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1. Dighi Port

- The port is located on the bank of Rajpuri creek, in the Raigad District of **Maharashtra**.
- The unique feature of the port is its ideal location within a natural harbor and exclusive channel offering a depth of 14.5 m, making it one the deepest port of Maharashtra.
- Dighi Port is the **first Greenfield port in Maharashtra**.
- Do find out about Major and Minor Ports.

2. The Food Safety And Standards Authority Of India (FSSAI)

- Established under Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006
- It consolidates various acts & orders that have hitherto handled food related issues in various Ministries and Departments.
- **Ministry of Health & Family Welfare**, Government of India is the Administrative Ministry for the implementation of FSSAI.
- FSSAI has given provisional approval to nearly 19 Rapid Analytical Food Testing (RAFT) kits and devices. To strengthen the food testing ecosystem in the country. This would foster innovation and also encourage start-ups to work in the food testing space.
- FSSAI will also release the first edition of the **State Food Safety Index**, that measures the performance of the States on key parameters of food safety. Parameters include **compliance, food testing- infrastructure & surveillance and consumer empowerment. etc.**

FSSAI Codex Trust Fund

- The Codex Trust Fund supports countries to build strong, solid and sustainable national capacity to engage in Codex.
- It is managed in a transparent manner by the **Codex Trust Fund Secretariat in WHO**, aimed to support several **developing and least developed countries**.
- Codex Trust Fund (CTF2), officially launched in July 2016 at the 39th Session of the CAC focuses on helping countries address the barriers to effective engagement in Codex at national level.
- The Codex Trust Fund 2 will run for 12 years and support over 100 eligible countries to build strong, solid and sustainable national capacity to engage in Codex where international food standards are established.
- **Joint application by India along with Bhutan and Nepal** has been accepted for support from CTF2.
- The project will be run for a period of three years.

3. Registered Valuers' Organisations

- Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) has been designated – under the Government-framed rules – as the 'authority' that recognises registered valuers' organisations (RVOs).

- IBBI registers valuers' and monitors their conduct and performance when it comes to valuation assignments under IBC or Companies Act.
- For any market economy (includes India), valuation of assets is crucial to facilitate variety of transactions.
- Every valuation required under the Companies Act 2013 and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) 2016 is conducted through registered valuers.

4. Libor Out Sonia In

- Britain's Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) has ordered banks and markets to stop using the London Interbank Offered Rate or Libor as a basis for pricing contracts.
- Market participants have been asked to switch to the Bank of England's SONIA overnight interest rate.
- The **Sterling Overnight Interbank Average Rate (SONIA)** is compiled by the BoE and based on actual transactions.
- It is seen as **harder to manipulate than Libor**, which is based on quotes supplied by banks.

5. Copyright Board

- The draft Copyright Amendment Rules 2019, **released by DIPP, proposes setting up an Appellate Board to replace the Copyright Board.**
- It is being done to **ensure that it is in sync with the technological advancements** in the current digital era.
- It also proposes to amend the manner in which copyright societies fix their tariff schemes.
- A copyright Society is a legal body which protects or safeguards the interest of owners of the work by giving assurance to the creative authors of the commercial management of their works.
- These societies **issue licences and collects royalties in accordance with a tariff scheme.**
- The copyright regime is **governed by the Copyright Act, 1957 and the Copyright Rules, 2013.** The Copyright Rules, 2013 were last amended in 2016 through the Copyright Amendment Rules, 2016.

6. India's Turmeric Exports

- **North America has emerged as the largest market** for the commodity.

7. Purchasing Managers' Index PMI

- The Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) is an **indicator of the economic health of the manufacturing sector.**
- The PMI is based on five major indicators: new orders, inventory levels, production, supplier deliveries and the employment environment.
- The purpose of the PMI is to **provide information about current business conditions to company decision makers, analysts and purchasing managers.**

- For India, the **PMI Data** is published by Japanese firm **Nikkei** but compiled and constructed by Market Economics (for the US, it is the Institute for Supply Management, ISM).
- The variables used to construct India's PMI for manufacturing sector are: **Output, New Orders, Employment, Input Costs, Output Prices, Backlogs of Work, Export Orders, Quantity of Purchases, Suppliers' Delivery Times, Stocks of Purchases and Stocks of Finished Goods**. Similar variables are used for the construction of services PMI.
- PMI of more than 50 represents expansion of the manufacturing sector when compared to the previous month. A PMI reading under 50 represents a contraction, and a reading at 50 indicates no change.

8. GDP-PPP

BURGERNOMICS

The **Big Mac index** is regarded as an indicator for the purchasing power of an economy. As many countries have different currencies, the standardised Big Mac prices are calculated by converting the average national Big Mac prices with the latest exchange rate to US dollars. A Big Mac costs ₹178 in India and \$5.58 in the US. The implied exchange rate is 31.90. The difference between this and the actual exchange rate suggests the Indian rupee is 54% undervalued.



Big Mac Index

- The Big Mac Index is published by **The Economist** as an informal way of measuring the purchasing power parity (PPP) between two currencies and provides a test of the extent to which market exchange rates result in goods costing the same in different countries.

9. Sugar production

- **Uttar Pradesh** is the highest sugarcane producing State.
- It has the **most area under the production** as well as the **maximum output of Sugarcane**.
- It is **followed by Maharashtra**.
- **Tamil Nadu** has the **highest productivity of sugarcane** in the country.

More on Sugarcane

- It is now widely accepted that India is the original home of *Saccharum* species.
- Sugarcane is a tall perennial tropical grass.
- Sugarcane is propagated vegetatively from stem cuttings.
- Broadly there are two distinct agro-climatic regions of sugarcane cultivation in India, viz., tropical and subtropical. However, five agro-climatic zones have been identified.
- Sugarcane is grown in the world from altitude 36.7° N and 31.0° S, from sea level to 1000m of altitude or little more.
- Rainfall: A total rainfall between 1100 and 1500 mm is adequately provided the distribution is right, abundant in the months of vegetative growth followed by a dry period for ripening.

- **Sugarcane undergoes a type of photosynthesis which is called C4.**
- Usually, plants use a C3 type of photosynthesis.
- There the enzyme that captures the CO₂ inside the cell forms primarily a compound containing 3 carbon atoms (3-PGA).
- However, certain plants (e.g. sugarcane, maize and sorghum) have been modified during evolution so that they contain complementary metabolic pathway where, instead of incorporating carbon from CO₂ in a 3-carbon acid, they incorporate into a 4-carbon acid and because of that this type of photosynthesis is called C4.
- We even refer to a given plant species as a C4 or C3 species depending on its metabolism
- **Tropical Sugarcane region:** The tropical sugarcane region consists of sugarcane agro-climatic zone 4 (peninsular zone) and 5(Coastal zone) which includes the states of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Pondicherry and Kerala.
- **Sub-tropical sugarcane region: Around 55 per cent of total cane area in the country is in the sub-tropics. U.P, Bihar, Haryana and Punjab comes under this region.**

Climatic requirement

- Temperature for different critical stages of sugarcane:
 - ✓ The different critical stages are germination, tillering, early growth, active growth and elongation.
- The optimum temperature for sprouting (germination) of stem cuttings is 32° to 38°c.
- It slows down below 25°, reaches plateau between 30°-34°. Temperatures above 38° reduce the rate of photosynthesis and increase respiration.
- For ripening, however, relatively low temperatures in the range of 12° to 14° are desirable.
- Reduction in yield of sugarcane due to rise in temperature:
- The sugarcane productivity and juice quality are profoundly influenced by weather conditions prevailing during the various crop-growth sub-periods.
- **Sugar recovery is highest when the weather is dry with low humidity;** bright sunshine hours, cooler nights with wide diurnal variations and very little rainfall during the ripening period.
- These conditions favour high sugar accumulation.
- The climatic conditions like very high temperature or very low temperature deteriorate the juice quality and thus affecting the sugar quality.
- A favourable climate like warm and humid climate favour the insect pests and diseases, which cause much damage to the quality and yield of its juice and finally sucrose contents.

10. Import of Pulses

- India is the world's biggest producer and consumer of pulses.
- Mainly: yellow peas, green gram and chickpeas.

- Imported from: Russia, Canada, Australia and Myanmar.

11. Top recipients of FDI

- UNCTAD's World Investment Report 2019
- India ranks 10th amongst the top recipients of FDI in 2018.
- Global FDI flows, however, fell 13 per cent in 2018 to \$1.3 trillion, from \$1.5 trillion in the previous year – **the third consecutive annual decline**.
- US remained the largest recipient of FDI, followed by China, Hong Kong (China) and Singapore.
- In terms of outward investors, Japan became the largest followed by China and France.

12. Kisan Credit Card (KCC)

- The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme was introduced in 1998 for the issue of Kisan Credit Cards to farmers on the basis of their holdings for uniform adoption by the banks so that farmers may use them to readily purchase agriculture inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, pesticides etc. and draw cash for their production needs.
- Implemented by Commercial Banks, RRBs, Small Finance Banks and Cooperatives.

Eligibility

- Farmers - individual/joint borrowers who are owner-cultivators;
- Tenant farmers, oral lessees & share croppers;
- Self Help Groups (SHGs) or Joint Liability Groups (JLGs) of farmers including tenant farmers, share croppers etc.

Objectives

- To meet the short term credit requirements for cultivation of crops
- Post harvest expenses
- Produce Marketing loan
- Consumption requirements of farmer household
- Working capital for maintenance of farm assets, activities allied to agriculture, like dairy animals, inland fishery and also working capital required for floriculture, horticulture etc.
- Investment credit requirement for agriculture and allied activities like pump sets, sprayers, dairy animals, floriculture, horticulture etc
- Short term credit requirements of rearing of animals, birds, fish, shrimp, other aquatic organisms, the capture of fish.

13. Consumer Price Index

- Central Statistics Office (CSO), Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation releases CPI (Rural, Urban, Combined).

- Consumer Price Index Numbers for **Agricultural Labourers and Rural Labourers** is released by the **Ministry of Labour & Employment**.

14. WTO - Subsidies

- India has submitted a new proposal to the World Trade Organisation (WTO), suggesting that developing countries and the least developed countries (LDCs) should be exempted from prohibitions for granting certain fisheries subsidies if the fishing occurs within waters under a country's own authority.
- At the Ministerial Conference in Buenos Aires in December 2017, members agreed to work towards adopting an agreement on disciplines that prohibit subsidies that contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, and eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing by the next the Ministerial Conference in 2020.
- In the negotiations, a number of developed country members, such as the US and Australia, are trying to do away with special and differential treatment for developing countries, in terms of lower reduction commitments.

On WTO: <https://youtu.be/dQUNGeOijk>

On WTO Boxes: https://youtu.be/6zEp_YWOyhg

15. MPEDA Marine Product Export Development Authority

- Marine Product Export Development Authority to revive the production of black tiger shrimps have started receiving encouraging response from farmers.

About MPEDA

- The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) was set up by an act of Parliament during 1972.
- The erstwhile Marine Products Export Promotion Council established by the Government of India in September 1961 was converged in to MPEDA on 24th August 1972.
- MPEDA is given the mandate to promote the marine products industry with special reference to exports from the country.
- It is under **Ministry of Commerce & Industry**.

16. Formalisation Of Workforce

- Workforce under **flexi-staffing**, or those provided through contractors to various employers has **been steadily growing**.
- The rise in number of flexi-staffing workers **indicates formalisation of workforce**. They get provident fund, group insurance, health insurance and other social security benefits available to formal sector workers.
- Besides, the employers have virtually no need to comply as many as 44 labour laws. The contractors, or flexi-staffing firms take care of all such legal obligation.

- The reforms that had significant impact on job formalization includes Skill India Initiative, GST Reform, EPF Reform and ESIC Reform among others. It showed that Haryana, Gujarat, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are the states with high growth potential for flexi-staffing.

17. Kaladan Multi Modal Transit Transport Project

- The project is connecting the eastern Indian seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe seaport in Rakhine State, Myanmar by sea.
- In Myanmar, it will then link Sittwe seaport to Paletwa in Chin State via the Kaladan river boat route, and then from Paletwa by road to Mizoram state in Northeast India.
- It seeks to create an alternative access route to the North-Eastern region by developing a multi-modal mode of transport for shipment of cargo from the Eastern ports of India to Myanmar as well as to the North-Eastern part of India through Myanmar.
- The project provides a strategic link to the North-East, thereby reducing pressure on the Siliguri Corridor.



18. Invest India & FDI

- Invest India was formed in 2009 under Section 25 of the Companies Act 1956 with 49 per cent equity by then **Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry** and 51 per cent **shareholding by FICCI. Invest India acts as National Investment Promotion and Facilitation Agency and first point of reference for investors in India.**
- The current shareholding pattern of Invest India has 51 per cent equity by industry associations (that is, 17 per cent each of FICCI, CII and Nasscom) and the remaining 49 per cent by the Centre and 19 State governments.
- FDI inflows depend on a host of factors such as the availability of natural resource, market size, infrastructure, political and general investment climate as well as macro-economic stability and investment decision of foreign investors.

19. Kimberley Process

- The Kimberley Process (KP) unites administrations, civil societies, and industry in reducing the flow of conflict diamonds 'rough diamonds used to finance wars against governments' - around the world.
- India is the Chair and host of 2019 Kimberley Process.
- Indian Government recently announced that it plans to promote common facility centres to support gems and jewellery industry.

20. Multi-Brand Retail

- According to FDI policy, India permits foreign direct investment in the multi-brand retail sector with a **cap of 51 per cent ownership by overseas players.**
- Draft e-commerce policy is being finalised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

E-Commerce

- E-commerce means buying and selling of goods and services including digital products over digital & electronic network.
- Inventory based model of e-commerce
 - ✓ An e-commerce activity where **inventory of goods and services is owned by e-commerce entity and is sold to the consumers directly.**
 - ✓ FDI is not permitted in inventory based model of e-commerce.
- Marketplace based model of e-commerce
 - ✓ Means providing of an information technology platform by an e-commerce entity on a digital & electronic network to act as a facilitator between buyer and seller.
 - ✓ 100% FDI under automatic route is permitted in marketplace model of e-commerce.
- Inventory of a vendor will be deemed to be controlled by e-commerce marketplace entity if more than 25% of purchases of such vendor are from the marketplace entity or its group companies.

21. Service Charges

- The restaurant industry defines service charge as a fee that is levied over and above the price of the food and drink for the additional convenience of serving inside a restaurant.
- They also emphasise that it is an internationally accepted best practice.
- The amount collected is distributed among the staff of the restaurant.
- A restaurant cannot force a customer to pay service charge.
- If service charge has been levied, the customer is within his/her right to ask the manager to deduct it as it is voluntary.
- It is a matter of contention in terms of GST. Whether to be levied on the entire amount (including service charge) or excluding it.

22. Steel Sector In India

- With **62-per cent share, the construction sector consumes most of the steel** used in the country.
- Important inputs: Iron ore, Coal, Limestone, minerals like Manganese

23. Pea Seeds

- Import policy of seeds of peas is amended from restricted to free category.
- The imports were allowed with a licence earlier.
- An **importer would not require a licence** from the government now.

24. War Risk Premium

- Strait of Hormuz — the world's busiest oil shipping lane and the only channel for vessels to enter and exit the Persian Gulf.
- India imported 84 per cent of its crude requirement in FY19
- Two of every three barrels were sourced from suppliers in West Asia.



25. Migration To Electric Vehicles (EVS)

- NITI Aayog's plan to push for **100 per cent electric vehicles** by completely banning **two-wheelers powered** by Internal Combustion Engines (ICE) of up to 150cc **by 2025**.
✓ It is 2023 for three-wheelers and 2025 for two-wheelers.
- Hybrid technology can also be considered and supported for the transition from conventional internal combustion engines to full EVs.
- Recent Changes: BS-VI changeover.

26. International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA)

- IRENA is an intergovernmental organisation that supports countries in their transition to a sustainable energy future, and serves as the principal platform for international cooperation, a centre of excellence, and a repository of policy, technology, resource and financial knowledge on renewable energy.
- The agency is headquartered in Masdar City, Abu Dhabi.
- 160 states and the European Union are members of IRENA.
- India is a member

India's Renewable Energy Target

- The Government has set a target of installing 100 GW of solar capacity by 2022 in the country.
- A target of installing 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by the year 2022 has been set, which includes 100 GW from solar, 60 GW from wind, 10 GW from bio-power and 5 GW from small hydro-power.

27. Gold Monetisation Scheme

- Government in 2015 had launched GMS to **mobilise the gold held by households and institutions**. The scheme **allows bank customers to deposit** their idle gold holdings for a fixed period in return for an interest in the range of 2.25-2.5 per cent.
- Presently, a customer has to give gold to a hallmarking centre, which works as a collection and assaying centre.
- The gold is then forwarded to a refinery, which then sends them to banks in the form of bars.
- Based on the hallmarking centre's receipts, the bank opens the customer's gold deposit account.
- Presently, there is import duty on gold at the rate of 10 per cent.

28. MEIS (Merchandise Exports From India Scheme)

- Government is considering phasing out the flagship Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS), possibly over the next two-three years.
- The next foreign trade policy (FTP), which will kick in from April 2020.
- The basic idea is to keep exports zero-rated in accordance with the best global practices, while ensuring that all schemes remain fully WTO-compliant.
- According to the special and differential provisions in the WTO's Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures, **when a member's per capita gross national income (GNI) exceeds \$1,000 per annum (at the 1990 exchange rate) for a third straight year, it has to withdraw its export subsidies**.
- According to a WTO notification in 2017, India crossed the per-capita GNI threshold for three straight years through 2015 – to \$1,178 in 2015 from \$1,051 in 2013.
- It seeks to promote export of notified goods manufactured/produced in India. It is implemented by the **Ministry of Commerce and Industry**.
- Salient features of MEIS are as under :
 - ✓ MEIS is result of major consolidation and simplification.
 - ✓ MEIS incentive Rates
 - ✓ Duty credit scrips are freely transferable and usable for payment of custom duty, excise duty and service tax
 - ✓ Incentives to be available for SEZs

29. Fall Army Worm (FAW)

- A pest found that attacks maize, sorghum and ragi.
- It has spread to 14 States in the country.
- New States where the FAW infestation is wreaking havoc are those from the North-eastern region.

30. Inter-Creditor Agreement (ICA)

- As per the RBI framework, in cases where a resolution plan (RP) is to be implemented, all lenders have to enter into an **ICA during the 30-day review period** (given to lenders after the first default to decide on the resolution strategy and implementation) to provide for ground rules for finalisation and implementation of the RP with respect to borrowers with credit facilities from more than one lender.
- A revised ICA is required after the RBI put together its framework as a replacement to the defunct February 12 circular on the 'Revised Framework for Resolution of Stressed Assets', which was struck down by the Supreme Court in April.
- You can watch our 2-Minute Series video on February 12 Circular of RBI.

31. Cement Production Increases Carbon Footprint

- Cement, responsible for 7% of global CO₂ emissions's contribution, is especially immense because of the chemical process required to make it.
- About two-thirds of the polluting gases come from cement production stem from burning limestone. Kilns are heated to more than 1,400 degrees Celsius (2,600 Fahrenheit), about four times hotter than a home oven set to the self-clean cycle. Inside the kiln, carbon trapped in the limestone combines with oxygen and is released as CO₂, the most abundant greenhouse gas.

