



C.A From 2nd July to 13th July 2018

General Studies -1

World Sanskrit Conference

Why in News?

Human Resource Development Minister Shri Prakash Javadekar will inaugurate the 17th World Sanskrit Conference to be held at Vancouver, Canada from 9th July to 13th July, 2018.

Highlights of Conference:

There will be a special panel discussion on over a dozen topics like;

History & Education of Women in Vedic Literature;

Sanskrit Buddhist Manuscripts;

Mimamsa Beyond the Yagasala;

The Yuktidipika Forging a Place for Sankhya; Introducing Bhagavata Purana Commentaries; Research on the Gargiyajyotisa.

Over 500 papers on various themes are likely to be presented during the 5-day conference.

About WSC

The World Sanskrit Conference is being held in various countries across the globe once in every three years and so far it has been held thrice in India.

The purpose of this conference is to promote, preserve and practice the Sanskrit language all over the world by the people.

India Tourism Mart'

Why in News?

Tourism Ministry in partnership with the Federation of Associations in Indian Tourism and Hospitality (FAITH) and with the support of State /UT Governments will



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organize the 'first ever' India Tourism Mart (ITM) from 16th to 18th September, 2018 at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi.

Objectives of Mart:

The objective of the event is to create an annual Global Tourism Mart for India in line with major international travel marts being held in countries across the world.

The Mart will provide a platform for all stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industries to interact and transact business opportunities.

Through ITM 2018, India can showcase its hidden destinations to the world, especially to emerging tourism markets like China, Latin America, and Japan etc.

With this event, the Government's aim of bringing the Tourist footfall to double in next three years shall be fulfilled.

Zero-budget natural farming

Why in News?

The Vice President of India, Shri M. Venkaiah Naidu has called for promoting zero-budget natural in agriculture to make farming viable and sustainable.

What is it?

Zero Budget Natural Farming (ZBNF) is a set of farming methods, and also a grassroots peasant movement, which has spread to various states in India.

It has attained wide success in southern India, especially the southern Indian state of Karnataka where it first evolved.

The movement in Karnataka state was born out of collaboration between Mr Subhash Palekar, who put together the ZBNF practices, and the state farmers association Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS), a member of La Via Campesina (LVC).

Advantages of ZBNF



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The neoliberalization of the Indian economy led to a deep agrarian crisis that is making small scale farming an unviable vocation.

Privatized seeds, inputs, and markets are inaccessible and expensive for peasants.

Indian farmers increasingly find themselves in a vicious cycle of debt, because of the high production costs, high interest rates for credit, the volatile market prices of crops, the rising costs of fossil fuel based inputs, and private seeds.

Debt is a problem for farmers of all sizes in India.

Under such conditions, 'zero budget' farming promises to end a reliance on loans and drastically cut production costs, ending the debt cycle for desperate farmers.

The word 'budget' refers to credit and expenses, thus the phrase 'Zero Budget' means without using any credit, and without spending any money on purchased inputs.

'Natural farming' means farming with Nature and without chemicals.

Lunar Eclipse:

Why in News?

A total lunar eclipse will occur on July 27-28, 2018 with a totality duration of 1 hour 43 minutes.

The duration makes it the longest total lunar eclipse of this century (2001 AD to 2100 AD).

Cause of Eclipse:

On July 27, the red planet Mars, will also be at opposition, meaning that the Sun and Mars will lie opposite to each other, keeping the Earth in the middle.

This will result in Mars coming close to the Earth, causing it to appear brighter than normal and it will be seen from evening to dawn towards the end of July.



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The brighter Mars will remain very close to the eclipsed Moon in the sky on July 27-28 and can be spotted very easily with the naked eye.

Earlier Incidents

The planet Mars comes at opposition at an average interval of 2 years and 2 months when the planet comes close to the Earth and becomes brighter.

Mars opposition that had occurred in August 2003 brought the two planets closest distance in approximately 60,000 years.

The closest approach of Mars on July 31, 2018 will bring the two planets closest and the planet Mars to be seen brightest since 2003.



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SC judgement on LG vs Delhi Govt. issue

A five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court on Wednesday unanimously held that the Lieutenant Governor (LG) of [Delhi](#) is bound by the “aid and advice” of the popularly-elected Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government and both have to work harmoniously with each other.

Salient Points Of Judgement:

It noted that there is no room for anarchy or absolutism in a democracy.

Chief Justice of India (CJI) held that except for issues of public order, police and land, the Lieutenant Governor is bound by the “aid and advice of the Kejriwal government, which has the public mandate.”

Real authority to take decisions lie in the elected government. This is the meaning of ‘aid and advice.

Every “trivial difference of opinion” between the LG and the NCT government cannot be referred to the President for a decision.

The issues referred should be of substantive or national importance.



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In this regard, the CJI interpreted the phrase “any matter” in the proviso to Article 239AA(4) as not “every matter.”

The CJI wrote that a reference to the President was only an exception and not the general rule.

The LG cannot act without applying his mind and refer everything to the President.”

LG’s concurrence not needed

The NCT government need only to inform the LG of its “well-deliberated” decisions.

The government need not obtain his “concurrence” in every issue of day-to-day governance.

A freeze on government decisions by the LG negates the very concept of “collective responsibility.”

The governance of the National Capital demands a “meaningful orchestration of democracy” and a “collaborative federal architecture.”

Collective responsibility means government speaking in one voice to the people whose aspirations the government reflects, Justice Chandrachud observed.

Not a ‘State’

The CJI, however, adhered to the nine-judge Bench judgment of the [Supreme Court](#) in the NDMC versus State of Punjab to conclude that Delhi is not a ‘State.’

The judgment also held that the LG is not a Governor but only an “administrator in a limited sense.”

“Real and substantive power lies with the elected representatives in a democracy. They owe responsibility to the legislature,” Justice Chandrachud observed, agreeing with the CJI that a “mixed balance” has to be struck considering the special status of the Delhi and “fundamental concerns” as Delhi is the National Capital.

Earlier Decision:



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The judgment came on appeals filed by the NCT government against an [August 4, 2016 judgment](#) of the Delhi High Court that declared that the LG had “complete control of all matters regarding National Capital Territory of Delhi, and nothing will happen without the concurrence of the LG.”

