



**C.A Dated On 30-04-2019**

**GS-2**

**ASW Water Craft:**

**Why in News?**

The Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Monday signed a contract with Kolkata based defence shipyard Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE) for the construction of eight Anti-Submarine Warfare Shallow Water Crafts (ASWSWCs).

**About the Ship:**

- The first ship is to be delivered within 42 months from contract signing date and subsequent balance ships delivery schedule will be two ships per year.
- Navy had issued the Request For Proposal (RFP) for design, construction and supply of the eight ASWSWCs to Defence Public Sector Undertaking (DPSU) shipyards and private shipyards in April 2014 in which GRSE emerged as the successful bidder.
- These ships displacing 750 tons, have a complement of 57 personnel and can reach speed of 25 knots.
- They are capable of full-scale sub surface surveillance of coastal waters and coordinated ASW operations with aircraft.
- These can also be deployed for search and rescue by day and night in coastal areas. In their secondary role, these will be capable to prosecute intruding aircraft, and lay mines in the sea bed, the statement added.

**National Clean Air Programme**

**Why in News?**

The Union Environment Ministry has constituted a committee to implement the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), which aims to reduce particulate matter (PM) pollution by 20%-30% in at least 102 cities by 2024.

**Members:**



### **C.A Dated On 30-04-2019**

- The committee will be chaired by the Secretary, Union Environment Ministry and has among its members the Joint Secretary (Thermal), Ministry of Power; Director-General, The Energy Resources Institute (TERI), the Delhi-based think-tank; and Professor Sachidananda Tripathi, Indian Institute of Technology-Kanpur (IIT-K).
- The NCAP unveiled in January is envisaged as a scheme to provide the States and the Centre with a framework to combat air pollution.
- The committee would be headquartered in New Delhi and its remit includes ensuring "inter-ministerial organisation and cooperation, sharing information and resolving issues that could arise between ministries.
- The committee would also give overall guidance and directions to effectively implement the programmes.

### **About NCAP:**

- The NCAP is envisioned as a five-year action plan with 2019 as the first year.
- There would be a review every five years.
- States in which the cities are located are expected to produce plans that include increasing the number of monitoring stations, providing technology support, conducting source apportionment studies, and strengthening enforcement.
- For achieving the NCAP targets, the cities would be expected to calculate the reduction in pollution, keeping 2017's average annual PM levels as the base year.
- The World Health Organisation's (WHO) database on air pollution over the years has listed Tier I and Tier II Indian cities as some of the most polluted places in the world. In 2018, 14 of the world's 15 most polluted cities were in India.
- The NCAP requires cities to implement specific measures such as "ensuring roads are pothole-free to improve traffic flow and thereby reduce dust" (within 60 days) or "ensuring strict action against unauthorised brick kilns" (within 30 days).
- It doesn't specify an exact date for when these obligations kick in.



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**Anti Tank Missile:**

**Why in News?**

The Army is in the process of procuring Spike-LR Anti-Tank Missiles from Israel and Igla-S Very Short Range Air Defence Systems (VSHORAD) from Russia through a set of new financial powers for emergency procurements sanctioned by the Defence Ministry earlier this month.

**About the Emergency Power:**

- Under the latest emergency financial powers, armed forces have been given a free hand to procure equipment worth up to ₹300 crore on a priority basis.
- Under the emergency route, the Army is looking to procure about 12 launchers and around 250 missiles for each system. Deliveries have to be completed in three months, but extendable to six months.

**About the Missile:**

- **Spike** is an Israeli [fire-and-forget anti-tank guided missile](#) and [anti-personnel](#) missile with a [tandem-charge HEAT warhead](#), currently in its fourth-generation.
- It was developed and designed by the Israeli company [Rafael Advanced Defense Systems](#).
- It is available in man-portable, vehicle-launched, and helicopter-launched variants.
- The weight of the missile is 14 kg (30 lb 14 oz), and the weight of the complete system is less than 45 kg (99 lb 3 oz)
- Maximum range is 4,000 m (2.5 mi) and it is used by infantry and light combat vehicles.
- It adds fiber-optic communication to and from the operator during flight. [

**GS-3**

**SC on RBI:**



C.A Dated On 30-04-2019

## Why in News?

The [Supreme Court](#) on Friday gave the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) “a last opportunity” to withdraw a November 2016 Disclosure Policy to the extent to which it stonewalls revelation of every other kind of information under the Right to Information Act, including the list of wilful defaulters and annual inspection reports.