✓ What comes out of the kiln is called clinker, the key raw ingredient of cement.
- It's the substance that, when mixed with gypsum and water, binds with gravel to harden and form concrete.
- Substitutes include fly-ash, which comes from the chimneys of plants that burn coal, or slag from steel-making blast furnaces.
- They trigger a chemical reaction and form what's known as a geopolymer binder

32. Utkarsh 2022

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has finalised a **three- year roadmap, named Utkarsh 2022 to improve regulation and supervision, among other functions of the central bank.**
- Utkarsh 2022 is a medium term strategy in line with the global central banks' plan to strengthen the regulatory and supervisory mechanism.
- The idea is that the central bank plays a proactive role and takes preemptive action to avoid any crisis.
- Earlier, an internal committee of RBI was formed under former Deputy Governor Viral Acharya, to identify issues that needed to be addressed over the next three years. The RBI board also approved the RBI's budget for the July 2019–June 2020 period.

33. Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS)

- **Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution** has launched a new **Central Sector scheme** namely “Integrated Management of Public Distribution System (IM-PDS)” for implementation during 2018-19 and 2019-20.
- The IMPDS system is already operational in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana and Tripura, wherein a beneficiary can avail his share of food grain from any district in the state.
- The key objectives of the scheme are to integrate the existing PDS systems/portals of States/UTs with the Central Systems/portals, introduction of National Portability of ration card holders to lift food grains from any fair price shop (FPS) across the country, and also National level de-duplication of ration cards/beneficiary.
- It will be through creation of national level data repository- for de-duplication of beneficiary data (Aadhaar based). It will also use of advanced data analytics techniques to bring about continuous improvements.
- It will help in moving towards ‘one nation one ration card’. It will ensure food security of migrant labourers who move to other states to seek better job opportunities.

34. SEBI gets teeth to probe new-age cases

- The Finance Bill, 2019 has given the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) **new powers to act against entities that tamper or destroy electronic databases or fail to furnish information when sought by the capital markets regulator**, SEBI, who can now also impose penalties of up to ₹1 crore on brokers for certain violations.
- As per the Finance Bill, a new section — 15HAA — has been inserted in the SEBI Act that says if a person tampers with information to obstruct or influence an investigation, destroys regulatory data or tries to access data in an unauthorised manner then the entity could be penalised up to ₹10 crore or three times the unlawful gains, whichever is higher.
- Though it is not yet clear whether ‘regulatory data’ and ‘database’ as mentioned in the section refers only to SEBI data or even those maintained by exchanges, depositories and clearing corporations.
- “For the purposes of this clause, a person shall be deemed to have altered, concealed or destroyed such information, record or document, in case he knowingly fails to immediately report the matter to the Board or fails to preserve the same till such information continues to be relevant to any investigation, inquiry, audit, inspection or proceeding, which may be initiated by the Board and conclusion thereof,” stated the Finance Bill.
- The Centre has also explicitly allowed the regulator to impose a fine of up to ₹1 crore on brokers if they fail to issue a contract note to clients in the format as laid down by the exchanges. Earlier, only the lower limit of ₹1 lakh was prescribed.

35. Govt widens RBI's scope in bid to change narrative on regulator's autonomy

- The government is pushing back against sustained criticism on erosion of institutional autonomy and is looking to change the narrative over the independence of the central bank, starting with powers over non-banks.
- Following the crisis at non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), the Union budget has **expanded the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) powers over them and allowed it to supervise housing finance companies (HFCs).**
- RBI has been seeking more powers for a while and the government seems to have listened, except for one key item: expanded powers to regulate public sector banks (PSBs). There is another hitch, on whether RBI has the capacity to discharge its expanded role.
- The Union budget proposed to amend the RBI Act 1934, empowering the central bank to supersede the board of NBFCs (other than those owned by the government) and enable resolution of financially troubled **NBFCs through a merger or by splitting them into viable and non-viable units called bridge institutions.**
- RBI can also remove auditors, call for audit of any group company of an NBFC, and have a say over the compensation of senior management.

36. Women Startup Summit 2019

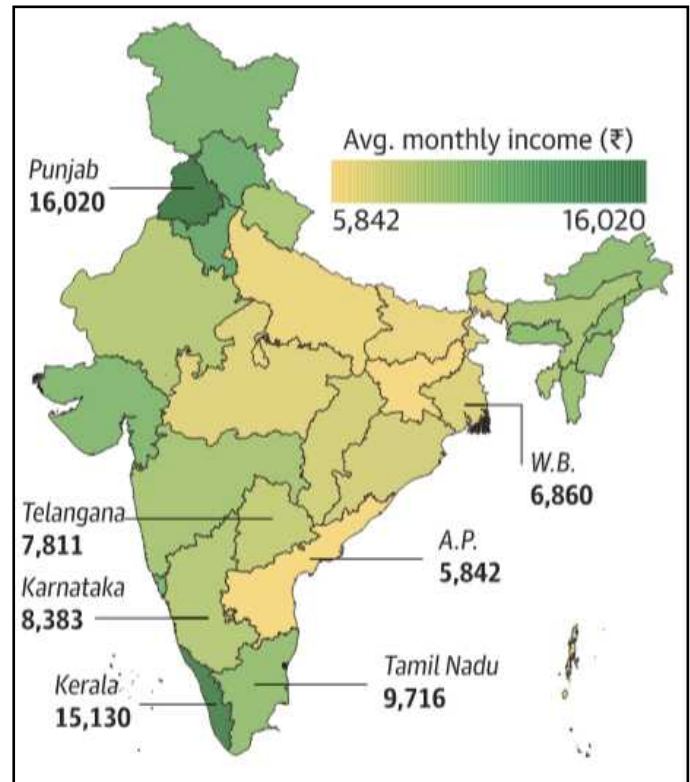
- Seeking to promote women entrepreneurship in a big way, the Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) is hosting the Women Startup Summit on August 1, in association with the Indian Women Network floated by Confederation of Indian Industry (CII), at the Integrated Startup Complex, Kochi.
- The 'Women Startup Summit 2019' aims at encouraging aspiring women professionals to take up their entrepreneurial journey and developing an inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystem in the State.
- Successful women leaders, startup founders, policy makers and women entrepreneurs will share their experiences, aspirations and celebrate their success stories revolving round the theme "Developing an Inclusive Entrepreneurship Ecosystem" at the one-day event.
- About 20 women startups shortlisted from the "She Loves Tech" national grand challenge will be showcased in the summit.
 - ✓ **She Loves Tech is a global competition which was launched in 2015 to provide a platform for women entrepreneurs and startups dedicated to improving the lives of women globally.**
- 2019 Global Startup Competition is the world's largest startup competition focused on women and technology.
- For the first time She Loves Tech competition will be held in India in association with Kerala Startup Mission, the nodal government organization for promoting the startups in Kerala.
- Kerala has 13% of women participation in the technology startup ecosystem and the state government has taken proactive steps for increasing the participation of women in the sector.

37. Farmer earnings skewed across States, show data

- The Centre aims to double farmers' income by 2022. A 2017 NABARD survey shows high levels of inter-State income inequality among agricultural households.

Income inequality

- The map depicts the average monthly income of agricultural households in 2017. Households in Punjab earned more than Rs. 16,000, the highest among States. Those in Andhra Pradesh earned the least -- Rs. 5,842 on average.
- Also, according to the survey, **85% of farmer households earn a mere 9% of the total income, while the top 15% earn 91%.**
- If it is compared with the overall inequality in India, it's far too high.
- Given the stark inequality in India, it shouldn't come as a surprise when the report says that **43 per cent of India's indebted households is farm households.**



38. US drags India to WTO

- The United States has dragged India to the World Trade Organisation requesting dispute consultations on the 'retaliatory duties' imposed by the country on 28 US goods last month.
- While India has imposed the duties as a tit-for-tat move against the US decision to impose unilateral additional tariffs on steel and aluminium imported from the country last year, Washington claims that the tariffs flout WTO rules.
- "The US claims that the additional duties, which India imposed through a series of notifications issued between June 2018 and June 2019, are inconsistent with provisions of the WTO's General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade by unfairly discriminating against US imports vis-à-vis those from other WTO members and by according less favourable treatment to US goods than that provided for in India's schedule of concessions," according to an official release.
- India's argument in support of its duties is that **retaliation is permitted under the WTO's Agreement on Safeguards.**
- If the dispute consultations between the two countries fail to resolve the matter the US can ask the WTO to set up a panel to decide on the matter.

39. Basel finds some RBI large exposure rules stricter than required

- The Reserve Bank of India's (RBI) norms on large exposures for banks are not only compliant with the Basel requirements, they are stricter in some areas as well, according to the findings of the Basel Committee on Banking Supervision.
- BCBS, the primary global standard setter for the prudential regulation of banks, has 45 members, comprising central banks and bank supervisors from 28 jurisdictions.
- The assessment was conducted by the **Regulatory Consistency Assessment Programme (RCAP)**, part of the Basel committee, and focused on the completeness and consistency of the domestic regulations in force on 7 June 2019, as applied to commercial banks in India, with the Basel large exposures framework.
- In some other respects, the Indian regulations are stricter than the Basel large exposures framework. For example, **banks' exposures to global systemically important banks are subject to stricter limits, in line with the letter and spirit of the Basel Guidelines, and the scope of application of the Indian standards is wider than just the internationally active banks covered by the Basel framework,**" the committee said.
- The RCAP assessment team was led by Vasily Pozdyshev, deputy governor of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation. It comprised four technical experts, from Belgium, Brazil, Denmark and the Basel Committee Secretariat.
- The Basel large exposures framework **requires banks to identify third parties that may constitute an additional risk factor inherent in the structure itself rather than in underlying assets.** RBI's implementation of the large exposures framework requires banks to identify such third parties (like originator, fund manager, liquidity provider and credit protection provider).
- "In addition, in cases where there are multiple third parties considered to be potential drivers of additional risk, the bank must assign the exposures resulting from the investment in the structures to each of the third parties. However, the **RBI's large exposures framework does not specify the identification of additional risks, nor provide instructions for banks to group these exposures,**" the report said.
- The report of the committee also found that while Basel large exposures framework limits the sum of all exposures of a bank to a single counterparty to 25% of Tier 1 capital, **Indian regulations establish the large exposure limit at 20%** adding that, in exceptional cases, banks' boards may allow an additional 5% exposure of the bank's available eligible capital base.

40. NHAI to raise ₹75,000 cr this fiscal; ties up with NIIF for funds

- The National Highways Authority of India (NHA) has to mobilise ₹75,000 crore this year, against ₹61,000 crore last year. The funds will be routed to construct highways under the Bharatmala project.

- The NHAI and National Infrastructure Investment Fund (NIIF) have signed an MoU, which will allow **NIIF to route international funds to NHAI**. As per the broad contours, the two organisations will form a special purpose vehicle, through which NIIF will route funds to specific projects of NHAI. NIIF, which had bid for first toll-operate-transfer (TOT) project of NHAI but did not win it, is open to participating in various projects including hybrid annuity projects.
- Simultaneously, NHAI is also considering an option to **list InVIT, Infrastructure Investment Trust**.
- Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari hoped that NIIF, which was announced four years ago in 2015, will make faster decisions about its investments in NHAI since highways authority has a lot of appetite for absorbing funds.
- NHAI will raise funds through various routes from its projects including one option that involves selling rights to set up petrol pumps in land parcels along the expressways. NHAI could earn a share of commission from each litre of fuel sold.

41. Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)

Major surveys

1. Household based Employment-Unemployment Surveys – **The NSS under MoSPI , replaced by PLFS**
 2. Annual Labour Force Survey – **Ministry of Labour and Employment**
 3. Population Census - Office of the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, **Ministry of Home Affairs**
- The National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) has been collecting data on employment and unemployment once in every five years.
 - Considering the need for availability of labour force statistics at more frequent intervals, **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation had launched the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** during 2017-18, with the objective of **measuring quarterly changes of various statistical indicators of the labour market in urban areas as well as generating the annual estimates of different labour force indicators both in rural and urban areas.**

Various Definitions

- **Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR):** LFPR is defined as the percentage of persons in labour force (i.e. working or seeking or available for work) in the population.
- **Worker Population Ratio (WPR):** WPR is defined as the percentage of employed persons in the population.
- **Proportion Unemployed (PU): Unemployment Rate (UR)** UR is defined as the percentage of persons unemployed among the persons in the labour force.
- **Activity Status- Usual Status:** The activity status of a person is determined on the basis of the activities pursued by the person during the specified reference period. When the activity status is determined on the basis of the reference period of last 365 days preceding the date of survey, it is known as the usual activity status of the person.

- **Activity Status- Current Weekly Status (CWS):** The activity status determined on the basis of a reference period of last 7 days preceding the date of survey is known as the current weekly status (CWS) of the person.
- **Principal activity status:** The activity status on which a person spent relatively long time (major time criterion) during 365 days preceding the date of survey, was considered the usual principal activity status of the person.
- **Subsidiary economic activity status:** The activity status in which a person in addition to his/her usual principal status, performs some economic activity for 30 days or more for the reference period of 365 days preceding the date of survey, was considered the subsidiary economic status.

All-India									
Rates	Rural			Urban			Rural+Urban		
	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person	Male	Female	Person
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)
PLFS (2017-18)									
LFPR	54.9	18.2	37.0	57.0	15.9	36.8	55.5	17.5	36.9
WPR	51.7	17.5	35.0	53.0	14.2	33.9	52.1	16.5	34.7
UR	5.8	3.8	5.3	7.1	10.8	7.8	6.2	5.7	6.1

- **Workforce Participation Rate:** The PLFS also notes that between 2011-12 and 2017-18, the WPR declined for both the sexes in rural and urban areas. However, the decline was the highest (by seven percentage points) for rural female workers. The WPR declined significantly for the young population (15-29 years age group) relative to the other age groups. The decline was larger for young men relative to young women.
- **Unemployment rate (UR)** in both rural and urban India is at its highest since 1972. The unemployment rates in urban areas are higher than those in rural areas. In rural areas, the UR is 5.3 per cent, whereas in urban areas, the UR is 7.8 per cent according to the usual status.

42. Fixed Term Employment

- The government has extended the facility of hiring workers on fixed term employment to all sectors, earlier only for textiles.
 - ✓ Boost Ease Of Doing Business
 - ✓ For Employers Intending To Hire People For Completing Specific Projects, Tasks And Orders,

✓ Industry In Employing Workers In Sectors Which Are Of Seasonal Nature And Witness Fluctuation Of Demand And Hence Requires Flexibility In Employing Workers.

✓ Focus On Job Creation Then Job Security.

Positives

- The concept of 'fixed term employment' clearly defines the tenure of employment as well as other related conditions of service and remunerations for the employees, which are otherwise provided to regular employees under various labour laws. Hence, a worker employed even for a short term is eligible for better working and service, conditions as compared to a contract worker.
- The fixed worker would be entitled to all benefits like wages, hours of work, allowances and others statutory benefits, not less than permanent workmen.

Negatives

- Fixed-term employment has been defined as an employee who is employed on a contract basis for a fixed period. Thus, the services of the employee will be automatically terminated as a result of nonrenewal of the contract. If the employment of an employee ends as a result of non-renewal of the contract, he or she shall not be

43. Sugar Buffer Stock

What

- Centre to create a Sugar Buffer Stock 4 million tonnes

Why

- Bumper domestic production - Pending sugarcane arrears of more than ₹ 15,000 crore
- The buffer stock will help maintain demand-supply balance and to stabilise sugar prices.
- Approved in the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA)—headed by Prime Minister
- The reimbursement available under the scheme would be directly credited into farmers' account on behalf of sugar mills against their cane price dues

Fair and Remunerative price (FRP)

- FRP is the minimum price that sugarcane farmers are legally guaranteed to get from sugar mills. The FRP is based on the **recommendation of the Commission of Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP)**. The "FRP" of sugarcane is determined under Sugarcane (Control) Order, 1966.
- Farmers in many States such as Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Maharashtra, are paid on the basis of the FRP set by the Centre.

44. Foreign Sovereign Bonds

- Government aims to raise as much as \$10 billion from overseas capital markets. This is the first time it will be done.

Why Overseas?

- Government wants to diversify its borrowing, which has so far been limited to the domestic market,
 - ✓ Create a benchmark for future foreign bond sales
 - ✓ Low global interest rates
 - ✓ India's low external debt, which at about 20 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is below most emerging-market peers

Risks

- Expose the country to external risks and shocks
- India runs a current-account deficit, which makes it reliant on foreign inflows and vulnerable to swings in investor sentiment and the currency
- Borrowing from overseas will increase the risk of currency volatility
- It will boost debt costs on dollar bonds when the rupee weakens
- Foreign debt would open India up to inflation threats

Bad examples

- Argentina, sovereign bond yields and credit default swaps -- insurance against non-payment -- surged in 2010
- Greece, plunged into economic crisis after irregularities in accounting procedures meant the government had under-reported its fiscal deficit.

45. Agricopter

- Students at the IIT Madras developed a "smart agricopter" to:
 - ✓ Eliminate manual spraying of pesticides in agricultural fields
 - ✓ Help identify crop health by using a imaging camera
- The advanced multispectral imaging camera allows the hexacopter drone to make smart maps

46. Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan Scheme (PM-KUSUM)

- It would encourage farmers to generate solar power in their farms and use the clean energy to replace their diesel water pumps. PM-KUSUM scheme entails setting up of **25,750MW solar capacity by 2022** with the total central financial support of Rs 34,422 crore.

PM-KUSUM

- The proposed scheme consists of three components:
 - ✓ Component-A : 10,000 megawatts (MW) of decentralised ground mounted grid-connected renewable power plants

✓ Component-B : Installation of 17.50 lakh standalone solar powered agriculture pumps

✓ Component-C : Solarisation of 10 lakh grid

Component-A

- Renewable power plants of capacity 500 kilowatts (kW) to 2 MW will be set up by individual farmers, cooperatives, panchayats, or farmer producer organisations (FPO) on their barren or cultivable lands.
- Power generated will be purchased by the distribution companies (discoms) at the feed-in tariffs determined by respective state electricity regulatory commissions

Component-B

- Individual farmers will be supported in installing standalone solar pumps of capacity up to 7.5 horsepower (HP). Solar PV capacity in kW equal to the pump capacity in HP is allowed under the scheme.

