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16TH INDIA - ASEAN SUMMIT**India attended the 16th ASEAN-India Summit in Bangkok, Thailand.**

Along with this Summit, the other summits that took place in Thailand are-

- 35th ASEAN Summit.
- 14th East Asia Summit.
- 3rd meeting of RCEP.

ASEAN

- The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, Thailand, with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration (Bangkok Declaration) by the Founding Fathers of ASEAN, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.
- Brunei Darussalam then joined on 7 January 1984, Viet Nam on 28 July 1995, Lao PDR and Myanmar on 23 July 1997, and Cambodia on 30 April 1999, making up what is today the ten Member States of ASEAN.
- The ASEAN Secretariat is located at Jakarta, Indonesia.

RCEP

- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a proposed agreement between the member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and its free trade agreement (FTA) partners.
- The pact aims to cover trade in goods and services, intellectual property, etc.
- The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership was introduced during the 19th ASEAN meet held in November 2011.
- The RCEP negotiations were kick-started during the 21st ASEAN Summit in Cambodia in November 2012. Now, all participating countries aim to finalise and sign a deal by November 2019.
- Member states of ASEAN and their FTA partners are Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, China, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

LINEAR ACCELERATOR (LINAC) SERVICES

- A medical linear accelerator (LINAC) is the device most commonly used for external beam radiation treatments for patients with cancer.
- It delivers high-energy x-rays or electrons to the region of the patient's tumor.
- These treatments can be designed in such a way that they destroy the cancer cells while sparing the surrounding normal tissue. The LINAC is used to treat all body sites.
- The linear accelerator uses microwave technology (similar to that used for radar) to accelerate electrons in a part of the accelerator called the "wave guide," then allows these electrons to collide with a heavy metal target to produce high-energy x-rays.
- These high energy x-rays are shaped as they exit the machine to conform to the shape of the patient's tumor and the customized beam is directed to the patient's tumor.

AMRIT PHARMACY

- AMRIT stands for Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment. AMRIT retail pharmacy network offers more than 5200 drugs, implants, surgical disposables and other consumables at average discounts up to 60% of Maximum Retail Price (MRP).
- The AMRIT (Affordable medicine and reliable implants for treatment) scheme aims to reduce expenditure incurred by patients on treatment of cancer and cardio vascular (heart) diseases to make health care affordable for poor.
- Hence, with the aim to reduce the expenditure incurred by patients on treatment of cancer and heart diseases, the Ministry for Health & Family Welfare, has launched the Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment (AMRIT) programme.
- The project has been floated in a tie-up with government-owned HLL Lifecare Ltd (HLL) which is deputed to establish and run the AMRIT chain of pharmacies across the country.
- HLL Lifecare Limited (formerly Hindustan Latex Limited) (HLL) is an Indian healthcare product manufacturing company based in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, India. A Government of India-owned corporation (Public-sector undertaking).

EXERCISE DUSTLIK 2019

The inaugural Indo-Uzbekistan Joint Field Training Exercise (FTX)-2019, Exercise DUSTLIK-2019 culminated on 13 November 2019 after 10 days of joint training with Uzbekistan Army.

- Training was focused on counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations in urban scenario as well as sharing of expertise on skills at arms, both combat shooting and experiences in counter insurgency and counter terrorism.
- It was conducted at Chirchiq Training Area, Uzbekistan.

EXERCISE SHAKTI 2019

The closing ceremony of the joint military exercise between Indian and French Army, Exercise 'SHAKTI-2019' was held at Mahajan Field Firing Range.

- The aim of the exercise was to achieve interoperability, to acquaint each other with operational procedures, combat drills and understand the functioning in such a situation. It was evident that both the armies were able to achieve this aim.
- Defence Exercises between India and France:
 1. Varuna – Naval exercise.
 2. Garuda – Air exercise.
 3. Shakti – Army exercise
- Gagan Shakti is conducted by the Indian Air Force to showcase its air dominance over the entire extended area of the Indian Ocean Region. It includes all terrain operations – desert, high altitude, maritime scenarios and special operations – in real time with specific focus on key areas like aerial combat, air to surface combat, paratrooper assault and medical evacuation.
 1. Garuda Shakti is the joint military exercise between India and Indonesia.
 2. Mitra Shakti is the joint military exercise between India and Sri Lanka.

EXERCISE TIGER TRIUMPH

The maiden India-US joint Tri services Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Exercise named 'TIGER TRIUMPH' is scheduled on the Eastern seaboard from 13 to 21 Nov 19.

- The Exercise is aimed to developing interoperability for conducting HADR operations.
- The exercise will be conducted off Visakhapatnam and Kakinada coasts in Andhra Pradesh.
- It aims to develop interoperability for conducting HADR operations.
- Other joint exercises:
 1. Military training: Yudh Abhyas and Vajra Prahar
 2. Air Forces: Cope India
 3. Naval Exercise along with Japan: Malabar

UNESCO CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK

UNESCO has designated Mumbai as a member of UNESCO Creative Cities Network (UCCN) in the field of FILM and Hyderabad in the field of GASTRONOMY.

HIGHLIGHTS

- UCCN created in 2004, is a network of cities which are thriving, active centres of cultural activities in their respective countries.
- The UNESCO Creative Cities Network now counts a total of 246 cities.
- The member cities that form part of the Network come from all continents and regions with different income levels and populations.
- They work together towards a common mission: placing creativity and the creative economy at the core of their urban development plans to make cities safe, resilient, inclusive and sustainable, in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- The 7 categories for recognition under UCCN are as follows-

1. Crafts and Folk Art
2. Design
3. Film
4. Gastronomy
5. Music
6. Media Arts
7. Literature

- Previously, 3 Indian cities were recognized as members of UCCN, namely-
 1. Jaipur-Crafts and Folk Arts (2015).
 2. Varanasi-Creative city of Music (2015).
 3. Chennai-Creative city of Music (2017).

World Cities Day 2019

- The United Nations General Assembly has designated the 31st of October as World Cities Day.
- The theme for World Cities Day, 2019 is, “Changing the world: innovations and a better life for future generations”.

APPS: UAN REGISTRATION, E-INSPECTION AND DIGI LOCKER

Minister of State (I/C) for Labour and Employment launched 3 Apps: UAN REGISTRATION, E-INSPECTION AND DIGI LOCKER, developed by Employees' Provident Fund Organization (EPFO) at its 67th Foundation Day.

HIGHLIGHTS

1. Online Facility for **UAN generation** by worker: Any workers can obtain Universal Account Number (UAN) directly on EPFO website which enrolls them for PF, Pension and Life Insurance benefits and a worker need not depend on his employer alone for UAN. This is in the direction of ease of living and ensuring universal social security.
2. EPS Pensioner's PPO in **DigiLocker** website/Application (APP) EPFO integrates with DigiLocker of NeGD to create depository of electronic PPOs which is accessible to individual pensioners. This is a move towards paperless system and ease of living for pensioners.
3. **e-Inspections**: Digital interface of EPFO with employers: The E-Inspection Form would be available in user login of employers not filing ECR which enables employer to inform either closure of business or unpaid dues with proposal for payment.

CENTRALIZED PUBLIC GRIEVANCE REDRESS AND MONITORING SYSTEM (CPGRAMS)

Public Grievances Redressal is one of the flagship initiatives for the reformation in governance started by Central government through addressing the grievances of general public.

HIGHLIGHTS

- It was created in June 2007 by DARPG (Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances).
- Under the public grievance mechanism any citizen of India can raise their problems, grievance or pleas to the central govt and state government Ministries and Departments. Grievance can be submitted to all important portfolio ministers and Departments.
- The system has been designed in-house by the National Informatics Centre (DARPG) team.
- Centralized Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) is an online web-enabled system over NICNET developed by NIC, in association with Directorate of Public Grievances (DPG) and Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG).
- CPGRAMS is the platform based on web technology which primarily aims to enable submission of grievances by the aggrieved citizens from anywhere and anytime (24x7) basis to Ministries/Departments/Organizations/State Governments who scrutinize and take action for speedy and favourable redress of these grievances.
- Tracking grievances is also facilitated on this portal through the system generated unique registration number.

DAR&PG

- The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DAR&PG), is the nodal agency of the Government of India in-charge of policy making, monitoring and coordinating departments for public grievances.
- The Allocation of Business Rules, 1961 delineated the mandate for the same.
- These rules have allocated work relating to **(i) redress of public grievances (in general) and (ii) grievances pertaining to Central Government agencies, to the DAR&PG.**

EXERCISE SCOJTEX 2019

Union Minister of Home Affairs inaugurated the Shanghai Cooperation Organization Joint Exercise on Urban Earthquake Search & Rescue (SCOJtEx-2019) at Dr. Ambedkar International Center, New Delhi.

HIGHLIGHTS

- On the initiative of Government of India, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) is hosting “Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Joint Urban Earthquake Search & Rescue Exercise (SCOJtEx.-2019)” of all 08 SCO member countries, with the aim to rehearse the disaster response mechanism, share knowledge, experience, technology & also for mutual coordination, etc.
- This exercise shall also provide an opportunity to enhance the coordination & co-operation involving multi-agency operations in an earthquake scenario.
- The participants of all 08 member countries namely **China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan** shall be participating in this exercise.
- The four days long simulation exercise has been conducted as per the **International Search & Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG)** methodology & guidelines.
- The main focus of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Joint Exercise on Urban Earthquake Search & Rescue (SCOJtEx-2019) shall be to test the region’s preparedness and resilience towards effective activation of Inter-governmental interaction for immediate response.

SCO

- The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), or Shanghai Pact, is a Eurasian political, economic, and security alliance, the creation of which was announced on 15 June 2001 in Shanghai, China by the leaders of **China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan**; the **Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Charter**, formally establishing the organisation, was signed in June 2002 and entered into force on 19 September 2003.
- The original five nations, with the exclusion of Uzbekistan, were previously members of the Shanghai Five group, founded on 26 April 1996.
- Since then, the organisation has expanded its membership to **eight countries** when India and Pakistan joined SCO as full members on 9 June 2017 at a summit in Astana, Kazakhstan.
- The Heads of State Council (HSC) is the supreme decision-making body in the SCO, it meets once a year and adopts decisions and guidelines on all important matters of the organisation.
- Military exercises are also regularly conducted among members to promote cooperation and coordination against terrorism and other external threats, and to maintain regional peace and stability.
- The SCO is widely regarded as the **"alliance of the East"**, due to its growing centrality in Asia-Pacific, and has been the primary security pillar of the region.
- It is the largest regional organisation in the world in terms of geographical coverage and population, covering three-fifths of the Eurasian continent and nearly half of the human population.

5th INDIA INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL

The host city of the 5th IISF-2019 is home to renowned scientific institutions that have been the workplace of pioneering scientists who gave shape to science in India. IISF is the largest science festival in the world.

The theme for this year’s festival is **RISEN India –Research, Innovation and Science Empowering the Nation.**

- The IISF 2019 is the fifth edition since its inception in 2015.
- The first and second IISF were held in New Delhi, the third in Chennai and the fourth IISF was held in Lucknow.

- IISF, organized jointly by Science & Technology -related Ministries and Departments of the Government of India and Vijnana Bharati (Vibha).
- It is an annual festival to celebrate the achievements of India's scientific and technological advancements with students, innovators, craftsmen, farmers, scientists and technocrats from India and abroad.

INDIA INTERNATIONAL SCIENCE FESTIVAL

- IISF is the largest science festival in the world. It is an annual festival to celebrate the achievements of India's scientific and technological advancements with students, innovators, craftsmen, farmers, scientists and technocrats from India and abroad.
- It was started from the year 2015.
- It is organized by the Ministry of Science & Technology, Ministry of Earth Sciences and Vijnana Bharati (Vibha).

VIJNANA BHARATI

- Swadeshi Science Movement was started in Indian Institute of Science- Bengaluru by a few eminent scientists under the guidance of Prof. K I Vasu.
- This movement gradually gained momentum and emerged as an organization with national presence.
- In 1991, it was decided to launch the Swadeshi Science Movement at all India Level and named it as Vijnana Bharati.
- It's one of the objectives is to motivate young scientists towards greater creativity and originality.
- It is headquartered in New Delhi.

IMPORTANT INDIAN ASTRONOMERS

Astronomers use spectroscopes to know details like temperature, chemical composition, etc. of celestial objects hundreds, millions of light years away from us.

A small personal model of advanced spectroscopes can easily be made by anyone using a box made of cardboard that has a very narrow window used to channel light into the spectroscope. A piece of a Compact Disc is used to split the light by a process called diffraction. This attempt is dedicated to renowned scientists **Meghnad Saha and C. V.**

Raman.

The largest electronics lesson and assembly of optical media communication units at a single location attempted on the next day with the participation of over 950 students. Communication link set up through Infrared signals - Wireless infrared communications refers to the use of free-space propagation of light waves in the near infrared band as a transmission medium for communication. This attempt is dedicated to **Chandrasekhara Venkata Raman and Satyendra Nath Bose.**

The record attempt for most people assembling Radio kits simultaneously attempted on November 7, 2019 with the participation of over 400 students. Like all other electromagnetic waves, radio waves travel at the speed of light in vacuum. They are generated by electric charges undergoing acceleration, such as time varying electric currents. Radio waves are generated artificially by transmitters and received by radio receivers, using antennas. This attempt is dedicated to **Jagadish Chandra Bose.**

The largest human image of a human chromosome will be attempted on the final day, November 8, 2019 with the participation of over 400 students. In the nucleus of each cell, the DNA molecule is packaged into thread-like structures called chromosomes. Each chromosome is made up of DNA tightly coiled many times around proteins called histones that support its structure. The attempt is designed to inculcate the spirit of discovery in young minds to start their own exploration in the world of Science and Technology.

IT INITIATIVES -ICEDASH & ATITHI

Finance Minister Launches two new IT Initiatives -ICEDASH & ATITHI .

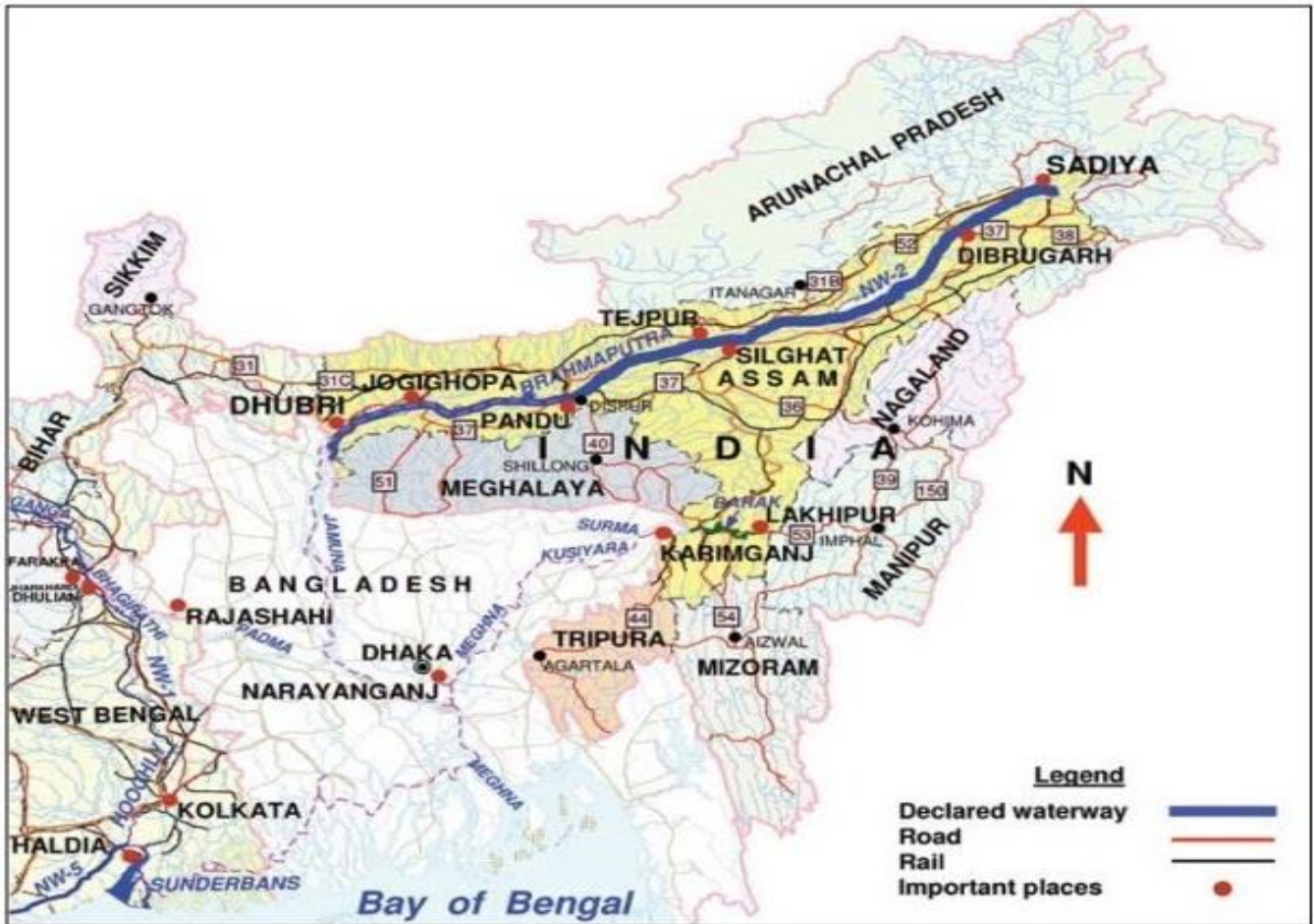
HIGHLIGHTS

- Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs unveiled two new IT initiatives – ICEDASH and ATITHI – for improved monitoring and pace of Customs clearance of imported goods and facilitating arriving international passengers by electronic filing of Customs baggage and currency declarations.
- ATITHI app will facilitate hassle free and faster clearance by Customs at the airports and enhance the experience of international tourists and other visitors at our airports.

- ICEDASH is an Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) monitoring dashboard of the Indian Customs helping public see the daily Customs clearance times of import cargo at various ports and airports. With ICEDASH, Indian Customs has taken a lead globally to provide an effective tool that helps the businesses compare clearance times across ports and plan their logistics accordingly. This dashboard has been developed by CBIC in collaboration with NIC. ICEDASH can be accessed through the CBIC website.
- With ATITHI, CBIC has introduced an easy to use mobile app for international travellers to file the Customs declaration in advance. Passengers can use this app to file declaration of dutiable items and currency with the Indian Customs even before boarding the flight to India. ATITHI is available on both, iOS and Android.