What does Article 239 AA says about the powers and functions of Delhi government and Lieutenant Governor:

- There shall be a Council of Ministers consisting of not more than ten percent, of the total number of members in the Legislative Assembly, with the Chief Minister at the head to aid and advise the Lieutenant Governor in the exercise to his functions in relation to matters with respect to which the Legislative Assembly has power to make laws, except in so far as he is, by or under any law, required to act in his discretion.
- Provided that in the case of difference of opinion between the Lieutenant Governor and his Ministers on any matter, the Lieutenant Governor shall refer it to the President for decision and act according to the decision given thereon by the President and pending such decision it shall be competent for the Lieutenant Governor in any case where the matter, in his opinion, is so urgent that it is necessary for him to take immediate action, to take such action or to give such direction in the matter as he deems necessary.

DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill

The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill 2018.

Details:

- The primary intended purpose for enactment of "The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Bill" is for expanding the application of DNA-based forensic technologies to support and strengthen the justice delivery system of the country.
- The utility of DNA based technologies for solving crimes, and to identify missing persons, is well recognized across the world.
- By providing for the mandatory accreditation and regulation of DNA laboratories, the Bill seeks to ensure that with the proposed expanded use of this technology in the country,



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there is also the assurance that the DNA test results are reliable and the data remain protected from misuse or abuse in terms of the privacy rights of our citizens.

- Speedier justice delivery.
- Increased conviction rate.
- Bill's provisions will enable the cross-matching between persons who have been reported missing on the one hand and unidentified dead bodies found in various parts of the country on the other, and also for establishing the identity of victims in mass disasters.

Background:

Forensic DNA profiling is of proven value in solving cases involving offences that are categorized as affecting the human body (such as murder, rape, human trafficking, or grievous hurt), and those against property (including theft, burglary, and dacoity).

The aggregate incidence of such crimes in the country, as per the statistics of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2016, is in excess of 3 lakhs per year.

Of these, only a very small proportion is being subjected to DNA testing at present.

It is expected that the expanded use of this technology in these categories of cases would result not only in speedier justice delivery but also in increased conviction rates, which at present is only around 30% (NCRB Statistics for 2016).

Boost to Higher Education

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal for expanding the scope of Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) by enhancing its capital base to Rs. 10,000 crore and tasking it to mobilise Rs. 1,00,000 crore for Revitalizing Infrastructure and Systems in Education (RISE) by 2022.

Details:

1. In order to expand this facility to all institutions, especially to the institutions set up after 2014, Central Universities which have very little internal resources, and the school education/health education infrastructure like AIIMSs, Kendriya Vidyalayas, the CCEA



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has approved windows for financing under HEFA and the modalities of repaying the Principal portion of the fund.

The Cabinet has also permitted the HEFA to mobilise Rs 1,00,000 crore over the next 4 years till 2022 to meet the infrastructure needs of these institutions.

The CCEA has also approved increasing the authorized share capital of HEFA to Rs. 10,000 crore, and approved infusing additional Government equity of Rs. 5,000 crore (in addition to Rs. 1,000 crore already provided) in HEFA.

The CCEA has also approved that the modalities for raising money from the market through Government guaranteed bonds and commercial borrowings would be decided in consultation with the Department of Economic Affairs so that the funds are mobilized at the least cost.

Benefits:

This would enable addressing the needs of all educational institutions with differing financial capacity in an inclusive manner.

This would enable HEFA to leverage additional resources from the market to supplement equity, to be deployed to fund the requirements of institutions.

Government guarantee would eliminate the risk factor in Bonds issue and attract investment in to this important national activity.

About HEFA:

HEFA has been set up on 31st May 2017 by the Central Government as a Non Profit, Non Banking Financing Company (NBFC) for mobilising extra-budgetary resources for building crucial infrastructure in the higher educational institutions under Central Govt.

Higher Education Financing Agency (HEFA) is a joint venture of MHRD Government of India and Canara Bank for financing creation of capital assets in higher education institutions in India.

VISION



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To enable India's premier educational institutions to excel and reach the top in global rankings by financing building world class infrastructure particularly R&D Infra.

MISSION

To provide timely finance at low interest rates for capital assets creation in India's higher education institutions and supplement it with grants by channelizing CSR funds from the corporate and donations from others.

In the existing arrangement, the entire principle portion is repaid by the institution over ten years, and the interest portion is serviced by the Government by providing additional grants to the institution.

So far, funding proposals worth Rs. 2,016 crore have been approved by the HEFA.

National Optical Fibre Network:

Why in News?

Tata Projects announced that it has bagged a Rs. 3,057 crore optical fibre cable network project in Chhattisgarh from Bharat Net.

The project, which will benefit about 2.6 crore people of the state, involves the laying of optical fibre network that follows ring architecture with Internet Protocol-Multi Protocol Label Switching (IP-MPLS) technology.

Benefits of NOFN:

Through this project, important services, including public distribution system (PDS), 102 (free ambulance service) and 108 (emergency service) would be effectively executed at gram panchayat level.



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The project would bring improvement in the coordination between security agencies, help provide better health facilities, enhance the reach of banking services, help education initiatives through online portals and promote digital payments thus bringing rural population closer to the digital economy.

The government would be able to manage G2C (government to citizen) service and its 'schemes/development programmes' due to the increase in the reach of the general service centres.

About NOFN:

The **National Optical Fibre Network** (NOFN) is a project initiated in 2011 and funded by Universal Service Obligation Fund to provide broadband connectivity to over two lakh (200,000) [Gram panchayats](#) of [India](#) at an initial cost of 20,000 crore (\$3 billion).

It aimed at using existing fiber optical network of Central utilities - [BSNL](#), [RailTel](#) and [Power Grid](#) - to provide internet connectivity to gram panchayats.

The project intended to enable the government of India to provide e-services and e-applications nationally.

A special purpose vehicle [Bharat Broadband Network Limited](#) (BBNL) was created as a [Public Sector Undertaking](#) (PSU) under the [Companies Act of 1956](#) for the execution of the project.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)

Why in News?

Progress data for scheme released by Govt.

Under PMAY (U) so far more than 51 Lakhs dwelling units have been sanctioned against the validated demand of 1 crore in last 3 years of implementation.

This is a huge jump in comparison to erstwhile housing scheme wherein only 12.4 Lakh houses were approved in around 9 years of its implementation. Out of over 51 lakh sanctioned houses, over 28 lakhs have already been grounded and are in various stages of construction.