Component-C

- Individual farmers will be supported to solarise pumps of capacity up to 7.5 HP. Solar PV capacity up to two times of pump capacity in kW is allowed under the scheme. The farmer will be able to use the generated energy to meet the irrigation needs and the excess available energy will be sold to discom. This will help to create an avenue for extra income to the farmers, and for the states to meet their renewable purchase obligation (RPO) targets

Funding

- For Component-B and Component-C, **central financial assistance (CFA) of 30 per cent States will give a subsidy of 30 per cent Remaining 40 per cent will be provided by the farmer.**
 - ✓ Bank finance may be made available for meeting 30 per cent of the cost. The remaining 10 per cent will be provided by the farmer.
- Higher CFA of 50 per cent will be provided for northeastern states, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

47. Amendments in the Companies Act

Intended to bring:

- More discipline in the compliance of Corporate Social Responsibility
- De-clogging the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT)
- Ease of doing business for small, medium, and large companies

CSR

- Carrying forward the unspent corporate social responsibility (CSR) amount to a special account to be spent within three financial years. **Unspent money after three years could go to Prime Minister's National Relief Fund or any other fund set up by the Central government or the State governments for socioeconomic development.**

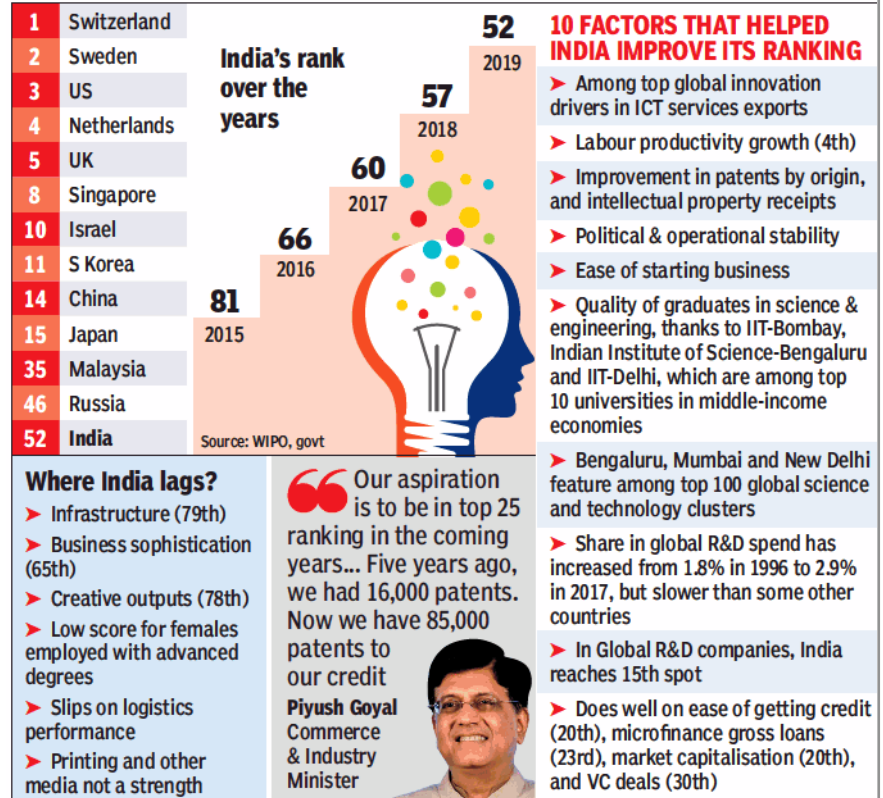
Shell companies

- In order to curb the menace of shell companies, the Bill proposes making non-maintenance of registered office and non-reporting of commencement of business grounds for striking off the name of the company from the register of companies

48. Global Innovation Index

- India climbed five notches on the global innovation index (GII) Rank: 52nd amongst 129 countries.
- GII has been jointly developed by **Cornell University, Paris-based business school INSEAD and WIPO**. It includes more than 80 indicators exploring a broad vision of innovation, including **political environment, education, infrastructure and business sophistication**.
- Switzerland continued to top the index in 2019. **China improved** its ranking to 14th from 17th last year.

INDIA UP 5 SLOTS IN GLOBAL INNOVATION INDEX



49. National List of Essential Medicines

- Currently all NLEM drugs are **regulated by National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)** for price control.
 - ✓ There are 376 drugs under the current NLEM.
 - ✓ Standing National Committee on Medicine is considering recommending delinking of price control with inclusion of drugs in NLEM.
- If an essential medicine is under NLEM, but its price control is economically unviable then the purpose is defeated because availability will become an issue. Also if it is an essential medicine but not included under NLEM, price won't be controlled and affordability will be affected.
- If the medicine is not essential and included in NLEM, then limited resources are strained. So the list will have to be re-looked.

Standing National Committee on Medicines (SNCM)

- Mandate of the Standing National Committee on Medicines (SNCM) is **not only limited to medicines, but also medical devices, medical disposables and consumables**, hygiene and other healthcare products.

50. Cloud Seeding

- A type of weather modification
- Aims to change the amount or type of precipitation. Substances are dispersed into the air that serve as cloud condensation or ice nuclei. Chemicals work to promote rainfall by inducing nucleation – what little water is in the air condenses around the newly introduced particles and crystallises to form ice.

Common Chemicals Used

- **Silver iodide, potassium iodide and dry ice (solid carbon dioxide), Liquid propane** can produce ice crystals at higher temperatures than silver iodide.

51. Mining of Atomic Minerals

- Government has **prohibited mining of atomic minerals by private entities**. It will grant operating rights to only state-run companies to safeguard strategic interest of the country.
- **Atomic minerals zirconium, monazite and thorium are found in abundance** along several beaches of the country.
- **Zircon** have potential applications in the strategic, defence and hi-tech sectors as it contains an important strategic element, called **hafnium**, which is used in the field of atomic energy.
- **Monazite is a mineral of thorium, uranium and rare earths** and it has a high percentage of neodymium which has several hi-tech applications.

52. Renewable Energy Cost

- India's renewable energy cost has become the lowest in the Asia Pacific.
- Levelised cost of electricity (LCOE) using solar photovoltaic has fallen to \$38 per megawatt hour (MWh).
 ✓ It is **14 percent cheaper than coal-fired power** that has traditionally been the cheapest.
- LCOE comprises the cost of generating a megawatt-hour (MWh) of electricity, the **upfront capital and development cost and the cost of equity and debt finance and operating and maintenance fees**.

53. Anti-dumping Duty

- Finance Ministry has imposed definitive antidumping duty on **all imports of purified terephthalic acid (PTA) from South Korea and Thailand**.
- PTA is primary **raw material in the manufacture of polyester chips**, which in turn are used in a number of applications in textile, packaging, furnishings, consumer goods, resins and coatings.
- Recommended by - Commerce Ministry Imposed by - Finance Ministry

- An anti-dumping duty is a protectionist tariff that a domestic government imposes on foreign imports that it believes are priced below fair market value.
- ✓ Dumping is a process where a company exports a product at a price lower than the price it normally charges in its own home market.

54. PRAAPTI

- Payment Ratification and Analysis in Power Procurement for bringing in Transparency in Invoicing of generators

55. Microdot

- Technology termed – microdot – requires spraying the body and parts of the vehicle or any other machine with microscopic dots that can be read with a microscope and identified with an ultra violet light source, which give a unique identification.
- Use of this technology will help check theft of vehicles and also use of fake spare parts.

56. SCED (Security Constrained Economic Dispatch)

- Power generating companies raise capacity utilisation of more efficient plants or of those units which are located closer to coal mines and thus have lower freight cost. As a result, the cost of power production goes down.
- It benefits both the distribution companies (Discoms) and end consumers.
- The mechanism then pools supply from selected stations on a national-level 'merit order', under which power is first dispatched from lower fuel cost units whenever any state seeks electricity from the central pool.

Learn more about MERIT App <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKrjScmXi90>



Quick Revision Series - UPSC Prelims || MERIT App
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Welcome to Sleepy Classes. Top Quality GS Coaching. FREE. Creating IAS from the grassroots of our nation. All the Free ...

57. Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACIC)

- NITI Aayog's Atal Community Innovation Centre's (ACIC) will provide a **platform in many of the rural, tribal areas and Tier-II and -III cities** and unserved regions to have access to latest technologies for innovation and to ideate and create prototypes for innovation.
- These centres can then become incubatees for other innovators.
- There will be focus on addressing local community challenges.

58. Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI)

- This index is prepared on the basis of a survey which was conducted among purchasing executives in over 400 companies.
- The companies were divided into **8 categories: basic metals, chemicals and plastics, electrical and optical, food and drink, mechanical engineering, textiles clothing, timber and paper, and transport.**
- An index over 50 implies 'expansion', while an index below 50 meant 'contraction'.
- The index is prepared by IHS Markit and released along with a detailed report.

59. Core Sector Slowed Down

- The eight core industries – coal, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products, fertilisers, steel, cement and electricity slowed sharply in June, at just 0.2 per cent.

● Sector	Weight
Overall Index	100
Refinery Product	28.0376
Electricity	19.853
Steel	17.9166
Coal	10.3335
Crude Oil	8.9833
Natural Gas	6.8768
Cement	5.372
Fertilizers	2.6276

60. Finance Industry Development Council (FIDC)

- FIDC is a **representative body of NBFCs.**
- It is a body incorporated as a Self Regulatory Organisation for Registered NBFCs.
- It was established in 2004-2005.

61. Consumer Protection Bill

- It will replace the Consumer Protection Act, 1986.
- It seeks to **establish a Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) to promote, protect and enforce consumer rights.**
- Celebrities endorsing misleading ads are also liable for fine.
- **If a product is found faulty, instead of earlier individual examination, the entire batch would be examined.**
- There is a provision in the bill wherein **members of the state and district level consumer disputes redressal forums will be appointed by the central government**

62. India second largest scrap importer

- India has emerged the world's second largest scrap importer.
- It replaced South Korea.
- Turkey is the largest importer of metal scrap in the world.

63. Consumer Confidence Survey (CCS)

- Consumer confidence is reflected in the current situation index (CSI).
- CSI comprises five variables – economic situation, employment, price level, income and spending.

64. India, Sugar and WTO

- Brazil, Australia and Guatemala have requested the WTO to set up dispute panels to rule on India's sugar subsidies.
- According to them, the amount of support to sugarcane producers in India exceeds the country's product-specific de minimis level of 10 per cent for the product.
- They claim that India's domestic support measures for sugar are inconsistent with obligations under the WTO's AoA, while the alleged export subsidies are inconsistent with India's obligations under the AoA and the Agreement on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures (SCM Agreement).

65. RIL-Aramco Deal

- Reliance Industries (RIL) decision to sell a 20 per cent stake in its refining and petrochemicals business to Saudi Aramco.
- Saudi Aramco is among the largest oil producers in the world.
- It will supply around 500,000 barrels per day, or 25 million tonnes per annum, of crude oil to RIL's twin refineries at Jamnagar in Gujarat.
- The deal could bring RIL pricing advantages given that a key supplier will now also be an investor in the business.
- It will have a positive effect on the petrochemicals business, which has crude oil as the main raw material.
- It will also, to an extent, cushion RIL from the uncertainties in the global crude oil market due to the US – Iran tensions.
- Jamnagar Refinery of Reliance Industries Limited is world's biggest refinery.

66. Municipal Bonds

- Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has raised ₹ 100 crore in the third tranche of Municipal Bonds on Bombay Stock Exchange.

- The civic body corporation created history in the Municipal Bond's market in India successfully secured bidding for Rs 100 crore.
- The proceeds would be used to develop flyovers and underpasses under the Strategic Road Development Plan

67. India's First Space Museum

- India's first Space Science Museum has opened in **Hyderabad**.
- It's a collaborative effort between the **Indian Space Research Organization (ISRO)** and the **B M Birla Science Centre**.
- This museum exhibits scale models of Indian Launch vehicles GSLV Mark III, GSLV Mark II and PSLV, Chandrayaan-1, Mars Orbiter spacecraft, APPLE, Aryabhata, Bhaskara, Rohini RS-1 and a model of the International Space Station (ISS).
- Visitors can directly get in touch with India's Antarctic Space Station (Dakshin Gangotri) in real time.

68. Swachh Survekshan 2020

- The **Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA)** launched the fifth edition of Swachh Survekshan 2020 (SS 2020), an annual cleanliness survey.
- The Ministry also launched the Water PLUS Protocol which aims to provide a guideline for cities and towns to **ensure that no untreated waste-water is released into the environment thereby enabling sustainability of the sanitation value chain**.

69. Picchvai Art

- Portraying a different identity to Lord Dwarkadheesh and pilgrimage Dwarka in Saurashtra, a unique exhibition of Dwarkadheesh Pichhvai paintings.
- Picchvai art literally meaning 'backdrop' around the idol.
- Influenced by different regional and social backdrop, the Picchvai art is known in different versions.
- The Deccan or Hyderabad style of Picchvai is a refreshed version, appealing to the urban art lovers, who want modifications in subjects other than the traditional Pichhvai subjects of Sharad Poornima around Lord Shrinathji.
- There are other popular **Picchvai styles of Kishangarh**, difficult to come across but are popular among collectors and auction houses, **Kota-Bundi and Nathdwara styles** which are known for the richness of its colours



70. Rotavirus Vaccination

- **Rotavirus is a leading cause of diarrhoea** in children less than five years of age.
- Rotavirus diarrhoea, unlike other forms of diarrhoea, can only be prevented through the vaccination.
- Other forms can be prevented by maintaining basic hygiene — frequent hand washing, safe water and food consumption, exclusive breastfeeding and vitamin A supplementation.
- Three doses of the Rotavirus vaccine are provided along with other vaccines, free of cost, under Universal Immunisation Programme at one-and-half-months, two-and-half-months, and three-and-half-months of age.

71. Arogyasri Health Scheme

- AHS is a flagship health care scheme of **Telangana government** and is said to have inspired Ayushman Bharat, the national health insurance scheme launched by the Centre.
- Aarogyasri was a flagship healthcare program, introduced by Dr Y S Rajasekhara Reddy as Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh in 2007, before the AP Re-organisation.
- After split of state in 2014, it became flagship healthcare scheme of Govt of Telangana and is administered by Aarogyasri Health Care Trust.

72. Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI)

- The **decisions** taken by the Advertising Standards Council of India (ASCI) are **applicable not only to advertisers who are its members but also non-members**, Delhi's Tees Hazari District court has ruled.
- The Advertising Standards Council of India, established in **1985**, is a **self-regulatory voluntary organization of the advertising industry in India**.
- It is a non-Government body.
- It works closely with the **Department of Consumer Affairs, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India, the Ministry of Ayush as well as the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting**.

73. MMDR Act to be Amended

- With a view to expedite the process of giving mining lease, the Coal Ministry is looking to do away with the need for taking 'prior approval' of the Centre before the State hands over the mining lease. This would call for an amendment to the Mines and Minerals Development and Regulation Act (MMDR), 1957.
- Under the current regime, the **State government has to go for a prior approval from the Central government after receiving necessary clearances such as environment, forest etc, before it can hand over the mining lease to a company**.

74. Coal Imports

- In 2014-15, coal imports stood at 217.78 million tonnes.
- They fell to 203.95 million tonnes in 2015-16 and 190.95 million tonnes in 2016-17.

- The import of coal has since increased to 208.27 million tonnes in 2017-18 and further to 235.24 million tonnes in 2018-19.
- But the production from auctioned mines and imports is a fraction of the total coal production of the country.
- The all-India raw coal production has also increased from 565.77 million tonnes in 2013-14 to 730.35 million tonnes (provisional) in 2018-19.

Output from auctioned and allocated mines



Financial year	Production (million tonnes)
2014-15	43.22
2015-16	11.80
2016-17	15.32
2017-18	16.20
2018-19	24.00
2019-20	45.00*

Source: Ministry of Coal *estimated

75. Blue Revolution

- 3 types of support:
 1. Infrastructure development in harbours
 2. Subsidies to joint venture projects to set up hatcheries/nurseries/quarantine facilities
 3. Viability Gap Funding to establish processing plants, and cold chain facilities at harvest or landing sites
- Around Rs.25,000 Crore will be disbursed through different schemes such as:
 - ✓ Pradhan Mantri Sampada Yojana
 - ✓ World Bank schemes
- Already running:
 - ✓ Fishery Infrastructure Development Fund (It is an interest subvention scheme)
- Inland fisheries contribute **50 per cent** of the total fish production.
- More can be obtained by covering **reservoirs, wetlands, rivers and streams** in different parts of the country.
- Marine Products Exports Development Authority (MPEDA) is making efforts to promote **cold water fisheries** in the entire **Himalayan** region to rear high-value fish varieties.

76. \$1 billion line of credit to Russian Far East

- Far East region of Russia accounts for
 - ✓ 98 per cent of Diamond
 - ✓ 50 per cent of gold mined in Russia
- Announced in 5th Eastern Economic Forum (EEF)

Ongoing Indian Investments

- ONGC's investments in oil and gas projects
- Development of coal and gold deposits by Tata Power and Sun Group
- Diamond polishing factories set up recently by KGK group and M Suresh

77. Kuril Islands

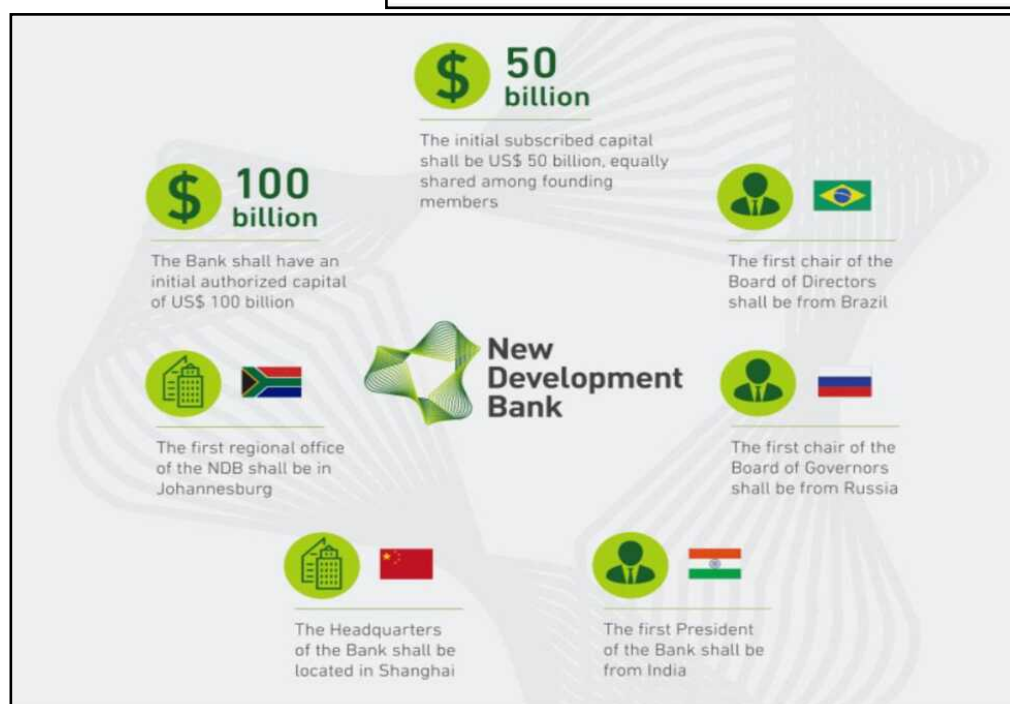


78. NDB & AP

- New Development Bank (NDB) has decided to lend Rs 6,000 crores to Andhra Pradesh Government for various projects.
- The amount will be used for social infrastructure projects and will be repaid in 32 years.
- The New Development Bank was set up in 2015 by BRICS nations. The Shanghai-based eBank has lent over Rs 75,000 crore to various projects till date all over the world and Rs 25,000 crores in India.

