



**C.A Dated On 15-09-2018**

**General Studies- 1**

**'Pravasi Bharatiya Divas' (PBD, or Non-resident Indian Day**

Fifteen years after then Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee launched the 'Pravasi Bharatiya Divas' (PBD, or Non-resident Indian Day) conference to mark the day Mahatma Gandhi returned to India from South Africa, the government has decided to move the date to facilitate NRI Kumbh Mela visitors, and "maximise their experience" during their visit to India.

The 15th edition of the event will be held in January 2019 in Varanasi, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's constituency, and close to the site of the 'Ardh Kumbh' in Allahabad.

**About pravasi Bharat Diwas:**

- While the PBD conference has been scheduled for January 7-9 since its inception in 2003, the 15th PBD conference in 2019 will be held on January 21-23rd instead.
- January 9 was chosen to celebrate this occasion since it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, returned to India from South Africa, led India's freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever."
- Established in 2000, it is sponsored by the [Ministry of External Affairs](#) of the [Government of India](#) and the [Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry](#) (FICCI), the [Confederation of Indian Industries](#) and the [Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region](#).
- A celebratory event is held on 7-9 January every other year in an Indian city: a forum for issues concerning the [Indian Diaspora](#) is organised and the [Pravasi Bharatiya Samman](#) Awards are given. [

**General Studies-2**

**UDAN Scheme:**

For every 10 seats available under the government's low-cost flying scheme, as many as seven were grabbed by passengers since its launch last year, according to data accessed under the RTI (Right to Information) Act.



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Extrapolation of data sought by *The Hindu* through a RTI application shows that as many 7.5 lakh seats were made available for sale by eight airline operators, of which 5.24 lakh seats were sold.

#### **About the Scheme:**

- UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik), aims to take flying to the masses and enhance air connectivity to Tier-1 and Tier-2 cities.
- Airlines have to set aside 50% of the total aircraft capacity for cheaper fares to be offered at the rate of ₹2,500 per hour of flight, in return for which airlines are given a subsidy by the Centre and the State government concerned.

**UDE DESH KA AAM NAAGRIK (UDAN)**

## India's Regional Air Connectivity Scheme

Aimed at bringing air travel within reach of the common man, Central Government has launched the UDAN scheme

**Highlights**

- ☁ Offers subsidy to airlines for flying to domestic airports with limited connectivity
- ☁ Fare cap of ₹ 2,500 per hour of flying by plane and ₹ 5,000 for helicopters
- ☁ State governments and airport operators will contribute to the scheme

☁ First flight under this scheme to take off in Jan 2017

☁ 50% seats of the UDAN flights to have a fare cap of ₹ 2,500 and the rest will have market-based pricing

☁ Applicable on flights of 200 km to 800 km distance

☁ Hilly, remote, island and security sensitive regions have no distance limit

☁ Centre will provide concessions on VAT and service tax to the airlines

☁ No landing charges, parking charges and Terminal Navigation Landing Charges

☁ A Regional Connectivity Fund will be created to fund the scheme

**KBK Infographics**



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### **General Studies-3**

#### **PSLV C- 42**

#### **Why in News?**

- A PSLV (polar satellite launch vehicle) will be launched on September 16 night from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota to put two earth observation satellites from the United Kingdom to space.
- There is no Indian satellite on this flight.
- PSLV-C42 will be the first fully commercial trip of the year, breaking a five-month-long lull, for the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).

#### **Objectives of Mission:**

- NovaSAR is an S-Band synthetic aperture radar satellite, which will map forest, land use and monitor ice cover, flood and disaster.
- S1-4 is a high resolution optical Earth observation satellite that will be used for surveying resources, urban management and monitoring of the environment and disasters.
- Antrix has so far contracted over 280 foreign customer satellites for a fee; most of them are small experimental or earth observation spacecraft.
- This will be the 44th PSLV and the 12th time it will fly as core-alone.

#### **About PSLV**

- The **Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV)** is an [expendable launch system](#) developed and operated by the [Indian Space Research Organisation](#) (ISRO).
- It is a [Medium-lift launch vehicle](#). It was developed to allow India to launch its [Indian Remote Sensing](#) (IRS) satellites into [sun-synchronous orbits](#), a



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service that was, until the advent of the PSLV in 1993, commercially available only from [Russia](#).

- PSLV can also launch small size satellites into [geostationary transfer orbit](#) (GTO).
- Some notable payloads launched by PSLV include India's first [lunar](#) probe [Chandrayaan-1](#), India's first [interplanetary mission](#), [Mars Orbiter Mission](#) (Mangalyaan) and India's first space [observatory](#), [Astrosat](#).

### **ICESat-2**

#### **Why in News?**

NASA's most advanced space laser satellite blasted off on Saturday on a mission to track ice loss around the world and improve forecasts of sea level rise as the climate warms.