NATIONAL WATERWAY - 2

The first-ever container cargo movement on Brahmaputra (National Waterway -2) will sail via National Waterway-1 (River Ganga), Indo-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) route and National Waterway-2 (River Brahmaputra).



- The Sadiya-Dhubri stretch of the Brahmaputra river (891 Km) declared as National Waterway-2 in 1988 is located in the state of Assam.
- As per the National Waterways Act, 2016, 111 waterways have been declared as NWs.
- National Waterway-1 (Prayagraj-Haldia) with length 1620 km is the longest National waterway in India.

KUNG FU NUNS

The Kung Fu Nuns of the Drukpa Order, some of the Himalayas’ most prominent human rights advocates, recently received the Asia Society’s prestigious Game Changer Award in New York on 30th October 2019 for their path-breaking work to empower women and dismantle gender stereotypes in the Himalayas.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Kung Fu Nuns represent a new generation of Buddhists who use their teachings to take real action and effect meaningful change in the world by promoting gender equality and environmentalism.

- With this recognition, the Kung Fu Nuns join the likes of iconic Indian leaders Indra Nooyi, Mukesh Ambani, and Dev Patel, who have also been honoured by the Asia Society in previous years for breaking the glass ceiling with their courage and inspiring their fellow citizens.
- The Nuns use Jigme as their first name and the meaning of Jigme is 'fearless'.
- The Kung Fu Nuns are the fearless daughters of India who represent a new generation of Buddhists using spirituality to inspire real-life action & impact.
- They are a strong community of 700 nuns and growing, with a thousand year-old Drukpa legacy.
- Harnessing the ancient martial art to build strength, promote equality, and improve communities, they are inspiring young girls to break stereotypes and be their own heroes.
- They belong to the Drukpa Lineage, a thousand-year-old Buddhist tradition that began in the Himalayas.
- The Gyalwang Drukpa, the spiritual leader and founder of the Drukpa order, encouraged his nuns to train in Kung Fu to build confidence as leaders.
- They are the only Buddhist nuns in the world to practice Kung Fu. The nuns use their martial arts expertise to challenge gender roles in India's conservative culture.

ASIA SOCIETY GAME CHANGER AWARDS

- Founded in 1956, the Asia Society is a nonpartisan, non-profit educational institution with offices in Hong Kong, Houston, Los Angeles, Manila, Melbourne, Mumbai, New York, San Francisco, Seoul, Shanghai, Tokyo, Washington, DC and Zurich.
- The society is dedicated to promoting mutual understanding and strengthening partnerships among people, leaders and institutions of Asia and the United States in a global context.
- Each year, the Asia Society honour individuals, organizations, or movements that have inspired, enlightened, and shown true leadership in areas that reflect Asia Society's core pillars of policy and business, arts and culture, and education.
- This year's Game Changer Awards along with its founding partner, Citi group has honoured women who are applying their unique vision and talent to make the world a better place.

AADI MAHOTSAV

Delhi Aadi Mahotsav has been organised at Dilli Haat between 16th to 30th November, 2019

The theme of the festival is "a Celebration of the Spirit of Tribal Crafts, Culture and Commerce", which represents the basic ethos of tribal life.

The concept of organising Aadi Mahotsav in major cities has proved to be a boon for tribal artisans by eliminating the middle man and providing direct access to large markets, otherwise impossible to reach for them.

TRIFED

- TRIFED an organisation of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India has started a new concept of organising "Aadi Mahotsav – National Tribal Festival" to provide direct market access to the tribal master-craftsmen and women in large metros and State capitals.
- TRIFED also promotes processing and value addition of forest produce through the **Prime Minister Van Dhan Yojana**, as a special scheme to promote tribal enterprise.
- A special initiative that has been launched for promoting Van Dhan for Specially-Abled tribal gatherers and artisans TRIFED proposes to set up atleast 150 such kendras in the country in the coming five months involving 45000 tribal specially-abled tribal artisans.

TRIFED

- TRIFED came into existence in 1987. It is a national-level apex organization functioning under the administrative control of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Govt. of India.
- TRIFED has its registered and Head Office located in New Delhi and has a network of 13 Regional Offices located at various places in the country.
- The ultimate objective of TRIFED is socio-economic development of tribal people in the country by way of marketing development of the tribal products.

PRIME MINISTER VAN DHAN YOJANA

- The Van Dhan Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED.
- It was launched on 14th April, 2018 and seeks to improve tribal incomes through value addition of tribal products.
- At unit level, aggregation of produce would be done by SHGs having about 30 members each forming Van Dhan Vikas 'Samuh'.
- The SHGs would also undertake primary value addition of the MFPs using equipment such as small cutting and sieving tools, decorticator, dryer, packaging tool etc based on MFPs available in the area.

HIGH ENERGY MATERIALS RESEARCH LABORATORY

Raksha Rajya Mantri inaugurated the Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO) Igniter Complex at High Energy Materials Research Laboratory (HEMRL) in Pune.

HIGHLIGHTS

- HEMRL is a premier laboratory of DRDO and primarily engages in developing Rocket and Gun Propellants, Pyrotechnic Devices, High Explosive Systems and synthesis of high energy molecules.
- HEMRL has created a state-of-the-art facility for design, processing and evaluation of ignition systems.
- The facility consists of process, assembly & storage buildings and a design centre.
- Remotely controlled sophisticated equipments such as Sieve Shaker, Planetary Mixer, Granulating Machine, Pelleting Machine etc are installed in the process buildings.
- Design, modelling and simulation laboratory; assembly and testing centre are also part of Igniter Complex. The noteworthy developments of the group in recent past are development of cap--based ignition system and multipoint simultaneous ignition system.
- Ignition is a crucial and highly critical phenomenon in the ignition chain of Rocket motor.
- HEMRL has developed various fuel /oxidizer-based igniter compositions using organic binders.
- The laboratory has developed several ignition systems to ensure reliable initiation of rocket motors of various tactical as well as strategic missiles.

BIOFUELS

The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas (MoP&NG), Government of India has recently joined IEA Bioenergy TCP as its 25th member.

- The primary goal of MoP&NG joining IEA Bioenergy TCP is to facilitate the market introduction of advanced biofuels with an aim to bring down emissions and reduce substantial crude oil imports.
- International Energy Agency's Technology Collaboration Programme on Bioenergy (IEA Bioenergy TCP) is an international platform for cooperation among countries with the aim of improving cooperation and information exchange between countries that have national programmes in bioenergy research, development and deployment.
- IEA Bioenergy TCP works under the framework of International Energy Agency (IEA) to which India has "Association" status since 30th March, 2017.

BIOFUELS

- Any hydrocarbon fuel that is produced from an organic matter (living or once living material) in a short period of time (days, weeks, or even months) is considered a biofuel.
- Biofuels may be solid, liquid or gaseous in nature.
 1. Solid: Wood, dried plant material, and manure
 2. Liquid: Bioethanol and Biodiesel
 3. Gaseous: Biogas
- These can be used to replace or can be used in addition to diesel, petrol or other fossil fuels for transport, stationary, portable and other applications. Also, they can be used to generate heat and electricity.
- Some of the main reasons for shifting to biofuels are the rising prices of oil, emission of the greenhouse gases from fossil fuels and the interest for obtaining fuel from agricultural crops for the benefit of farmers.

CATEGORIES OF BIOFUELS

1. **First generation biofuels:** These are made from food sources such as sugar, starch, vegetable oil, or animal fats using conventional technology. Common first-generation biofuels include Bioalcohols, Biodiesel, Vegetable oil,

Bioethers, Biogas. Though the process of conversion is easy, but use of food sources in the production of biofuels creates an imbalance in food economy, leading to increased food prices and hunger.

2. **Second generation biofuels:** These are produced from non-food crops or portions of food crops that are not edible and considered as wastes, e.g. stems, husks, wood chips, and fruit skins and peeling. Thermochemical reactions or biochemical conversion process is used for producing such fuels. Examples include cellulose ethanol, biodiesel. Though these fuels do not affect food economy, their production is quite complicated. Also, it is reported that these biofuels emit less greenhouse gases when compared to first generation biofuels.
3. **Third generation biofuels:** These are produced from micro-organisms like algae. Example- Butanol Micro-organisms like algae can be grown using land and water unsuitable for food production, therefore reducing the strain on already depleted water sources. One disadvantage is that fertilizers used in the production of such crops lead to environment pollution.
4. **Fourth Generation Biofuels:** In the production of these fuels, crops that are genetically engineered to take in high amounts of carbon are grown and harvested as biomass. The crops are then converted into fuel using second generation techniques. The fuel is pre-combusted and the carbon is captured. Then the carbon is geo-sequestered, meaning that the carbon is stored in depleted oil or gas fields or in unmineable coal seams. Some of these fuels are considered as carbon negative as their production pulls out carbon from environment.

INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES ON SUSTAINABLE BIOFUELS

1. **Roundtable on Sustainable Biomaterials (RSB):** It is an international initiative which brings together farmers, companies, governments, non-governmental organizations, and scientists who are interested in the sustainability of biofuel production and distribution. In April 2011, it launched a set of comprehensive sustainability criteria - the "RSB Certification System." Biofuels producers that meet these criteria are able to show buyers and regulators that their product has been obtained without harming the environment or violating human rights.
2. **Sustainable Biofuels Consensus:** It is an international initiative which calls upon governments, the private sector, and other stakeholders to take decisive action to ensure the sustainable trade, production, and use of biofuels.
3. **Bonsucro:** It is an international not-for-profit, multi-stakeholder organization established in 2008 to promote sustainable sugar cane. Its stated aim is to reduce 'the environmental and social impacts of sugarcane production while recognising the need for economic viability'. It does that through setting sustainability standards and certifying sugar cane products including ethanol, sugar and molasses.

RECENT INITIATIVES

Initiatives by Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology:

- The department successfully developed 2G Ethanol and transferred the technology to Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs).
- Developed Indigenous Cellulolytic Enzyme for the production of biofuels.
- Demonstrated micro algae-based sewage treatment technology.
- It has strengthened the international collaboration to accelerate innovation in Sustainable Biofuel through multilateral programs like **Mission Innovation and Biofuture Platform**.
- It is training & encouraging young researchers in the field of Bioenergy through Fellowships/Awards.
- **Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN Yojana, 2019:** The objective of the scheme is to create an ecosystem for setting up commercial projects and to boost Research and Development in 2G Ethanol sector.
- **Ethanol blending:** The 2018 Biofuel Policy has the objective of reaching 20% ethanol-blending and 5% biodiesel-blending by the year 2030. The Government has reduced GST on ethanol for blending in fuel from 18% to 5%. The Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas is making all efforts to increase ethanol supply for petrol.
- **GOBAR (Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources) DHAN scheme, 2018:** It focuses on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste in farms to useful compost, biogas and bio-CNG, thus keeping villages clean and increasing the income of rural households. It was launched under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin).
- **Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO)** launched by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) aims for an ecosystem that will enable the collection and conversion of used cooking oil to biodiesel.

➤ **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.
- It 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.
- 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.
- The Policy encourages setting up of supply chain mechanisms for biodiesel production from non-edible oilseeds, Used Cooking Oil, short gestation crops.

NATIONAL HYDROLOGY PROJECT

National Hydrology Project has been approved by the cabinet on 06.04.2016 as a central sector scheme with a total outlay of Rs.3679.7674 crore [Rs.3,640 crore for National Hydrology Project (NHP) and Rs.39.7674 crore for establishment of National Water informatics Centre (NWIC) as a repository of nation-wide water resources data].

NWIC is envisaged as an independent organization with adequate administrative and financial powers under the overall control of Secretary, MoWR, RD&GR.

OBJECTIVE: To improve the extent, quality, and accessibility of water resources information decision support system for floods and basin level resource assessment/planning and to strengthen the capacity of targeted water resources professionals and management institutions in India.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHT

- Central Sector Scheme, with 100% grant to the States
- Budget Outlay: about Rs3,640 Crore, with World Bank Assistance to the tune of 50% of the project cost
- Timeline: 8 years from 2016-17 to 2023-24
- Scale: Pan India
- Lead Agency: MoWR, RD&GR
- Implementing Agencies: 49 (including 10 from Central Government and 39 from States)
- Loan agreement with world bank has been signed on 18-4-2017.

PRAGATI

Prime Minister chaired the 31st interaction through PRAGATI — the ICT based multi-modal platform for Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.

- PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation), as the name suggests, is aimed at starting a culture of Pro-Active Governance and Timely Implementation.
- It is also a robust system for bringing e-transparency and e-accountability with real-time presence and exchange among the key stakeholders. The platform was launched on March 25, 2015.
- It is a multi-purpose and multi-modal platform that is aimed at addressing common man's grievances, and simultaneously monitoring and reviewing important programmes and projects of the Government of India as well as projects flagged by State Governments.

KEY FEATURES

- It is a three-tier system (PMO, Union Government Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries of the States) Prime Minister will hold a monthly programme where he will interact with the Government of India Secretaries, and Chief Secretaries through Video-conferencing enabled by data and geo-informatics visuals.
- The programme will be held once in every month on Fourth Wednesday at 3.30 PM-to be known as PRAGATI Day.

- Issues to be flagged before the PM are picked up from the available database regarding Public Grievances, on-going Programmes and pending Projects
- The system will ride on, strengthen and re-engineer the data bases of the CPGRAMS for grievances, Project Monitoring Group (PMG) and the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation. PRAGATI provides an interface and platform for all these three aspects.
- It will take into consideration various correspondences to PM's office by the common people or from high dignitaries of States and/or developers of public projects.
- The issues flagged are uploaded seven days prior to the PRAGATI day (i.e. on third Wednesday of every month). These issues can be viewed by the Union Government Secretaries and Chief Secretaries after entering into the application.
- User ID and Password for each of the Union Government Secretaries and Chief Secretaries have been created and made available. Union Government Secretaries and Chief Secretaries will be able to see the issues pertaining to their Department /State.
- Union Government Secretaries and Chief Secretaries have to put their comments and updates about the flagged issues within three days (i.e. by next Monday).
- One day - Tuesday is available to the PMO team to review the data entered by the Union Government Secretaries and Chief Secretaries.
- The design is such, that when PM reviews the issue he should have on his screen the issue as well as the latest updates and visuals regarding the same.

SHALA DARPAN PORTAL

Minister of State for Human Resource Development launched Shaala Darpan portal, an E-Governance school automation and management system for Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS) in New Delhi.

This single integrated platform has been developed for information sharing and knowledge dissemination for the 22000 employees and over 2 lakh students across schools and offices of Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti.

- Shaala Darpan is an end to end e-Governance school automation and management system.
- It has been implemented at Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti as the first major initiative to enable automation of all activities of the country's largest residential schooling system through a single umbrella - 636 schools, 8 Regional Offices, 8 NLI's and Head Quarter.
- The system has several pluggable components that can interact with each other. These are enlisted below:
 1. School Information and Management System for complete school automation.
 2. Bilingual Content Management Portal for information dissemination.
 3. Employee ERP to manage the day to day activities of all employees.
 4. Budget & Finance management system.
 5. Inventory & Store management system.
 6. Library management system.

HS CODE

Khadi got HS code, issued by the central government to categorize its products in export.

In a long awaited move to make export of Khadi, exclusively categorized from the general league of textile products, the ministry of commerce and industries has allocated separate HS code for this signature fabric of India.

- The Harmonised System, or simply 'HS', is a six-digit identification code developed by the World Customs Organization (WCO).
- Called the "universal economic language" for goods, it is a multipurpose international product nomenclature.
- Over 200 countries use the system as a basis for their customs tariffs, gathering international trade statistics, making trade policies, and for monitoring goods.
- The system helps in harmonising of customs and trade procedures, thus reducing costs in international trade.
- According to the WCO website, the system currently comprises of around 5,000 commodity groups, each identified by a unique six-digit code that has numbers arranged in a legal and logical structure, with well-defined rules to achieve uniform classification.
- Of the six digits, the first two denote the HS Chapter, the next two give the HS heading, and the last two give the HS subheading.

- The HS code for pineapple, for example, is 0804.30, which means it belongs to Chapter 08 (Edible fruit & nuts, peel of citrus/melons), Heading 04 (Dates, figs, pineapples, avocados, etc. fresh or dried), and Subheading 30 (Pineapples).

SIGNIFICANCE

- The move is expected to boost Khadi exports in the coming years.
- In 2006, the government had given the MSME-controlled Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) the Export Promotion Council Status (EPCS). Yet, the absence of a separate HS code hindered Khadi from achieving its full potential, as its exports were difficult to categorise and calculate. The latest move is expected to help resolve this issue.

BIMSTEC PORTS CONCLAVE

The Minister of State (I/C) for Shipping inaugurated the first ever 'BIMSTEC Ports' Conclave' at Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh.

- The Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is a regional multilateral organisation.
- Its members lie in the littoral and adjacent areas of the Bay of Bengal constituting a contiguous regional unity.
- Out of the 7 members, Five are from South Asia –
 1. Bangladesh
 2. Bhutan
 3. India
 4. Nepal
 5. Sri Lanka
- Two are from Southeast Asia –
 6. Myanmar
 7. Thailand
- BIMSTEC not only connects South and Southeast Asia, but also the ecologies of the Great Himalayas and the Bay of Bengal.
- It mainly aims to create an enabling environment for rapid economic development; accelerate social progress; and promote collaboration on matters of common interest in the region.
- This sub-regional organization came into being in 1997 through the Bangkok Declaration.
- Initially, it was formed with four Member States with the acronym 'BIST-EC' (Bangladesh, India, Sri-Lanka and Thailand Economic Cooperation).
- It became renamed 'BIMST-EC' in 1997, following the inclusion of Myanmar.
- With the admission of Nepal and Bhutan in 2004, the name of the grouping was changed to 'Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation' (BIMSTEC).

OBJECTIVES

- Creating an enabling environment for the rapid economic development of the sub-region.
- Encouraging the spirit of equality and partnership.
- Promoting active collaboration and mutual assistance in the areas of common interests of the member countries
- Accelerating support for each other in the fields of education, science, and technology, etc.