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Further over 8 lakh houses have already been completed and nearly 8 lakh houses have been occupied by the beneficiaries.

Other Innovative Steps Taken:

Global Housing construction technology challenge has been proposed to use the opportunity of large scale construction under PMAY-U to attract the best available global construction technologies which could ensure delivery of houses at a minimum cost, in minimum time while ensuring maximum number of houses in a given area.

This will help in technology transfer to our country so that ultimately these globally best available construction technologies and designs get adopted in the country benefiting the construction industry at large.

The Global Housing Construction Technology Challenge (GHTC-I) may help to adopt those technologies to suit local conditions and requirements.

It is win-win situation for all stakeholders which would help in fast transition of new global construction technologies in India giving a fillip to building affordable houses in India in a cost effective and sustainable manner.

GoI has been insisting States/UTs to issue technology-agnostic tenders for construction of large scale housing.

Progress of the houses on the ground are being monitored through geo-tagging using space technology.

Objective of Scheme:

The Government of India is committed to provide “Housing for All” by the end of the Mission period-2022.

A National Urban Housing Fund for Rs. 60,000 crores has been set up for raising Extra Budgetary Resources (EBR) in phases, for the rapid implementation of PMAY (U).

Keeping the ethos of cooperative federalism, the States/UTs are implementing the scheme with considerable zeal and initiatives.



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National Testing Agency

Why in News?

National Testing Agency (NTA) has started its work and will be conducting various entrance examinations for higher educational Institutions from next academic sessions onwards.

Advantages of NTA:

NTA will bring qualitative difference in the examination process by its focus on research and scientific test design using services of Experts, Researchers, Statisticians, Psychometricians, Test Item Writers and Education Specialists.

The item writers would be trained to ensure that the quality of questions is as per the test design.

The experts, statisticians and item writers/subject matter experts are already identified for being inducted into NTA.

The new system will be student friendly, fair , transparent and flexible, the Minister added.

About NTA:

National Testing Agency (NTA) was approved by the Union Cabinet in November 2017 as an Autonomous and self-sustained premier testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for higher educational Institutions.

Institutions of Eminence

Why in News?

The Government has shortlisted Six Institutions of Eminence (IoEs) including 3 from Public Sector and 3 from Private Sector.

An Empowered Expert Committee (EEC) in its report recommended selection of 6 institutions (3 from public sector and 3 from private sector) as Institutions of Eminence. The details of these Institutions are as under:

Public Sector: (i) Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore, Karnataka; (ii) Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay, Maharashtra; and (iii) Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi.



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Private Sector: (i) Jio Institute (Reliance Foundation), Pune under Green Field Category; (ii) Birla Institute of Technology & Sciences, Pilani, Rajasthan; and (iii) Manipal Academy of Higher Education, Manipal, Karnataka.

Benefits of IoE Staus:

It will ensure complete autonomy to the selected institutions and facilitate them to grow more rapidly.

At the same time, they will get more opportunity to scale up their operations with more skills and quality improvement so that they become World Class Institutions in the field of education.

It is expected that the above selected Institutions will come up in top 500 of the world ranking in 10 years and in top 100 of the world ranking eventually overtime.

Objectives for IoE:

To achieve the top world ranking, these Institutions shall be provided with greater autonomy to admit foreign students up to 30% of admitted students;

to recruit foreign faculty upto 25% of faculty strength;

to offer online courses upto 20% of its programmes; to enter into academic collaboration with top 500 in the world ranking Institutions without permission of UGC;

free to fix and charge fees from foreign students without restriction; flexibility of course structure in terms of number of credit hours and years to take a degree; complete flexibility in fixing of curriculum and syllabus, among others.

Each public Institution selected as 'Institution of Eminence' will get financial assistance up to Rs. 1000 Crore over the period of five years under this scheme.

National Rural Livelihoods Mission

Why in News?

Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi will be holding 'Direct Samvad' with the members of Self Help Groups under Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission(DAY-NRLM) and beneficiaries of DDU-GKY and RSETIs, through video conferencing.



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About NRLM:

Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana – National Rural Livelihoods Mission (DAY-NRLM) is one of the flagship programmes of the Ministry of Rural Development, Government of India to alleviate rural poverty.

The centrally sponsored programme, seeks to mobilize about 9 crore households into SHGs and link them to sustainable livelihoods opportunities by building their skills and enabling them to access formal sources of finance, entitlements and services from both public and private sectors.

It is envisaged that the intensive and continuous capacity building of rural poor women will ensure their social, economic and political upliftment.

DAY-NRLM has emerged as the largest institutional platform for women's empowerment.

Achievements of Scheme:

The Mission has now initiated implementation in 4884 blocks spread across 600 districts in 29 States and 5 Union Territories. As of May'18, more than 5 crore women have been mobilized into 45 lakh Self Help Groups (SHGs).

In addition, 2.48 lakh Village Organizations and 20,000 Cluster Level Federations have also been promoted.

The Mission has created dedicated sensitive support structures in all states.

Every state now has a State Rural Livelihoods Mission manned by over 20000 professionals at various levels for providing training and capacity building and long term hand holding support to the Women's organisations.

However, the cornerstone of the Mission's implementation strategy is the community driven approach adopted under the programme.

More than 1.8 lakh community members have been trained and deployed to provide support to the community institutions in a variety of themes, such as bookkeeping, training and capacity building, financial services etc.

Finance through NRLM:



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DAY - NRLM is also providing Interest Subvention to women SHGs availing Bank loans upto Rs. 3.00 lakhs.

The interest subvention scheme ensures availability of loan @ 7% per annum.

In select 250 districts an additional subvention of 3% is also allowed on timely repayment of loans reducing the effective interest rate to 4%. Since Inception, Rs. 2324 crores have been provided under the scheme.

Jal Bachao, Video Banao, Puruskar Pao

What is it?

In an attempt to engage with the people of India on the important issues of water conservation and water management, the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has launched a video contest titled “Jal Bachao, Video Banao, Puruskar Pao”.

The Ministry has joined hands with MyGov portal of the Government of India to run the contest.

Who are Eligible?

In the contest, any Indian citizen can upload their video entries on YouTube and enter the publicly accessible link on the Video link section of MyGov contest page www.mygov.in.

How will it Work?

The participants will be judged on the basis of elements of creativity, originality, composition, technical excellence, artistic merit, quality of video, content and visual impact. The prize amount is Rs 25,000/-, Rs 15,000/- and Rs 10,000/- for first, second and third positions respectively.