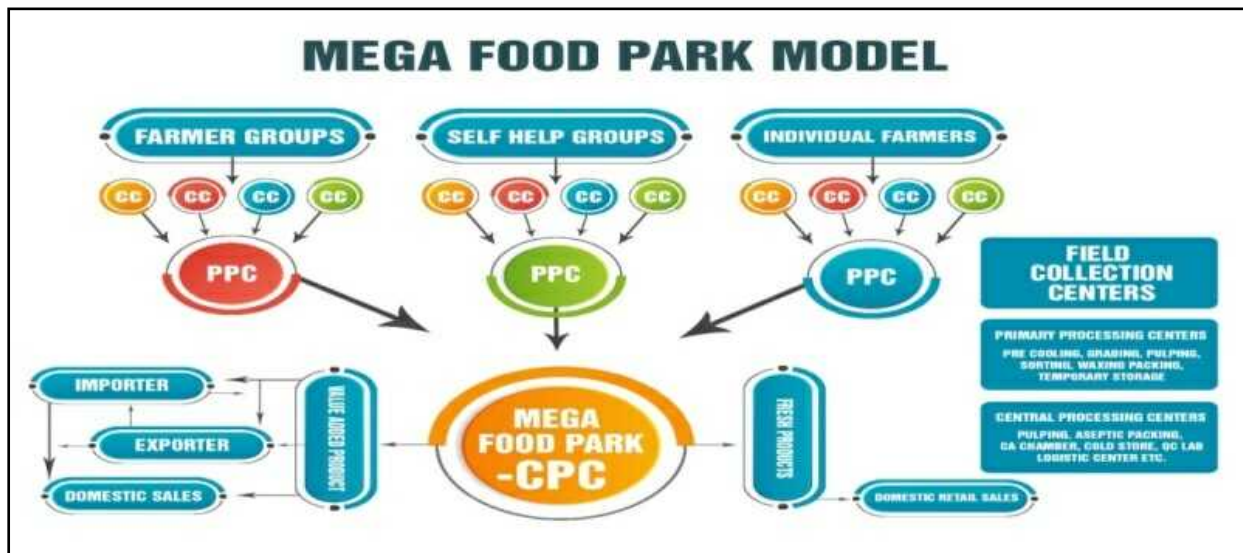
Countries by Shareholding at the New Development Bank

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF SHARES	SHARE HOLDING (% OF TOTAL)	VOTING RIGHTS (% OF TOTAL)
BRAZIL	100,000	20	20
RUSSIA	100,000	20	20
INDIA	100,000	20	20
CHINA	100,000	20	20
SOUTH AFRICA	100,000	20	20
UNALLOCATED SHARES	500,000	-	-
GRAND TOTAL	1000,000	100	100



79. Mega Food Park

- First Mega Food Park in Telangana promoted by Smart Agro Food Park.
- Located at Lakkampally village in Nizamabad district.
- The Mega Food Park Scheme is being implemented in order to give a major impetus to the food processing sector by adding value and reducing food wastage at each stage of the supply chain with particular focus on perishables.



Day – 7

Food Processing

Sources Referred

Food processing and related industries in India- scope and significance, location, upstream and downstream requirements, supply chain management.

- Indian Agriculture and Food management. RAMESH SINGH (10th edition)
- Value edition through food processing (Kurukshetra February 2018 edition – Agriculture for prosperity).
- Food processing industry challenges and prospects
<https://www.india-briefing.com/news/the-food-processing-industry-in-india-investment-prospects-14169.html/>
- Arthapedia article- Food processing in India
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80. India, US military Exercise

- Yudh Abhyas 2019
- Washington

81. MGNREGS

- Under Ministry of Rural Development 54 per cent of these are located in just five States:
 - ✓ Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh and Telangana.
- There are 260 works which are permissible under MGNREGA.
- 164 works are related to agriculture and allied activities.
- A large number of works is for improvement of productivity of land through:
 - ✓ Land development
 - ✓ Plantation
 - ✓ Vermicomposting
 - ✓ Food grain storage
 - ✓ Bunding
 - ✓ Dug-well etc.
- Under MGNREGS, every asset is mandatorily geo-tagged.

82. ICC Test rankings

- Steve Smith Number 1

83. Rafael Nadal wins US Open

- 19th Grand Slam

84. National Dairy Plan

- National Dairy Plan Phase I (NDP I) is a **Central Sector Scheme** for a period of 2011-12 to 2018-19.

NDP I Objectives

- To help **increase productivity of milch animals and thereby increase milk production to meet the rapidly growing demand for milk**
- To help provide rural milk producers with greater access to the organised milk-processing sector
- The NDP was largely financed with loan from International Development Association of the World Bank with implementing agencies appointed in States by NDDB.

Do Read Rashtriya Gokul Mission

85. National Research Development Corporation

- Engaged in promoting indigenous technologies in the Indian industry and startups.
- It will soon expand its wings to the U.S.
- National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) was established in 1953 by the Government of India.

Primary objective

- To promote, develop and commercialise the technologies/know-how/inventions/patents/processes emanating from various national R&D institutions/Universities
- It is presently working under the administrative control of the **Dept. of Scientific & Industrial Research, Ministry of Science & Technology.**

86. Oil Pipelines from India to Neighbours

September 2018, India and Bangladesh

- Agreement for a cross-border pipeline to carry one million tonne diesel annually from Siliguri (West Bengal) depot of the Numaligarh Refinery (NRL) to Parbatipur in Bangladesh.

September 2019, India and Nepal

- Completed construction of 69-km Motihari (Bihar)-Amlekhigunj (Nepal).

87. Liberalising Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)

- Liberalising regulations in **single brand retail, coal mining, and contract manufacturing and digital media.**
- Other decisions notified by the government include **relaxation in the domestic sourcing norms** for single brand retail, allowing sourcing for exports and for global operations of the single-brand, to be counted towards the 30 per cent mandatory requirement.
- Additionally, retail trading through e-commerce can also be undertaken prior to opening of brick and mortar stores, subject to the condition that the company opens brick and mortar stores within two years from date of start of online retail.
- The decisions taken also include allowing 100 per cent FDI for sale of coal, coal mining activities including associated processing infrastructure subject to the provisions of Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 and the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957.

88. Swedish environmental activist

- **Greta Thunberg** and the Fridays for Future youth movement received Amnesty International's 'Ambassadors of Conscience' award

89. Checkpost at India-Myanmar Border

- Integrated check-post at the Moreh (Manipur) border with Myanmar is ready for operations.

- Both the passenger and cargo terminals facility may be handed over to the Land Ports Authority of India (LPAI).
- India's Ministry of External Affairs sponsored the construction of a **bridge across river Menal that divides the two nations here.**
- It is part of Trilateral Highway connecting India with Thailand via-Myanmar.
- The Assam Rifles guards Indo-Myanmar border and is guarding against the rise of informal trade.

90. Five Technology Missions

- Department of Science and Technology (DST) is all set to launch five technology missions to prepare the country to meet scientific and technological challenges of the future.
 1. Mission on electric mobility
 2. Mission Methanol
 3. Mission on Quantum Technology
 4. Mission on Cyber Physical Systems
 5. Mission on production of Digital Maps

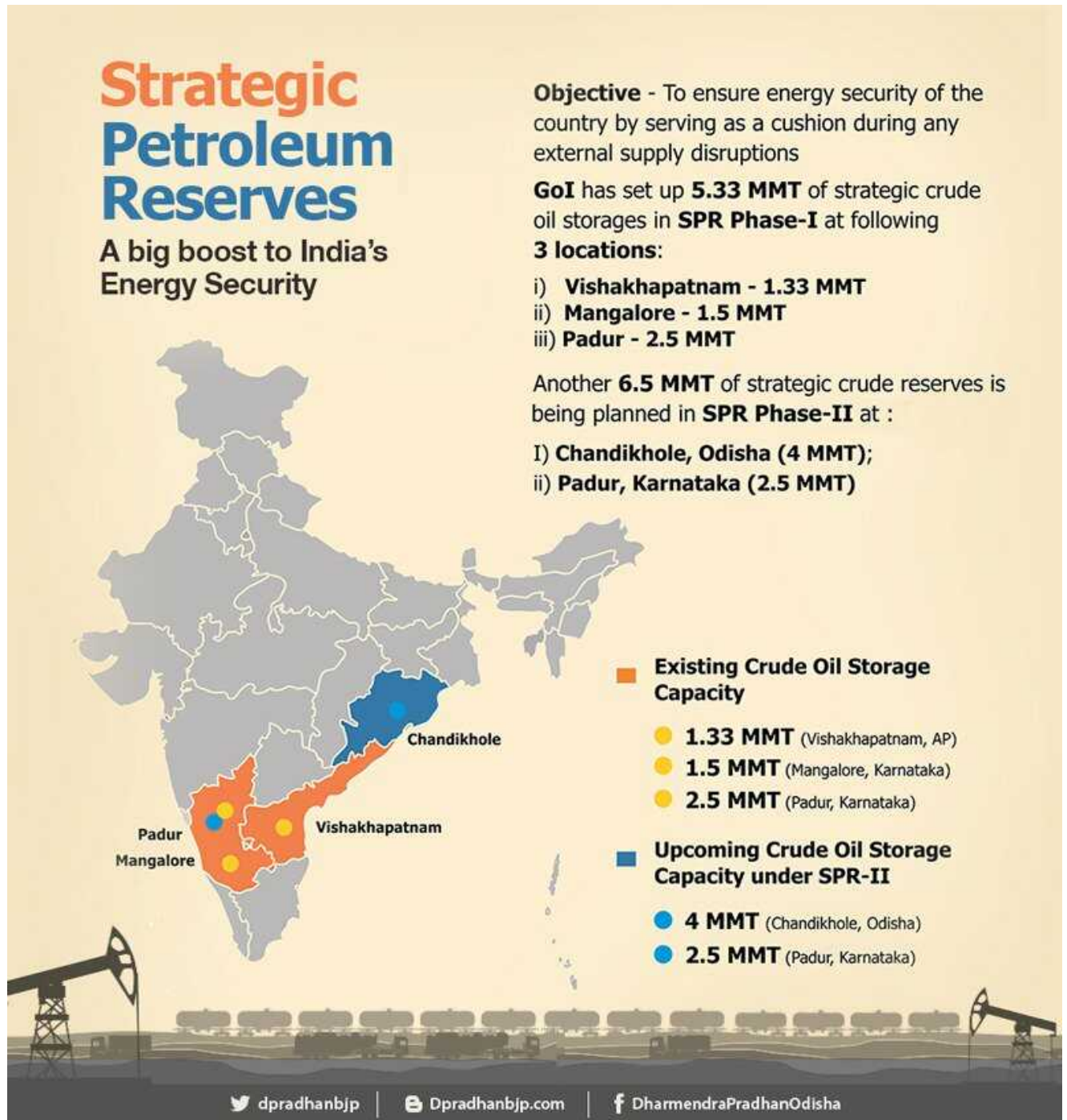
91. Government Announces steps to boost housing

- A Rs.10,000 crore special window to provide last-mile funding for completion of ongoing housing projects which are not NPAs or facing bankruptcy proceedings under NCLT.
- This window will help in completion of affordable and middle income housing projects.
- The interest rate on housing building advance will be lowered and linked to the 10-year G-sec yields.
- External commercial borrowing (ECB) guidelines will also be relaxed to help housing developers obtain overseas funds.

92. Strategic Oil Reserves

- India may dip into its strategic oil reserves stored in underground caverns at **Mangaluru, Paddur (near Udupi) and Visakhapatnam**, after the drone strikes on Saudi Arabian Oil Co or Saudi Aramco's facility.
- Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserve Ltd (ISPRL) is owned by government.
- It manages emergency oil reserves in the country.
- It has **already built 5.33 million tonnes (mt) of underground storage capacity at Visakhapatnam (1.33 million tonnes), Mangaluru (1.5 million tonnes) and Padur (2.5 million tonnes).**
- It can help meet around 9.5 days of the country's oil needs.
- Currently, the strategic reserves are not filled to its full capacity.
- Typically, India's oil refiners hold a crude inventory of 15-20 days, including the crude on the high seas en-route to be delivered to customers.

- About 16 per cent of India's crude imports come from Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil producer.
- India is the world's third largest oil importer.



93. National Centre for Clean Coal R&D

- The new centre would address several critical R&D challenges towards the development of clean coal technologies in tandem with developing supercritical power plant technologies, both at the materials and system level.
- National Centre for Clean Coal Research and Development will be located at Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru.

94. Gandhi Solar Park

- At a contribution of about one million dollars, India has gifted solar panels that have been installed on the roof of the UN Headquarters here, one panel each for every 193 UN Member State.

95. PMC Bank

- Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank Ltd.) founded in 1984.
- PMC Bank was the youngest bank to get the status of a scheduled bank in 2000.

Why in News

- It has been put under the directions of the RBI.

What is the Issue

- It turned out that the bank had suppressed the sticky assets and under-reported them.
- The bank was funding a clutch of companies, mainly in the troubled real estate sector, led by Housing Development & Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL).

Which Act gives power to RBI to issues such directions?

- Sub-section (1) of Section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 read +Section 56.

What are the directions?

Without the prior approval in writing from the Reserve Bank, the Urban Co-operative Bank will not be able to:

- Grant or renew any loans and advances
- Make any investment
- Incur any liability including borrowing of funds and acceptance of fresh deposits
- Disburse or agree to disburse any payment whether in discharge of its liabilities and obligations or otherwise
- Enter into any compromise or arrangement and sell, transfer or otherwise dispose of any of its properties or assets except as notified in the RBI directions

96. E-Assessment Scheme

- Usually, a few months after filing the returns, the department sends to all assesses an intimation under Section 143(1) of the Income Tax Act, showing side by side the computation of income tax as done by the assessee as well as by the department. A discrepancy often means a demand for more taxes, which you may have to pay up.
- Section 143(2), requiring the assessee to meet the assessing officer on a particular date and/or produce any evidence in support of the return. This is commonly called 'scrutiny assessment'. It is this personal interface between the tax department and the taxpayer that is being made online – or 'faceless' – now.

- Every notice or order will be delivered to the assessee electronically: Either uploaded on the assessee's e-filing account or mobile app (Aaykar Setu).

97. Axis Bank's QIP

- Its qualified institutional placement was over-subscribed.
- The transaction was anchored by several large marquee foreign portfolio investors, domestic mutual funds and insurance companies. <https://youtu.be/uyBRJZj-fWM>

98. Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)

- It is set to replace the UGC.
- It will also take over the All-India Council of Technical Education (AICTE).
- A bill in this regard will be placed before the Cabinet.
- The Higher Education Commission of India will be a **single regulator**.
- It will promote the quality of academic instruction, maintenance of academic standards and encourage autonomy of good performing educational institutions for free pursuit of knowledge, innovation, skills and entrepreneurship.
- UGC is the regulator for universities across the country, AICTE acts as a regulator for engineering, pharmacy, management and other technical education colleges.
- It is under The Ministry of Human Resource Development (HRD).

99. Sardar Patel National Unity Award

- A new civilian award in the name of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel that would **recognise notable and inspiring contributions towards India's unity and integrity**.
- It would **not be conferred posthumously except in very rare and highly deserving cases, would comprise a medal and a citation**.
- No monetary grant or cash reward would be attached to the award and not more than three awards would be given in a year.
- The award would be announced on the occasion of National Unity Day – the birth anniversary of Sardar Patel on October 31.

100. New method developed to measure soil erosion

Soil Erosion

- Involves disaggregation and displacement of soil.
- It leads to decrease in its organic content and eventually its fertility.

What is the method?

- It measures the rate of soil erosion and associated decrease in organic content in soil by assessing **levels of radioactive cesium in soil**.

- This method can help in monitoring the effects of soil erosion and effectiveness of soil conservation strategies.

101. CARICOM

- Indian PM held a meeting with the leaders of the **Caribbean Community and Common Market (CARICOM)**.
- This is the first-ever India-Caricom leaders' summit.

Focus

- Fighting climate change
- Increasing India's participation with the grouping

Announcement

- A \$14-million grant for community development projects in the CARICOM.
- Another \$150 million line of credit for solar, renewable energy and climate-change related projects.
- The Caribbean Community and Common Market grouping has 15 members-states and five associate members.

102. Bulgaria's Kristalina Georgieva

- New Managing Director of International Monetary Fund (IMF).
- It continues the tradition of a European holding the role.
- But she becomes the first leader from an emerging market.
- She succeeds Christine Lagarde, a former French finance minister who led the fund from 2011.
- Christine is the incoming European Central Bank president

103. India & IMF

- Finance Minister is the **ex-officio Governor on the Board of Governors of the IMF**.
- **RBI Governor is the Alternate Governor at the IMF**.
- India is represented at the IMF by an Executive Director, who also represents three other countries as well, viz. **Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Bhutan**.

After Quota Reforms

- India's share increased to 2.75 % (from 2.44%), making it the 8th largest quota holding country in the IMF.

104. Indian Green Building Council

- The Indian Green Building Council (IGBC), part of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) was formed in the year 2001.

- The council offers a wide array of services which include developing new green building rating programmes, certification services and green building training programmes.
- The council also organises Green Building Congress, its annual flagship event on green buildings.
- The council also closely works with several State Governments, Central Government, World Green Building Council, bilateral multi-lateral agencies in promoting green building concepts in the country.

Green Building Movement in India

- “A green building is one which uses less water, optimises energy efficiency, conserves natural resources, generates less waste and provides healthier spaces for occupants, as compared to a conventional building.”
- With a modest beginning of 20,000 sq.ft. green built-up area in the country in the year 2003, today (as on 21 September 2019) more than 5,424 Green Buildings projects coming up with a footprint of over 7 Billion sq.ft are registered with the Indian Green Building Council (IGBC).

105. National Water Policy

- Plan to come out with an updated version of the National Water Policy.
- There will be changes in:
 - ✓ Water governance structure
 - ❖ Hydrological boundaries, rather than administrative or political boundaries, should be part of the water governance structure in the country
 - ✓ Regulatory framework
 - ❖ Setting up a National Bureau of Water Use Efficiency
 - ❖ Rejuvenation and Revitalisation of traditional water bodies and resources through the age-old conservation methods.
 - ✓ Idea of water trade
 - ❖ Water-surplus States such as Chhattisgarh can gain by sharing the resource with the deficient ones.

106. Bharat 22 ETF

- **Further Fund Offer 2 (FFO 2) of Bharat 22 Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF) opened.**
- It is an Open-Ended ETF.
- It will invest in a basket of government-owned and private sector entities.
 - ✓ **Stock weighting mechanism** – Free Float Market Capitalization Weighting Method
 - ✓ **Weight caps** – Stock level cap: 15%; Sector level cap: 20% applied at annual rebalancing
 - ✓ **Additions/ deletions** to the index – As per GoI notification on their website
 - ✓ Both Anchor & Non-Anchor investors can participate.

Exchange Traded Fund (ETF)

- An ETF is an **open-ended mutual fund scheme** with an objective to track and reflect the performance of its underlying index.
- It achieves this through a **passive investment strategy** of investing in the same stocks and in the same proportion as they constitute the underlying index.

Bharat 22 ETF

- The government of India, in the Budget speech of 2017, announced its plan to achieve a divestment target of Rs 72,500 crore in the FY 2017-18.
- Bharat 22 ETF has been set up as one of its vehicle to achieve the target. It is an open-ended Exchange Traded Fund which will invest in similar composition and weightages as they appear in Bharat 22 Index
- The index is collectively comprised of **22 stocks of Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSE), Public Sector Banks and private companies which are Strategic Holding of Specified Undertaking of Unit Trust of India (SUUTI).**
- The said 22 stocks are spread across six sectors: **Basic Materials, Energy, Finance, FMCG, Industrials and Utilities.**

Specified Undertaking of the Unit Trust of India (SUUTI)

- The Parliament bifurcated UTI in 2002,
- Creating SUUTI and UTI Asset Management Co. Pvt. Ltd
- The former holding the assured-return investment plans of UTI and the latter overseeing market-linked plans
- The bifurcation took place after UTI's US-64 investment plan ran into trouble
- SUUTI has minority stakes in 51 listed and unlisted companies with most of its value locked in Axis Bank Ltd (11.53% stake), ITC (9.17%), and L&T (4.2%).