GOVERNMENT e-MARKETPLACE

Government e-Marketplace (GeM) signed MoU with Central Bank of India.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Through this partnership, Central Bank of India will be able to offer an array of services including transfer of funds through GeM Pool Accounts (GPA), advising of electronic Performance Bank Guarantees (e-PBG) and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) to the registered users on the portal.
- Integration for payments and various banking services is one of the priorities for GeM towards the goal of paperless, contactless and cashless system.

- GeM is also working with Banks, TReDs, and SIDBI to provide bill discounting and financing of working capital where the cost of capital is linked to the performance & rating of a seller on GeM. This will help the sellers in general and the MSMEs in particular to access easy credit and do better business with the government.
- In addition, GeM is contemplating the creation of EMD pool account for making it easy for sellers to comply with the EMD requirements while responding to bids.

ABOUT

- GeM is an initiative of the Government of India which offers a one stop platform for facilitating online procurement of goods and services by Central and State government organizations.
- GeM provides tools for Direct Purchase, bidding and reverse auction for ensuring transparent and efficient procurement.
- GeM SPV is the National Public Procurement Portal for ensuring efficient and transparent mechanisms for procurement of goods and services by Central and State government organizations in a cashless, contactless and paperless manner.
- GeM is a complete online marketplace that allows all bonafide sellers to register themselves and transact on the platform. All verifications are done through online integration.
- GeM promotes inclusiveness and promotes ease of doing business with the government.
- It is a fully transparent online marketplace which not only speeds up public procurement but also ensures substantial savings in the process (15-25% on an average).
- GeM ensures efficient transmission of policy intent which can benefit SMEs such as MSME Preference Policy, Make in India and Start-ups which can be effectively implemented on a rule-based electronic platform.

EXERCISE SAMUDRA SHAKTI

Indian Navy – Indonesian Navy Bilateral Maritime Exercise ‘Samudra Shakti Progresses in the Bay of Bengal.

- INS Kamorta, an Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette is jointly exercising with Indonesian Warship KRI Usman Harun, a multi-role Corvette in the Bay of Bengal as part of the ongoing Indian Navy – Indonesian Navy Bilateral Exercise ‘Samudra Shakti’.
- Garuda Shakti is the joint military exercise between India and Indonesia.

FINANCIAL STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (FSDC)

FM chairs 21st Meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC).

- The Council reviewed the current global and domestic macro-economic situation and financial stability and vulnerabilities issues, including inter-alia, those concerning NBFCs and Credit Rating Agencies.
- The Council reviewed the action taken by members on the decision taken by FSDC earlier and held discussions on the proposals submitted for further strengthening of the resolution framework and framework for cyber security of the financial sector.
- The Council also took note of the activities undertaken by the FSDC Sub-Committee chaired by the Governor, RBI and the initiatives taken by the various regulators in the financial sector.

FINANCIAL STABILITY AND DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (FSDC)

- Drawing from the idea of Raghuram Rajan Committee (2008) to create a super-regulatory body for the financial sector, in 2010 it was decided to set up Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC), an autonomous body dealing with macroprudential and financial regularities in the entire financial sector of India.
- Financial Stability and Development Council is an apex-level body constituted by the Government of India.
- The apex-level FSDC is not a statutory body.
- The body envisages to strengthen and institutionalize the mechanism of maintaining financial stability, financial sector development, inter-regulatory coordination along with monitoring macro-prudential regulation of the economy.
- It must be noted that no funds are separately allocated to the council for undertaking its activities.
- The finance minister is the chairman of the council.
- It has the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor and chairpersons of the Securities and Exchange Board of India, Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority and Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority as other members along with finance ministry officials.

FSDC RECONSTITUTED:

- The decision has now been taken by the Union Government to reconstitute the body and include secretaries from the revenue department as well as Ministry of Information Technology (MeitY).
- It will also include Chairman of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India.
- The reconstitution would make FSDC more broad-based to incorporate changes in the economic regulatory framework of the country

RESPONSIBILITIES OF FSDC

- Bringing about stability in the financial sector.
- Development of Financial Sector.
- Inter-regulatory coordination.
- Promoting financial literacy.
- Ensuring financial inclusion.
- Macroprudential supervision of the economy including the functioning of large financial conglomerates.
- Coordinating India's international interface with financial sector bodies like the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), Financial Stability Board (FSB) and any such body as may be decided by the Finance Minister from time to time.

CYCLONE BULBUL

Very Severe Cyclonic Storm Bulbul was a strong tropical cyclone which struck the Indian state of West Bengal as well as Bangladesh.

- Causing storm surge, heavy rains, and flash floods across the areas.
- After crossing the Indochinese Peninsula, Severe Tropical Storm Matmo's remnants entered the Andaman Sea.
- It began to organize over the southern Bay of Bengal in the beginning of November, then it slowly intensified into a cyclonic storm as it moved north.
- It is only the fourth tropical cyclone ever recorded to regenerate over the Andaman Sea, having crossed Southeast Asia overland (thus sharing with the name Matmo in operational JTWC advisories).
- In addition, it is only the second to make it to hurricane strength, the first being in 1960.

CYCLONE

- Cyclone is the formation of very low-pressure system with very high-speed winds revolving around it. Factors like wind speed, wind direction, temperature and humidity contribute to the development of cyclones.
- Before cloud formation, water takes up heat from the atmosphere to change into vapour. When water vapour changes back to liquid form as raindrops, this heat is released to the atmosphere.
- The heat released to the atmosphere warms the air around. The air tends to rise and causes a drop in pressure. More air rushes to the centre of the storm. This cycle is repeated.
- Since Hurricanes derive their energy from heated seawater which can be prevented by presence of upper-level-winds that disrupt the storm circulation forcing it to lose its strength.

NAMING OF CYCLONES

- Hurricanes, typhoons, cyclones are all the same, just different names for tropical storms in different parts of the world - Hurricane in the Atlantic, Typhoon in the Pacific and Cyclone in the Indian Ocean.
- For the Indian ocean region, the host nations constitute of Bangladesh, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand and the name governing body is Regional Specialised Meteorological Centre (RSMC), New Delhi.
- Each nation prepares a list of ten names which they think is suitable to be assigned to a cyclone. Out of these, the governing body, i.e, RSMC, selects eight names from each country and accordingly prepares eight lists which consist of the names approved by the governing body.
- Since 2004, the cyclones have been named according to the list approved by RSMC.
- The practice of naming storms (tropical cyclones) is to help in the quick identification of storms in warning messages as names are easier to remember and facilitate disaster risk awareness, preparedness, management and reduction.

THE OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY, HEALTH AND WORKING CONDITIONS CODE, 2019

The Code seeks to regulate health and safety conditions of workers in establishments with 10 or more workers, and in all mines and docks.

- It subsumes and replaces 13 labour laws relating to safety, health and working conditions. These laws include: Factories Act, 1948; Mines Act, 1952; Dock Workers Act, 1986; Contract Labour Act, 1970; and Inter-State Migrant Workers Act, 1979.
- Establishments covered by the Code are required to register with registering officers, appointed by the central or state governments.
- Welfare facilities, working conditions and work hours for different types of establishments and workers will be prescribed by the central or state governments through rules.
- The Code sets up occupational safety boards at the national and state level to advise the central and state governments on the standards, rules, and regulations to be framed under the Code.
- The Code creates special provisions for certain classes of establishments such as factories, mines, dock workers, and constructions workers. These include separate provisions on licenses, safety regulations, and duties of employers.

FEATURE	GENERAL PROVISIONS	SPECIFIC PROVISIONS
Duties of Employers	Duties include providing a safe workplace, issuing appointment letters, and complying with the provisions of the Code.	<p>*Factories, mines, docks, plantation and construction: Employer must provide a risk-free workplace and instruct employees on safety protocol.</p> <p>*Inter-state migrant workers: Employer must notify specified authority of both states in the case of fatal accidents and serious bodily harm.</p> <p>*Mines: The owner and agent of the mine will be jointly responsible for providing a safe work environment.</p>
Working conditions and welfare facilities.	To be notified by the appropriate government. These may include bathing spaces, canteens, and first aid boxes.	<p>*Factories, mines, plantation, construction, and motor transport undertakings: Appropriate government may require provision of added facilities like ambulance rooms, welfare officers, and temporary housing.</p> <p>*Factories, mines, plantation, and motor transport undertakings: Appropriate government may appoint medical officers to examine, certify, and supervise the health of workers.</p> <p>*Factories involved in hazardous processes: Maximum permissible limits of exposure to chemical and toxic substances in manufacturing processes will be prescribed by state government. Further, it may specify medical examinations for workers, among other facilities.</p> <p>*Interstate migrant workers: Employers must provide suitable conditions of work, medical facilities, housing, displacement and journey allowance.</p>
Dangerous operations	No general provision for hazardous and dangerous operations.	*Factories involved in hazardous processes: Emergency standards may be set. The National Advisory Board may give recommendations in cases of extraordinary occurrences.

Inspector	Inspector-cum-Facilitators may inquire into accidents and conduct inspections, among others.	*Factories, mines, docks, and construction work: Inspector-cum-Facilitators may limit number of employees working or prohibit work in an establishment, if it appears that workers are in danger.
License and Registration	All establishments with ten or more workers must register with the appropriate government.	*Factories: Additional licenses and registration may be required. *Beedi workers and contract labour: License required for beedi and cigar establishments (except for family establishments). Contractors must either obtain a five-year license or obtain work-specific licenses. *Audio-visual workers: A signed agreement between the employer and worker must be registered with the government.
Work hours	To be notified by the government.	*Working Journalists: Work hours cannot exceed 144 hours in 4 weeks.
Leave	Workers are entitled to one day off for every 20 days of work and one day off every week.	*Sales promotion employees are entitled to leave for 1/11th of time on duty, and medical leave for 1/18th of time on duty. Motor transport workers are entitled to one day off in every 10 days, in certain cases.
Disability	No general provision in the Code.	*Construction work: No employer can hire workers with defective vision, deafness, or a tendency for giddiness, if there is a risk of accident.
Age	No person below the age of 14 may be allowed to work.	*Mines: No worker below the age of 18 or apprentice/trainee below the age of 16, may work in a mine.

11TH BAL SANGAM

National School of Drama, one of the foremost theatre training institutions in the world and the only one of its kind in India announced the commencement of its much awaited 11th edition of Bal Sangam from 9th-12th November 2019, in its premises.

- Bal Sangam, an outreach programme of Sanskaar Rang Toli (Theatre-in-Education Company), in every alternate year brings forth both the heritage and legacy of traditional art forms and performances that are presented by children belonging to traditional performing families, guru paramparas and institutions across the country.
- Sanskaar Rang Toli (T.I.E. Co.) of NSD was established on October 16, 1989, and completed 30 years of its existence.
- Sanskaar Rang Toli is the only theatre education resource centers in the country and has worked with around 20 thousand children till date in various workshops.
- It consists of a group of actor-teachers working with and performing for children.
- The major focus of the TIE Company is to perform creative, curriculum-based and participatory plays in schools, specially designed and prepared for children of different age groups.
- The TIE Company has done more than 2000 performances in various parts of the country. More than 10 lakh children, apart from college students, teachers, parents and theatre lovers, have witnessed these plays in approximately all the states in the country as well as internationally such as Poland, China, Philippines and Japan.

NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION

The Ministry is implementing Centrally Sponsored Scheme of National AYUSH Mission (NAM) through States/UTs for the promotion of AYUSH system including Homoeopathy.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Ministry has setup an apex autonomous National Institute of Homoeopathy at Kolkata which is conducting under-graduate & post-graduate courses in Homoeopathy and is also providing health care services through its OPD/IPD.
- The Ministry of AYUSH through its apex autonomous Research Council namely, Central Council for Research in Homoeopathy (CCRH) which has a network of 24 institutes/units and 06 treatment centres all over India is undertaking scientific research in Homoeopathy.
- The research is undertaken in the broad areas of clinical research, drug standardization, drug proving, clinical verification, fundamental research and public health & epidemics. CCRH has also been providing health care services through the OPDs/IPDs of its institutes.

SWASTHYA RAKSHAN PROGRAM: CCRH launched Swasthya Rakshan program which is being undertaken in 55 villages/ urban colonies through 11 institutes under the Council. In this programme the local population is given health education and are sensitized about adopting hygienic measures and are motivated about benefits & adopting healthy life style; screening for early diagnosis and first line of treatment by holding camps periodically in 55 identified villages.

INTEGRATED NPCDCS PROGRAM: Integration of Homoeopathy and Yoga in National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases & Stroke (NPCDCS) has been taken up at Community Health Centre levels in–Krishna district, Andhra Pradesh, Darjeeling district, West Bengal, Sambalpur, Odisha and Nashik, Maharashtra. The program has been undertaken in collaboration with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare under NPCDCS programme.

NATIONAL AYUSH MISSION

- Department of AYUSH, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India has launched National AYUSH Mission (NAM) during 12th Plan for im-plementing through States/UTs.
- The basic objective of NAM is to promote AYUSH medical systems through cost effective AYUSH services, strengthening of educational systems, facilitate the enforcement of quality control of Ayurveda, Siddha and Unani & Homoeopathy (ASU &H) drugs and sustainable availability of ASU & H raw-materials.

COMPONENTS OF THE MISSION

Mandatory Components

- AYUSH Services.
- AYUSH Educational Institutions.
- Quality Control of ASU &H Drugs.
- Medicinal Plants.

Flexible Components

1. Out of the total State envelop available, 20% funds will be earmarked for flexible funds which can be spent on any of the items given below with the stipulation that not more than 5% of the envelop is spent on any of the components:
 - AYUSH Wellness Centres including Yoga & Naturopathy.
 - Tele-medicine.
 - Sports Medicine through AYUSH.
 - Innovations in AYUSH including Public Private Partnership.
 - Interest subsidy component for Private AYUSH educational Institutions.
 - Reimbursement of Testing charges.
 - IEC activities.
 - Research & Development in areas related to Medicinal Plants.
 - Voluntary certification scheme: Project based.
 - Market Promotion, Market intelligence & buy back intervention.

- Crop Insurance for Medicinal Plants
- 2. The financial assistance from Government of India shall be supplementary in the form of contractual engagements, infrastructure development, Capacity Building and supply of medicines to be provided from Department of AYUSH.
- 3. States shall ensure to make available all the regular manpower posts filled in the existing facilities. The procurement of medicines will be made by the States/UTs as per the existing guidelines of the scheme.

NATIONAL AYUSH GRID

Ministry of AYUSH has conceptualized AYUSH GRID Project for digitising AYUSH healthcare delivery at all levels. In this regard the Ministries of AYUSH and Electronics and Information Technology signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on the digitization of the AYUSH sector

BACKGROUND: In pursuance to the National Health Policy 2017 and e-governance initiative, the Ministry of AYUSH aims to digitise the entire AYUSH leading to transformation in the field of health care delivery at all levels, in addition to greater research, education, delivery of various healthcare programmes and better drug regulations

- The main components of AYUSH GRID Project are as under:
 1. Health Services.
 2. Education.
 3. Research.
 4. Central Sector and Centrally Sponsored Schemes.
 5. Training.
 6. Citizen Centric Services.
 7. Drug Licencing Portal.
 8. Media Outreach

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- The project intends to develop a network of People, Knowledge and Technology for radical, sustainable and wholesome transformation of AYUSH sector, and play a pivotal role in taking care of holistic health care needs (i.e. curative, preventive and promotive health) and socio- economic wellbeing of Indian citizens and further extending the benefits to the entire world population.
- The project also intends to create an organic and dynamic information and communication technology (ICT) powered network interconnecting all streams of AYUSH in their key functional areas viz. health care delivery, capacity building, research & development, AYUSH drug regulation and education.
- This will be beneficial for all stakeholders of AYUSH and also helpful for effective governance. Strategies for development will be in sync with the national and international policies and health care needs
- The AYUSH Grid Project is the proposed IT backbone for the entire AYUSH sector covering the healthcare systems Ayurveda, Yoga & Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, Sowa Rigpa and Homoeopathy.
- Importance: AYUSH Grid is envisaged as an omnibus digital eco- system that would lead to all round development of the AYUSH sector in fields of healthcare delivery at all levels, research, education, schemes and various health programs.

UDAN 4.0

With focus on connectivity of North eastern region, UDAN 4.0 scheme under the Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) has invited bids for 6 underserved and 24 unserved airports/airstrips in the North-East states of India.

- The Union Government has launched the fourth round of the regional connectivity scheme, UDAN to boost connectivity to more remote and regional areas of the country.
- UDAN, which stands for 'Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik', aims to make air travel affordable and widespread. The UDAN 4.0 will focus on the priority regions including the northeast, hilly states, Jammu and Kashmir UT, Ladakh and islands.
- The Union Ministry of Civil Aviation launched the 4th round of the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) UDAN following three successful rounds of bidding to enhance connectivity in the remote and regional areas of the country.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Revision of Viability Gap Funding (VGF) – The VGF provision for Category 2 / 3 aircraft (with more than 20 seats) has been enhanced for the operation of flights under RCS to priority areas. The VGF cap applicable for operation of category 1 / 1 A aircraft (below 20 seaters) has also been revised to incentivize the operation of smaller aircraft under the scheme.

Priority Areas: The priority areas include the two new union territories of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir, hilly states of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, north-eastern states and island regions of Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

- Short-haul routes- The VGF provision would be restricted to routes with stage length of up to 600 km for the operation of category 2 / 3 aircraft. Beyond this, no monetary support would be provided. The table for the provision of VGF for various stage lengths would be available for stage length up to 500 km.
- Prioritization framework – Under the scheme, airports already developed by the Airport Authority of India will be given higher priority for the Viability Gap Funding. The airports not part of the list but are located in the priority areas will be given priority next, followed by airports located in other areas.
- Flexibility to change the flight operation frequency - The Selected Airline Operator (SAO) will be allowed to change the flight operation frequency during the tenure of flight operation of the given route. However, this will only be allowed when the total scheduled flight operation, which was submitted as a part of the Technical Proposal, was conformed and adhered to within a year.
- Inclusion of helicopter and seaplane operation- The operation of helicopter and seaplane would be allowed under round four of the UDAN scheme under the NSOP license.

UDAN SCHEME: This scheme is a part of the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) and is funded jointly by the GoI and the state governments. The following are its salient features:

- The scheme duration is for 10 years.
- Airlines participating in UDAN are selected through a competitive bidding process.