Any innovative advertisement/commercial on Water Conservation are also welcome.



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India Cuts Oil Import from Iran

Indian refiners cut imports of Iranian oil last month as they started weaning their plants off crude from the country to avoid sanctions by the United States that are set to take effect in November.

India's monthly oil imports from [Iran](#) declined to 5,92,800 barrels per day (bpd) in June, down 16% from May, according to data from industry and shipping sources.

Reasons for Cut:

The United States in May said it would reimpose the sanctions after withdrawing from a 2015 agreement with Iran, Russia, China, France, Germany, and Britain, where Tehran agreed to curb its nuclear activities in return for the lifting of earlier sanctions.

The Government of India, Iran's top oil client after China, asked refiners last month to prepare for drastic reductions or even zero Iranian oil imports.

The first set of sanctions will take effect on August 6 and the rest, notably in the petroleum sector, following a 180-day "wind-down period" ending on November 4.

Buyers concerned

U. S. officials said in June they would push countries to reduce their Iranian oil imports to zero.

The Indian refiners will want to comply with the limits to maintain their access to the U.S. financial system.

Startup India Yatra

The Startup India Yatra van will travel to 10 cities of Madhya Pradesh, starting from the capital Bhopal, to spread awareness about Startup India and Madhya Pradesh Startup Policy.

The vehicle, with experts on board, will provide an opportunity for entrepreneurial talents to pitch an idea and get incubated, scaling it from idea to enterprise.

Aim of Yatra:



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Startup India Yatra aims to scout grass root level entrepreneurs in the smaller towns of India, providing a platform for budding entrepreneurs to realize their Startup dream.

How will it Work?

Startup India Yatra's technology partner, [Shrofile](#), a video-based personality evaluation platform headquartered in Gurugram, will record ideas of entrepreneurs from Madhya Pradesh via the Startup India mobile van.

Entrepreneurs will record their ideas on the Startup India App screens, which will be shared with the Startup India team for evaluation and selection.

Prior to Madhya Pradesh, the Yatra had travelled to the States of [Gujarat](#), [Uttar Pradesh](#), Odisha and Uttarakhand.

To promote job creation in tier 2 and tier 3 towns and cities, Startup India organizes the **Startup India Yatra** in one state every month.

Benefits of Yatra:

The Yatra conducts boot camps where students are taught lessons in business planning followed by a pitch fest where ideas are invited.

Shortlisted business ideas get incubated in State run incubators.

A total of 19,000 students across 40 districts have benefitted from the Yatra through the boot camps, with over 90 received grants or incubation offers from the State governments.

The Startup India initiative of the Government of India envisages to build a robust startup ecosystem in the country for nurturing innovation and providing opportunities to budding entrepreneurs.

The **States Startup Ranking Framework** was launched by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP) in February 2018, with the aim to foster competitiveness and to propel the



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states and union territories to work proactively towards promotion of their startup ecosystems.

This was also targeted at facilitating states and UTs to identify, learn and replicate good practices from each other and for bringing to the fore, their own progress.

Target Olympic Podium Scheme

Why in News?

The **Mission Olympic Cell** has included the entire Indian hockey team in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme, rewarding the players for their silver medal-winning performance at the Champions Trophy.

Significance of the move:

Athletes from different sports have been included in Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS) individually but it is first instance that an entire team has been made beneficiary of the financial assistance scheme.

About Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS):

- It was launched by Ministry of Sports within the ambit of National Sports Development Fund (NSDF).
- It aims at identifying and supporting potential medal prospects for upcoming Olympic Games.
- It will provide selected sportspersons customized training at institutes having world class facilities and also other necessary support is being provided to the elite athletes. It will also provide a benchmark for selection of athletes on par with international standards.
- Under it, Sports Authority of India (SAI) and federations, which are members of Mission Olympic Cell (MOC), will be nodal agencies for disbursement of fund. They will make payments directly to beneficiary person and institution concerned on behalf of athletes.



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Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)

Why in News?

Dr. TCA Raghavan is the new Director General (DG) of Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA).

Appointment: He was selected by Governing Body and Governing Council of ICWA headed by Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu.

About ICWA?

It was established in 1943 by group of Indian intellectuals as think tank. It was established as non-official, non-political and non-profit organisation under Registration of Societies Act 1860.

- It was declared institution of national importance by Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA), 2001 enacted by Parliament.
- The Vice President of India is the ex-officio President of ICWA, while the Minister of External Affairs is its Vice-President.
- ICWA is devoted exclusively for the study of international relations and foreign affairs. Vice President of India is its ex-officio President.
- It had conducted historic international conferences like Asian Relations Conference in 1947 under leadership Sarojini Naidu and United Nations and New World Order in 1994.

General Studies-3

Coal Mine Surveillance & Management System (CMSMS) and 'Khan Prahari'

Union Minister of Coal, Railways, Finance & Corporate Affairs, Shri Piyush Goyal launched the Coal Mine Surveillance & Management System (CMSMS) and Mobile Application 'Khan Prahari' developed by CMPDI, Ranchi a Subsidiary of CIL and Bhaskarcharya Institute of Space Application and Geo-informatics (BISAG) at a ceremony at, New Delhi.

About CMSMS:



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The basic objective of CMSMS is reporting, monitoring and taking suitable action on unauthorised coal mining activities.

The CMSMS is a web based GIS application through which location of sites for unauthorised mining can be detected.

The basic platform used in the system is of Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology's (MeiTY) map which provides village level information.

The leasehold boundary of all the coal mines are displayed on this map.

The system will use satellite data to detect changes by which unauthorised mining activity extending beyond the allotted lease area can be detected and suitable action can be taken on it.

It is the working of the concept of 'cooperative federalism' in action.

The system also uses information provided by responsible citizens using smartphones using the mobile application "Khan Prahari".

About Khan Prahari

Khan Prahari is a tool for reporting any activity taking place related to illegal coal mining like rat hole mining, pilferage etc.

One can upload geo-tagged photographs of the incident along with textual information directly to the system.

Hence, both satellite data and human information will be used to capture information on the unauthorised mining activities.

Once reported, the information will be automatically directed to the nodal officers to take suitable action on those activities. The complainant can also track his complaint through the system. The identity of the complainant shall not be revealed. This app can easily be downloaded in Android and IOS.