#### **About the Mission:**

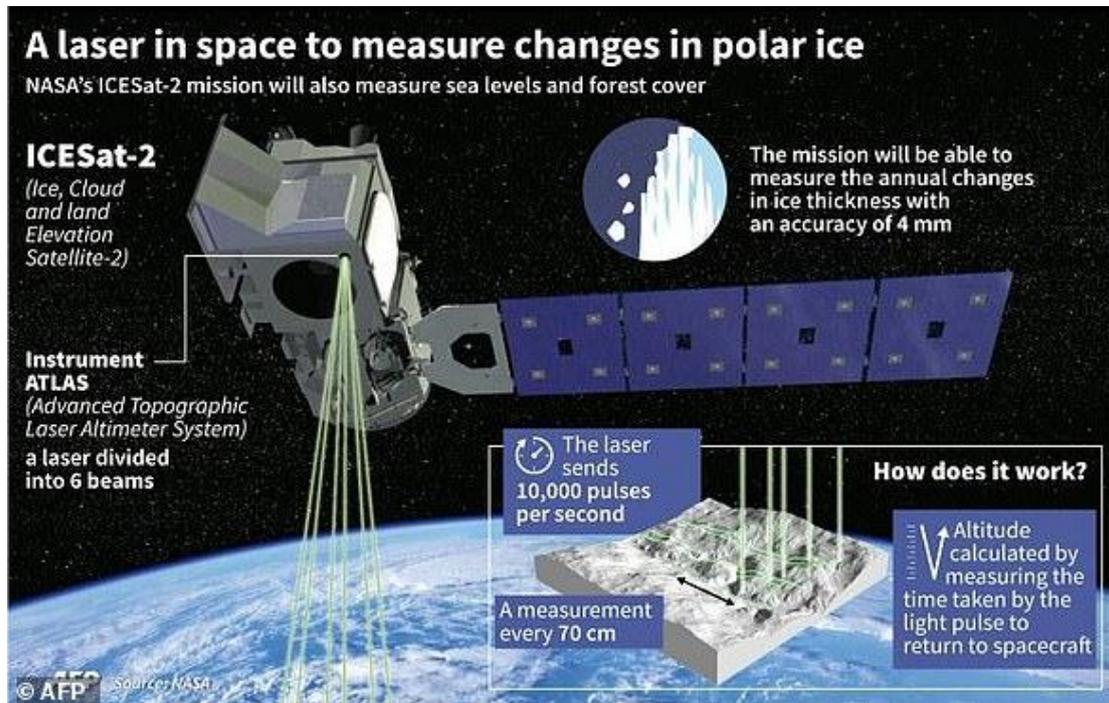
- The \$1 billion ICESat-2 mission was launched aboard a Delta II rocket from Vandenberg Air Force base in California at 1302 GMT.
- The launch marks the first time in nearly a decade that NASA has had a tool in orbit to measure ice sheet surface elevation across the globe.
- The preceding mission, ICESat, launched in 2003 and ended in 2009.
- The first ICESat revealed that sea ice was thinning, and ice cover was disappearing from coastal areas in Greenland and Antarctica.

#### **How is New Icesat different?**

- The new laser will fire 10,000 times in one second, compared to the original ICESat which fired 40 times a second.
- The mission will gather enough data to estimate the annual elevation change in the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets even if it's as slight as four mm - the width of a No. 2 pencil," NASA said in a statement.
- Importantly, the laser will measure the slope and height of the ice, not just the area it covers.



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## **Coral Reef Restoration:**

### **Why in News?**

A team from National Centre for Coastal Research, Chennai, plans to work on coral monitoring and restoration in the Gulf of Mannar region.

The group has prior experience in studying corals across the country.

They have successfully transplanted and nurtured corals in the Lakshadweep region. Now they are set to work in the Gulf of Mannar.

### **About Coral Reefs:**

- Coral reefs are among the most diverse ecosystems on earth, and their role in maintaining marine biodiversity is of no small measure.
- However, it is well documented that coral systems around the world are bleaching and dying due to climate and chemical changes in the sea water.



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**About Coral bleaching**

- Corals have a symbiotic relationship with the unicellular algae dinoflagellates.
- An increase in sea surface temperatures leads to coral bleaching and the breaking of this relationship.
- This ecosystem is so sensitive that an increase of sea surface temperature by one degree can cause the corals to bleach and die.
- Apart from sea surface temperatures, increase in carbon dioxide levels in the sea water and a change in its chemical composition can also trigger bleaching.

**Corals in India**

Coral reefs in India are only seen in some localities around the Gulf of Mannar, Gulf of Kutch, Lakshadweep islands and Andaman and Nicobar islands.

In many of these places, bleaching of corals and related cnideria species such as giant clam and tentacle sea anemone have been observed by the team.

**Restoration efforts**

- Over the last decade, this region has seen restoration of live corals in these areas.
- The team found that the branching coral *Acropora* could grow 25 cm in 3 years. Another genera, *Pocillopora*, grew 15 cm in 3 years.
- The researchers plan to replicate the model in the Gulf of Mannar region, and towards this end, they have set up a centre in a 25-acre piece of land near the Rameshwaram coast.
- Partnering with Gulf of Mannar Marine National Park Authority, they will first monitor the 21 islands in this region and identify degraded areas.
- In January, after the monsoons, they plan to start transplantation work with branching coral species.