107. Street Lighting National Programme (SLNP)

- Launched on January 5, 2015 with the objective to **replace all conventional street lights with smart and energy efficient LED street lights by March 2019.**
- Target - To replace 1.34 crore conventional street lights with energy efficient LED lights by March 2019.
- New target - **March 2020.**

Benefits

- Annual energy savings : 6.71 billion kWh
 - Avoiding 1.2 GW of peak demand
 - Resulting in reduction of Green House Gas emission by 4.63 million tonne CO₂ every year
- ✓ The programme is **voluntary in nature.**

- ✓ It runs **without any budgetary allocation** from the centre.
- ✓ The cost of using efficient lighting is repaid by municipalities from savings in energy and maintenance expenditure over a period of time.

108. Doubling Farmers' Income

- It has **three** important pillars:
 - ✓ Increasing the **total output from agriculture** by realising **higher productivity**
 - ✓ To ensure **cost-effectiveness** through **efficient use of resources**
 - ✓ To ensure **remunerative prices** to farmers
- Various **initiatives** taken forward in this regards are:
 - ✓ Realising higher output through productivity
 - ✓ Soil health card
 - ✓ Micro-irrigation
 - ✓ Neem coated urea
 - ✓ eNAM
 - ✓ Setting up of 22,000 GrAMs (Gramin Agricultural Markets)
 - ✓ PM Fasal Bima Yojana
 - ✓ PM Kisan
 - ✓ PM- Maan Dhan, a pension scheme

109. Case of NPK

- Ideal NPK (Nitrogen-Phosphorus-Potassium) consumption ratio: 4:2:1
- Actual ratio (2017-18): 6.10 : 2.46 : 1
- Ratio (2015-16): 7.23 : 2.9 : 1
- Suggests that there is still much work to be done in changing usage patterns and improving soil health.

Soil Health Card scheme

- Introduced in 2014-15.
- Farmers have their soil tested and get recommendations on the appropriate doses of fertilisers.
- Indiscriminate use of nitrogenous fertilizers pollutes the groundwater:
- Nitrogen from fertilizers gets converted to nitrate by the bacteria in the soil, leaches into the groundwater and washes out of the soil surface, entering streams and rivers.

110. Personal Insolvency to be introduced in India

It is proposed that:

- Debt recovery tribunals (DRTs) in the country would be the institutional set up that would look at personal insolvency.
- A non-adjudicatory process would be adopted for those with very small exposures under the proposed personal insolvency regime.
- Cross border insolvency regime - based on the UNCITRAL model - would be enacted

What is Personal Insolvency

- A personal insolvency agreement is a legal agreement you can reach with your creditors if you can no longer afford to repay the debt.
- This option is only available to people who have been struggling with debt for some time.
- In a personal insolvency agreement, you arrange to pay an agreed amount over a period of time (usually 3 to 5 years). Usually you can settle your debts for less than what is owed, and the balance will be formally written off.
- A personal insolvency agreement will not cover secured debts such as a mortgage or car loan.
- A creditor can apply to the court to make you bankrupt if the personal insolvency agreement fails.

111. Hybrid Annuity Model (HAM)

A report highlights that:

- In India HAM based road projects awarded by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) have managed to steer away from financial closure issues but land acquisition-related problems continue to hinder the commencement of project construction.
- HAM has been introduced by the Government to revive PPP (Public Private Partnership) in highway construction.
- Three different models of Highway Construction involving PPP:
 - ✓ PPP Annuity
 - ✓ PPP Toll
 - ✓ EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction)
- HAM = A mix of BOT Annuity + EPC models
 - ✓ The government contributes 40% of the project cost in the first five years through annual payments (annuity)
 - ✓ The remaining payment will be made on the basis of the assets created and the performance of the developer.
- Hybrid annuity means the first 40% payment is made as fixed amount in five equal installments.

- Remaining 60% is paid as variable annuity amount after the completion of the project depending upon the value of assets created.
- In HAM, developer finds money for the remaining 60% in the form of equity or loans.
- There is **no toll right for the developer**.
 - ✓ Under HAM, Revenue collection would be the **responsibility of the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI)**.

112. Swiss Account Details

- India is among 75 countries with which Switzerland's Federal Tax Administration (FTA) has exchanged information on financial accounts within the framework of global standards on AEOI (Automatic Exchange of Information).
- India has got the first set of Swiss bank account details of its nationals under a new automatic information exchange pact.
- The AEOI only relates to accounts that are officially in the name of Indians and they might include those used for business and other genuine purposes.
- The Global Forum of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development reviews the AEOI implementation.
- It consists of OECD countries and other jurisdictions that agreed to implement tax related transparency and information exchange

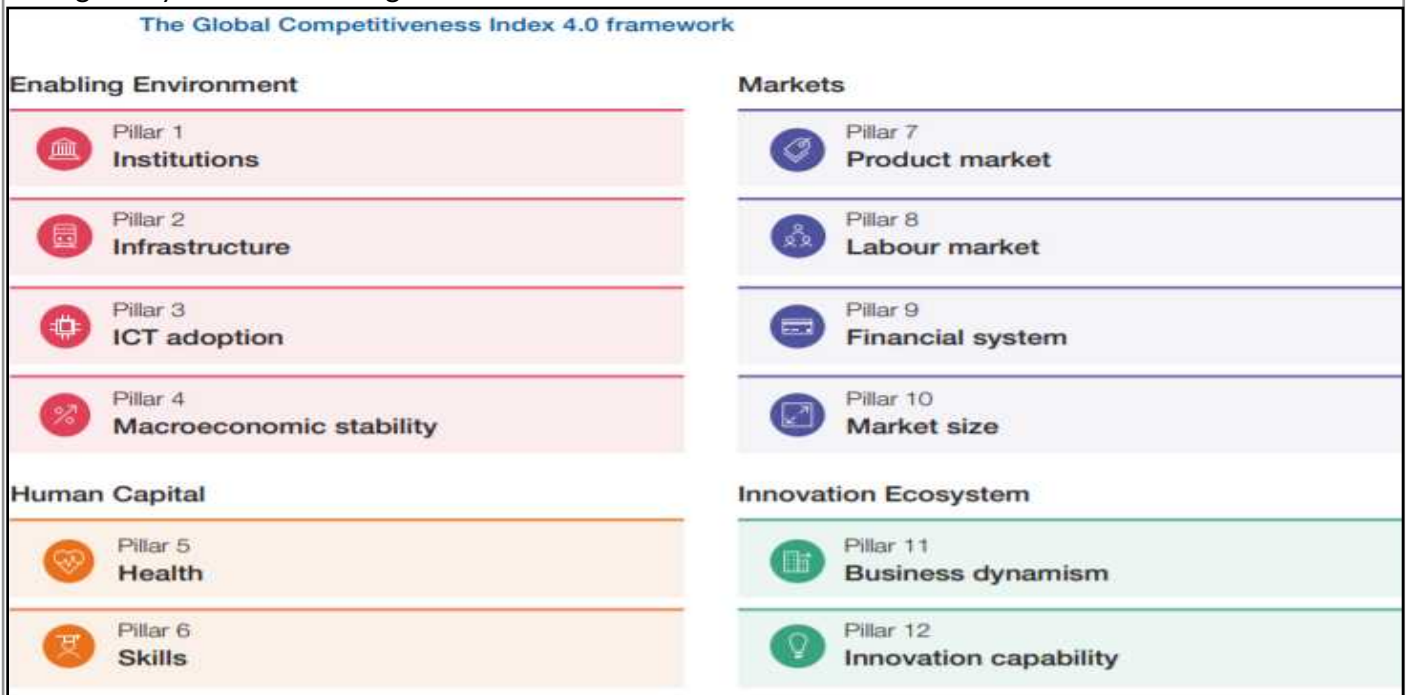
113. India's first private container terminal

- **Nhava Sheva International Container Terminal Pvt Ltd** or NSICT is in news.
- It is India's first private container terminal at a Central government-run port.
- NSICT is **run by the Dubai government-owned DP World Ltd at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT)**, India's biggest container gateway.
- Earlier container terminal privatisation contracts followed the royalty model.
- Now, the Central government-owned ports followed: **Revenue-share model** (Wherein the bidder willing to share the most from its annual gross revenue with the government-owned port trust wins the contract)

114. Global Competitiveness Index

- India moved down 10 places to rank 68th.
- **Singapore replaced the US as the world's most competitive economy.**
- India was ranked 58th in the last year's annual Global Competitiveness Index.
- It is **compiled by the Geneva-based World Economic Forum (WEF)**.
- India is among the worst-performing BRICS nations along with Brazil (ranked even lower than India at 71 this year).

- India is also ranked high – at 15th place – in terms of corporate governance, while it is ranked second globally for shareholder governance



115. India halved its poverty rate since 1990s: World Bank

- Since 1990, India has made efforts to:
 - ✓ Eliminate extreme poverty
 - ✓ Which has helped address climate change
- Annual growth exceeding seven per cent over the last 15 years halved its poverty rate since the 1990s.

Highlighting

Growth can cause development.

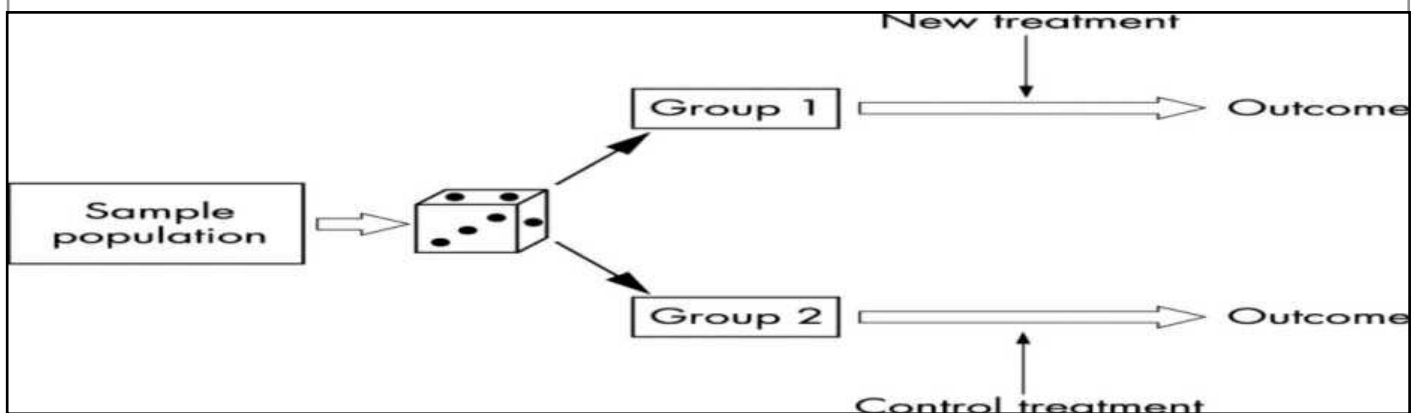
What more needs to be done

- Land will need to be used more productively in urban areas
- Spatial transformation of cities achieving agglomeration economies
- In rural areas by increased agricultural productivity
- India's water management will need to provide for shifting water allocation to higher-value uses
- Policies to increase the value of water use within sectors.
- Connecting people to the electricity grid
- Generation of electricity will need to be less carbon intensive
- Arresting declining female labour force participation
- India's public sector institutions will need to be modernised to deliver services

- Regulations that match the aspirations of a middle income country
- Improving accountability and effectiveness
- Improving the ability of the state to interface with the private sector
- Strengthening the compact among tiers of government to improve service delivery

116. Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo's Work

- Banerjee and his co-workers try to measure the effectiveness of actions (such as government programmes) in improving people's lives.
- The Nobel Prize committee noted that these economists "introduced a new approach to obtaining reliable answers about the best ways to fight global poverty."
- They use **randomized controlled trials**, similar to clinical trials in medical research.
- For example, although polio vaccination is freely available in India, many mothers were not bringing their children for the vaccination drives.
- They tried an experiment in Rajasthan, where they gifted a bag of pulses to mothers who vaccinated their children. Soon, the immunisation rate went up in the region.
- In another experiment, they found that school students learned better when teaching assistants were appointed to help them.



What is a randomised controlled trial

- It is an experiment that is designed to isolate the influence that a certain intervention or variable has on an outcome or event.
- A social science researcher who wants to find the effect that employing more teachers in schools has on children's learning outcomes, for instance, can conduct a randomised controlled trial to find the answer.
- They used the technique to study the impact that free meals and books had on learning in Kenyan schools.
- Later, they conducted similar experiments in India and further popularised RCTs through their book **Poor Economics**, published in 2011.

117. Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab

- J-PAL is a global research center working to reduce poverty by ensuring that policy is informed by scientific evidence.
- J-PAL conducts randomized impact evaluations to answer critical questions in the fight against poverty, and builds partnerships with governments, NGOs, donors, and others to generate new research, share knowledge, and scale up effective programs.
- It was founded in 2003.

118. Side Pocketing

- It means **separating bad assets from the good ones**.
- SEBI has asked mutual fund players to side pocket.
- A few mutual funds have indulged in off-market lending to promoters based on securities and other such instruments as underlying assets.
- Promoters were not able to pay back these MFs within the stipulated deadline and the fund houses had extended their tenure.
- SEBI has made it clear that it does not recognise or approve of private lending deals by MFs.
- With these side pocketing and 'default' norms, SEBI could be in a clash with RBI, which regulates banks and loan defaults.
- MFs players are now mulling over ideas of joining Inter creditor agreement (ICA), stipulated as per RBI norms, which the banks follow in dealing with default and resolution cases.

119. E-invoicing GST

- GST Council, on September 29, 2019, has approved the introduction of 'E-invoicing' or 'electronic invoicing' for business to business (B2B) transactions from January 1, 2020.
- It can help arrest tax evasion as it enables pre-populating of GST returns with the e-invoice details.
- It reduces the compliance requirements to a great extent for it propels pre-populating of various returns such as GSTR 1 and e-way bills.
- In addition, it standardises the invoice format ensuring interoperability of the data, eliminates fake invoices, provides complete trail of B2B transactions and enables system level matching of ITC and output tax.
- As the system evolves, intercommunication of the transactions between the buyers' and sellers' software, e-way bill system and the banking systems is also mooted. This captures the complete transaction trail and can arrest tax evasion significantly.

120. Coal Bed Methane (CBM) Production

- Coalbed Methane (CBM), an **unconventional** source of natural gas.
- **India has the fifth largest proven coal reserves in the world** and thus holds significant prospects for exploration and exploitation of CBM.
- The Gondwana sediments of eastern India host the bulk of India's coal reserves and all the current CBM producing blocks.

Coal Bed Methane (CBM) Production

- Coalbed Methane (CBM) is natural gas contained in coal.
- It consists **primarily of methane**, the gas we use for home heating, gas fired electrical generation and industrial fuel.
- CBM commonly is referred to as an "unconventional" form of natural gas because it is primarily **stored through adsorption to the coal itself rather than in the pore space of the rock**, like most "conventional" gas.
- The gas is released in response to a drop in pressure in the coal.

121. India jumps to 63rd position in World Bank's ease of doing business rankings

- India has climbed 14 places to be ranked 63 among 190 countries in the World Bank's 'Ease of Doing Business 2020' report.
- The country's performance improved in six of the ten parameters.
- Simplified Proforma for Incorporating Company Electronically (SPICE) company find a mention in the report.

122. The Cape Town Agreement

- It was **adopted by the IMO in 2012 to help combat illegal, unregulated and unreported (IUU) fishing**.
- **India, ranked third in fisheries, is yet to ratify a global regulatory regime adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for safety of fishing vessels.**
- The Cape Town Agreement includes mandatory international requirements for stability and associated seaworthiness, machinery and electrical installations, life-saving appliances, communications equipment and fire protection, as well as fishing vessel construction.
- It is aimed at facilitating better control of fishing vessel safety by flag, port and coastal states.

123. Merchandise Export Incentive Scheme (MEIS)

- The **Remission of Duties or Taxes on Export Product (RoDTEP) scheme**, which is scheduled to replace the MEIS from January 1 2010 but is yet to get Cabinet approval.

- The rates under RoDTEP scheme are yet to be fixed by the drawback committee; it may be lower than the MEIS rates.
- MEIS, under which export incentives, ranging from 2 per cent to 5 per cent of export value, are extended to a large number of sectors depending on the product and the country being exported to, may be in violation of World Trade Organisation rules.
- This is because India's per capita Gross National Income has over-shot the threshold limit of \$1000 per annum a number of years back and the time allowed under WTO to roll back export sops is coming to an end.
- **Benefits available under MEIS are in the form of transferable duty credit scrips which can be used for paying a large number of duties including customs duties on imports.**
- Government will eventually replace the MEIS scheme with RoDTEP, which adheres to WTO rules

124. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP)

- RCEP sought to create a free trade zone among the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN - Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Vietnam) and its six FTA partners (China, Japan, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand)

RCEP talks: A timeline

Nov 2012
RCEP negotiations launched at the ASEAN Summit in Cambodia

Sept 2015
India offers to eliminate tariffs on 42.5% of items from China, and more for ASEAN

2017-18
India improves its offer of eliminating tariffs for about 90% of the items from ASEAN, and over 74% of items from China

2018
Key Central ministries and departments, including Steel, Textiles and Heavy Industry, object to the deal

Nov 2019
India finally says no to RCEP deal to protect "vulnerable" sections

Impressive numbers

The 16 RCEP members together account for **39%** of global GDP, **30%** of global trade, **26%** of global foreign direct investment flows, and **45%** of the total population

The trade deficit with ASEAN

- The trade deficit with ASEAN tripled to \$26.6 billion from \$9.4 billion in 2009-10. **FTA tariff reduction has happened in four major sectors — textiles, metals, automobiles and machinery.**
- India has decided not to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) pact saying it will not "compromise" on its core issues.
- India had also been firm in its demand that an adequate Auto Trigger Safeguard Mechanism be put in place to save the economy against dumping of cheap imports and import surges.
- The country also did not want to accept 'ratchet' obligation in the investment chapter that would have prevented it from changing its existing rules.

125. Kyarr

IMD said the cyclone over East-Central Arabian Sea moved to the North-North-East (towards India's West Coast initially.

126. Alternative Investment Funds (AIFs) for Homes

- A special window created for stalled housing projects in affordable and middle-income range.

