizations, institutions of higher learning, private sector and individual professionals.

MEMBERSHIP

- The International Telecommunication Union (ITU), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) are founding organisations of the Institute and they are non-voting members of the General Conference.

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

ICANN

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

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

ccNSO

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

ICANN

- The Internet Corporation of Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) is a non-profit organization that was set up in 1998 to oversee the administration of domain names.
- ICANN coordinates and ensures the smooth and secure functioning of the cybernetic framework.
- The global nature of the Web today means that there are constantly increasing numbers of Domain Names, Host Names, IP addresses and web sites that are emerging on a daily basis. ICANN oversees this interconnected network and ensures that computers across the internet can find one another through defined unique pathways and identifiers.
- ICANN performs four major functions namely:
 - a) Approval of companies that can become accredited registrars for domain names.
 - b) Decision making regarding the addition of new Top Level Domains (TLDs) to the Root system.
 - c) Coordinating technical parameters to maintain universal connectivity.
 - d) Creating a Uniform Domain Name Dispute Resolution Policy (UDRP) for competing domain names.

BLOCKCHAIN DISTRICT

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

HIGHLIGHTS

- Initially it would be a virtual cluster, connecting with the stakeholders working in the emerging technology. It would have a physical building at a later phase.

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

BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY

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

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

Blockchain can be used in public administration

By maintaining an immutable and chronologically ordered record of all actions and files (“blocks”) linked together (“chain”) in a distributed and decentralized database, Blockchain creates an efficient and cost-effective database that is virtually tamper-proof. By doing so, blockchain promises to create more transparent, accountable, and efficient governments.

In addition to creating a more efficient government, blockchain can also help create a more honest government. A public blockchain, like the one Bitcoin uses, records all information and transactions on the decentralized database permanently, publicly, and most importantly, securely. By allowing governments to track the movement of government funds, blockchain can hold state and local actors accountable for any misappropriations.

Blockchain not only deters corruption through accountability, but it can also do so by bypassing the middleman entirely. Earlier this year, the World Food Programme began testing blockchain-based food and cash transactions in Pakistan’s Sindh province. Refugees in Jordan’s Azraq camp are now using the same technology, in conjunction with biometric registration data for authentication, to pay for food.

PRADHAN MANTRI UJJWALA YOJANA

Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana has achieved the 5 crore mark. Through PMUY, initially, 5 crore BPL households were targeted for providing deposit free LPG connections to BPL households by 31st March, 2019.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana aims to provide LPG (liquefied petroleum gas) connections to poor households.

- Under the scheme, an adult woman member of a below poverty line family identified through the Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) is given a deposit-free LPG connection with financial assistance of Rs 1,600 per connection by the Centre.
- Eligible households will be identified in consultation with state governments and Union territories.
- The scheme is being implemented by the **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas**.

OBJECTIVES

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

PINGALI VENKAYYA 141ST BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

141st birth anniversary of freedom fighter and designer of Indian National Flag Pingali Venkayya was observed on August 2, 2018.

Pingali Venkayya

- Pingali Venkayya was a freedom fighter and the designer of the Indian National Tricolour.
- Born on August 2, 1876 in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh, Venkayya served as a soldier in the British Army in South Africa during the Anglo Boer war in Africa.
- A firm believer in Gandhian principles and an ardent nationalist, Venkayya met the Mahatma during the war.

The evolution of Indian National Flag:

- Between 1918 and 1921, Venkayya raised the issue of having an own flag in every session of the Congress. Back then, he was working as a lecturer in the Andhra National College in Machilipatnam.
- He met the Mahatma once again in Vijayawada and showed him his publication with the various designs of the flag. Acknowledging the need for a national flag, Gandhi then asked Venkayya to design a fresh one at the national congress meeting in 1921.
- Initially, Venkayya came up with saffron and green colours, but it later evolved with a spinning wheel at the centre and a third colour-white. (LALA HANS RAJ SONDHI SUGGESTED ADDING A SPINNING WHEEL — SHOWING THE INDEPENDENT INDIANS WHO CAN SPIN THEIR OWN CLOTHING FROM LOCAL FIBRES.)
- The flag was officially adopted by the Indian National Congress in 1931.

WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK

August 1 to 7 every year is observed as World Breastfeeding Week.

Organized by ***World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA), WHO and UNICEF.***

OBJECTIVE

To promote exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life which yields tremendous health benefits, providing critical nutrients, protection from deadly diseases such as pneumonia and fostering growth and development.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Breastfeeding is an important efficient and cost-effective intervention promoting child survival and health.
- Breastfeeding within an hour of birth could prevent 20% of the newborn deaths.
- Infants who are not breastfed are 15 times more likely to die from pneumonia and 11 times more likely to die from diarrhoea than children who are exclusively breastfed, which are two leading causes of death in children under-five years of age.
- In addition, children who were not breastfed are at increased risk for diabetes, obesity, allergies, asthma, childhood leukemia, sudden infant death syndrome etc. Apart from mortality and morbidity benefits, breastfeeding also has tremendous impact on improved IQ.