The Central government will provide the following:

- Subsidy to cover Value Gap funding (VGF) for participating airlines.
- Concessional GST on tickets booked using the scheme.
- Code sharing for flights under the policy.

State Governments will extend the following measures:

- GST reduction to 1% for 10 years.
- Coordination with oil companies to facilitate refuelling facilities.
- Provide land for airport and ancillary development.
- Trained security personnel.
- Utilities at subsidised rates.
- 20% of VGF

Airport operators such as AAI will provide the following concessions:

- No parking, landing and storage charges at participating airports.
- Nil TNLC (Terminal Navigation Landing Charges).
- Allow ground handling by the airline selected through the bidding process.
- RNCF (Route Navigation and Facilitation Charges) will be discounted to 42.4% of normal rates by the Airports Authority of India

Value Gap Funding is not provided to cargo airlines. All other terms and conditions remain the same as passenger airlines. The fares are graded based on distance and flight hours for both fixed-wing and rotary-wing services. The RCS subsidy is funded by a levy of Rs 5000 per flight on major routes. Flights regulated under this policy framework can be booked from the UDAN website and major travel portals by passengers.

INTERNATIONAL UDAN

- The international air connectivity scheme is being referred to as International UDAN or Overseas UDAN.
- International UDAN is an extension of the domestic UDAN scheme that rolled out last year. Udaan means flight in Hindi and UDAN in this context is 'Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik'. That is, let the common citizen of the country fly.
- UDAN in its domestic avatar seeks to boost air connectivity by linking up un-served and under-served airports in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities with the big cities and also with each other. This is done by offering cheap tickets to passengers and the Central and State governments paying a subsidy to the airlines to enable them to offer cheap tickets.
- Under International UDAN, the plan is to connect India's smaller cities directly to some key foreign destinations in the neighbourhood. Such direct air connectivity, it is hoped, would promote the development of the city and the State by wooing tourists and businesspeople to travel via smaller towns, instead of their flying through the metros.
- The scheme seeks to make use of the open skies policy that India has with other Asian countries that allows direct and unlimited flights to and from these nations to 18 Indian destinations.
- Now, these routes are untested, and airlines could be understandably reluctant to ply them. To encourage them to participate, the government offers a subsidy in the form of pre-decided payout per seat. Airlines are required to bid on the number of passenger seats per flight for which such support is required.
- Unlike in domestic UDAN where both the Centre and the State government share the subsidy, it is only the State government that will provide the financial support for flights under international UDAN.
- But like the domestic UDAN, the financial support and flying exclusivity on the route will be for three years.
- Only Indian carriers can participate in the international UDAN scheme, and only aircraft with capacity of 70 seats or more can fly the foreign routes.

TECHNOLOGY & INNOVATION SUPPORT CENTRES

A Service Level Agreement (SLA) has been signed between Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Geneva for establishing Technology and Innovation Support Centre (TISC) network in India on 3rd May, 2017.

The creation and expansion of TISC network is aligned to the vision statement of National IPR Policy, 2016. The mandate of a TISC includes:

- Creating awareness & capacity building on IPRs.
- Providing search facility to inventors.
- Providing practical training and tools for the staff.
- Conducting IP training programs.
- IP asset management, assistance in commercialization and strengthening Technology Transfer Offices.
- Six TISCs have been established and nine more TISCs have been approved.

The Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) and World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) have signed an agreement to establish Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISC).

WIPO's Technology and Innovation Support Centers (TISC) program provides innovators in developing countries with access to locally based, high quality technology information and related services, helping them to exploit their innovative potential and to create, protect, and manage their intellectual property (IP) rights.

Services offered by TISCs may include:

- Access to online patent and non-patent (scientific and technical) resources and IP-related publications;
- Assistance in searching and retrieving technology information;
- Training in database search;
- On-demand searches (novelty, state-of-the-art and infringement);
- Monitoring technology and competitors;
- Basic information on industrial property laws, management and strategy, and technology commercialization and marketing.

The Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) is designated as the National Focal point for the TISC national network. As the national focal point, CIPAM shall identify potential host institutions, assess their capacities

and support them in joining the TISC project. CIPAM will also act as the main intermediary between WIPO and TISC host institutions and coordinate all the activities of the national TISC network.

Over 500TISCs operate worldwide and establishing TISC in India will give the host institutions access to the Global network. In upcoming years CIPAM is planning to establish TISC's in Universities, State Science Councils, R&D institutions etc. TISC will give an impetus to Knowledge sharing, sharing of best practices among the TISC's, capacity building, generation and commercialization of IPs.

ANAEMIA MukT BHARAT

The Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has launched “Anaemia MukT Bharat” strategy for prevention and treatment of anaemia in children (6-59 months), pre-school children (5-9 years), adolescents girls and boys (10-19 years), pregnant and lactating women and in women of reproductive age group (15-49 years) in programme mode through life cycle approach via Iron & Folic Acid (IFA) supplementation across life stages.

Since the initiation of the strategy, various activities have been conducted. These are in the form of guidelines and dissemination, training package, supply chain management assessment, quarterly dashboard report for monitoring and review of programme coverage.

- Universal screening of pregnant women for anaemia is a part of ante-natal care and all severely anaemic mothers are line listed and followed up for comprehensive management at higher facilities.
- Both the Health Management Information System & Mother Child Tracking System are reporting the cases of anaemic and severely anaemic pregnant women.
- In malaria endemic areas, to tackle the problem of anaemia due to malaria particularly in pregnant women and children, Long Lasting Insecticide Nets (LLINs) and Insecticide Treated Bed Nets (ITBNs) are being distributed.
- Health and nutrition education through IEC & BCC to promote dietary diversification, inclusion of iron folate rich food as well as food items that promotes iron absorption.
- Safe Motherhood Booklet is being distributed to the pregnant women for educating them on dietary diversification and promotion of consumption of IFA.

DATA

- As per the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) - IV (20015-16), 54.2 percent women (15-49 years) and 59.5 percent children (6-59 months) in rural area of the country are anaemic.
- As per Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (2016-18), 19% children aged 1-4 years, 17 % children aged 5-9 years and 32% adolescents aged 10-19 years have zinc deficiency in the country.
- The most common cause of anaemia is iron deficiency, caused by inadequate dietary iron intake or absorption, increased needs for iron during pregnancy or growth periods, and increased iron losses as a result of menstruation and helminth (intestinal worms) infestation.
- Other important causes of anaemia include hemoglobinopathies such as Sickle Cell Anaemia, Thalassaemia etc, Malaria and Fluorosis.

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SKILLS

The Government of India has approved the proposal for setting up of Indian Institute of Skills (IISs) in 3 locations in the country namely Mumbai, Kanpur and Ahmedabad.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The vision behind setting up IIS is to build world-class skill training centres by learning from and imbibing best practices from internationally renowned existing skill institutions.
- The existing skill ecosystem of the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE) consists of Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), Polytechnics, Advanced Training Institutes (ATIs) which are now known as National Skill Training Institutes (NSTI) besides a large number of short duration skill training providers.
- The proposed IIS will be established in PPP mode.
- These proposed IIS would have the following features which would uniquely distinguish them from the other MSDE training institutions:

1. State-of-art skill centre uniquely conceptualized to bring in best in class infrastructure and facilities to meet the aspirations of students, who directly enter the skill learning domain after class X/XII (like ITI / diploma courses) instead of the traditionally preferred pathway of higher education.
2. Strong industry/employer connect through collaboration with both public and private sector leading industry, both for supporting latest training facilities in these institutes and also opportunities for on-the-job trainings in their industries for students of these institutes.
3. Modern training methodology with extensive use of tools such as simulators, virtual learning and augmented learning platforms.
4. Autonomy in governance to enable innovation & promote seamless adoption of modern curricula, emerging technologies & learning methodologies.
5. Promote delivery of qualifications in modular fashion with clear and multiple entry-exit pathways.
6. Promote apprenticeship-embedded courses by leveraging better industry connect.
7. Offer higher order qualifications leading up to certificates, diplomas, advanced diplomas, and even degrees in conjunction with Universities.

POCSO

As per National Crimes Record Bureau (NCRB), the latest data regarding the total number of sexual assault, aggravated sexual assault, penetrative and aggravated penetrative assault and child pornography cases registered under Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 and total number of cases decided pertains to year 2017.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, 2012 has adequate provisions ensuring speedy trial under the Act.
- **Section 28** of the POCSO Act 2012 provides for establishment of Special Courts for the purpose of providing speedy trial.
- Further, **Section 35** of the POCSO Act provides that the evidence of the child shall be recorded within a period of thirty days of the Special Court taking cognizance of the offence and reasons for delay, if any, shall be recorded by the Special Court. Further, **Section 35** also lays down that the Special Court shall complete the trial, as far as possible, within a period of one year from the date of taking cognizance of the offence.
- However, Police and Public Order are State subjects under the Seventh Schedule to the Constitution of India. The responsibilities to maintain law and order, protection of life and property of the citizens including children, rest primarily with the respective State Governments and UT Administration.
- A scheme namely **Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children (CCPWC)** has been approved under which an online cybercrime reporting portal has been launched on 20th September, 2018 to enable public to report complaints pertaining to child pornography/ child sexual abuse material, rape/gang rape imageries or sexually explicit content.

NATIONAL NUTRITION MISSION

Government is implementing the POSHAN Abhiyan since 18th December, 2017 to address the problem of malnutrition in the country.

HIGHLIGHTS

POSHAN Abhiyaan (National Nutrition Mission) is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD), Government of India, which ensures convergence with various programmes i.e., Anganwadi Services, Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG) of MWCD Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY), National Health Mission (NHM), Swachh-Bharat Mission, Public Distribution System (PDS), Department Food & Public Distribution, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) and Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The goals of NNM are to achieve improvement in nutritional status of Children from 0-6 years, Adolescent Girls, Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers in a time bound manner during the next three years beginning 2017-18.
- The National Nutrition Mission (NNM) has been set up with a three years budget of Rs.9046.17 crore commencing from 2017-18.
- The programme through the targets will strive to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia and low birth weight babies.

- NNM targets to reduce stunting, under- nutrition, anaemia (among young children, women and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight by 2%, 2%, 3% and 2% per annum respectively.
- Although the target to reduce Stunting is atleast 2% p.a., Mission would strive to achieve reduction in Stunting from 38.4% (NFHS-4) to 25% by 2022 (Mission 25 by 2022).
- All the States and districts will be covered in a phased manner i.e. 315 districts in 2017-18, 235 districts in 2018-19 and remaining districts in 2019-20.

BHARATIYA POSHAN KRISHI KOSH

Ministry of Women and Child Development along with Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) announced the Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh (BPKK) in New Delhi on 18th November, 2019.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Bhartiya Poshan Krishi Kosh” project has two components – Development of a Food Atlas and Documentation of promising practices for Jan-Andolan for POSHAN Abhiyaan.
- The Agro-Food Atlas is to act as a repository of diverse crops across 127 agro-climatic zones of the country having three parts- crops currently being grown, agro-ecological conditions (soil, organic carbon content, ground water availability etc) and guidance on how a greater diversity of crops could be encouraged in a particular district or block to promote dietary diversity and nutrition.
- The project includes diverse data sources like National Sample Survey, Agri-Census, Soil Health Cards, ISRO’s Advanced Wide Field Sensor (AWiFS) and National Aeronautics and Space Administration’s (NASA’s) Moderate Resolution Imaging Spectro-Radio meter.
- The project also documents social, behavioural and cultural practices that promote and reinforce healthy dietary behaviours.
- Identification of promising practices with the help of a multi-disciplinary group of experts and developments of a tool kit to disseminate best strategies for Social and Behavioural Change Communication, specific to population groups in those regions is also a part of it.
- A Technical Support Unit has been set-up under NITI Aayog which undertakes/conducts/ facilitates regular monitoring and evaluation of the National Nutrition Mission to assess the impact of the programme.
- A National Council on India’s Nutritional Challenges under the Chairmanship of Vice-Chairman NITI Aayog has been constituted to provide policy direction review and effective coordination and convergence between Ministries which have a sectoral responsibility for the challenge of nutrition.

PRADHAN MANTRI MATRU VANDANA YOJANA

The maternity benefits under Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) are available to the eligible beneficiaries for first living child. Normally, the first pregnancy of a woman exposes her to new kinds of challenges and stress factors.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY) is a Maternity Benefit Programme that is implemented in all the districts of the country in accordance with the provision of the National Food Security Act, 2013.

OBJECTIVES

- Providing partial compensation for the wage loss in terms of cash incentive s so that the woman can take adequate rest before and after delivery of the first living child.
- The cash incentive provided would lead to improved health seeking behaviour amongst the Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers (PW& LM).

TARGET BENEFICIARIES

- All Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers, excluding PW&LM who are in regular employment with the Central Government or the State Governments or PSUs or those who are in receipt of similar benefits under any law for the time being in force.
- All eligible Pregnant Women and Lactating Mothers who have their pregnancy on or after 01.01.2017 for first child in family.
- The date and stage of pregnancy for a beneficiary would be counted with respect to her LMP date as mentioned in the MCP card.
- Case of Miscarriage/Still Birth:
 1. A beneficiary is eligible to receive benefits under the scheme only once.

2. In case of miscarriage/still birth, the beneficiary would be eligible to claim the remaining instalment(s) in event of any future pregnancy.
 3. Thus, after receiving the 1st instalment, if the beneficiary has a miscarriage, she would only be eligible for receiving 2nd and 3rd instalment in event of future pregnancy subject to fulfilment of eligibility criterion and conditionalities of the scheme. Similarly, if the beneficiary has a miscarriage or still birth after receiving 1st and 2nd instalments, she would only be eligible for receiving 3rd instalment in event of future pregnancy subject to fulfilment of eligibility criterion and conditionalities of the scheme.
- **Case of Infant Mortality:** A beneficiary is eligible to receive benefits under the scheme only once. That is, in case of infant mortality, she will not be eligible for claiming benefits under the scheme, if she has already received all the instalments of the maternity benefit under PMMVY earlier.
 - Pregnant and Lactating AWWs/ AWHs/ ASHA may also avail the benefits under the PMMVY subject to fulfilment of scheme conditionalities.

BENEFITS UNDER PMMVY

- Cash incentive of Rs 5000 in three instalments i.e. first instalment of Rs 1000/- on early registration of pregnancy at the Anganwadi Centre (AWC) / approved Health facility as may be identified by the respective administering State / UT, second instalment of Rs 2000/- after six months of pregnancy on receiving at least one ante-natal check-up (ANC) and third instalment of Rs 2000/- after child birth is registered and the child has received the first cycle of BCG, OPV, DPT and Hepatitis - B, or its equivalent/ substitute.
- The eligible beneficiaries would receive the incentive given under the Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) for Institutional delivery and the incentive received under JSY would be accounted towards maternity benefits so that on an average a woman gets Rs 6000 / -.

EXERCISE HAND IN HAND 2019

The Eighth Edition of India China joint training exercise 'Hand-in-Hand-2019' commenced at Joint Training Node, Umroi, Meghalaya on 07 December 2019.

The exercise aims to enrich both the contingents from each other's experience in counter - terrorism operations. Besides counter-terrorism operations, discussions on Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief (HADR) operations will also be conducted as part of the exercise.

EXERCISE MILAN

MILAN 2020 is aimed to enhance professional interaction between friendly foreign navies and learn from each other's strengths and best practices in the maritime domain.

- MILAN series of biennial a multilateral naval exercise which commenced in 1995, was conducted at Andaman and Nicobar Command (ANC) until last year, is being conducted for the first time on the mainland at ENC with increased scope and complexity of the Exercise.
- Milan is a multilateral naval exercise hosted by the Indian Navy under the aegis of the Andaman and Nicobar Command. The biennial event is held in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, and features professional exercises and seminars, social events and sporting fixtures between participating nations.
- Milan was first held in 1995. Apart from the Indian Navy, the navies of Indonesia, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand participated in the inaugural edition.
- Seventeen nations, including India, participated in Milan 2014 making it the biggest edition of the event ever.
- The most recent edition of Milan was held at Port Blair from 6-13 March 2018.
- Sixteen foreign nations participated in the event.

'DEF CONNECT 2019'

The Ministry of Defence had organised the inaugural session of 'Def Connect 2019' to showcase the accomplishments of the Innovation for Defence Excellence (iDEX) initiative in New Delhi.

iDEX portal and Defence India Start-up Challenge (DISC)-III was also launched.

INNOVATION FOR DEFENCE ECOSYSTEM (IDEX)

- iDEX, launched in 2018, is an ecosystem to foster innovation & technology development in Defence and Aerospace by engaging innovators & entrepreneurs to deliver technologically advanced solutions for modernizing Indian Military.
- Core Objectives:

1. Indigenization: Rapid development of new, indigenized and innovative technology.
 2. Innovation: Creates a culture of engagement with innovative startups to encourage co-creation.
- It provides funding/grants to MSMEs, start-ups, individual innovator, R&D institutes and academia to carry out research and development.
 - iDEX is funded and managed by “Defence Innovation Organisation”.
 - iDEX portal was launched to provide wider publicity and better visibility of iDEX activities and enable more efficient running of future challenges through better information management.

DEFENCE INNOVATION ORGANISATION (DIO)

- DIO is a not for profit organisation formed under section 8 of the Companies Act 2013.
- It is funded by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) and Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL).
- It provides high level policy guidance to iDEX.

DEFENCE INDIA STARTUP CHALLENGE (DISC)

- DISC aimed at supporting Startups/MSMEs/Innovators to create prototypes and/or commercialize products/solutions in the area of National Defence and Security.
- It has been launched by the Ministry of Defence in partnership with Atal Innovation Mission.
- The vision of the DISC is two-fold:
 1. Prototyping: Help create functional prototypes of products/technologies relevant for national security, and spur fast-moving innovation in Indian defence sector.
 2. Commercialization: Help new tech products/technologies find a market and early customer in the form of the Indian Defence Establishment.
- Under DISC-III, three challenges from the ARMY, Navy and Air Force were thrown open to prospective start-ups.
- Under the program, the start-ups, Indian companies and individual innovators (includes research & academic institutions) can participate.

8TH SESSION OF ITPGRFA

8TH session of the Governing Body of International Treaty of Plant Genetic Resources for Food and Agriculture (ITPGRFA), held at Rome, Italy.