- It will also cover projects that are classified as non-performing assets (NPA), or where National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) proceedings have already started.
- The government shall act as the sponsor of the fund. It will infuse funds up to ₹10,000 crore. The fund will provide relief to developers with unfinished projects and ensure delivery of homes to buyers.
- Besides the Centre's ₹10,000 crore, SBI, LIC and other public sector financial institutions will also pump in money into the fund, taking the figure to around ₹25,000 crore. The government expects sovereign funds and pension funds to contribute at a later stage.
- **The funds will be set up as category-II AIFs registered with SEBI.**

127. Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) & Schools

- FSSAI has proposed to restrict the sale and the advertisement of food products, which are high in fat, salt and sugar (HFSS), in school premises and within 50 meters of the school campus.
- The proposal is part of the draft Food Safety and Standards (Safe Food and Healthy Diets for School Children) Regulations, 2019, which is being finalised to define and promote healthy diets, based on the direction by the Delhi High Court in 2015.
- The regulator has also proposed setting up a sub-committee by the State Level Advisory Committee to monitor the implementation of these regulations and to ensure availability of safe and wholesome food to school children in the draft regulations.
- HFSS food includes deep fried foods such as –
 - ✓ French fries
 - ✓ Fried chips
 - ✓ Sugar-sweetened carbonated or non-carbonated beverages
 - ✓ Ready-to-eat foods
 - ✓ Noodles, burgers, pizzas and
 - ✓ Confectionery items among others

128. Weather Derivatives

- India has always faced unpredictable monsoons. Besides, non-seasonal weather conditions too, spoil the harvest for farmers.
- There can be plans to launch derivative products based on rainfall, temperature, moisture, and wind, among others, to help farmers and corporates hedge against these risks.
- National Commodity and Derivatives Exchange (NCDEX) has been planning to launch weather futures, from as far back as 2003. It was even working on a rain index, a tool to track the monsoon's progress, jointly with the Indian Meteorological Department.

- The first derivative product (based on average temperatures) was launched through the exchange mechanism in 1999 on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange.
- Weather risk affects farmers, during both pre- and post-monsoon periods.
- Besides, it will have a significant direct and indirect economic impact across sectors, such as insurance, FMCG, tourism and even sports.

129. Surjit Bhalla HLAG on Exports and Investments

- High Level Advisory Group on trade chaired by economist Surjit Bhalla has put forward a number of proposals to increase exports and attract more foreign investments.
 - ✓ Enabling greater access to credit for exporters
 - ✓ Strengthening exports of labour-intensive sectors and ICT products
 - ✓ Putting in place a national trade facilitation action plan
 - ✓ Simplifying regulatory and tax framework for foreign investment funds and individual investors.
- Other important panel to remember is Baba Kalyani's on SEZs.

130. Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC)

- FSDC is the apex body of sectoral regulators, headed by the finance minister.
 - ✓ RBI Governor
 - ✓ Securities and Exchange Board of India chairman
 - ✓ Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI)
 - ✓ Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) chairman
 - ✓ Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority

131. Green Finance

- Green financing is to **increase level of financial flows** (from banking, micro-credit, insurance and investment) from the public, private and not-for-profit sectors **to sustainable development priorities**.
- A key part of this is:
 - ✓ To better manage environmental and social risks
 - ✓ Take up opportunities that bring both a decent rate of return and Environmental benefit
 - ✓ Deliver greater accountability

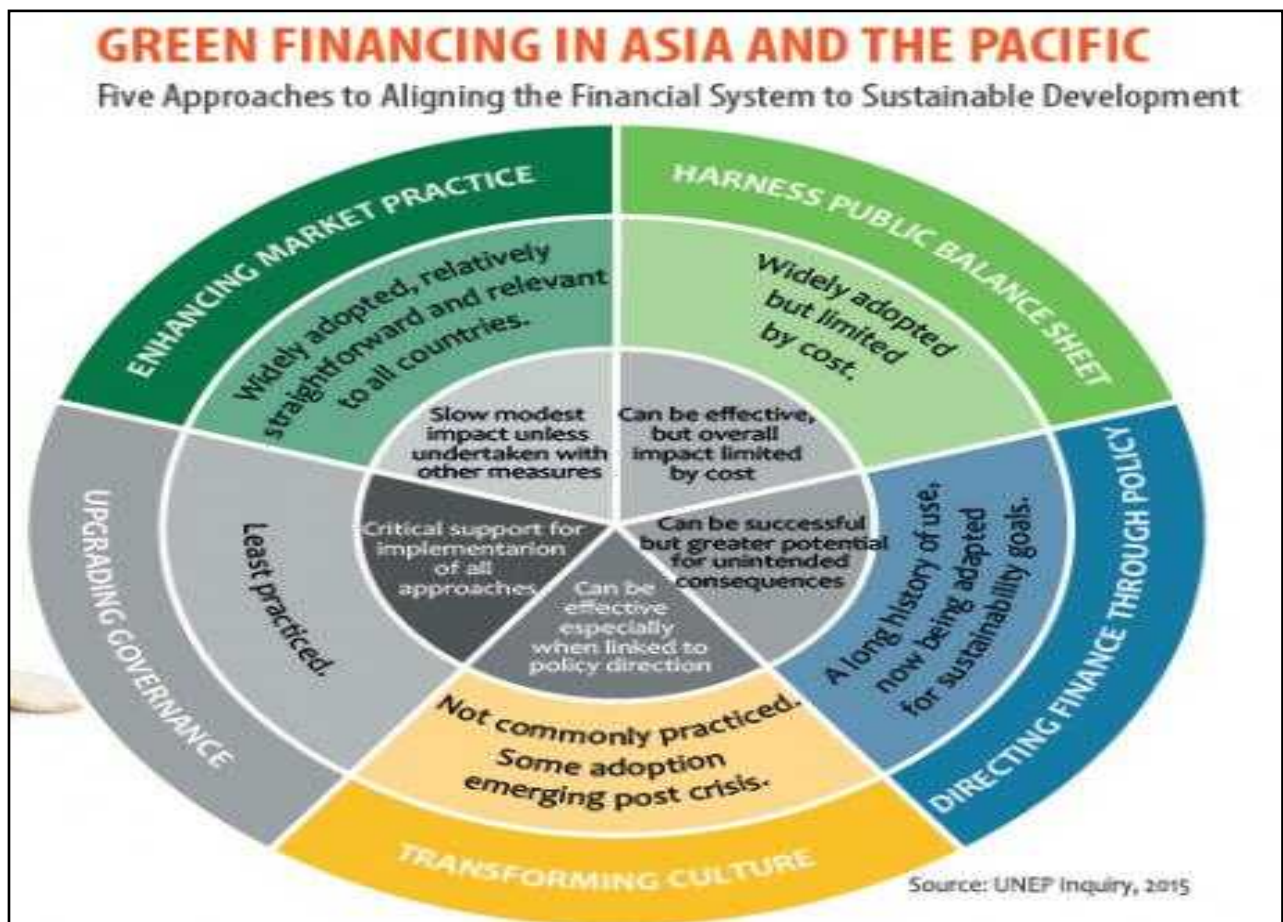
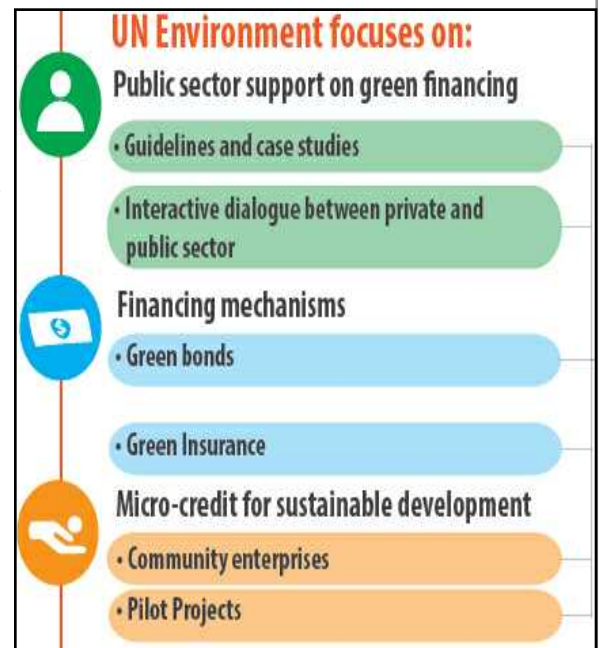
Green Finance

- UK is a leading global hub for green finance, home to many world-class institutions from all stages of the investment lifecycle, from project conception to delivery and advisory.
- In order to increase the Green Finance, there is a need for:

- ✓ Increased transparency and standards
- ✓ Greater visibility of opportunities and funding gaps
- ✓ Further government cooperation to building domestic support in India, greater technical experience sharing among regulators
- ✓ Targeted policy reforms and incentives, such as changes to the External Commercial Borrowing (ECB) guidelines by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) for issuers with green track records

Green financing could be promoted through changes in

- Countries' regulatory frameworks,
- Harmonizing public financial incentives,
- Increases in green financing from different sectors
- Alignment of public sector financing decision-making with the environmental dimension of the Sustainable Development Goals
- Increases in investment in clean and green technologies
- Financing for sustainable natural resource-based green economies
- Climate smart blue economy, increase use of green bonds, and so on.



132. Mass enterprises

- Refers to millions of ordinary local businesses, are providers of stable job opportunities.
- It can help address the country's unemployment issues.
- A mass enterprise surveyed includes businesses that hire 5-20 people and includes businesses ranging from beauty salon, small eateries to food catering providers.
- Among Mass enterprises, manufacturing firms are a key opportunity, typically employing more people than the service industry, generating more revenue per employee, and having less informality.
- The report also highlighted that minimal digitisation of accounting and poor cash flow management are common barriers that affected mass entrepreneurs from accessing formal credit.
- Sector-specific training and mentorship in digital environment are necessary to help rural entrepreneurs understand various complexities of business and to help them learn from their industry peers.

133. Anti-Base Erosion

- OECD has come up with a new proposal that could end up ensuring that profits of internationally operating businesses—including tech and digital giants—are subjected to a minimum rate of corporate tax
- It would reduce the incentive for taxpayers around the world to engage in profit shifting and establish a floor for tax competition among jurisdictions.

GloBE Proposal

- Pillar One addresses the **allocation of taxing rights between jurisdictions** and considers various proposals for new profit allocation and nexus rules.
 ✓ It is expected to assist members of the 'Inclusive Framework' (on BEPS) in the development of a solution for its final report to the G20 in 2020.
- The new proposal—the **Global Anti-Base Erosion (GloBE)** proposal under Pillar two of BEPS 2.0 project aimed at addressing the tax challenges of the digitalisation of the economy.

134. Smart Meter

- It is a digital meter that replaces old analog meters to record electrical usage.
- These digital meters can transmit energy consumption information to the utility (as it is connected to the internet) in frequent intervals, and can monitor consumption more precisely.
- For consumers, smart meters help in monitoring and managing electricity consumption and save money. It can be like your mobile pre-paid connection. You can buy electricity for a fixed amount, and use it. After finishing, you can top-up, just like a mobile recharge.
- It can help power distribution companies (discom) to conduct power-quality analysis in near-real time.
- It can help discoms plug leakages in the whole chain.

- They are prone to cyber-attacks, which can cause power shutdown or steal customer information.

135. Revising GDP Base Year

- Normally, it is done every five years.
- Surveys are started for the same.
- Central government's planning to revise the base year **from the current 2011-12 to 2017-18** for calculating the GDP growth.
- Based on the surveys the decision is taken on whether it is a good economic year or not.
- 2018-19 can also be made the GDP base year as 2017-18 was the year of demonetisation and start of GST.

136. Dividend Distribution Tax

- Proposal to tax dividends once they are paid to shareholders, rather than the current system where the **company pays the levy**.
- That will **allow individuals to claim refunds in their home jurisdictions**.
- Indian companies need to pay the tax office 15% of dividends declared, which rises past 20% once surcharges are added. Investors, who are also taxed on their earnings, have protested these multiple levies.
- The Dividend Distribution Tax is a tax levied on dividends that a company pays to its shareholders out of its profits.
- The Dividend Distribution Tax, or DDT, is **taxable at source**, and is deducted at the time of the company distributing dividends.
- The dividend is the part of profits that the company shares with its shareholders.
- The law provides for the Dividend Distribution Tax to be levied at the hands of the company, and not at the hands of the receiving shareholder.
- However, an additional tax is imposed on the shareholder, who receives over Rs. 10 lakh in dividend income in a financial year.

137. Sabka Vishwas Scheme

- It is for settling pending **disputes of service tax and central excise**.
- The Sabka Vishwas Scheme, 2019 is a scheme proposed in the Union Budget, 2019, and introduced to resolve all disputes relating to the erstwhile Service Tax and Central Excise Acts, which are now subsumed under GST, as well as 26 other Indirect Tax enactments
- Finance Minister had announced Sabka Vishwas (Legacy Dispute Resolution) Scheme, 2019 with the objective of settling pending disputes of Service Tax and Central Excise in the budget.
- In all cases, there is full waiver of interest and penalty and exemption from prosecution.

138. Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) growth

- RBI survey has sharply cut the forecast of real private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) growth, **reflecting lower household demand.**
- PFCE, according to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, includes:
 - ✓ Final consumption expenditure of households
 - ✓ Final consumption expenditure of non-profit institutions serving households like temples and gurdwaras.
 - ✓ The final consumption expenditure of households relates to outlays on new durable as well as nondurable goods (except land) and on services.

Real Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF)

It consists of:

- The outlays (purchases and own account production) of industries
- Producers of government services
- Producers of private non-profit services to households on addition of commodities to their stocks of fixed assets less their net sales (i.e. sales minus purchases) of similar second-hand and scrapped goods.
- Excluded from GFCF are the outlays of government services on durable goods for military use.
- GFCF includes:
 - ✓ Acquisitions of reproducible and non-reproducible durable goods (except land, mineral deposits, timber tracts, fisheries and the like) for civilian use
 - ✓ Work-in-progress on construction projects
 - ✓ Capital repairs
 - ✓ Outlays on the improvement of land and on the development and extension of timber tracts, plantations, vineyards, etc., among others.

139. AIIB Funding

- Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is evaluating loans worth over \$2.2 billion for funding:
 - ✓ Power transmission and distribution projects in Assam
 - ✓ Metro rail projects in Chennai, Mumbai
 - ✓ Rural water supply system in Karnataka.
- Head Quarters: Beijing
- India is the second largest share holder in AIIB
- Largest borrower – India

AIIB founding members



140. Happy Seeder

- A tractor-mounted machine that allows planting of wheat without the need to burn the leftover straw from the previous paddy crop.
- Happy Seeder (HS) or Turbo Happy Seeder (THS) is a tractor-operated machine developed by the PAU in collaboration with Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), for in-situ management of paddy stubble (straw).
- Centre subsidising the cost of Happy Seeder up to 50 per cent for individual farmers and 80 per cent for co-operatives.



- After harvesting the paddy field using a combined harvester fitted with Super-SMS (Straw Management System) equipment, which chops and evenly spreads the stubble in the field, farmers can directly sow wheat seeds using Happy Seeder with the stubble's organic value adding to the soil.

141. India's Power Sector

- A recent report by SBI highlighted that **electricity demand in India contracted to an eight-year low**. This contraction in demand has had an impact on three important stakeholders–
✓ Power producers

- ✓ Power distributors
- ✓ Lender (mostly banks)
- There's a decline in:
 - ✓ Plant Load Factor (PLF) (PLF is used to determine a plant's power producing capacity.
 - ✓ Renewable generation
 - ✓ Thermal generation (Hydro energy, however, grew).
- Factors undermining the power sector:
 - ✓ Weak economy
 - ✓ Dues from discoms (delayed payments from state-owned power distribution companies)
 - ✓ Lending bottlenecks
 - ✓ Climate change-induced natural calamities

142. Development of Steel Clusters in India

- Ministry of Steel has proposed setting up integrated steel hubs similar to the ones in Korea, China and Germany. The hubs would support the growth of the steel sector.
- Draft Framework Policy-Development of Steel Clusters in India aims at creating 'Integrated Steel Hubs' based on the principle of:
 - ✓ Availability of raw material
 - ✓ Logistics support
 - ✓ Proximity to demand centres.
- It will enable capacity expansion through:
 - ✓ Provision of a cohesive ecosystem
 - ✓ Presence of effective forward and backward linkages
 - ✓ Single-window mechanism for swift approval of clearances
 - ✓ Best-in-class logistics infrastructure

Load Factor

Load factor for a power plant is the ratio between average load and peak load and can be expressed as

$$\mu_{lf} = (100) P_{at} / P_{pl}$$

where

μ_{lf} = load factor (%)

P_{pl} = peak load for the power plant in the period (kW)

What does a cluster mean:

- A cluster will be a defined region with co-located units across the steel value chain along with the provision of basic infrastructure facilities and other relevant value-added services.
- The clusters will primarily include units from secondary steel sector and ancillary industry.
- Policy's focus will be on two types of clusters:

✓ One around the Integrated Steel Plants (ISPs)

✓ The other near the demand centres.

Clusters around ISPs

- Cluster around ISPs will be called ancillary and downstream cluster.
- It will primarily have a steel plant as its anchor plant, with focus on ancillary units and may also entail downstream units.
- It will help create an integrated ecosystem for the industry with enhanced linkage for both the ISPs as well as the tenant units

Cluster near Demand Centres

- They will be called 'value-added steel clusters'.
- They will enable capacity expansion of units producing carbon steel, alloy (including stainless steel) as well as other high grade and special steel by improving their cost competitiveness through effective raw material linkages and other interventions such as reduced cost of power.

143. Strategic Divestment in five PSUs

These are:

- Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL)
- Shipping Corporation of India
- Container Corporation of India
- Tehri Hydro Power Development Corporation (THDCIL)
- North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd (NEEPCO).
- THDCIL and NEEPCO will go to NTPC
- Strategic disinvestment means offering stake along with control and management of the company.
- It could be offered to a private company or even to another CPSE.

Strategic Sale

BPCL*
Sale of full **53.3%** stake to strategic buyer
(*After removing Numaligarh Refinery from its fold)

Shipping Corp
Sale of entire **63.8%** stake to strategic buyer

Concor
30.8% stake and management control to strategic buyer
(Govt to retain 24% stake)

Tehri Hydro
Entire **74.2%** stake to NTPC

Neepco
Entire **100%** stake to NTPC

DISINVESTMENT

Reduction of govt stake in select PSUs to below 51%

PSUs to be identified by officials

Govt to retain management control on case-to-case basis

144. Coarse Cereals

- Benefits of switching back to coarse cereals:
 - ✓ Nutritional security
 - ✓ Energy utilisation
 - ✓ Water utilisation
 - ✓ Even cut its greenhouse gas emissions
- Green Revolution - Focus mainly on increasing rice and wheat output.

- A large number of farmers shifted away from more nutritious coarse cereals to high-yielding crops such as rice.
- It narrowed the diversity of cultivated crops.

Some Facts about Rice Cultivation

- Currently, rice accounts for 74 per cent of kharif cereals production.
- 80 per cent of energy and 81 per cent of water used for cereal production in the season.
- Nearly 90 per cent of greenhouse gas emissions from kharif cereals production comes from rice alone.
- Increasing the supply of nutria cereals may be an important part of improving the country's food security:
 - ✓ Nearly 200 million undernourished people in India
 - ✓ Widespread groundwater depletion
 - ✓ Need to adapt to climate change

145. Industrial Relations Code Bill

- The government wants to codify 44 central labour laws into four broad codes.
 - ✓ Code on Wages (approved by Parliament)
 - ✓ Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (taken up by Labour Ministry)
 - ✓ Industrial Relation Code Bill (the one we are discussing)
 - ✓ Code on Social Security (it is in the pre-legislative stage)
- The draft code on Industrial Relations has been prepared after amalgamating, simplifying and rationalizing the relevant provisions of three Central Labour Acts:
 - ✓ The Trade Unions Act, 1926
 - ✓ The Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946
 - ✓ The Industrial Disputes Act, 1947

Provisions of Industrial Relations Code Bill

- The bill provides for setting up of a two-member tribunal (in place of one-member)
- Imparting flexibility to the exit provisions relating to retrenchment and others:
- 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 (executive order).
- That means there would be no need for Parliament approval.
- Re-skilling fund to be utilised for crediting to workers in the manner to be prescribed.
- Defining Fixed Term Employment

146. Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019

- India has ratified **Hong Kong International Convention for Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships**.
- It is a global rule that seeks to ensure that end-of-life ships are dismantled in an environment-friendly and responsible manner.
- The Hong Kong International Convention was adopted by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in 2009.
- The Bill, when enacted by the Parliament, requires ship recycling facilities to obtain authorisation to operate and only authorised yards will be permitted to import ships for recycling.
- Ship-specific Ship Recycling Plans (SRPs) will need to be prepared for incoming vessels and incoming ships will need to obtain a “Ready for Recycling Certificate” in accordance with the HKC.
- India is one of the four major ship recycling countries - India, Bangladesh, China and Pakistan.