Cabinet approves accession to WIPO Copyright Treaty, 1996 and WIPO Performance and Phonograms Treaty, 1996



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The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved the proposal submitted by Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry regarding accession to the WIPO Copyright Treaty and WIPO Performers and Phonograms Treaty which extends coverage of copyright to the internet and digital environment.

The approval is a step towards the objective laid in the National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy adopted by the Government on 12th May 2016 which aims to get value for IPRs through commercialization by providing guidance and support to IPR owners about commercial opportunities of e-commerce through Internet and mobile platforms.

Benefits:

Meeting the demand of the copyright industries, these treaties will help India:

- To enable creative right-holders enjoy the fruit of their labour, through international copyright system that can be used to secure a return on the investment made in producing and distributing creative works;
- To facilitate international protection of domestic rights holder by providing them level-playing field in other countries as India already extends protection to foreign works through the International Copyright order and these treaties will enable Indian right holders to get reciprocal protection abroad;
- To instil confidence and distribute creative works in digital environment with return on investment; and
- To spur business growth and contribute to the development of a vibrant creative economy and cultural landscape.

Background:

Copyright Act, 1957:

After the administration of Copyright Act 1957 was transferred to DIPP in March 2016, a study was initiated to examine compatibility of Copyright Act 1957 with WCT and WPPT. Also a joint study was undertaken with WIPO.

The Copyright Act, 1957 was amended in 2012 to bring it in conformity, with WCT and WPPT, includes amendment in definition of "Communication to the public" to make it applicable to digital environment.



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WIPO Copyright Treaty came in force on March 6, 2002 and has been adopted by 96 contracting parties till date and is A Special agreement under Berne Convention (for protection of literary and artistic works).

It has provisions to extend the protection of copyrights contained therein to the digital environment.

Further it recognises the rights specific to digital environment, of making work available, to address "on-demand" and other interactive modes of access,

WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty came in force on May 20, 2002 and has 96 contracting parties as its members. WPPT deals with rights of two kinds of beneficiaries, particularly in digital environment -

- (i) Performers (actors, singers, musicians etc.)
- (ii) Producers of Phonograms (Sound recordings).

The treaty empowers right owners in their negotiations with new digital platforms and distributors. It recognizes moral rights of the performers for the first time & provides exclusive economic rights to them.

Both the treaties provide framework for creators and right owners to use technical tools to protect their works and safeguard information about their use i.e. Protection of Technological Protection Measures (TPMs) and Rights Management Information (RMI).

Crew Escape System - Technology Demonstrator

ISRO carried out a major technology demonstration today, the first in a series of tests to qualify a Crew Escape System, which is a critical technology relevant for human spaceflight.

About Crew Escape sysem:

The Crew Escape System is an emergency escape measure designed to quickly pull the crew module along with the astronauts to a safe distance from the launch vehicle in the event of a launch abort.

The first test (Pad Abort Test) demonstrated the safe recovery of the crew module in case of any exigency at the launch pad.



C.A From 2nd July to 13th July 2018

After a smooth countdown of 5 hours, the Crew Escape System along with the simulated crew module with a mass of 12.6 tonnes, lifted off at the opening of the launch window from its pad at Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota today.

The test was over in 259 seconds, during which the Crew Escape System along with crew module soared skyward, then arced out over the Bay of Bengal and floated back to Earth under its parachutes about 2.9 km from Sriharikota.

Benefits:

The Pad Abort Test [PAT] demonstrated the safe recovery of the crew module in case of any exigency at the launch pad.

PAT is a major technology demonstrator and the first in a series of tests to qualify a larger Crew Escape System of the future.

The U.S., Russia and China which have sent human missions have developed their own systems.

ISRO has been readying technologies like pad abort — that are necessary for a future manned mission — as part of its R&D activities.

ICAT releases First BS-VI engine certificate

ICAT has completed the first BS-VI certification for a heavy duty engine.

The engine has been developed and manufactured indigenously by Volvo Eicher in India.

The successful completion of the compliance test of the engine, much ahead of the implementation date of 1 April, 2020, gives sufficient time for product stabilization in terms of making it more robust and cost competitive for the end consumers.

About ICAT:

The International Centre for Automotive Technology (ICAT) is a division of NATRiP implementation society (NATIS), under the administrative control of Ministry of Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises, Government of India.



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ICAT is the first of new world class centers established under the National Automotive Testing and R&D Infrastructure Project (NATRIP) with the main objective of carrying out Research & Development besides extending homologation facilities in the field of Automotive Engineering.

ICAT is one of the prime testing agencies recognized by the Government of India as one of the accredited 'Type Approval and Homologation' agencies in India under Central Motor Vehicle Rules (CMVR) and has also been recognized as Scientific and Industrial Research Organization (SIRO) by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), by BIS for Tyre Testing, Safety Glasses and by Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) for emission and noise testing of generator sets.

ICAT has emerged as a comprehensive technical partner of the automotive industry.

About Bharat stage

Bharat stage emission standards (BSES) are emission standards instituted by the [Government of India](#) to regulate the output of [air pollutants](#) from [internal combustion engines](#) and [Spark-ignition engines](#) equipment, including [motor vehicles](#).

The standards and the timeline for implementation are set by the Central Pollution Control Board under the Ministry of Environment & Forests and climate change.

The standards, based on [European regulations](#) were first introduced in 2000. Progressively stringent norms have been rolled out since then.

All new vehicles manufactured after the implementation of the norms have to be compliant with the regulations.

Since October 2010, Bharat Stage (BS) III norms have been enforced across the country. In 13 major cities, Bharat Stage IV emission norms have been in place since April 2010 and it has been enforced for entire country since April 2017.

In 2016, the Indian government announced that the country would skip the BS-V norms altogether and adopt BS-VI norms by 2020

Recapitalization of RRBs

Why in News?



C.A From 2nd July to 13th July 2018

Cabinet approves extension of Scheme of Recapitalization of Regional Rural Banks upto 2019-20.

Benefits:

This will enable the RRBs to maintain the minimum prescribed Capital to Risk Weighted Assets Ratio (CRAR) of 9%.

A strong capital structure and minimum required level of CRAR will ensure financial stability of RRBs which will enable them to play a greater role in financial inclusion and meeting the credit requirements of rural areas.