- The Governing Body sessions are biennial and this year it is being held from 11th to 16th November with participation of delegates from 146 countries, international organizations, civil societies, farmers’ organizations, FAO officials and UN organizations.
- ITPGRFA also known as Seed Treaty, is a comprehensive international agreement for ensuring food security through the conservation, exchange and sustainable use of the world's plant genetic resources for food and agriculture (PGRFA), as well as the fair and equitable benefit sharing arising from its use.
- It also recognizes farmers' rights, subject to national laws.

PROTECTION OF PLANT VARIETIES AND FARMERS’ RIGHTS (PPV&FR) ACT

RIGHTS UNDER THE ACT

- **Breeders’ Rights:** Breeders will have exclusive rights to produce, sell, market, distribute, import or export the protected variety. Breeder can appoint agent/ licensee and may exercise for civil remedy in case of infringement of rights.
- **Researchers’ Rights:** Researcher can use any of the registered variety under the Act for conducting experiment or research. This includes the use of a variety as an initial source of variety for the purpose of developing another variety but repeated use needs prior permission of the registered breeder.
- **Farmers' Rights**
 1. A farmer who has evolved or developed a new variety is entitled for registration and protection in like manner as a breeder of a variety.
 2. Farmers variety can also be registered as an extant variety.
 3. A farmer can save, use, sow, re-sow, exchange, share or sell his farm produce including seed of a variety protected under the PPV&FR Act, 2001 in the same manner as he was entitled before the coming into force of this Act provided farmer shall not be entitled to sell branded seed of a variety protected under the PPV&FR Act, 2001.
 4. Farmers are eligible for recognition and rewards for the conservation of Plant Genetic Resources of land races and wild relatives of economic plants.

5. There is also a provision for compensation to the farmers for non-performance of variety under Section 39 (2) of the Act, 2001.
6. Farmer shall not be liable to pay any fee in any proceeding before the Authority or Registrar or the Tribunal or the High Court under the Act.

“SWACHH – NIRMAL TAT ABHIYAAN”

To strive to make our beaches clean and create awareness amongst citizens about the importance of coastal ecosystems, the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC) undertook a mass cleanliness-cum-awareness drive in 50 identified beaches under the “Swachh – Nirmal Tat Abhiyaan”.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The identified beaches are in 10 coastal States/Union Territories (UTs) namely Gujarat, Daman & Diu, Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha.
- The beaches have been identified after the consultation with the States/UTs.
- The cleaning drives in all beaches are being undertaken, involving school/college students of Eco-clubs, district administration, institutions, volunteers, local communities and other stakeholders.
- State Nodal Agencies for the Eco-clubs will be facilitating the week long intensive cleanliness drive in all 10 States/UTs. Nodal teachers from the Eco-clubs will be present at the sites during the entire cleanliness drive.
- MoEF&CC officials have also been deputed to monitor the implementation of the drive.
- For beach cleaning activities which will be a duration of two hours on daily basis, a minimum of one Kilometre stretch of the beach shall be identified.
- Beach sand cleaning machines shall also be deployed at about identified 15 beaches. Thereafter collected waste will be processed as per extant Waste Management Rules, 2016.
- Environment Education Division of the Ministry and Society of Integrated Coastal Management (SICOM) under the aegis of this Ministry will be responsible for the overall coordination for the drive in 50 beaches.
- Respective State Governments and Central Ministries will also be actively participating in the beach cleaning drives.
- The Ministry has also decided that on completion of the drive, best three beaches will be suitably awarded along with a Certificate of Appreciation for all the participating Eco-clubs.

6TH WORLD CONGRESS ON RURAL AND AGRICULTURAL FINANCE

The Government of India inaugurated the 6th World Congress on Rural and Agriculture Finance jointly organised by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and Asia - Pacific Rural Agricultural and Credit Association (APRACA).

APRACA

- The establishment of a Regional Association that promotes cooperation and facilitates mutual exchange of information and expertise in the field of rural finance was first proposed at the Regional Seminar on Agricultural Credit for Small Farmers, sponsored by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the Pacific in October 1974.
- As of 30 April 2019, a total of 86 institutions in 24 countries in the Asia-Pacific Region are affiliated with the APRACA as its members.
- Over the years it has developed a repository of knowledge in managing and serving rural financial institutions, financial inclusion and to help avert financial risks and improve efficiency.
- The General Secretariat of APRACA was established at the FAO Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (FAO-RAP) premises in Bangkok, Thailand.

GOLDEN LEAF AWARD 2019

Tobacco Board of India has been awarded the Golden Leaf Award in the Most Impressive Public Service Initiative category for the year 2019, for its efforts to initiate various sustainability (green) initiatives in Flue-Cured Virginia (FCV) tobacco cultivation in India. Executive Director of Tobacco Board, K. Sunitha, received the award at Tab Expo 2019 event in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

- The Golden Leaf Awards were created to recognize professional excellence and dedication in the tobacco industry by Tobacco Reporter, an international magazine in the year 2006.

- The Golden Leaf Award is granted every year to companies that have achieved outstanding performance in five categories, namely:
 - 1) Most impressive public service initiative
 - 2) Most committed to quality
 - 3) Most exciting newcomer to the industry
 - 4) Most promising new product introduction
 - 5) Most outstanding service to the industry
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TOBACCO BOARD OF INDIA

- Tobacco Board of India is a statutory body established under Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- Due to various efforts taken by the tobacco board, India is now world's fourth largest producer of FCV tobacco.
- The main functions of the Board include
 1. Regulating the production and curing of Virginia tobacco.
 2. Implementation activities for improving the yields and quality of tobacco.
 3. Facilitating sale of tobacco through e-auctions.
 4. Undertaking various grower welfare measures.
 5. Export promotion of tobacco and tobacco products.

40TH UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE

Union HRD Minister held bilateral talks with Education Ministers of Norway, Bangladesh, Mexico, Thailand, UAE and Malaysia in Paris on 13th November, 2019. The meetings took place on the side lines of 40th UNESCO General Conference held in Paris.

PROGRAMME DISCUSSED

GIAN PROGRAMME

- Ministry/Department: Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- GIAN stands for Global Initiative of Academic Networks.

Scheme:

- Programme in Higher Education.
- Aimed at tapping the talent pool of scientists and entrepreneurs, internationally to encourage their engagement with the institutes of Higher Education in India so as to augment the country's existing academic resources, accelerate the pace of quality reform, and elevate India's scientific and technological capacity to global excellence.
- It enables interaction of students and faculty with the best academic and industry experts from all over the world and also share their experiences and expertise to motivate people to work on Indian problems
- It is a system of Guest Lectures by internationally and nationally renowned experts targeted towards a comprehensive Faculty Development Programme not only for new IITs, IIMs, IISERs but also other institutions in the country.

SWAYAM PRABHA & SWAYAM PORTAL

- SWAYAM Prabha is an initiative of the Ministry of Human Resources Development to provide 32 High Quality Educational Channels through DTH (Direct to Home) across the length and breadth of the country on 24X7 basis.
- It has curriculum-based course content covering diverse disciplines. This is primarily aimed at making quality learning resources accessible to remote areas where internet availability is still a challenge.
- The DTH channels are using the GSAT-15 satellite for programme telecasts.

Scope of the channels

- The SWAYAM PRABHA has new content everyday for at least (4) hours which would be repeated 5 more times in a day, allowing the students to choose the time of their convenience. The channels are uplinked from BISAG, Gandhinagar. The contents are provided by NPTEL, IITs, UGC, CEC, IGNOU, NCERT and NIOS. The INFLIBNET Centre maintains the web portal.
- The DTH Channels covers the following:
 1. **Higher Education:** Curriculum-based course contents at post-graduate and under-graduate level covering diverse disciplines such as arts, science, commerce, performing arts, social sciences and humanities,

engineering, technology, law, medicine, agriculture, etc. All courses would be certification-ready in their detailed offering through SWAYAM, the platform being developed for offering MOOCs courses.

2. **School education (9-12 levels):** modules for teacher's training as well as teaching and learning aids for children of India to help them understand the subjects better and also help them in preparing for competitive examinations for admissions to professional degree programmes.
3. Curriculum-based courses that can meet the needs of life-long learners of Indian citizens in India and abroad.
4. Assist students (class 11th & 12th) prepare for competitive exams.

DUO INDIA PROGRAMME

- DUO-India Fellowship Programme is established in 2019 with the aim of promoting exchange of people between India and European countries on a balanced and permanent basis.
- For this program, only such institutes which are part of the Joint Research Projects under Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) are eligible to participate.
- DUO-India aims to fund every year, 100 student-pairs for exchanges for one semester, starting from 2020 onwards aiming to provide mobility between Indian and European institutes.
- In this respect, DUO-India requires that a PAIR (two persons) of students be exchanged, and they should be from any of the collaborating institutes (both Indian and European) under SPARC projects.
- As of now, 14 European countries namely Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and UK are part of SPARC programme.

GLOBAL COOLING PRIZE

Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare, announced the finalists of the 'Global Cooling Prize' (GCP) at an Award Ceremony, being organized by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) under the Mission Innovation (MI) programme.

- GCP has received 139 applications from 31 countries around the globe from innovators, start-ups, research institutes, universities, and key AC industry manufacturers.
- The largest number of 45 applications were received from India. The seven finalists will be awarded US \$200,000 to develop two prototypes for real field testing in India.
- This prize is expected to stimulate innovation in cooling technology that can be accessed by millions of people in India initially and around the world eventually.

MISSION INNOVATION (MI) is a global initiative of 24 countries and the European Union to accelerate global clean energy innovation.

- MI identified "Affordable Heating and Cooling of Building Innovation Challenge" as one of the seven innovation challenges.
- India agreed to its engagement as MI Member for the Mission Innovation Challenge # 7: Affordable Heating and Cooling Challenge.
- The objective of the MI Challenge #7 is to make low carbon heating and cooling affordable for everyone.

GLOBAL COOLING PRIZE

- Department of Science & Technology (DST) in partnership with BEE & MoEF&CC has launched GCP jointly with Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI), an independent non-profit research institute and think tank founded in 1982 in the US, to spur development of residential cooling solution that has drastically (upto five times) less climate impact than today's standard products especially contextualized to Indian context.
- GCP aims to spur development of a residential cooling solution that has at least five times (5x) less climate impact than today's standard products.

SISSERI RIVER BRIDGE

Recently, the Defence Minister inaugurated the Sisseri River Bridge located at lower Dibang Valley in Arunachal Pradesh. The 200m long bridge provides connectivity between Dibang Valley and Siang.

- The bridge was constructed by 'Project Brahmanak' of Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
- There are four projects of BRO in Arunachal Pradesh namely Vartak, Arunank, Brahmanak, and Udayak to not only meet the strategic requirement of India but also contribute to the socio-economic development of the region.
- This bridge is strategically important from the military viewpoint and will be a part of Trans Arunachal Highway.

- The Trans-Arunachal Highway was ₹10,000-crore two-lane highway project that aimed to connect Tawang in the west to Kanubari in the east of Arunachal Pradesh. It was conceived in 2008.
- The Government has adopted the Border Area Development Programme (BADP) for infrastructural upgradation of the area, necessary for the security of the North-East and the entire country.

BORDER AREA DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

- BADP was started in the year 1986-87 for balanced development of border areas of states bordering Pakistan, namely, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Gujarat, and Rajasthan.
- It was subsequently extended to all the land borders.
- The programme is administered by the Department of Border Management of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).
- States are provided a 100% non-lapsable Special Central Assistance fund under BADP to meet the special developmental needs and well-being of the people living in remote and inaccessible areas situated near the international border.
- The programme was amended in 2015 to provide the provision for third party inspection and quality control mechanism under MHA for random inspections of the BADP schemes.

SAANS CAMPAIGN

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched a campaign in Gujarat named Social Awareness and Action to Neutralise Pneumonia Successfully (SAANS).

- The aim is to reduce child mortality due to pneumonia, which contributes to around 15% of deaths of children under the age of five annually.
- Key Features
 1. To mobilise people to protect children from pneumonia, and train health personnel and other stakeholders to provide prioritised treatment to control the disease.
 2. A child suffering from pneumonia will be treated with a pre-referral dose of antibiotic amoxicillin by Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers.
 3. Pulse Oximeter (device to monitor oxygen saturation) will be used at the Health and Wellness Centre for identification of low oxygen levels in the blood of child and if required, the child can be treated by the use of oxygen cylinders.
 4. A mass awareness campaign will be launched about the effective solutions for pneumonia prevention like breastfeeding, age-appropriate complementary feeding and immunization etc.

PNEUMONIA

- Pneumonia is an infection that inflames the air sacs (alveoli) in one or both lungs. The air sacs may fill up with fluid or pus, causing symptoms such as a cough, fever, chills and trouble breathing.
- Agents: Many germs can cause pneumonia. The most common are bacteria and viruses in the air that humans breathe.
- It is preventable through vaccination.
- Vulnerable Population: Infants and young children, people older than age 65, and people with weak immune systems.
- The prevalence rate among Infants in India: Under-five mortality rate in the country is 37 per 1000 live births, of which 5.3 deaths are caused due to pneumonia.

Step Taken by India:

- The government aims to achieve a target of reducing pneumonia deaths among children to less than three per 1,000 live births by 2025.
- In 2014, India launched 'Integrated Action Plan for Prevention and Control of Pneumonia and Diarrhoea (IAPPD)' to undertake collaborative efforts towards prevention of diarrhoea and Pneumonia related under-five deaths.

KPSC PLENARY 2019

The Plenary meeting of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) is being hosted by India, the present Kimberley Process (KP) Chair, in New Delhi.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Kimberley Process is a joint initiative involving Government, International Diamond Industry and Civil Society to stem the flow of Conflict Diamonds. “Conflict Diamonds” means rough diamonds used by rebel movements or their allies to finance conflict aimed at undermining legitimate governments.
- It is also described in United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions.
- In 1998, certain rebel movements in Africa (Sierra Leone, Angola, D.R. of Congo, Liberia) were selling, among other things, illegally obtained diamonds – known as conflict diamonds – to fund their wars against legitimate governments.
- With a view to find ways to stop trade in conflict diamonds, world’s diamond industry, United Nations, Governments and leading NGOs came together and in November 2002 at Interlaken, where the final draft of the Kimberley Process measures were ratified by more than fifty nations.
- The KPCS came into effect from 1st January, 2003 and evolved into an effective mechanism for stopping the trade in conflict diamonds.
- At present, KPCS has 55 members representing 82 countries including EU with 28 members.
- The Kimberley Process is chaired, on a rotating basis, by participating countries. KP Vice-Chair is generally elected by KP Plenary each year who becomes the Chair in the next year. India is the current Chair of KPCS with Russian Federation as Vice Chair for the year 2019.

EXERCISE ZA’IR-AL-BAHR (ROAR OF THE SEA)

Indian Navy Guided Missile Stealth Frigate INS Trikand and Patrol Aircraft P8-I arrived at Doha for the inaugural edition of the Bilateral Maritime Exercise Za’ir-Al-Bahr (Roar of the Sea) being conducted between the Indian Navy and Qatari Emiri Naval Forces.

- Za’ir-Al-Bahr 2019 would strengthen cooperation and enhance interoperability between the two navies.
- The exercise helps to strengthen cooperation and enhance interoperability between the two navies
- It majorly focuses on the fight against terrorism, maritime piracy, and maritime security
- The participation of INS Trikand and Patrol Aircraft P8-I will be noteworthy during exercise.
- The P8-I Maritime Patrol Aircraft incorporates the latest technology for maritime surveillance.

SARDAR PATEL NATIONAL UNITY AWARD 2020

Government of India has instituted the highest civilian award in the field of contribution to the unity and integrity of India, in the name of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

- The Award seeks to recognize notable and inspiring contributions to promote the cause of national unity and integrity and to reinforce the value of a strong and united India.
- All citizens, without distinction of religion, race caste, gender place of birth, age or occupation, and any institution/organization would be eligible for the Award.
- Any Indian national or institution or organization based in India would be able to nominate an individual for consideration for this Award.
- Individual may also nominate themselves. State Governments, UT Administrations and Ministries of Government of India may also send nominations.

NISHTHA PROGRAMME

The Department of School Education and Literacy has launched a National Mission to improve learning outcomes at the Elementary level through an Integrated Teacher Training Programme called NISHTHA – National Initiative for School Heads’ and Teachers’ Holistic Advancement under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Samagra Shiksha in 2019-20.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The aim of this training is to motivate and equip teachers to encourage and foster critical thinking in students, handle diverse situations and act as first level counsellors.
- They will be oriented on and develop their skills on various aspects related to Learning Outcomes.
- National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE) has been notified as an Academic Authority under Section 23(1) of the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education (RTE) Act, 2009 to lay down the minimum qualifications required for a person to be appointed as a teacher.

- Accordingly, the NCTE has notified the minimum qualifications vide notification dated 25th August, 2010 as amended from time to time.
- This massive capacity building programme has been integrated with technology to ensure smooth facilitation, availability of digital content and technology enabled teaching methods to support the teachers.
- A Mobile App and Learning Management System (LMS) have been developed by NCERT.
- LMS is being used for registration of Resource Persons and Teachers, dissemination of resources, training gap and impact analysis, monitoring, mentoring and measuring the progress online.

NATIONAL POLICY ON BIOFUELS

Government has notified the new National Policy on Biofuels – 2018. The salient features of the Policy are as under:

- Categorization of biofuels as “Basic Biofuels” and “Advanced Biofuels”.
- Incentives, off-take assurance and viability gap funding for advanced biofuels.
- Allowing B-molasses, sugarcane juice, damaged food grains and surplus food grains for ethanol production.
- Setting up of supply chain mechanisms for biodiesel production from non-edible oilseeds, Used Cooking Oil, short gestation crops.
- Synergy of efforts by defining roles and responsibilities of all the concerned Ministries/Departments with respect to biofuels.

BACKGROUND

- In line with National Policy on Biofuels, Government has approved “**Pradhan Mantri JI-VAN (Jaiv Indhan-Vatavaran Anukool Fasal Awashesh Nivaran) Yojana**” for providing financial support to Integrated Bio-Ethanol Projects using lignocellulosic biomass & other renewable feedstock for the period 2018-19 to 2023-24.
- **Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT)** scheme envisages establishing 5000 Compressed Bio Gas (CBG) plants across the country by 2023. Under this scheme, Oil Public Sector Undertakings have invited Expression of Interest (EoI) for procuring CBG from potential entrepreneurs and has offered an assured price for off take of CBG.
- The Government through Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) is implementing the **Ethanol Blended Petrol (EBP) programme** under which, OMCs sell ethanol blended petrol with percentage of ethanol upto 10% subject to its availability. OMCs procure ethanol for blending in petrol.