Beaching Method - Recycling of Ships

- India follows the beaching method for dismantling ships.
- Under the beaching method, ships are first grounded and then dismantled.
- The IMO Convention does not prohibit the dismantling of old ships by the beaching method.
- It is often subjected to criticism for its lax safety and health aspects.
- Also, this is not permitted under the EU rules.

147. Fishermen & Kisan Credit Card (KCC)

- In the Budget 2018-19, the government had announced extension of the Kisan Credit Card (KCC) facility to:
 - ✓ Animal husbandry farmers
 - ✓ Fishermen
- To help them meet their working capital requirements.
- To give boost to the fishery sector, the government has drafted two key Bills:
 - ✓ The National Marine Fisheries (Regulation and Management) Bill 2019
 - ✓ Bill on controlling diseases in fish

148. Seed Bill 2019

- It aims to ensure that farmers get the highest quality seeds.
- It also aims at increasing the ‘ease-of-doing-business’ for the seed industry.
- It aims to foster competition by updating the Seed Act 1966 and Seed Rules 1968.

Seed Act 1966

- Introduced after the 'Green Revolution'.
- It was aided by the Seed Rules 1968.
- Both these were developed with the collaboration of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).
- It is mandatory to label the seeds with notified quality parameters.
- If not done or if quality is found lacking, it invites punitive measures against seed sellers.
- The seed label is given a unique identification number to ensure traceability of seed.

The New Seed Bill

- It asks for registration and licensing of seed producers and processors separately.
- It is driven by European standards.
- It also asks for:
 - ✓ Compulsory registration of seed varieties based on VCU (value for cultivation and use) evaluation
 - ✓ Licensing of seed producers
 - ✓ Licensing of seed processors.
 - ✓ Price control in the event of an emergency, monopolization or profiteering

Challenges for The New Seed Bill

- Magnitude of crop registration as the new bill proposes compulsory registration of varieties/hybrids.
- Allowing provisions like in the UPOV (Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants) to enter the new Seed Bill
- India has more than 100 crops, 5 geographical regions and hundreds of seed companies with R&D, the workload for nationwide evaluation as compared to the current workload will be more than 100 times greater.
- Need to recognize the nationwide evaluation facilities including those within the private sector.
- Many times, deterioration of seed quality is a biological process due to accelerated ageing when the seed lots are subject to very harsh conditions in summer before they are sown by the farmers.

149. Karvy Scandal

- Karvy Stock Broking Limited (KSBL) sold excess securities (securities not available in DP account) to the tune of a few hundred crore Rupees.
- A Depository Participant (DP) is an intermediary between the investor and the depository.

MODUS OPERANDI

- > Karvy Stock Broking pulled out shares from its clients' demat accounts
- > Transferred those shares to demat accounts controlled by it
- > Pledged those shares with banks and took money
- > Transferred the money to real estate arm, Karvy Realty
- > Failed to return those shares to clients from whose accounts it had pulled the shares in the first place

₹2,000cr
Estimated amount
of scam

2.5L
Demat a/cs with
Karvy on Oct 31

- A DP is typically a financial organization like a bank, broker, financial institution, or custodian acting as an agent of the depository to make its services available to the investors.
- The NSE forwarded a preliminary report to SEBI on the non-compliances observed with respect to the pledging/misuse of client securities by KSBL.
- Sebi said the unauthorised use of clients' funds creates a serious doubt over the conduct and integrity of KSBL.
- The depositories, i.e. NSDL and CDSL, in order to prevent further misuse of clients' securities by KSBL, have been hereby directed not to act upon any instruction given by KSBL in pursuance of power of attorney given to KSBL by its clients with immediate effect.
- Even if clients' securities were pledged, it should have only been for meeting the obligation of the respective clients which was not observed in this case.

Find Out More on:

- NSDL
- CDSL
- Demat Account
- Depository Accounts

150. Alternative Financing Models for Road Infrastructure

Existing Problems of Financing Road Infrastructure:

- No corporate bond market
- Banks wary of giving debts
- Large scale of funding required
- Long term of debt required
- Hybrid Annuity Model also under-subscribed (CRISIL report - only 70-75 per cent of the length awarded during that time have achieved financial closure under HAM)

What could be done:

- LPVR (Least Present Value of Revenues):
- Flexible term concessions
- Concession term is linked to the total aggregate revenue of a project reaching a predefined net present value-based threshold.

Subordinate Debt

- A form of an unsecured loan
- Could be considered like in projects where up to 10-30 per cent was provided by the grantor to the developer for mitigating high traffic risk exposure.

Minimum Revenue Guarantee

- The grantor usually pays a minimum fixed portion of the annual toll revenues to the concessionaire during the contract term to offset traffic under-performance.

Shadow Tolling Mechanism

- Toll amounts are collected per vehicle, which are paid by a third party such as a sponsoring governmental entity and not by the user.

Hybrid Structure

- Mix of shadow tolling and user-payment tolling.

Securitisation Structures

- Collateralised loan obligations
- Toll road securitisation

Multiple Debt Structures

- Deferred principal payments
- Bullet debt issuances

Infrastructure Investment Trusts

- Speedy resolution of distressed assets under the insolvency regime would improve overall investor sentiments.

151. World Trade Organisation's Dispute settlement system

- For the past two years, the US has repeatedly blocked the selection process for filling vacancies at the WTO's Appellate Body.
- It is the highest adjudicating body for global trade disputes.
- The adjudicating body will be reduced to one member from its requisite strength of seven.
- Consequently, a quorum of three members as required for adjudicating any trade dispute will remain unfulfilled.

US' Stand

- Highest adjudicating body failed to adhere to various provisions of the WTO's dispute settlement understanding (DSU).
- US has charged the AB for failing to issue reports within the mandatory period of 90 days.
- Washington has criticised the AB for its allegedly "flawed" interpretation in various cases concerning the importance of municipal law in resolving trade disputes.
- Existing and former AB members claimed well beyond their mandated remuneration.

152. 15th Finance Commission gets extension

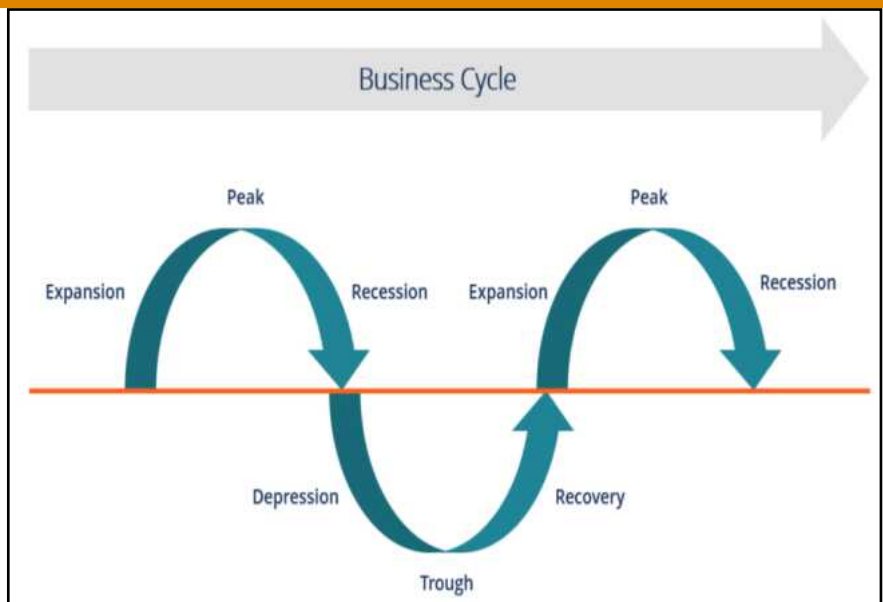
- The extension of the term will enable the Commission to examine various comparable estimates for financial projections in view of reforms and the new realities to finalise its recommendations for the period 2020-2026.
- Addendum in ToR is required because of the Kashmir development. Since the Finance Commission's recommendation on devolution is meant only for States and as Jammu & Kashmir ceased to be a State, there was a need to change the terms of reference.
- Normally, grants for a Union Territory are provided by the Home Ministry



153. Economic Slowdown

Cyclical Economic Slowdown

- It is a part of the business cycle having its peaks and troughs.
- The economy will be moving in cycles with periods of peak performance followed by a downturn and then a trough of low activity.
- These are expected to be short-term problems that could be addressed with an adequate mix of fiscal and monetary policies.



Structural Economic Slowdown

- Sometimes the problems of the economy can go deeper, impeding the efficient and fair production of goods and services.
- In such a scenario, a monetary and fiscal stimulus won't be enough to revive the economy.
- Fixing such problems would require the government to undertake some structural policies.
- The best example in this regard would be the reforms that were carried out to address the crisis in 1991.

Way Out of the Slowdown

- Structural Reforms
- Stimulus Packages
- Further rate cuts
- Increase in fiscal spending

- Deviation from fiscal deficit target
- Boost in consumption sentiment
- RBI has cut the repo rate repeatedly to its lowest level since 2010.
- The economic growth of any country is driven by a virtuous cycle of:
 - ✓ Savings
 - ✓ Investment
 - ✓ Exports.
- Investment is considered to be the key driver of growth.
- Economic Survey (2019), investment, especially private investment, is the 'key driver' that drives demand, creates capacity, increases labour productivity, introduces new technology, allows creative destruction, and generates jobs.

How do we know Investment is happening?

- By Gross Fixed Capital Formation (GFCF) as a per cent of GDP is showing a declining trend. **GFCF as a per cent of GDP has declined from 34.3 per cent in 2011 to 28.8 per cent in 2018.**
- Similarly, if we consider the GFCF in the private sector, it declined from 26.9 per cent in 2011 to 21.4 per cent in 2018.
- Likewise, the new investment projects declined by around 35% from 2011 to 2018.

Some Challenges

- A slowdown in consumption demand
- Decline in manufacturing
- Inability of the IBC to resolve cases in a time-bound manner
- Rising global trade tension
- Improper transmission mechanism of monetary policy related measures.
- Broad-based cyclical downturn in several sectors, including:
 - ✓ Manufacturing, trade, hotels, transport, communication and broadcasting, construction, and agriculture.
- Structural issues in:
 - ✓ Land, labour, agricultural marketing.

154. Tracking Free Trade Agreements (FTAs)

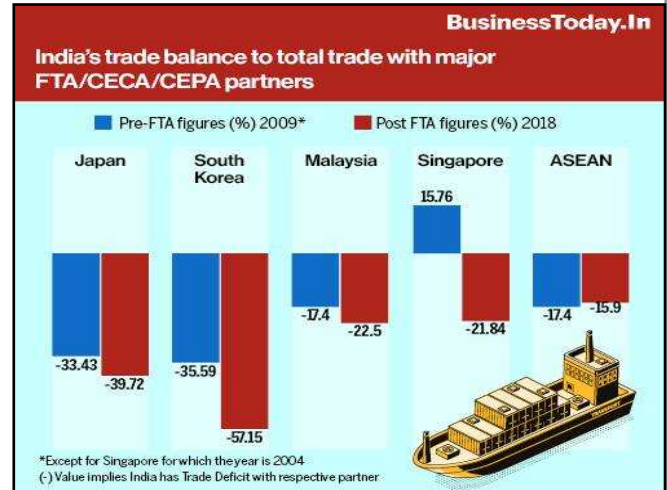
- The Commerce & Industry Ministry is considering setting up a trade monitoring division that will monitor utilisation of current FTAs and the non-tariff measures taken by partner countries.
- It is to coordinate with the Directorate General of Foreign Trade, the Department of Revenue and the Directorate General of Commercial Intelligence and Statistics.

NITI Aayog's Report

- India's utilisation rate for most FTAs is very low (between 4 per cent and 20 per cent).
- India's existing FTAs with the ASEAN, Japan and South Korea, too, have worked out more in favour of the partner countries and have resulted in an increase in trade deficit with the countries.

SOME OF INDIA'S TRADE AGREEMENTS CURRENTLY IN FORCE	
Trade agreements	In force from
Sri Lanka FTA (Free Trade Agreement)	March 2000
Thailand EHS (Early Harvest Scheme)	September 2004
Singapore CECA (Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement)	August 2005
SAFTA (South Asia Free Trade Agreement)	January 2006
Chile PTA (Preferential Trade Agreement)	September 2007
MERCOSUR PTA	June 2009
ASEAN FTA	January 2010
Korea CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement)	January 2010
Malaysia CECA	July 2011
Japan CEPA	August 2011

Source: CI compilation from information available at Department of Commerce (India) website



155. Alternative Fuels

Sustainable Alternative Towards Affordable Transportation (SATAT)

- SATAT plans to establish 5,000 Compressed BioGas (CBG) plants across the country with an estimated CBG production of 15 MMT/annum by 2023.

Benefits of CBG

- Introduction of CBG in transport sector has multiple benefits such as:
 - ✓ Waste management
 - ✓ Reduction in carbon emissions
 - ✓ Additional revenue source for farmers
 - ✓ Boost to entrepreneurship and rural economy by way of generating employment opportunities.

156. National Anti-profiteering Authority (NAA)

- The NAA is the statutory mechanism under GST law to check the unfair profiteering activities by the registered suppliers.
- The Authority's core function is to ensure that the commensurate benefits of the reduction in GST rates on goods and services done by the GST Council and of the Input tax credit are passed on to the recipients by way of commensurate reduction in prices by suppliers.
- The formation of the NAA comes in the background of rate-reduction on a large number of items by the GST Council in its 22nd meeting at Guwahati.
- At the meeting, the Council reduced rates of more than 200 items.
- This should result in reduced prices and consumers will be benefited only if the registered suppliers under GST law reduce prices of the respective items immediately.

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- There is a petition challenging the composition of the Authority as it **does not have judicial member(s)** though it is required as NAA is supposed to be the quasi judicial body or a tribunal.
- The Authority, constituted on recommendation of the GST Council, is composed of a **Chairman and four technical members** and there is a clear need for a judicial member as the matters from here go straight to High Courts.

157. New Energy Efficiency Norms

- New energy labelling norms, set to be applicable for refrigerators from January 2020 and air-conditioners from January 2021.
- New energy labelling norms for ceiling fans are also expected to be implemented from July 2020.
- Household appliances such as ACs and refrigerators come with star ratings, which are categorised as per Indian seasonal energy efficiency ratio (ISEER) bands and comparative energy consumption (CEC) criteria respectively.
- They indicate the amount of cooling the appliance delivers for every unit of electrical energy consumed.
- The higher the rating, the more energy efficient it is.
- Energy efficiency norm revisions will continue to happen and is necessary for sustainable growth.

Some Recommendations

- GST reduction on energy-efficient models to narrow the price gap between energy- efficient products and normal products is suggested to make these products more affordable.
- Given that a large part of premium-segment products is either imported or assembled after importing components, a shift towards local manufacturing can bring down costs.

158. Stand Up India (SUPI) scheme

- SUPI was launched on April 5, 2016.
- It aimed to **facilitate bank loans of ₹10 lakh to ₹1 crore to SC/ST and women borrowers.**
- The aim was to **set up Greenfield enterprises in the manufacturing, services and trading sectors.**
- In case of non-individual enterprises **at least 51% of the shareholding and controlling stake should be held by either an SC/ST or woman entrepreneur**

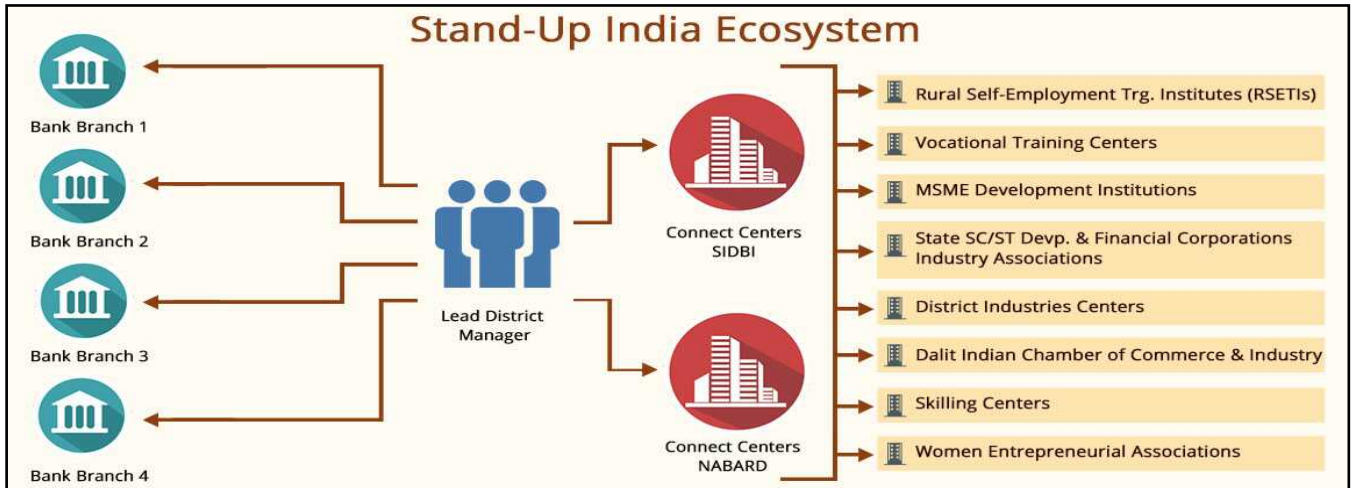
Other Important Initiatives working for developing Entrepreneurs in India

- **SMILE** - SIDBI Make In India Soft Loan Fund For Micro Small And Medium Enterprises.
- **Start Up India Scheme**
- **Mudra**

Stand-Up vs SMILE

- SMILE Scheme is operated only through SIDBI for investment in projects coming up in 25 identified sectors under the Make in India programme for existing and new units.

- The support is in the nature of quasi equity and term loan on relatively soft terms, with the minimum term loan size for new units at 25 lakh.
- Stand-Up India scheme is proposed to be operated through 1.25 lakh bank branches in the country.
- The loans would be above 10 lakh and up to 100 lakh specifically for SC/ST/Women entrepreneurs setting up green field projects.



Stand-Up vs Start-Up India

- Stand Up India Scheme is to facilitate bank loans between 10 lakh to 1 crore to the enterprises promoted by SC or ST and Women entrepreneurs to set up green field projects in manufacturing, trading and service sectors.
- **Start Up India Scheme** aims to boost innovative and technology led enterprises for new/existing enterprises. According to Dept. of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GoI vide Notification dated Feb 17, 2016, an entity shall be considered as a startup –
 - ✓ up to five years from the date of its incorporation/registration,
 - ✓ if its turnover for any of the financial years has not exceeded 25 crore, and
 - ✓ It is working towards innovation, development, deployment or commercialization of new products, processes or services driven by technology or intellectual property.