## Details:

### All for transparency

**In RBI versus Jayantilal N. Misty, the Supreme Court in 2015 said:**

- There is no fiduciary relationship between the RBI and the financial institutions
- RBI has a statutory duty to uphold the interests of the public at large,

the depositors and the country's economy and the banking sector

- RBI should act with transparency and not hide information that might embarrass the individual banks, and the RBI is duty-bound to comply with the provisions of the RTI Act



The 2015 judgment had rejected the RBI's argument that it could refuse information sought under the RTI on the grounds of economic interest, commercial confidence, fiduciary relationship or public interest.



**C.A Dated On 30-04-2019**

**SC's Observation:**

- The court had observed that there was “no fiduciary relationship between the RBI and the financial institutions”.
- The court, in 2015, reminded the RBI that it had the statutory duty to uphold the interests of the public at large, the depositors, the economy and the banking sector.
- This court was also of the opinion that the RBI should act with transparency and not hide information that might embarrass the individual banks.
- The RBI is duty-bound to comply with the provisions of the RTI Act and disclose the information... the submission made on behalf of the RBI that the disclosure would hurt the economic interests of the country was found to be totally misconceived..
- The court however said some matters of national economic interest like disclosure of information about currency or exchange rates, interest rates, taxes, the regulation or supervision of banking, insurance and other financial institutions, proposals for expenditure or borrowing and foreign investments could harm the national economy, particularly, if released prematurely.
- “However, lower-level economic and financial information like contracts and departmental budgets should not be withheld under this exemption,” Justice Rao wrote, referring to the 2015 verdict of the apex court.

**Global Forest Watch:**

**Context:**

The world lost 12 million hectares (30 million acres) of tropical tree cover last year, researchers said on Thursday, warning the planet’s health was at stake.

It was the fourth highest annual decline since records began in 2001, according to new data from Global Forest Watch, which uses satellite imagery and remote sensing to monitor tree cover losses from Brazil to Ghana.

**Salient Observation Made:**



### **C.A Dated On 30-04-2019**

- Data represented “heartbreaking losses in real places,” with indigenous communities most vulnerable to losing their homes and livelihoods through deforestation.
- The loss of huge swathes of forest around the world also has major implications for climate change as they absorb a third of the planet-warming greenhouse gas emissions produced globally.
- The study found much of the loss occurred in primary rainforest — mature trees that absorb more carbon and are harder to replace.
- The rate of destruction in 2018 was lower than in the two previous years.
- It peaked in 2016 when about 17 million hectares of tropical forest were lost due partly to rampant forest fires, according to the WRI.
- The study highlighted new deforestation hotspots, particularly in Africa, where illegal mining, small-scale forest clearing and the expansion of cocoa farms led to an increase in tree loss in countries such as Ghana and the Ivory Coast.

#### **Positive News:**

- Indonesia was a rare bright spot, with primary forest loss slowing for two years running, after the government imposed a moratorium on forest-clearing.
- Indonesia has the world’s third largest total area of tropical forest and is also the biggest producer of palm oil.
- Environmentalists blame much of the forest destruction on land clearance for oil-palm plantations.

#### **GM Brinjal:**

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

Genetically modified (GM) brinjal is being illegally grown in the Fatehabad district of [Haryana](#), according to anti-GM activists.

On Thursday, they demanded that the Central and the State regulatory agencies immediately take action to stop the cultivation, investigate the spread



### **C.A Dated On 30-04-2019**

of the illegal variety and destroy all such crops, seeds and saplings as dangerous biohazards are entering the food chain.

#### **About GM Brinjal:**

- Brinjal has been genetically modified by inserting a protein gene from the soil bacterium *Bacillus thuringiensis* to give protection against certain pests.
- The result is Bt brinjal, which was developed in India by Maharashtra-based seed company Mahyco.
- It was on the verge of becoming India's first GM food crop, when the Genetic Engineering Appraisal Committee (GEAC) cleared it for commercialisation in 2009, before doubts about the long-term impact on consumer health and plant biodiversity led then-Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh to slap an indefinite moratorium on the crop.

#### **Concerns:**

- Many [controversies](#) surround the development and release of [genetically modified foods](#), ranging from human safety and environmental impacts to ethical concerns such as corporate control of the food supply and [intellectual property](#) rights.
- The brinjal is an important food crop for India, and the potential commercialization of a genetically modified variety has drawn support and criticism.
- Although it is a major food crop in India, brinjal production is relatively low with fruit and shoot borer [infestation](#) a major constraint to [yield](#).

#### **Benefits:**

- Proponents of the technology believe the Bt brinjal will have positive effects for the Indian economy and the health of the farmers.
- Field trials conducted on research-managed farms carried out by Mahyco and the [Indian Council of Agricultural Research](#) suggested a 42% [pesticide](#) reduction and a doubling of the yield was possible.



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- The economic gain for consumers, developers and farmers was estimated to potentially be US\$108 million per year with an additional \$3–4 million saved due to health benefits associated with decreased pesticide use.