MAA PROGRAMME

To intensify the efforts further for promotion of breastfeeding, the Health Ministry has initiated a nationwide programme called “MAA-Mother’s Absolute Affection” to bring undiluted focus on promotion of breastfeeding and provision of services towards supporting breastfeeding, along with ongoing efforts of routine health systems.

- The key components of the MAA programme are awareness generation, promotion of breastfeeding & inter personal counselling at community level, skilled support for breastfeeding at delivery points and monitoring and Award/ recognition of health facility.
- Under this programme, ASHA has been incentivized for reaching out to pregnant and lactating mothers and provide information on benefits and techniques of successful breastfeeding during interpersonal communication.
- ANMs at all sub-centres and health personnel at all delivery points are being trained for providing skilled support to mothers referred with issues related to breastfeeding.
- Under NHM, funding support has been recommended for all States and UTs for successful implementation of the MAA programme.

UNICEF REPORT

- A new report released by UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (WHO) has ranked Sri Lanka at the top of the list of countries with early initiation of breastfeeding.
- India ranks 56th among the 76 countries that were analysed.
- Countries like Kazakhstan, Rwanda, Bhutan and Uruguay have fared much better than India.
- Azerbaijan, Pakistan and Montenegro are at the bottom.
- Only two in five new-borns are breastfed within the first hour of life across the world.

WABA

World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA) is a global network of individuals and organisations concerned with the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding worldwide based on the Innocenti Declarations, the Ten Links for Nurturing the Future and the WHO/UNICEF Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding.

WABA is in consultative status with UNICEF and an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations (ECOSOC).

TAGLINE AND LOGO FOR GI

India has unveiled a tagline and a tricolour logo for geographical indication (GI) certified products. From now on, the GI-registered goods will sport the logo and the tagline to make them more attractive.

Tagline: "Invaluable Treasures of Incredible India".

HIGHLIGHTS

- A total of 320 products have been conferred the GI status in India so far.
- Karnataka comes first with 38 GI products, followed by Maharashtra which has 32 products.
- Tamil Nadu comes third with 25 GI products.

GI TAG

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

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

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

GI is covered as element of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under Paris Convention for Protection of Industrial Property.

At international level, GI is governed by WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).

In India, Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection Act), 1999 governs it.

US HAS GIVEN INDIA STRATEGIC TRADE AUTHORISATION – 1 STATUS

- STA allows for license exception with regards to exports from the US. This type of US government authorisation allows a certain item to be exported under defined conditions without a transaction-specific license.
- Items eligible for export to STA-1 nations include those under control for national security, chemical or biological weapons, nuclear non-proliferation, regional stability, crime control.
- The categories also include electronics, lasers and sensors, information security, computers and electronics, navigation, telecommunications, aerospace, etc.

SIGNIFICANCE

- India can get easy access to latest defence technologies, with the reduction of the number of licenses needed for exports from the US.
- It is also a boost for the foundational Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA).

- STA-1 provides India with greater supply chain efficiency, both for defence, and for other high-tech products.
- The status eases export controls for high technology product sales to India, granting it the same access as NATO allies — Australia, Japan and South Korea.
- India is the only South Asian nation on the STA-1 list that has 36 countries. Other Asian countries designated as STA-1 are Japan and South Korea. Till recently, India was classified as an STA-2 country along with seven others.

SOCIAL MEDIA COMMUNICATION HUB

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

Concerns

It was alleged that though the stated aim of the project was to enable the government to understand the impact of social media campaigns on welfare schemes and improve the reach of such campaigns, the project had two aspects — “mass surveillance apparatus that aims at collecting and analysing huge volumes of data, and profiling people based on that” and “utilising this data to predict the mood of people online and issue responses, including those targeted at individuals or groups”.

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

FACTS

- The Telangana Archives and Research Institute holds a whopping 1.55 lakh documents — all on handmade paper — including 5,000 from the period of Shah Jahan (1628-1658) and another 1.5 lakh of Aurangzeb (1658-1707). Written in Persian in Shikasta script, cursive style, the documents are linked and arranged in chronological order — date, month and regnal year-wise.
- **PENCIL’ Portal:** The government has launched a web portal called ‘PENCIL’ for effective implementation of the National Child Labour Project, (NCLP).

PENCIL (Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour) — an electronic platform for no child labour in the country has been developed by the Labour Ministry.

PENCIL portal has five components — Child Tracking System, Complaint Corner, State Government, National Child Labour Project and Convergence.

- As part of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) initiatives, **SCO Peace Mission Exercise** is conducted biennially for SCO member states. The joint exercise for the year 2018 was conducted by Central Military Commission of Russia from 22 August to 29 August 2018 at Chebarkul, Chelyabinsk, Russia.