TARGET OLYMPIC PODIUM SCHEME

Target Olympic Podium (TOP) Scheme was formulated in July 2014 under overall ambit of National Sports Development Fund (NSDF).

- **AIM:** To identify, groom and prepare potential medal prospects for Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- High priority category has been created to put focus on and incentivize those sports disciplines played in the Olympics in which India has won medals in the last conducted Asian Games as well as Commonwealth Games or in which India has good chance of winning medals in Olympics.
- Presently, nine sports disciplines viz., (i) Athletics, (ii) Badminton (iii) Hockey (iv) Shooting (v) Tennis (vi) Weightlifting (vii) Wrestling, (viii) Archery and (ix) Boxing have been categorised as ‘High Priority’.
- Under the Scheme of Assistance to National Sports Federations (NSFs), assistance is also provided to sports disciplines other than High Priority Sports disciplines.
- Assistance is given for participation in international sporting events, conduct of international events in India, conduct of National Championships and coaching camps.
- Further, identification and nurturing of identified talented sportspersons belonging to various sports disciplines is done under the promotional schemes of **Sports Authority of India and Khelo India Scheme**.

AYUSH PROJECTS

Ministry of AYUSH in collaboration with Ministry of Health & Family Welfare has implemented a project viz Integration of AYUSH (Ayurveda) with National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardio-vascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS) program in the identified Districts.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS), under Ministry of AYUSH has developed AYUSH-82, a formulation through extensive research methodologies and the same has been commercialised for further benefit of public at large.
- CCRAS has developed AYUSH-QOL-2C for improving Quality of life of breast & cervical cancer patients in collaboration with All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi and St. Jones Medical College (Bengaluru).
- In addition to this, CCRAS has validated 82 classical Ayurvedic formulations and 11 new drugs on more than 32 diseases conditions, lifestyle diseases such as Diabetes, Bronchial Asthma, Hypertension, Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS), Iron deficiency anaemic, Osteoarthritis, Rheumatoid arthritis, Haemorrhoids, Computer vision Syndrome, Obesity etc.

PM KISAN MAAN DHAN YOJANA

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY) is an old age pension scheme for all land holding Small and Marginal Farmers (SMFs) in the country.

HIGHLIGHTS

- It is voluntary and contributory for farmers in the entry age group of 18 to 40 years and a monthly pension of Rs. 3000/- will be provided to them on attaining the age of 60 years.
- The farmers will have to make a monthly contribution of Rs.55 to Rs.200, depending on their age of entry, in the Pension Fund till they reach the retirement date i.e. the age of 60 years.
- The farmers will have to make a monthly contribution of Rs.55 to Rs.200, depending on their age of entry, in the Pension Fund till they reach the retirement date i.e. the age of 60 years.
- The monthly contributions will fall due on the same day every month as enrolment date. The beneficiaries may also choose an option to pay their contributions on quarterly, 4-monthly or half-yearly basis. Such contributions will fall due on the same day of such period as the date of enrolment.
- The spouse is also eligible to get a separate pension of Rs.3000/- upon making separate contributions to the Fund.
- The Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) shall be the Pension Fund Manager and responsible for Pension pay out.
- In case of death of the farmer before retirement date, the spouse may continue in the scheme by paying the remaining contributions till the remaining age of the deceased farmer.
- If the spouse does not wish to continue, the total contribution made by the farmer along with interest will be paid to the spouse. If there is no spouse, then total contribution along with interest will be paid to the nominee.]If the farmer dies after the retirement date, the spouse will receive 50% of the pension as Family Pension. After the death of both the farmer and the spouse, the accumulated corpus shall be credited back to the Pension Fund.
- The beneficiaries may opt voluntarily to exit the Scheme after a minimum period of 5 years of regular contributions. On exit, their entire contribution shall be returned by LIC with an interest equivalent to prevailing saving bank rates.
- The farmers, who are also beneficiaries of PM-Kisan Scheme, will have the option to allow their contribution debited from the benefit of that Scheme directly.
- In case of default in making regular contributions, the beneficiaries are allowed to regularize the contributions by paying the outstanding dues along with prescribed interest. Until 1 month from first unpaid contribution, no late fee would be charged. Three payment cycles demand would be raised for payment of contribution without any interest.

PARAMPARAGAT KRISHI VIKAS YOJANA (PKVY)

Government has been promoting organic farming under the dedicated scheme of Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY) which encourages all kinds of chemical free farming systems including Zero budget Natural Farming.

- Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana” is an elaborated component of Soil Health Management (SHM) of major project National Mission of Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA).
- Under PKVY Organic farming is promoted through adoption of organic village by cluster approach and PGS certification.

The Scheme envisages:

- Promotion of commercial organic production through certified organic farming.

- The produce will be pesticide residue free and will contribute to improve the health of consumer.
- It will raise farmer's income and create potential market for traders.
- It will motivate the farmers for natural resource mobilization for input production.

Programme implementation

- Groups of farmers would be motivated to take up organic farming under Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana (PKVY).
- Fifty or more farmers will form a cluster having 50 acres land to take up the organic farming under the scheme. In this way during three years 10,000 clusters will be formed covering 5.0 lakh acre area under organic farming.
- There will be no liability on the farmers for expenditure on certification.
- Every farmer will be provided Rs. 20,000 per acre in three years for seed to harvesting of crops and to transport produce to the market.
- Organic farming will be promoted by using traditional resources and the organic products will be linked with the market.
- It will increase domestic production and certification of organic produce by involving farmers

FARMERS CLUBS

- Farmers' Clubs (FCs) promoted by National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) are grass root level informal fora organized by the rural branches of banks, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), etc.
- The programme is being implemented for the mutual benefit of the banks and the farmers.
- The major objective is to promote "Development through credit, technology transfer, awareness and capacity building" of the farmers.
- The clubs are beneficial for banks as well as line departments of the State Government for convergence of the programmes / schemes sponsored / implemented by them.

JANSANKHYA STHIRATA KOSH

Jansankhya SthirataKosh (JSK), an autonomous body under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, implemented the following schemes:

1. Prerna Scheme (for delaying marriage, childbirth and spacing).
2. Santushti Scheme (Public Private Partnership for sterilization services).
3. National Helpline (for information on family planning).

The JSK has been discontinued on 08/02/2019 vide the cabinet decision on 07.02.2018 and various schemes for population control are being supported under National Health Mission;

STEPS BEING TAKEN BY THE GOVERNMENT TO CONTROL POPULATION GROWTH:

1. Mission ParivarVikas- The Government has launched Mission Parivar Vikas for substantially increasing access to contraceptives and family planning services in 146 high fertility districts with Total Fertility Rate (TFR) of 3 and above in seven high focus states. These districts are from the states of Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Assam that itself constitutes 44% of the country's population.
2. New Contraceptive Choices- New contraceptives viz. Injectable contraceptive and Cent chroman have been added to the existing basket of choices. A new method of IUCD insertion immediately after delivery i.e. post-partum IUCD (PPIUCD) has been introduced.
3. Redesigned Contraceptive Packaging - The packaging for Condoms, OCPs and ECPs has now been improved and redesigned so as to increase the demand for these commodities.
4. Compensation scheme for sterilization acceptors - Under the scheme MoHFW provides compensation for loss of wages to the beneficiary and also to the service provider (& team) for conducting sterilizations.

5. Clinical Outreach Teams (COT) Scheme - The scheme has been launched in 146 Mission Parivar Vikas districts for providing Family planning services through mobile teams from accredited organizations in far-flung, underserved and geographically difficult areas.
6. Scheme for Home delivery of contraceptives by ASHAs at doorstep of beneficiaries.
7. Scheme for ASHAs to Ensure spacing in births.
8. Scheme for provision of Pregnancy Testing Kits in the drug kits of ASHAs for use in communities.
9. Family Planning Logistic Management and Information System (FP-LMIS): A dedicated software to ensure smooth forecasting, procurement and distribution of family planning commodities across all the levels of health facilities.
10. National Family Planning Indemnity Scheme (NFPIS) under which clients are insured in the eventualities of death, complication and failure following sterilization.
11. Ensuring quality of care in Family Planning services by establishing Quality Assurance Committees in all states and districts.
12. Appointment of dedicated RMNCH+A counsellor at high case load facilities.

MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS INITIATIVES

The Government is supporting implementation of the District Mental Health Programme (DMHP) under NMHP in 655 districts of the country for early detection, management and treatment of mental disorders/illnesses.

- The Government of India has launched the National Mental Health Programme (NMHP) in 1982, keeping in view the heavy burden of mental illness in the community, and the absolute inadequacy of mental health care infrastructure in the country to deal with it.
- NMHP has 3 components:
 1. Treatment of Mentally ill.
 2. Rehabilitation.
 3. Prevention and promotion of positive mental health.

Aims

- Prevention and treatment of mental and neurological disorders and their associated disabilities.
- Use of mental health technology to improve general health services.
- Application of mental health principles in total national development to improve quality of life.

FAME INDIA SCHEME

The Union cabinet has approved the proposal for implementation of 'Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India Phase II (FAME India Phase II)' scheme for promotion of Electric Mobility in the country.

- The scheme with total outlay of Rs 10000 Crores over the period of three years (2019-20 to 2021-22) will be implemented with effect from 1st April 2019.
- This scheme is the expanded version of the present scheme titled 'FAME India1' which was launched on 1st April 2015, with total outlay of Rs. 895 crores.

OBJECTIVES

- Encourage Faster adoption of Electric and hybrid vehicle by way of offering upfront Incentive on purchase of Electric vehicles.
- Establish a necessary charging Infrastructure for electric vehicles.
- The scheme will help in addressing the issue of environmental pollution and fuel security.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Emphasis on electrification of the public transportation that includes shared transport.

- In 3-Wheel (W) and 4-Wheel (W) segment incentives will be applicable mainly to vehicles used for public transport or registered for commercial purposes.
- In the 2-Wheel (W) segment, the focus will be on the private vehicles.
- To encourage advance technologies, the benefits of incentives, will be extended to only those vehicles which are fitted with advance battery like a Lithium Ion battery and other new technology batteries.
- The scheme proposes for establishment of charging infrastructure, whereby about 2700 charging stations will be established in metros, other million plus cities, smart cities and cities of Hilly states across the country so that there will be availability of at least one charging station in a grid of 3 km x 3 km.
- Establishment of Charging stations are also proposed on major highways connecting major city clusters.
- On such highways, charging stations will be established on both sides of the road at an interval of about 25 km each.

REHABILITATION OF BEGGARS

The subject matter of "Relief of the disabled and unemployable" is a State subject as per entry No. 9 of State List in the 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India.

- The States are responsible for taking necessary preventive and rehabilitative steps. However, during the year 2017-18 and 2018-19 an amount of Rs. 1.00 crore and Rs. 50 lakhs respectively released to National Backward Classes Finance Development Corporation for skill development training of members of beggar community.
- During the current financial year 2019-20, an amount of Rs. 1.00 crore has been released to National Institute of Social Defence (NISD) for Empowerment and Rehabilitation of Beggars (ERB) under Integrated Programme for Rehabilitation of Beggars during F.Y. 2019-20.
- As per Census 2011, the total No. of beggars in Delhi are 2187. The male beggars are 1343 and the female beggars are 844.

PATENT PROSECUTION HIGHWAY PROGRAMME

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for adoption of Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) programme by the Indian Patent Office (IPO) under the Controller General of Patents, Designs & Trade Marks, India (CGPDTM) with patent offices of various other interest countries or regions.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The said programme will initially commence between Japan Patent Office (JPO) and Indian Patent Office on pilot basis for a period of three years only.
- Under this Pilot programme, Indian Patent Office may receive patent applications in certain specified technical fields only, namely, Electrical, Electronics, Computer Science, Information Technology, Physics, Civil, Mechanical, Textiles, Automobiles and Metallurgy while JPO may receive applications in all fields of technology.
- PPH programme would lead to the following benefits for the Indian IP office:
 1. Reduction in time to dispose patent applications.
 2. Reduction in pendency of patent applications.
 3. Improvement in quality of search and examination of patent applications.
 4. An opportunity for Indian inventors including MSMEs and Start-ups of India to get accelerated examination of their patent applications in Japan.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SOWA RIGPA (NISR) AT LEH

The Union Cabinet approved the establishment of the National Institute for Sowa-Rigpa in Leh as an autonomous organization under the Ministry of AYUSH.

- Sowa-Rigpa is a Traditional Medical system of the Himalayan belt in India. It has been popularly practiced in Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling (West Bengal), Himachal Pradesh, Union Territory of Ladakh and now all over India.
- The setting up of the National Institute of Sowa-Rigpa would provide an impetus for the revival of Sowa-Rigpa in the Indian Sub-continent.
- The Institute will also provide opportunities for students of Sowa-Rigpa not only in India but also from other countries.
- The Institute will be an autonomous National Institute under Ministry of AYUSH with the mandate to undertake interdisciplinary education and research programmes in Sowa-Rigpa in collaboration with premier national and international Institutes and facilitate integration of different systems of medicine.

- The objective is to establish the National Institute of Sowa-Rigpa (NISR) as an apex Institute for Sowa-Rigpa with aim of bringing a valid and useful synergy between Traditional Wisdom of Sowa-Rigpa and modern science, tools and technology. It will help to promote interdisciplinary research & education of Sowa-Rigpa.

HONG KONG CONVENTION

The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for enactment of Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019 and accession to the Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009.

- Under the Bill, ship recycling facilities are required to be authorized and ships shall be recycled only in such authorized ship recycling facilities.
- The Bill also provides that ships shall be recycled in accordance with a ship-specific recycling plan. Ships to be recycled in India shall be required to obtain a Ready for Recycling Certificate in accordance with the HKC.

SALIENT FEATURES:

- The Government of India has decided to enact a Bill, namely Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019, to provide for the regulation of recycling of ships by setting certain international standards and laying down the statutory mechanism for enforcement of such standards.
- It has also been decided to accede to the Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009.
- When the Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships, 2009 comes into force, its provisions will be implemented under the provisions of the Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019 and rules and regulations framed there under.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CODE BILL, 2019

The Union Cabinet has given its approval for introduction of the Industrial Relations Code, 2019 in the Parliament.

- Setting up of two-member tribunal (in place of one member) introducing a concept that some of the important cases will be adjudicated jointly and the rest by a single member resulting speedier disposal of cases.
 1. To impart flexibility to the exit provisions (relating to retrenchment etc.), for which, the threshold for prior approval of appropriate Government has been kept unchanged at 100 employees, but added a provision for changing 'such number of employees' through notification.
 2. The re-skilling fund, is to be utilised for crediting to workers in the manner to be prescribed.
 3. Definition of Fixed Term Employment and that it would not lead to any notice period and payment of compensation on retrenchment excluded.
 4. Vesting of powers with the government officers for adjudication of disputes involving penalty as fines thereby lessening the burden on tribunal.

BACKGROUND:

The draft code on Industrial Relations has been prepared after amalgamating, simplifying and rationalizing the relevant provisions of following three Central Labour Acts:

- The Trade Unions Act, 1926.
- The Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946.
- The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947.

IRNSS

India's indigenous navigation satellite system termed as Navigation with Indian Constellation (NavIC) is already established by ISRO and is functional since April 2018.

- NavIC consists of Space Segment (constellation of seven IRNSS satellites) and Ground Segment (spread across India). The system is providing Positioning, Navigation and Timing (PNT) service and one satellite (IRNSS-1A) is providing messaging service.
- Use of AIS-140 compliant NavIC-based vehicle trackers system has been made compulsory to all commercial vehicles.
- More than 75 companies are now manufacturing NavIC based vehicle trackers, and several thousand vehicles are now plying on the roads equipped with these devices.
- The updated version of new mobile models will be having NavIC based positioning systems.

- NavIC has been accepted by 3GPP (Third Generation Project Partnership) thereby enabling incorporation of NavIC as part of assisted GNSS.
- NavIC is also useful for applications like timing solution, drones, surveying, weather radiosondes, forestry, precision agriculture, etc.

SATELLITES TO ASSESS POLLUTION STATUS

The Imager payload on-board ISRO’s INSAT-3D & 3DR satellites is used to monitor Aerosol Optical Depth (AOD), which is indicator of particles and smoke from biomass burning affecting visibility and increase of PM2.5 and PM10 concentration in the atmosphere.

- It is found that AOD, PM2.5 and PM10 concentrations are higher over Indo-Gangetic Plain covering parts of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar during October and November.
- High concentration of these pollutants is seen originating from parts of Punjab and Haryana during stubble burning.
- Climatological study of satellite-based fire occurrences and associated pollutant parameters reveal that fire occurrences increased by 4% over Punjab and Haryana region during October- November between 2003 and 2017.
- The model-based analysis suggests that there is a high probability of transportation of smoke aerosols from Punjab & Haryana, towards down-wind regions of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.
- INSAT 3D & 3DR Imager based AOD, PM2.5 and PM10 spatial maps are made available on web portals with other ancillary parameters for visualization.
- Using medium resolution Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) satellite data, stubble burned area maps are generated at the end of stubble burning activity in Kharif season.

CYBER ATTACK ON KKNPP

A malware infection was identified in NPCIL KKNPP Internet connected system.

- There was an identification of a malware infection on KKNPP administrative network used for day to day administrative activities.
- The affected system contains data related to administrative function. Plant control and instrumentation system is not connected to any external network such as Intranet, Internet and administrative system.
- The malware infection was not able to get access to the controls of the Nuclear Power Plant.
- Investigations have been carried out by the Computer & Information Security Advisory Group (CISAG) – DAE along with the national agency, Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In).

INDUSTRIAL CORRIDORS

Government of India has approved the development of following five industrial corridor projects to be implemented through National Industrial Corridor Development and Implementation Trust (NICDIT):

S.NO.	INDUSTRIAL CORRIDOR	STATES
1	Delhi Mumbai Industrial Corridor (DMIC)	Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra
2	Amritsar Kolkata Industrial Corridor (AKIC)	Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal
3	Chennai Bengaluru Industrial Corridor (CBIC)	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala
4	East Coast Economic Corridor (ECEC) with Vizag Chennai Industrial Corridor (VCIC) as Phase-1	West Bengal, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu
5	Bengaluru Mumbai Industrial Corridor (BMIC)	Karnataka, Maharashtra

Only one city ‘Tumakuru’ has been identified in Karnataka for development as ‘node’ in Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor.