About RRBs:

- RRBs are jointly owned by Government of India, the concerned State Government and Sponsor Banks with the issued capital shared in the proportion of 50%, 15% and 35% respectively.
- RRBs were set up with the objective to provide credit and other facilities, especially to the small and marginal farmers, agricultural labourers, artisans and small entrepreneurs in rural areas for development of agriculture, trade, commerce, industry and other productive activities.

Nasscom inks MoU with NITI Aayog on research

The National Association of Software and Services Companies (Nasscom), India's premier software lobby, on Thursday opened a Center of Excellence (CoE) for Data Science and Artificial Intelligence here.

Nasscom also signed a MoU with NITI Aayog to collaboratively foster applied research, accelerating adoption and ethics, privacy and security.

Supporting AI strategy



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Nasscom would support the government's National Strategy for AI and will facilitate collaboration between NITI Aayog and CoEs.

It will also include NITI Aayog as a knowledge partner.

Leveraging their skilling platform FutureSkills, Nasscom and NITI Aayog will together accelerate innovation and cultivate skilling in India.

The CoE initiative is a nationwide programme on innovation, focusing on solutions in smart manufacturing, automotive, healthcare, agriculture, energy, IoT, banking and financial services, retail, telecom, and host of emerging technologies.

International Round Table Conference on "Data for New India"

The Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation (MoSPI) is organising a two-day International Round Table Conference at New Delhi during 9-10th July, 2018.

Purpose of RTC

To identify innovative ideas for improving the statistical system in India, taking cue from the best practices followed in advanced countries like Canada, UK and Australia.

Such a Conference is being organized in India for the first time.

In the Conference, the experts from National and International agencies would deliberate on key statistical issues, such as data governance structure and capabilities, organizational issues, managing data systems in a federal structure and resource mobilization for ensuring quality statistical products to be produced.

The conference is expected to suggest measures paving way for initiating the reform process in the Indian Statistical System.

Fight Against Black Money:

New Step By Govt.

In a move aimed at widening the crackdown on black money and following the money trail flowing in and out of thousands of shell companies, the Centre is planning to set up an



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information technology (IT)-based mechanism to keep a tab on all non-cash financial transactions in the country.

Highly-placed government sources involved in devising the initiative said the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had been asked to develop the IT infrastructure for this purpose.

How will It Work?

Currently, the idea is to make the RBI the sole repository of such information, which will not be made available to other agencies such as the income tax department and the enforcement directorate as a default.

Such agencies may be required to make specific requests to the central bank if they want information on a particular set of entities.

Although the data will be captured for all transactions irrespective of the size of the transactions, the large ones would be relevant for enforcement purposes.

Mechanism Already in Place

Under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, banks and financial institutions are already required to alert the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU), under the Finance Ministry, to any suspicious transactions, cash or otherwise.

Cash transactions of more than Rs. 10 lakh (including a series of transactions integrally connected to each other and exceeding Rs. 10 lakh in a month), need to be reported to the FIU.

All suspicious transactions need to be reported to the unit within seven days after it is concluded that those are suspicious in nature.

The move to track all financial transactions is the latest in a series to curb black money and identify shell companies.



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Effects of Govt. Intervention:

Following the 2016 demonetisation exercise that rendered more than 86% of the currency in circulation invalid, it was found there had been a significant spurt in the operations of shell firms that typically have no assets or active businesses.

The Centre has shut down more than two lakh such entities.

In FY17, the FIU had received more than 15.9 million Cash Transaction Reports and 4.73 lakh Suspicious Transaction Reports.

Formalin found in Fishes:

As many as 11 out of 30 samples of fish species purchased from Chinthadripet and Kasimedu, the two major fish markets in [Chennai](#), on two different days, have tested positive for formalin, a cancer-inducing chemical used illegally to preserve fish.

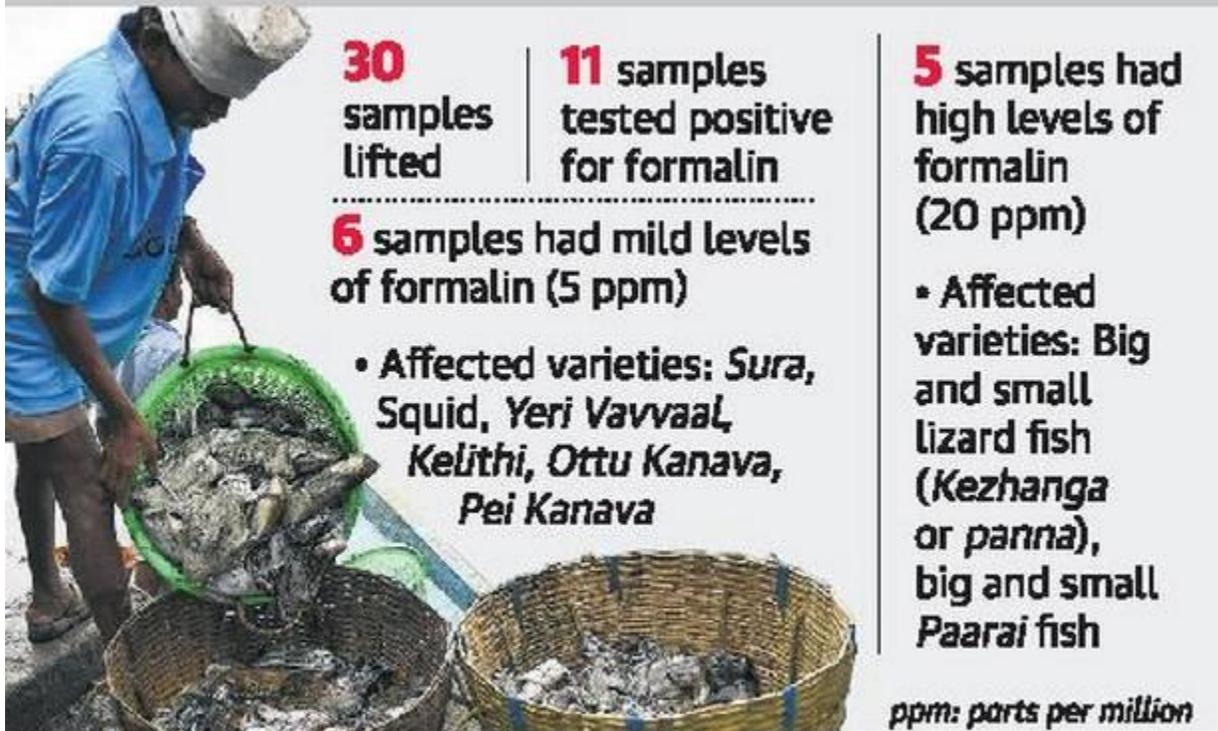
A low-cost formalin detection kit developed by researchers of the State-run university was used to test the samples purchased by The Hindu for ascertaining if they contained the carcinogen



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that is used widely as a preservative and disinfectant.

Fishy business | What the tests revealed:



Formalin causes irritation in the eyes, throat, skin and stomach. Long-term exposure could harm kidneys, liver and even cause cancer

Side Effects Of Formalin:

Formalin causes irritation in the eyes, throat, skin and stomach. In the long run continued exposure causes harm to the kidneys, liver and can even cause cancers.

This is the first time samples of fish in [Tamil Nadu](#) have tested positive for formalin.

Both big and small lizard fish or panna or kezhanga and paarai (Malabar trevally) were found to have formalin content of above 20 ppm (parts per million).



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Other varieties such as sura, octopus, eri vavvaal, ottu kanava, peikanava and kelithi had formalin of around 5 ppm.

Why is Formalin Used?

Fish industry experts said formalin or formaldehyde is sprayed on the fish or injected into the fish or the fish is dipped into the solution. T

his helps keep the fish fresh for a longer time.

Usually people who buy fish check the gills for freshness, if it is red it denotes freshness, when formalin is used the gills remain red for longer periods.

In some cases, fishermen also apply kumkum to retain redness.

Asian Development Bank

Why in News?

Union Minister of State (IC) for Power and New & Renewable Energy Shri R.K Singh took a meeting here, today, with the officials from ADB and Finance Ministry to review the progress of lining project of the Son canal in Shahabad – Bhojpur region of Bihar.

Centre and ADB signed \$84 million loan for water supply in Bihar.

About ADB:

It is a regional development bank established on 22 August 1966 and is headquartered in Philippines. It aims to facilitate economic development of countries in Asia. It also aims for an Asia and Pacific free from poverty.

Membership:



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The bank admits the members of the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP, formerly known as the United Nations Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East) and non-regional developed countries.

Currently, it has 67 members – of which 48 are from within Asia and the Pacific and 19 outside.

Voting:

ADB was modelled closely on the World Bank, and has a similar weighted voting system where votes are distributed in proportion with member's capital subscriptions.

Funding:

- ADB raises funds through bond issues on the world's capital markets.
- ADB also rely on its members' contributions, retained earnings from its lending operations, and the repayment of loans.
- Japan holds the largest proportions of shares at 15.67%. The United States holds 15.56%, China holds 6.47%, India holds 6.36%, and Australia holds 5.81%.

Board of Governors:

- It is the highest policy-making body of the bank.
- It is composed of one representative from each member state.
- The Board of Governors also elect the bank's President who is the chairperson of the Board of Directors and manages ADB.
- The Alternate Board of Governors are nominated by Board of Governors of ADB's 67 to represent them at the Annual Meeting that meets formally once year to be held in a member country.

Loans:



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It offers both Hard Loans and Soft loans. The ADB offers “hard” loans from ordinary capital resources (OCR) on commercial terms, and the Asian Development Fund (ADF) affiliated with the ADB extends “soft” loans from special fund resources with concessional conditions.

GRACE-FO mission

About three weeks after their launch, the twin climate-monitoring satellites- GRACE-FO satellites (short for Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment Follow-On)- that NASA deployed in Earth’s orbit have switched on their powerful lasers for the first time, showing that their systems are shipshape.

About GRACE- FO mission:

The Gravity Recovery and Climate Experiment Follow-on (GRACE-FO) mission is a partnership between NASA and the German Research Centre for Geosciences (GFZ).

GRACE-FO is a successor to the original GRACE mission, which began orbiting Earth on March 17, 2002. The GRACE missions measure variations in gravity over Earth’s surface, producing a new map of the gravity field every 30 days.

- GRACE-FO will carry on the extremely successful work of its predecessor while testing a new technology designed to dramatically improve the already remarkable precision of its measurement system.
- GRACE-FO will continue the work of tracking Earth’s water movement to monitor changes in underground water storage, the amount of water in large lakes and rivers, soil moisture, ice sheets and glaciers, and sea level caused by the addition of water to the ocean. These discoveries provide a unique view of Earth’s climate and have far-reaching benefits to society and the world’s population.

Ease of Doing Business Index

- Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Ministry of Commerce and Industry, released the final rankings of States in Ease of Doing Business in New Delhi today.
- The top rankers are Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Haryana. Jharkhand and Gujarat stood fourth and fifth respectively.



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- DIPP, Ministry of Commerce and Industry in collaboration with the World Bank conducted an annual reform exercise for all States and UTs under the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP).
- The aim of this exercise is to improve delivery of various Central Government regulatory functions and services in an efficient, effective and transparent manner.

Assesment Parameters:

- The current assessment under the BRAP 2017 is based on a combined score consisting of **Reform evidence score** that is based on evidences uploaded by the States and UTs and **Feedback score** that is based on the feedback garnered from the actual users of the services provided to the businesses.
- It is for the first time that DIPP has introduced taking feedback to ensure that the reforms have actually reached ground level.
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- India climbed up 29 spots to the 100th position out of 190 surveyed countries in the World Bank's ease of doing business (EDB) index 2018.

Malaria control through use of Technology:

- More than 80% of a dengue fever-spreading mosquito has been wiped out in an Australian town during a landmark trial, scientists said on Tuesday, offering hope for combating the dangerous pest globally.
- Researchers from Australia's national science body CSIRO bred millions of non-biting male Aedes aegypti mosquitoes in laboratory conditions at James Cook University (JCU) in a project funded by Google parent company Alphabet.
- The mosquitoes were infected with the Wolbachia bacteria, which renders them sterile.

How does it Work?

- They were then released into the wild at trial sites around the Queensland town of Innisfail where over three months they mated with females who laid eggs that did not hatch, causing the population to plummet.



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- The Aedes aegypti mosquito is one of the world's most dangerous pests, capable of spreading devastating diseases like dengue, Zika and chikungunya.
- It is responsible for infecting millions of people around the world each year and JCU's Kyran Staunton said the successful trial was a major step forward.
- The so-called sterile insect technique has been used before but the challenge in making it work for mosquitoes was being able to rear enough of them, identify males, remove biting females, and then release them in large enough numbers to suppress a population.