START-UPS

Start-up India Initiative was launched on 16th January 2016.

- The Start-up India Action Plan with 19 Action Points intends to build a strong eco-system for nurturing innovation and start-ups in the country that will drive sustainable economic growth and generate large scale employment opportunities.
- The Action Plan is divided across the following areas:
 1. Simplification and Handholding
 2. Funding Support and Incentives
 3. Industry- Academia Partnership and Incubation
- The incentives being provided to startups under Startup India initiative to overcome their initial hurdles are given below:
 1. Self-Certification under 6 Labour Laws & 3 Environmental Laws.
 2. Relaxations in Public Procurement Norms.
 3. Faster exit under the Bankruptcy Code.
 4. Rebates on Patent & Trademark filing fees, support from facilitators and expedited examination of Patent application.
 5. Income Tax exemption under Section 80 IAC of Income Tax Act.
 6. Exemption from Income Tax on investments received above fair market value under clause (ii) of the proviso to clause (vii b) of sub-section (2) of section 56 of the Income Tax Act.
 7. Funding support under the Fund of Funds for start-ups.
 8. Guidance and facilitation support from Start-up India Hub

NATIONAL BAMBOO MISSION

As per India State of Forest Report, 2017, total bamboo bearing area in the country is 156866 sq. km. and North Eastern States represents 54172 sq. km bamboo bearing area which is 34.53% of the country’s bamboo bearing area.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The restructured National Bamboo Mission (NBM) has been launched in 2018-19 by the Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare.
- The National Bamboo Mission focuses on the development of complete value chain of bamboo sector to link growers with consumers starting from planting material, plantation, creation of facilities for collection, aggregation, processing, marketing, micro, small & medium enterprises, skill development and brand building initiative in a cluster approach mode.
- NBM interventions includes support to industries for establishment of bamboo treatment and seasoning plants, establishment of carbonisation plants and establishment of livelihood business incubators and establishment of processing units for value addition.
- Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises is implementing a scheme called ‘Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) in seven districts of Manipur, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tripura and Assam for need-based assistance, replacement of production equipment, setting up of Common Facility Centres (CFC), product development, quality improvement, improved marketing, training and capacity building.

PRADHAN MANTRI AWAS YOJANA-GRAMIN

Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Gramin completes three years.

Objective: To provide pucca house to all who are houseless and living in dilapidated houses in rural areas by 2022.

The main features of the scheme of PMAY-G are:

- Identification of beneficiaries as per the housing deprivation parameters and exclusion criteria prescribed under Socio Economic Caste Census (SECC) 2011 after due verification by Gram Sabha.
- Under PMAY, the cost of unit assistance is to be shared between Central and State Governments in the ratio 60:40 in plain areas and 90:10 for North Eastern and hilly states.

- The unit assistance given to beneficiaries under the programme is Rs 1,20,000 in plain areas and to Rs 1,30,000 in hilly states/difficult areas /Integrated Action Plan (IAP) for Selected Tribal and Backward Districts. Presently the NE States, States of HP, J&K and Uttarakhand and all 82 LWE districts are identified as difficult and hilly areas. The unit size is 25 sq.m including a dedicated area for hygienic cooking.
- The beneficiary is entitled to 90 days of unskilled labour from MGNREGA.
- The beneficiary would be facilitated to avail loan of up to Rs.70,000/- for construction of the house which is optional.
- Funds will be transferred electronically directly to the account of the beneficiary.

RASHTRIYA VAYOSHRI YOJANA

Rashtriya Vayoshri Yojana' (RVY) is a Scheme of this Ministry, launched in 2017, under which aids and assisted living devices are provided free of cost to senior citizens who are suffering from age related infirmities/disabilities and belong to BPL category, to restore near normalcy in their bodily functions.

- Free of cost distribution of the devices, commensurate with the extent of disability/infirmity that is manifested among the eligible senior citizens.
- In case of multiple disabilities/infirmities manifested in the same person, the assistive devices will be given in respect of each disability/impairment.
- ALIMCO will undertake one year free maintenance of the aids & assisted living devices.
- Beneficiaries in each district will be identified by the State Governments/UT Administrations through a Committee chaired by the Deputy Commissioner/District Collector.
- As far as possible, 30% of the beneficiaries in each district shall be women.
- The State Government/UT Administration/District Level Committee can also utilize the data of BPL beneficiaries receiving Old Age Pension under the NSAP or any other Scheme of the State/UT for identification of senior citizens belonging to BPL category.
- The devices will be distributed in Camp mode.

MAINTENANCE AND WELFARE OF PARENTS AND SENIOR CITIZENS AMENDMENT BILL, 2019

- In the Act, the term children refers to children and grandchildren, excluding minors.
- The Bill adds the following to the definition: step-children, adoptive children, children-in-laws, and the legal guardian of minor children. Further, the Act defines a relative as the legal heir of a childless senior citizen, excluding minors, who possess or would inherit his property after death.
- The Bill amends this to include minors represented by their legal guardians.
- The Act defines parents to include biological, adoptive, and step parents. The Bill expands the definition of parents to include parent-in-laws, and grandparents.
- Under the Act, maintenance is defined as the provision of food, clothing, residence, medical attendance and treatment.
- Welfare is defined to include the provision of food, healthcare, and other amenities necessary for senior citizens.
- The Bill expands the definition of: (i) maintenance to include the provision of healthcare, safety, and security for parents and senior citizens to lead a life of dignity, (ii) welfare to include the provision of housing, clothing, safety, and other amenities necessary for the physical and mental well-being of a senior citizen or parent.
- **Maintenance orders:** Under the Act, state governments constitute maintenance Tribunals to decide on the maintenance payable to senior citizens and parents.
- These Tribunals may direct children and relatives to pay a monthly maintenance fee of up to Rs 10,000 to parents and senior citizens.
- The Bill removes the upper limit on the maintenance fee. The Tribunals may take the following into consideration while deciding the maintenance amount: (i) the standard of living and earnings of the parent or senior citizen, and (ii) the earnings of the children. The Act requires children and relatives to deposit the maintenance amount with the relevant parent or senior citizen within 30 days of being ordered to do so. The Bill reduces the number of days to 15.
- **Appeals:** The Act provides for senior citizens or parents to appeal the decisions of the maintenance Tribunal. The Bill allows children and relatives also to appeal decisions of the Tribunal.
- **Offences and penalties:** Under the Act, abandonment of a senior citizen or parent is punishable with imprisonment of up to three months, or a fine of up to Rs 5,000, or both. The Bill increases the penalty to imprisonment between three and six months, or fine of up to Rs 10,000, or both. The Bill also provides that if the children or relatives fail to comply with the maintenance order, the Tribunal may issue a warrant to levy the due

amount. Failure to pay such fine may lead to imprisonment of up to one month, or until the payment is made, whichever is earlier.

- **Maintenance officer:** The Act provides for a maintenance officer to represent a parent during proceedings of the Tribunal. The Bill requires maintenance officers to: (i) ensure compliance with orders on maintenance payments, and (ii) act as a liaison for parents or senior citizens.
- **Establishment of care-homes:** Under the Act, state governments may set up old age homes. The Bill removes this and provides for senior citizen care homes which may be set up by government or private organisations. These homes must be registered with a registration authority set up by the state government. The central government will prescribe minimum standards for these homes, such as food, infrastructure, and medical facilities.
- **Healthcare:** The Act provides for certain facilities (such as separate queues, beds, and facilities for geriatric patients) for senior citizens in government hospitals. The Bill require all hospitals, including private organisations, to provide these facilities for senior citizens. Further, homecare facilities will be provided for senior citizens with disabilities.
- **Protection and welfare measures:** The Bill requires every police station to have at least one officer, not below the rank of Assistant Sub-Inspector, to deal with issues related to parents and senior citizens. State governments must constitute a special police unit for senior citizens in every district. The unit will be headed by a police officer not below the rank of Deputy Superintendent of Police.

NEW SPACE INDIA LIMITED

A new company by name, “New Space India Limited (NSIL)”, has been incorporated on 06th March 2019, as a wholly owned Government of India Undertaking / Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE), under the administrative control of Department of Space (DOS) to commercially exploit the research and development work of Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

Mandate of NSIL includes viz.

- Small Satellite technology transfer to industry wherein NSIL will obtain license from DOS/ISRO and sub-license it to industries.
- Manufacture of Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) in collaboration with Private Sector.
- Production of Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) through Indian Industry.
- Production and marketing of Space based services, including launch and application.
- Transfer of technology developed by ISRO Centres and constituent institutions of DOS.
- Marketing of spin-off technologies and products, both in India and abroad
- Any other subject which Government of India deems fit.

INTENSIFIED MISSION INDRADHANUSH 2.0

Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Dr Harsh Vardhan reviewed the preparedness within States for roll out of Intensified Mission Indradhanush (IMI) 2.0 in States from 2nd December 2019.

The salient features of IMI 2.0 are:

- Immunization activity will be in four rounds over 7 working days excluding the RI days, Sundays and holidays.
- Enhanced immunization session with flexible timing, mobile session and mobilization by other departments.
- Enhanced focus on left outs, dropouts, and resistant families and hard to reach areas.
- Focus on urban, underserved population and tribal areas.
- Inter-ministerial and inter-departmental coordination.
- Enhance political, administrative and financial commitment, through advocacy.
- Intensified Mission Indradhanush immunization drive, consisting of 4 rounds of immunization will be conducted in the selected districts and urban cities between Dec 2019 - March 2020.

CENTRAL ROAD AND INFRASTRUCTURE FUND

The Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF) is earmarked for various infrastructure sectors such as Transport (Road and Bridges, Ports, Shipyards, Inland Waterways, Airports, Railways, Urban Public Transport), Energy, Water and Sanitation, Communication, Social and Commercial Infrastructure, etc., as per the provisions of CRIF Act, 2000 amended by the Finance Act, 2019.

- The funds for various infrastructure sectors are to be earmarked as per the provisions of the above mentioned Act.
- As per amendment to the Government of India (Allocation of Business) Rules, 1961 in July, 2018, the subject matter pertains to the Ministry of Finance.

- The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways is primarily responsible for development and maintenance of National Highways (NHs).
- Apart from this, it also allocates funds for development of State Roads under Central Road Fund (CRF)/ CRIF and Economic Importance & Inter State Connectivity (EI&ISC) schemes.

CERTIFYING ORGANIC FOOD

- Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) is the food regulator in the country and is responsible for regulating organic food in domestic market and imports.
- FSSAI has notified domestic standards for organic products recognizing National Programme for Organic Production (NPOP), Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS) or any other equivalent procedure as pre-requisite for qualifying the organic food claim in domestic market.
- These Regulations require organic food to comply with the provisions of any one of the existing certification systems - National Programme for Organic Production under Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) or Participatory Guarantee System for India (PGS) under Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
- Organic foods are required to comply with the requirements of labelling of FSSAI in addition to that of NPOP or PGS-India. Therefore, a proper system is in place to regulate the organic foods in the country.

GROWTH RATE OF INDUSTRIAL, CORE AND MANUFACTURING SECTORS

Global growth is forecast at 3.0% for 2019, its lowest level since 2008-09 as per the World Economic Outlook of the IMF, October 2019. However, despite this global downturn, India continues to grow faster than rest of the world.

A statement of the growth of IIP, Index of Eight Core industries & Manufacturing sector during the last five years is:

Growth of Index of Industrial Production (IIP), Index of Eight Core Industries (ICI) & Manufacturing Sector

GROWTH/YEARS	OVERALL GROWTH OF IIP	OVERALL GROWTH OF CORE INDUSTRIES	MANUFACTURING SECTOR
2014-15	4.0	4.9	3.8
2015-16	3.3	3.0	2.8
2016-17	4.6	4.8	4.4
2017-18	4.4	4.3	4.6
2018-19	3.8	4.4	3.9

Source: 1) Source: National Statistical Office (NSO), 2) Office of Economic Adviser, DPIIT

- The growth of industrial sector is an interplay of several factors, like domestic demand, demand for exports, level of investment and prevailing prices.
- The Government has been continuously taking steps to boost industrial growth including infrastructure sector which includes putting in place a policy framework to create conducive business environment, strengthening infrastructure network and ensuring availability of required inputs.
- Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) policy and procedures have been simplified and liberalised progressively. The Government has also taken up a series of measures to improve Ease of Doing Business.

KISHORI HEALTH CARDS

States are maintaining Kishori Health Cards for Adolescent Girls in Angawadi Centres (AWCs) to record the information about the weight, height, Body Mass Index (BMI) along with other services provided under the scheme.

- Government is implementing Scheme for Adolescent Girls across the country including Satna district of Madhya Pradesh.

- The details of achievements/outcomes made under the scheme are marked on Kishori Health Card and the card also carries important milestones of Adolescent Girls' life including mainstreaming them into the schools.

PROTECTION OF ENDANGERED SPECIES

Census of major flagship species is undertaken at the State-level by the respective State/Union Territory Governments periodically.

- However, census of tiger and elephant is undertaken at the national level once every four and five years respectively.
- As per the report of the latest census carried out by the state and central government, the population of endangered species especially lions, rhinos, tigers, and elephants has increased in country.
- Ministry is providing financial assistance to State /UT Governments for the recovery programme of critically endangered species under the component- Recovery programme for saving of critically endangered species and habitats of the Centrally sponsored scheme '**Development of Wildlife Habitats**'.
- Presently 21 critically endangered species have been identified under this programme.
- The Ministry has formulated the **3rd 'National Wildlife Action Plan' for a period of 2017 to 2031** to save wild animals in the country.
- The Plan focuses landscape approach in conservation of all wildlife irrespective of where they occur. It also gives special emphasis to recovery of threatened species of wildlife while conserving their habitats which includes terrestrial, inland aquatic, coastal and marine ecosystems.

The measures taken by the Government to control illegal killing and poaching of wild animals are:

1. The Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 provides for punishment for violation of its provisions. The Act also provides for forfeiture of any equipment, vehicle or weapon that is used for committing wildlife offence(s). Law enforcement authorities in the States maintain strict vigil against poaching of wild animals.
2. Wildlife Crime Control Bureau has been set up to gather intelligence about poaching and unlawful trade in wild animals and animal articles and to achieve inter-state and trans-boundary coordination in enforcement of wildlife laws.
3. The State/Union Territory Governments have been requested to strengthen the field formations and intensify patrolling in and around Protected Areas. **Protected Areas, viz., National Parks, Sanctuaries, Conservation Reserves and Community Reserves** covering important wildlife habitats have been created all over the country under the provisions of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972 to conserve wild animals and their habitats.
4. Financial assistance is provided to the State/Union Territory Governments under the Centrally Sponsored Schemes of 'Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats', 'Project Tiger' and 'Project Elephant', for providing better protection to wildlife and improvement of habitat.

SABKA VISHWAS – LEGACY DISPUTE RESOLUTION SCHEME

The aim of Sabka Vishwas (Legacy Dispute Resolution) Scheme, 2019 is to help taxpayers, including small taxpayers, in clearing the baggage of disputes under legacy taxes (Service Tax and Central Excise), which are subsumed in Goods and Service Tax.

- The Sabka Vishwas (Legacy Dispute Resolution) Scheme is a one-time measure for liquidation of past disputes of Central Excise and Service Tax as well as to ensure disclosure of unpaid taxes by a person eligible to make a declaration.
- The scheme comes with a validity of 4 months starting from September 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019. It provides that eligible persons shall declare the tax dues and pay the same in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme. It further provides for certain immunities including penalty, interest or any other proceedings under the Central Excise Act, 1944 or Chapter V of the Finance Act, 1944 to those persons who pay the declared tax dues.

OBJECTIVES

- a) To encourage voluntary disclosure of past disputes of Central Excise, Service-tax and 26 other Indirect-tax enactments.

- b) To facilitate an eligible person to declare the unpaid tax dues and pay the same as per provisions of this scheme.
 c) To provide certain immunities, including penalty, interest or any other proceedings including prosecution, to eligible persons who pay the declared tax dues.

When benefit of the scheme can be availed?

The scheme can be opted for in respect of following:

- a) All those cases where no appeal has been filed by the tax payer before expiry of the time period.
 b) Any type of tax dispute in any appellate forum which has attained finality.
 c) Taxpayer has admitted tax liability in a return filed on or before 30-06-2019.

NATIONAL CHILD LABOUR PROJECT

- The National Child Labour Project (NCLP) Scheme is a Central Sector Scheme.
- Under this Scheme the District Project Societies (DPS) are set up at the district level under the Chairmanship of the Collector/District Magistrate for overseeing the implementation of the project.
- Under this Scheme, the children in the age group of 9-14 years are withdrawn from work and put into NCLP Special Training Centres, where they are provided with bridge education, vocational training, mid-day meal, stipend, health care etc. before being mainstreamed into formal education system.
- The children in the age group of 5-8 years are directly linked to the formal education system through a close coordination with the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- Further, to ensure the effective enforcement of the provisions of the Child Labour Act and smooth implementation of NCLP Scheme, a dedicated online portal named PENCiL (Platform for Effective Enforcement for No Child Labour) is developed in order to make the NCLP successful through better monitoring and implementation ensuring the timely disposal of work with transparency.

ATAL BEEMIT VYAKTI KALYAN YOJANA

Atal Bimit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana is a welfare measure being implemented by the Employee's State Insurance (ESI) Corporation. It offers cash compensation to insured persons when they are rendered unemployed.

- The Scheme was introduced w.e.f. 01-07-2018. The scheme is implemented on pilot basis for a period of two years initially.
- The scheme provides relief to the extent of 25% of the average per day earning during the previous four contribution periods (total earning during the four contributions period/730) to be paid up to maximum 90 days of unemployment once in lifetime of the Insured Person.
- The maximum duration, for which an IP shall be eligible to draw the Relief under the Atal Beemit Vyakti Kalyan Yojana (ABVKY) will be 90 days once in life time after a minimum of two years of Insurable Employment and subject to the contributory conditions specified above.
- The claim for relief under the Atal Beemit Kalyaan Yojana will be payable after the three months of his/her clear unemployment.
- The relief will be paid for clear month of unemployment. No prospective claim will be allowed.
- In case the beneficiary gets gainful employment in between the three months of unemployment for which he was eligible for relief under ABVKY, the relief will be payable for clear month of unemployment between the date of unemployment and date of re-employment.
- The balance of 90 days of relief in this case may be claimed in the same manner as mentioned above based upon the initial contributory conditions by the beneficiary in case he again renders unemployed from Insurable employment within one year from initial unemployment.