Debug project

- Verily — a life sciences company funded by Alphabet — has developed a mosquito rearing, sex sorting and release technology as part of its global Debug project.

Western Ghats

- One of the Hottest Biodiversity Hotspots and UNESCO World Heritage site, the Western Ghats has come fourth in the list of the Lonely Planet, considered a Bible by travellers worldwide.
- Neelakurinji (*Strobilanthes kunthiana*), which has started blooming after 12 years in the famed hill station of Munnar has found mention in report.

About Western Ghats:

- Traversing Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Goa and Maharashtra, these rugged hills are UNESCO listed as one of the top spots for biodiversity in the world, protecting everything from wild elephants and tigers to the neelakurinji flower, which blooms only once every 12 years and will be painting the hills in purple livery from August to October 2018.
- Western Ghats supports the life of 7,402 species of flowering plants, 1814 species of non-flowering plants, 139 mammal species, 508 bird species, 179 amphibian species, 6000 insects species and 290 freshwater fish species.

Workshop On Greenhouse Gas Inventories in Asia



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- Dr. Harsh Vardhan Inaugurates 16th Workshop On Greenhouse Gas Inventories in Asia.

About WGIA:

- WGIA is an initiative of Government of Japan to improve the quality of Greenhouse Gas Inventories of Asian countries by building capacities through training and exchange of experience.
- A reliable and robust inventory is the backbone of climate action.
- Such efforts will contribute towards meeting the requirements towards enhanced reporting and transparency as required under the Convention and its Paris Agreement.

Member Nations:

- 15 countries including Brunei, Cambodia, China, India, Indonesia, Japan, Republic of Korea, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam are WGIA members and around 100 GHG inventory experts from these countries participated along with representatives from UNFCCC, IPCC, FAO and other specialized agencies. India is hosting WGIA for the first time.

Nilgiri Tahr:

Why in News?

- The antics of the sure-footed Nilgiri tahr are a treat to watch, but these endangered wild mountain goats – found only in high altitudes in India's Western Ghats — could be losing their footing with increasing climate change.
- Even under moderate scenarios of future climate change, tahrs could lose approximately 60% of their habitats from the 2030s on, predict scientists in their study in Ecological Engineering, an international journal that emphasises the need for ecological restoration.
- Scientists tried to predict how [climate change](#) can affect tahr habitat in the Ghats by mapping tahr distribution (using existing information and field surveys) and then using climatic factors of these locations to see where tahrs would be able to survive, given current and future climate change scenarios.

Details of Study:



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- They found that tahr strongholds such as Chinnar, Eravikulam and Parambikulam in Kerala will still be stable habitats under different climate change scenarios.
- However, other regions, including parts of Tamil Nadu's Kalakkad Mundanthurai Tiger Reserve and the [wildlife](#) sanctuaries of Peppara, Neyyar, Schenduruny and Srivilliputhur, could experience severe habitat loss in future; in total, approx. 60% of tahr habitat could be lost across the Ghats from 2030s onwards.
- There are only around 2,500 tahrs left in the wild and their population — “small and isolated, making them vulnerable to local extinction” — shows a “decreasing” trend, as per the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

Local threat

- According to the report, only the Eravikulam and Mukurthi National Parks stress on tahr-centered conservation activities in their management plans.
- Though the recovery plan identified “conservation units” and made site-specific recommendations, how much of it has been implemented is unclear.

About Nilgiri Tahr:

- The **Nilgiri tahr** (*Nilgiritragus hylocrius*) known locally as the **Nilgiri ibex** or simply **ibex**, is an [ungulate](#) that is [endemic](#) to the [Nilgiri Hills](#) and the southern portion of the [Western Ghats](#) in the states of [Tamil Nadu](#) and [Kerala](#) in Southern [India](#).
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- It is the state animal of [Tamil Nadu](#).
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- Despite its local name, it is more closely related to the sheep of the genus [Ovis](#) than the ibex and wild goats of the genus [Capra](#).

Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2018

The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation launches the Swachh Survekshan Grameen 2018 (SSG 2018) in the capital today.



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An independent survey agency will conduct the survey in all districts from 1st to 31st August 2018, and the results will be announced in the form of a ranking of all districts and states on the basis of quantitative and qualitative sanitation (Swachhata) parameters.

The objective of SSG 2018 is to undertake a ranking of states and districts on the basis of their performance attained on key quantitative and qualitative SBM-G parameters.

In the process, through a countrywide communication campaign, rural communities will be engaged in the improvement of the sanitation and cleanliness of their surrounding areas, he added.

As part of Swachh Survekshan Grameen 6,980 villages in 698 districts across India will be covered. Total 34,000 public places namely schools, anganwadis, public health centres, haat/bazaars/religious places in these villages will be visited for survey.

Parameters of Survey:

During the process, 65% weightage has been assigned to the findings and outcome from the survey and 35% to the service level parameters to be obtained from the IMIS of the MDWS. The weights to different elements of the SSG would be as below:

- Direct Observation of sanitation in public places: 30%
- Citizen's Feedback on sanitation parameters: 35%
- Service Level Progress on sanitation progress in the country as per SBMG- MIS: 35%

Performance Of SBM:

Over 7.7 crore toilets have been built in rural India under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen) since its launch in October 2014, with a usage of 93% as per an independent third-party survey conducted in 2017-18 across all States/UTs.

Nearly 4 lakh villages, over 400 districts and 19 States and Union Territories have declared themselves free from open defecation.



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INS Tarangini

Why in News?

INS Tarangini arrived at her seventh port, Sunderland in the UK, during her Lokayan-18 voyage and also to participate in the prestigious 'tall ship races - 2018'.

About INS Tarangini:

The ship is part of the first Training Squadron based at Kochi, under the Southern Naval Command of the Indian Navy. The name 'Tarangini' is derived from the Hindi word 'Tarang' meaning waves; thus, Tarangini means 'the one that rides the waves'.

INS Tarangini is the first ship of the Indian Navy to have circumnavigated the globe in the year 2003-04 and has participated in tall ship races conducted around the world in 2007, 2011 and 2015.

INS Tarangini is a three masted 'barque,' commissioned in 1997 as a sail training ship for the Indian Navy.