PSLV-C47

India's Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, in its forty ninth flight (PSLV-C47), successfully launched Cartosat-3 along with 13 Nanosatellites of USA from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, Sriharikota.

- Cartosat-3 is the most complex and advanced earth observation satellite built by ISRO and it was a third-generation agile advanced satellite having high resolution imaging capability.
- The mission life of the Cartosat-3 is 5 years.
- Cartosat-3 will address the increased user's demands for large scale urban planning, rural resource and infrastructure development, coastal land use and land cover, etc.

- PSLV-C47 was the 21st flight of PSLV in 'XL' configuration (with 6 solid strap-on motors). This was the 74th launch vehicle mission from SDSC SHAR, Sriharikota and 9th satellite of Cartosat series.

EXERCISE MITRA SHAKTI-VII: 2019

The seventh edition of **India-Sri Lanka** joint training exercise, Exercise MITRA SHAKTI– 2019 is scheduled to be conducted at Foreign Training Node (FTN), Pune from 01 - 14 December 2019. The sixth edition of the exercise was held in Sri Lanka.

- The aim of this joint training exercise is to build and promote positive relations between armies of India and Sri Lanka with focus on sub unit level training for counter insurgency & counter terrorism operations in urban and rural environment under United Nations mandate.
- The joint exercise is designed for incorporating the current dynamics of United Nations peace keeping operations through practical & comprehensive discussions and tactical exercises.
- India and Sri Lanka have collaborated on counterterrorism and counterinsurgency operations over the years. The two sides have a long history of military cooperation.
- Exercise MITRA SHAKTI - 2019 is aimed at sending a strong message to all the member nations of the United Nations of the intent, commitment and capability of the militaries of both India & Sri Lanka towards maintaining world peace and upholding the mandate of United Nations.

HIM VIJAY MILITARY EXERCISE

The Indian Army Conducts routine military exercises every year. Exercise HIM VIJAY was one such endeavour.

- It was conducted to validate operational capabilities of our combat formations.
- Training exercises are conducted from within available resources and funds.
- The exercise was an all Arms exercise and approximately a Division strength participated.

INDIA'S IMMIGRATION POLICY

India has put in place robust visa and immigration systems to enable inward & outward movement of all persons including legitimate foreigners like professionals and members of skilled workforce, business persons, students and tourists.

The entry, stay, movement, transit through and exit of foreign nationals in the country are governed by:

- The Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920.
- The Foreigners Act, 1946, The Registration of Foreigners Act, 1939.
- The Citizenship Act, 1955.
- The Immigration (Carrier's Liability) Act, 2000.

There are 21 main categories and 65 sub-categories of visas are granted by India to foreigners and noted that the thrust of India's present visa policy is to encourage foreigners to visit India for tourism, improve people to people contact & business relationships, make India a hub of medical/educational /manufacturing activities and to promote various activities in line with the flagship programmes of the Government.

TRANSGENDER PERSONS (PROTECTION OF RIGHTS) BILL 2019

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill 2019 has been passed by the Parliament. It was passed by the Rajya Sabha on 26th November, 2019 and already passed by the 17th Lok Sabha on 5th August, 2019.

Definition of a transgender person: The Bill defines a transgender person as one whose gender does not match the gender assigned at birth. It includes trans-men and trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons with socio-cultural identities, such as kinnar and hijra. Intersex variations is defined to mean a person who at birth shows variation in his or her primary sexual characteristics, external genitalia, chromosomes, or hormones from the normative standard of male or female body.

Prohibition against discrimination: The Bill prohibits the discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment in relation to: (i) education; (ii) employment; (iii) healthcare; (iv) access to, or enjoyment of goods, facilities, opportunities available to the public; (v) right to movement; (vi) right to reside, rent, or otherwise occupy property; (vii) opportunity to hold public or private office; and (viii) access to a government or private establishment in whose care or custody a transgender person is.

Right of residence: Every transgender person shall have a right to reside and be included in his household. If the immediate family is unable to care for the transgender person, the person may be placed in a rehabilitation centre, on the orders of a competent court.

Employment: No government or private entity can discriminate against a transgender person in employment matters, including recruitment, and promotion. Every establishment is required to designate a person to be a complaint officer to deal with complaints in relation to the Act.

Education: Educational institutions funded or recognised by the relevant government shall provide inclusive education, sports and recreational facilities for transgender persons, without discrimination.

Health care: The government must take steps to provide health facilities to transgender persons including separate HIV surveillance centres, and sex reassignment surgeries. The government shall review medical curriculum to address health issues of transgender persons, and provide comprehensive medical insurance schemes for them.

Certificate of identity for a transgender person: A transgender person may make an application to the District Magistrate for a certificate of identity, indicating the gender as 'transgender'. A revised certificate may be obtained only if the individual undergoes surgery to change their gender either as a male or a female.

Welfare measures by the government: The Bill states that the relevant government will take measures to ensure the full inclusion and participation of transgender persons in society. It must also take steps for their rescue and rehabilitation, vocational training and self-employment, create schemes that are transgender sensitive, and promote their participation in cultural activities.

Offences and penalties: The Bill recognizes the following offences against transgender persons: (i) forced or bonded labour (excluding compulsory government service for public purposes), (ii) denial of use of public places, (iii) removal from household, and village, (iv) physical, sexual, verbal, emotional or economic abuse. Penalties for these offences vary between six months and two years, and a fine.

National Council for Transgender persons (NCT): The NCT will consist of: (i) Union Minister for Social Justice (Chairperson); (ii) Minister of State for Social Justice (Vice- Chairperson); (iii) Secretary of the Ministry of Social Justice; (iv) one representative from ministries including Health, Home Affairs, and Human Resources Development. Other members include representatives of the NITI Aayog, and the National Human Rights Commission. State governments will also be represented. The Council will also consist of five members from the transgender community and five experts from non-governmental organisations.

The Council will advise the central government as well as monitor the impact of policies, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons. It will also redress the grievances of transgender persons.

JAL SHAKTI ABHIYAN

Government of India has launched Jal Shakti Abhiyan (JSA), a water conservation campaign, which is being implemented in 256 water-stressed districts of the country.

- The Phase-I was implemented from 1st July, 2019 to 30th September, 2019 across the country and Phase-II is being implemented from 1st October, 2019 to 30th November, 2019 in the Southern States which receive retreating monsoon.
- During the campaign, officers, groundwater experts and scientists from the Government of India have worked with State and District officials in these districts to promote water conservation and water resource management by focusing on accelerated implementation of five target interventions, viz. water conservation & rainwater harvesting, renovation of traditional and other water bodies/ tanks, reuse and recharge of bore wells, watershed development and intensive afforestation.

PROPOSAL OF ISRO TO TRANSFER SPACE-GRADE LI-ION CELL TECHNOLOGY TO BHEL

ISRO has transferred its indigenous technology to produce space-grade Li-Ion cells to BHEL.

- In March 2018, BHEL signed the Technology Transfer Agreement with ISRO for acquiring the Li-Ion Cell production technology.

- This production facility is primarily targeting to meet Li-Ion Cell requirements for ISRO and other strategic sectors. However, BHEL can also produce and sell Li-Ion cells for meeting other national/commercial applications by suitably modifying the space-grade cell which can lead to cost reduction.
- BHEL is in the process of establishing the Li-Ion production facility near Bangalore in Karnataka.
- Various equipments (both indigenous and imported) for establishing this facility are procured and being commissioned.
- ISRO has already provided all technical documentation for establishing the production plant as well as hands-on training in various production activities for BHEL staff at ISRO's facilities.
- As per the Technology Transfer Agreement, space-grade Li-Ion cells manufactured by BHEL are meant for meeting the national requirements only. However, BHEL can also sell the space-grade Li-Ion cells to parties outside India after obtaining prior written consent from ISRO.

YUWAAH YOUTH SKILLING INITIATIVE

- UNICEF has informed that they have launched 'YuWaah' Generation Unlimited in India on 1.11.2019.
- According to UNICEF, Generation Unlimited, called YuWaah in India, is a multi-stakeholder alliance which aims to facilitate youth to gain relevant skills for productive lives and the future of work.
- The target age group of YuWaah includes adolescent girls and boys and its key mission is to promote access to foundational, transferable and 21st century skills for youth inside and outside formal education systems, which includes defining foundational skills, life skills and flexible learning and identifying and scaling impactful delivery models.
- YuWaah intends to create platforms to guide youth to market opportunities (career guidance, mentorship, internships, apprenticeships) and facilitate integration of career guidance in school education.

RASHTRIYA MAHILA KOSH

- Rashtriya Mahila Kosh (RMK) was established by the Government of India in March, 1993 as an autonomous body under the Ministry of Women & Child Development.
- It was registered under the Societies Registration Act 1860.
- The operating model currently followed by RMK is that of a facilitating agency wherein RMK provides loans to NGO-MFIs termed as Intermediary Organizations (IMO) which on-lend to Self Help Groups (SHGs) of women.
- RMK extends micro-credit to the women in the informal sector through a client friendly, without collateral and in a hassle-free manner for income generation activities.
- RMK has taken a number of promotional measures to popularize the concept of micro financing, enterprise development, thrift and credit, formation and strengthening of Women-SHGs through intermediary organizations.

5TH NITI AAYOG-DRC DIALOGUE

The Fifth Dialogue of NITI Aayog and Development Research Centre (DRC), of the State Council, People's Republic of China, was held in Wuhan, China.

- This is the first ministerial Dialogue between China and India since the informal meeting between Chinese President Xi Jinping and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Chennai.
- Based on the agreement at the Fourth Dialogue in Mumbai 2018, DRC and NITI Aayog had undertaken joint research in the areas of WTO reform and urbanization, whose preliminary findings were presented at the Fifth Dialogue as a key deliverable.
- To advance high-quality development, the two sides decided to strengthen knowledge sharing and mutual learning in high-tech, digital economy, fiscal policy and jointly address the challenges arising from the environment, income gaps, etc. Emphasis was laid on promoting sustainable urbanization, development of Smart Cities, infrastructure and green transportation.
- Both sides also agreed to explore synergies in tourism; health sector; culture, language and people-to-people exchanges; and learn from respective best practices and create favourable conditions for facilitating ease-of-doing business by giving impetus to outbound and inbound investments.
- The Sixth Dialogue will be convened in India in the second half of November 2020.

EXERCISE SURYA KIRAN – XIV

Joint military exercise 'SURYA KIRAN – XIV' between India and Nepal will be conducted at Salijhandi, Rupendehi district of Nepal from 03 to 16 December 2019.

- The exercise will comprise of 300 soldiers from both Indian and Nepal Army who would be sharing their experience in conduct of various counter insurgency and counter terrorism operations as also various humanitarian assistance missions by both the Armies.
- Exercise SURYA KIRAN - XIV is an annual event which is conducted alternatively in Nepal and India.
- Notably, in the series of military training exercises undertaken by India with various countries, exercise SURYA KIRAN with Nepal is an important exercise in terms of the security challenges faced by both the nations in the realm of changing facets of global terrorism.
- The aim of this exercise is to conduct a Battalion level combined training between Indian Army and Nepal Army to increase interoperability in jungle warfare and counter terrorist operations in mountainous terrain, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, medical and environmental conservation including aviation aspects.
- The joint military exercise will enhance the level of defence cooperation which will further foster the bilateral relations between the two nations.

INTERNATIONAL COALITION FOR DISASTER RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

The Government of India has approved the establishment of an International Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure (CDRI) at an outlay of Rs. 480 crore (approx. USD 70 million) for a corpus required to fund technical assistance and research projects on an ongoing basis over a period of 5 years from 2019-20 to 2023-24.

- The coalition envisages 3 tiered structures viz Governing Council (GC), Executive Committee (EC) and a Secretariat of the Society. The objectives of CDRI are as follows:
 1. The CDRI is to serve as a platform where knowledge is generated and exchanged on different aspects of disaster and climate resilience of infrastructure.
 2. To bring together technical expertise from a multitude of stakeholders. In doing so, it is to create a mechanism to assist countries to upgrade their capacities and practices, with regard to infrastructure development in accordance with their risk context and economic needs.
 3. The work of CDRI is to focus on relevant thematic areas including the four major themes of
 - a) Risk Assessment for key infrastructure sectors at multiple scales.
 - b) Standards, regulation and mechanisms for enforcement.
 - c) Role of finance in promoting disaster resilience.
 - d) Predictable mechanisms for supporting disaster recovery in key infrastructure sectors.
- This coalition is to provide a platform/forum for countries at all stages of development to access knowledge and resources from other members and to contribute to the resilience of each other's infrastructure.
- The charter of CDRI has been shared with 38 countries including G 20 and non-G 20 nations. So far nine countries viz. Afghanistan, Australia, Bhutan, Fiji, Italy, Mauritius, Mongolia, Sri Lanka and United Kingdom have conveyed their willingness to join the CDRI in writing.
- The coalition is to –
 - a). Provide a platform for India to emerge as a global leader on climate Action and Disaster Resilience.
 - b). Complement the International Solar Alliance (ISA) and address adaptation and disaster resilience.
 - c). Facilitate India's support to resilient infrastructure in Africa, SIDS and Asia.
 - d). Provide access to knowledge, technology and capacity development for infra developers.
 - e). Create opportunities for Indian infrastructure & technology firms to expand services abroad.

ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION PROGRAMME

The Nationwide Artificial Insemination Programme (N.A.I.P) which was launched on 11th September, 2019 covering 600 chosen districts including aspirational districts as identified by NITI Aayog has picked up pace.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The rate of Artificial Insemination is continuously increasing and has reached an average of 25,000 animals per day so far.
- The NAIP is a campaign mode genetic upgradation program covering all breeds of bovines to enhance the milk production using low cost breeding technology for improving genetic merit of milch animals with high quality seed.
- The gestation period for getting the benefits from the AI bovine is approximately 3 years.

- The aim of the program to inseminate over 1 crore bovines in 6 months & ear-tag them with 'Pashu Aadhaar' which is a unique identification provided to the animals so as to enable the Government to identify and track the animals uniquely with all details such as the breed, age, gender and owner details.
- Every cow and buffalo under AI will be tagged and can be tracked through the Information Network on Animal Productivity and Health (INAPH) Database.
- Out of the 28 participating States, High Performing States include Telangana, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand.
- States that have been lagging include Chattishgarh, Goa, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh.
- In the State of West Bengal, the programme is yet to start.
- North Eastern States except Sikkim are lagging behind and need to expedite the progress so as to ensure that the people in their States can benefit from the programme.
- Overall A.I coverage in the selected districts is expected to enhance from the present level of 18% to 45% of the breedable bovine females under this programme.

PAHCHAN INITIATIVE

The Office of Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) under Ministry of Textiles has taken an initiative to issue Aadhar link identity card to handicrafts artisans under "PAHCHAN" initiative with effect from October, 2016.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Pahchan card has an information of handicrafts artisans viz: name & address, Aadhar Card number, mobile number and craft practiced.
- The Office of the Development Commissioner (Handicrafts) has registered 25.04 lakh artisans across the country under "PAHCHAN" initiative till date and the process is continuing.

INTEGRATED TEXTILE PARKS

The Government is implementing the Scheme for Integrated Textile Park (SITP) which provides support for creation of world-class infrastructure facilities for setting up of textile units, with a Government of India (GoI) grant up to 40% of the project cost subject to a ceiling of Rs. 40 crore.

- However, GoI grant is up to 90% of the project cost for first two projects (each) in the States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir; with ceiling limit of Rs. 40.00 crore for each textile park.
- The Scheme is demand driven.
- A total of 59 textile parks have been sanctioned under SITP by the Ministry of Textiles out of which 22 textile parks have been completed and rest are under various stages of construction.
- Two textile parks have been sanctioned in Uttar Pradesh so far, under the Scheme.

NIRBHAYA FUND

- Government of India has set up a dedicated fund called Nirbhaya Fund for implementation of initiatives aimed at enhancing the safety and security of women in the country.
- Under the Nirbhaya Fund, the proposed projects should have the features like direct impact on safety and security concerns of women, optimum use of existing infrastructure, innovative use of technology, no duplication of existing government schemes/ programmes, provision for real time intervention as far as possible.
- strict privacy and confidentiality of women's identity and information and defined monitoring mechanism.
- As per the guidelines issued by Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Women and Child Development is the nodal authority for appraisal of the schemes/proposals received under Nirbhaya Fund.
- An Empowered Committee of officers (EC) under the Chairpersonship of Secretary, Ministry of Women and Child Development has been set up for appraising various schemes/projects proposed to be funded from the Nirbhaya Fund.

SHE-BOX

Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India has developed an online complaint management system titled Sexual Harassment electronic-Box (SHe-Box) for registering complaints related to sexual harassment at workplace by women, including government and private employees.

- The new SHe-Box portal offers the facility of making online complaints of sexual harassment at workplace to all women employees in the country including government and private employees.
- Those who have already filed a written complaint with the concerned Internal Complaint Committee (ICC) or Local Complaint Committee (LCC) constituted under the SH Act are also eligible to file their complaint through this portal.
- Once a complaint is submitted to the SHe-Box portal, it directly reaches to the concerned authority having jurisdiction to take action in the matter.
- The SHe-Box portal has been developed with the objective to facilitate the registration of complaints related to sexual harassment of women at workplace.
- It is to ensure the effective implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (the SH Act), 2013.
- Users of SHe-Box also have the option of interacting with Ministry of WCD through this portal, with an assured time-bound response.
- The portal also provides information on 112 institutions empanelled by MWCD to conduct training/workshops on the issue of sexual harassment at the workplace.
- It also has the option for resource persons and institutions willing to contribute to training on this subject in various organisations to submit their applications.
- SHe-Box will provide a platform to these empanelled institutes/organisations to share their capacity building activities with the Ministry which in turn will be able to monitor the activities of these institutes/organizations so empanelled from across the country.
- Once a complaint is submitted to the 'SHe-Box', it will be directly sent to the internal complaints committee (ICC) of the ministry/department/ PSU/ autonomous body etc concerned, having jurisdiction to inquire into the matter.
- The ICC will take action as prescribed under the Act and update the status of the complaint. The portal is also an effort to provide "speedier remedy" to women facing sexual harassment at the workplace, as envisaged under the sexual harassment Act.