159. A non-major port at Ramayapatnam

- It will be a Greenfield port at Ramayapatnam in the state's Prakasam district as a non-major port.
- The state government, through RITES Ltd, has filed an application with the expert appraisal committee (EAC) attached to ministry of environment forest and climate change, to set the ball rolling on the terms of reference for environment and coastal regulation zone clearances for the project.



- Around 95 per cent of India's trading by volume and 70 per cent by value is done through maritime transport.
- India is serviced by 12 major ports, 200 notified minor and intermediate ports.
- The total 187 non-major ports are in the various States with Maharashtra having 53 ports.

160. Long-term Irrigation Fund

- Union Finance Minister announced the Long Term Irrigation Fund (LTIF) in the Union Budget 2016-17 for fast tracking the **completion of the 99 identified Medium and Major Irrigation projects, spread across 18 states**, in mission mode by December 2019
- Under LTIF, NABARD provides loan towards Central Share as well as State Share with a tenor of 15 years.
- The Central Share is provided to National Water Development Agency (NWDA), an agency working under the aegis of MoWR, RD & GR, GoI, whereas the loan towards State Share is availed by the State Governments.
- During 2016-17 & 2017-18, loans were extended towards Central as well as State Share by blending of resources directly raised by NABARD with those raised through GoI serviced Extra Budgetary Resources (EBRs) in the required proportion so as to keep lending cost at 6% per annum.

161. SWAMIH Investment Fund I

Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing Fund (SWAMIH) Investment Fund I

- It is sponsored by the Government of India for **providing last-mile funding to enable completion of construction of stalled housing projects.**
- It will **provide priority debt financing for the completion of stalled housing projects** that are in the affordable and middle-income housing sector.
- It is a **Category II Alternate Investment Fund (AIF)**
- It has been formed under the Special Window for Affordable and Mid-Income Housing as announced by Finance Minister in September, 2019.
- It is to provide last-mile funding to enable completion of construction of stalled housing projects
- The Government of India is the Sponsor of the Fund while SBICAP Ventures is the Investment Manager to this Fund.
- The Fund aims to provide senior capital for last mile funding to complete construction of housing projects.
- Fund has attracted interest from investors such as Government of India, SBI, LIC, HDFC Ltd and all major public sector banks.
- The Government of India has committed a fund infusion of up to Rs 10,000 crores in the Special Window and further investments will be brought in through institutional and private investors to generate a total corpus of Rs 25,000 crore.

- With funds at the disposal, the aim of the scheme is to complete the unfinished projects as early as possible and hand over the flats to the home buyers.
- Importantly, those projects which have been declared as NPA or have been undergoing NCLT proceedings, will also qualify for the funding.

162. India Skills Report

- It is a joint initiative of a few private players (like Wheebox (a global talent-assessment company), Tagged by People Strong) and **Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) in collaboration with UNDP, AICTE and AIU.**
- About 46.21 per cent students were found employable or ready to take up jobs in 2019, compared with 33 per cent in 2014, and 47.38 per cent in 2018
- Prime Minister's vision of India becoming a \$5 trillion economy requires increasing the per-capita income of Indians.
- It can happen only when people get employment, which consequently demands the skills and useful talent.
- To achieve that, along with the universities and colleges in India, various emerging start-ups are already using innovative technologies to facilitate skill up-gradation, job creation, internships and workforce management on their platforms

163. World Economic Forum's Gender Gap Report

- Global Gender Gap Report 2020 benchmarks 153 countries on their progress towards gender parity in four dimensions:
 - ✓ Economic Participation and Opportunity
 - ✓ Educational Attainment
 - ✓ Health and Survival
 - ✓ Political Empowerment.
- They have further sub-indices.
- The WEF had published its first gender gap report in 2006, when India was ranked relatively higher at 98th place.

HOW INDIA LETS DOWN ITS WOMEN ON HEALTH, JOBS

India has slipped four places to No. 112 in the latest report on gender parity by World Economic Forum. But the slide in the Global Gender Gap report 2020 is despite a slight improvement in the country's score. That's because countries that were placed below India in the previous edition of the report (2018) have achieved bigger improvements in closing the gender gap, showing that much work remains to be done. India is at the bottom of the table for all components of gender parity analysed by the report of 153 countries, political empowerment being the only exception. On Gender Gap Index, 0 represents complete inequality and 1 represents complete equality

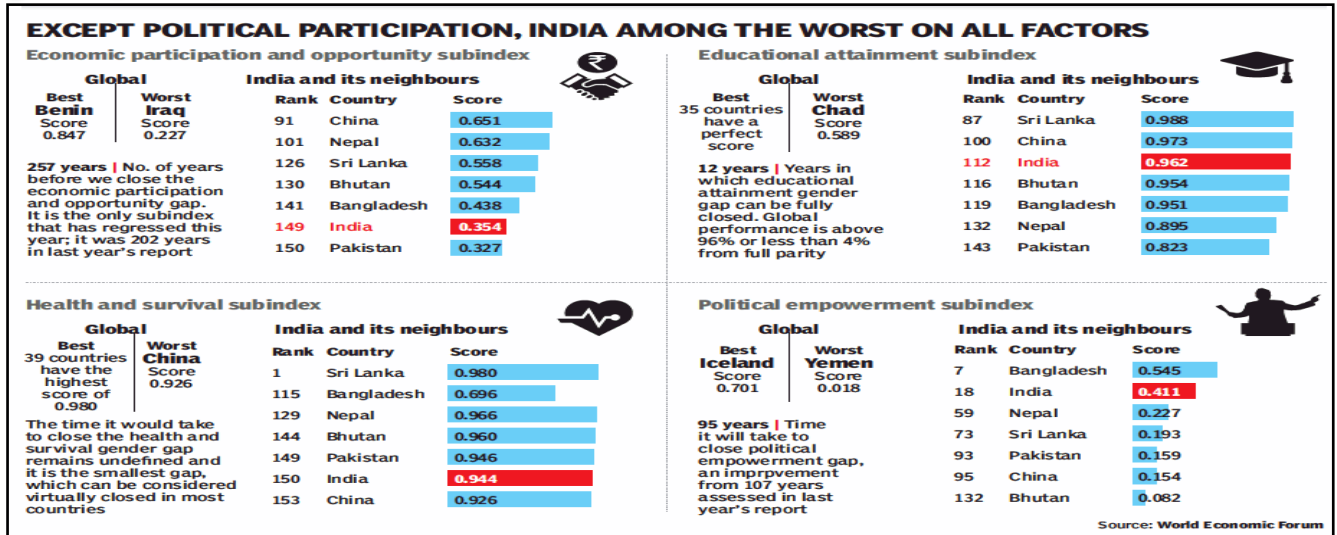
BANGLADESH TOPS THE SUBCONTINENT ON GENDER EQUALITY

Overall Gender Gap Index

Global Top 5		India and its neighbours		
	Score	Rank	Country	Score
Iceland	0.877	50	Bangladesh	0.726
Norway	0.842	89	China	0.676
Finland	0.832	101	Nepal	0.68
Sweden	0.82	102	Sri Lanka	0.68
Nicaragua	0.804	112	India	0.668
		131	Bhutan	0.635
		151	Pakistan	0.564



99.5 years | Time to close overall gender gap in scenario as assessed by 2020 Gender Gap report. This is almost 10 years less than that measured in the last edition



- India has slipped four places to rank 112th globally in terms of gender gap amid widening disparity in terms of women's health and survival and economic participation - the two areas where the country is now ranked in the bottom five.

164. Ujjwala

- Recent data analysis by CAG has revealed mismatch in name of 12.46 lakh beneficiaries between PMUY database and SECC-2011 data.
- Eligible beneficiaries:
 - ✓ An adult woman belonging to a poor family not having LPG connection in her household
 - ✓ SECC 2011 list
 - ✓ In seven identified categories i.e.
 - ❖ SC/ST households
 - ❖ Beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) (Gramin)
 - ❖ Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY)
 - ❖ Forest dwellers
 - ❖ Most Backward Classes (MBC)
 - ❖ Tea and Ex-Tea Garden Tribes
 - ❖ People residing in river Islands

The Scheme provides

- A financial support of Rs 1600 for each LPG connection to the BPL households
- Interest free loan to purchase stove and refill by Oil Marketing Companies.
- The administrative cost of Rs. 1600 per connection, which includes a cylinder, pressure regulator, booklet, safety hose, etc., would be borne by the Government.

- Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana is a scheme of the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas for providing LPG connections to women from Below Poverty Line (BPL) households.

165. Solar Star Ratings

- Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE) are close to finalising a star rating mechanism for solar Photovoltaic (PV) panels.
- The **efficiency of energy generation equipment was not rated by the BEE**
- The efficiency of panels will be assessed while factoring the energy output over the area covered by the panels.
- These panels will also be assessed on the annual degradation of PV equipment that leads to lowering of energy output.
- BEE rating for solar PV panels is an extension of the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) specification for the same that were enforced in January this year.
- While the **BIS norms ensured compatibility and safety of equipment, the BEE ratings will cater to quality of power supplied.**

166. Ayushman Bharat

- Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) is popularly referred to as 'Ayushman Bharat'.
- PM-JAY provides an annual health cover of ₹5 lakh for close to 10 crore poor families in the country.
- It is run by The **National Health Authority (NHA)**.

NHA

- National Health Authority is the successor of National Health Agency, which was functioning as a registered society since 23rd May, 2018.
- It is an **attached office of the Ministry of health and Family Welfare with full functional autonomy**.
- Its Governing Board is chaired by the Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare.
- There is a Chief Executive Officer (CEO), an officer in the rank of Secretary to the Government of India manages its affairs.
- The CEO is the Ex-Office Member Secretary to the Governing Board.
- To implement the scheme in the State, State Health Agencies (SHAs) in the form of a society/trust have been set up by the States.
- SHAs have full operational autonomy over implementation of the scheme in the State including extending the coverage to non SECC beneficiaries.
- It was launched as recommended by the National Health Policy 2017, to achieve the vision of Universal Health Coverage (UHC).
- It aims to undertake path breaking interventions to holistically address health (covering prevention, promotion and ambulatory care), at primary, secondary and tertiary level.

- It comprises of two inter-related components, which are -
 - ✓ Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs)
 - ✓ Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) (Health Insurance Cover)

167. GST Council

- It is a **constitutional body for making recommendations to the Union and State Government on issues related to Goods and Service Tax.**
- The GST Council is **chaired by the Union Finance Minister and other members are the Union State Minister of Revenue or Finance and Ministers in-charge of Finance or Taxation of all the States.**
- As per Article 279A (1) of the amended Constitution, the GST Council has to be constituted by the President within 60 days of the commencement of Article 279A.
- As per Article 279A of the amended Constitution, the GST Council which will be a joint forum of the Centre and the States shall consist of the following members: -
 - ✓ The Union Finance Minister- Chairperson
 - ✓ The Union Minister of State in charge of Revenue or Finance- Member
 - ✓ The Minister in charge of Finance or Taxation or any other Minister nominated by each State Government – Members
- As per Article 279A (4): The Council will make recommendations to the Union and the States on important issues related to GST, like:
 - ✓ The goods and services that may be subjected or exempted from GST
 - ✓ Model GST Laws
 - ✓ Principles that govern Place of Supply
 - ✓ Threshold limits
 - ✓ GST rates including the floor rates with bands
 - ✓ Special rates for raising additional resources during natural calamities/disasters, special provisions for certain States, etc.
- Other things to keep in mind:
 - ✓ Creation of the GST Council Secretariat, with its office at New Delhi.
 - ✓ Appointment of the Secretary (Revenue) as the Ex-Officio Secretary to the GST Council.
 - ✓ Inclusion of the Chairperson, Central Board of Excise and Customs (CBEC), as a permanent invitee (non-voting) to all proceedings of the GST Council.
 - ✓ Create one post of Additional Secretary to the GST Council in the GST Council Secretariat (at the level of Additional Secretary to the Government of India), and four posts of Commissioner in the GST Council Secretariat (at the level of Joint Secretary to the Government of India).

- Adequate funds for meeting the recurring and non-recurring expenses of the GST Council Secretariat, the entire cost for which shall be borne by the Central Government.



- The GST Council Secretariat shall be manned by officers taken on deputation from both the Central and State Governments.

168. Inverted Duty Structure

Why in News

- GST Council may initiate measures to remove this.
- Under the GST regime, a registered taxpayer can claim a refund of unutilised ITC at the end of any tax period, where the credit has accumulated on account of rate of tax on inputs being higher than that on output supplies.

What is Inverted Duty Structure

- It is an arrangement for manufactured items where raw materials have higher duty, while finished product attracts lower duty.
- Such imbalanced tax structure results into accumulation of tax credits (input tax credit or ITC).

Various Items witnessing IDS

- Mobile phones, footwear, fabrics, man-made yarn, ready made garments and made-ups.
- Fertilisers, renewal equipment, tractors, pharma, generators/inverters, edible oil, job work, agarbatti, agri machinery, utensil, bicycles, LED light, milling machines, ink, ethyl alcohol, medical equipment, PP bags and water pumps.

Major Impacts of IDS

- Direct impact on the 'Make in India' initiatives
- Impacts the Ease of doing business
- Impacts GST credits

169. Chabahar Port

Issue

- India had to procure equipment for running the port, but because of the US sanctions, India was not able to procure.

Earlier Development

- In November 2018, the United States granted a waiver to the port from the sanctions it has imposed on the Persian Gulf nation.

Recent Development

- United States has given a written assurance to India that will help facilitate global banks to fund the purchase of equipment worth \$85 million to be erected at Chabahar port which India is developing in Iran.

Location

- Located in the Sistan-Baluchistan Province on Iran's South-eastern coast (outside the Persian Gulf), Chabahar port is of great strategic importance for the development of regional maritime transit traffic to Afghanistan and Central Asia.



170. National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA)

What is NFRA

- It is a statutory body set up under the Companies Act.
- It is an independent regulator for auditors of listed companies and large unlisted companies, besides banks and insurers.
- It has been constituted by the Centre to enforce auditing standards.
- The Authority also has oversight of electricity firms and corporations referred to it by the Centre.

Why in News

- Now, consultants, including senior ones, are proposed to be appointed across several grades.

Recently

- NFRA has decided to hire consultants to assist it in identifying audit reports that need to be taken up for review.
- Consultants — mainly chartered accountants — are proposed to be hired for a period of one year (on a contract basis) to assist the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) in the conduct of audit quality review and disciplinary proceedings.

Functions of NFRA

- Recommend accounting and auditing policies and standards to be adopted by companies for approval by the Central Government;
- Monitor and enforce compliance with accounting standards and auditing standards;
- Oversee the quality of service of the professions associated with ensuring compliance with such standards and suggest measures for improvement in the quality of service;
- Perform such other functions and duties as may be necessary or incidental to the aforesaid functions and duties.
- The Authority shall have power to monitor and enforce compliance with accounting standards and auditing standards, oversee the quality of service or undertake investigation of such section of the auditors of the following class of companies and bodies corporate, namely:-
 - ✓ Listed on any stock exchange in India or outside India
 - ✓ Unlisted public companies having paid-up capital of not less than rupees five hundred crores or having annual turnover of not less than rupees one thousand crores or having, in aggregate, outstanding loans, debentures and deposits of not less than rupees five hundred crores as on the 31st March of immediately preceding financial year;
 - ✓ Certain Insurance companies, banking companies, companies engaged in the generation or supply of electricity, companies governed by any special Act for the time being in force or bodies corporate incorporated by Companies Act
 - ✓ Any body corporate or company or person, or any class of bodies corporate or companies or persons, on a reference made to the Authority by the Central Government in public interest

171. 100 GW Renewable Energy

- India is set to cross 100 GW renewable energy capacity mark in 2020

Next Important Thing to do

- Promote storage to ensure 24X7 clean energy supply as coal fired thermal power still remains the base load in the country.

Other Issues in Renewable Energy

- Lack of interest of financial institution to fund renewable energy projects
- Safeguard duty on imported solar panels
- Ambiguity over goods and services tax (GST) on solar equipment
- Low investor sentiment due to delayed or non-payment by discoms to clean energy developers.

India's Renewable Energy includes

- Solar
- Wind
- Small Hydro

- Biomass
- Waste to energy
- Hydrogen Energy
- Ocean Renewable Energy
- Geo Thermal Energy

Important things to remember

- Hydro projects up to 25 MW capacity are categorized as Small Hydro Power (SHP) projects.
- Further, these are classified as:
 - ✓ Micro Hydro Up to 100 kW
 - ✓ Mini Hydro 101 to 2000 kW
 - ✓ Small Hydro 2001 to 25000 kW (25 MW)
- Ocean Renewable Energy includes:
 - ✓ Wave energy
 - ✓ Tidal energy
 - ✓ Ocean current energy
 - ✓ Salinity gradient energy
 - ✓ Ocean thermal gradient energy

Power from renewable energy (million units)				
Year	Solar	Wind	Total electricity supplied in India	% of renewable energy in total electricity supplied
2014-2015	4,599.02	33,768.30	10,30,785	3.72
2015-2016	7,447.92	33,029.39	10,90,850	3.71
2016-2017	1,34,99.41	46,004.34	11,35,332	5.24
2017-2018	25,871.07	52,666.09	12,04,697	6.52
2018-2019	39,268.20	62,036.38	12,67,526	7.99
April- Oct 2019	26,929.21	47,729.38	832,627.09	8.97

Source: Parliamentary questions and Central Electricity Authority

KUSUM Scheme

- Ultra Mega Renewable Energy Power Parks (UMREPPs)

172. College of Supervision

- RBI is planning to set up 'college of supervision'.
- RBI is envisaging providing skills to officials to improve risk assessment in banks, NBFCs.
- It will ensure that irregularities in the financial sector, which is increasingly becoming complex and interconnected, do not escape the attention of its inspectors.

173. National Infrastructure Pipeline Plan

- Rs 102 lakh crore of infrastructure projects.
- Estimated that India would need to spend \$4.5 trillion on infrastructure by 2030 to sustain its growth rate.

NIPP

- ₹102-lakh crore five-year infrastructure development plan across 22 sectors and 18 States and Union Territories.
- The principal focus on roads, housing and urban development, railways, power and irrigation.

Benefits

- Enable more infra projects
- Grow businesses, Create jobs
- Improve ease of living
- Provide equitable access to infrastructure for all, Inclusive Growth
- Creates additional fiscal space by improving revenue base of the government
- Ensures quality of expenditure focused in productive areas.
- Ensures enhanced access to sources of finance as result of increased investor confidence.
- Exposures less likely to suffer stress given active project monitoring, thereby less likelihood of NPAs.

Challenges

- Finance
- Resistance to land acquisition
- Controversies over pricing, construction and operation in PPPs
- Led to projects running aground and becoming expensive.
- Lack of Private participation
- Infrastructure NPAs

174. SDG Index

- NITI Aayog released the second edition of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) India Index, which comprehensively documents the progress made by India's States and Union Territories towards achieving the 2030 SDG targets.
- India has improved three position from 57 points last year to 60 this year, slowly inching towards fulfilment of sustainable development goals (SDGs).
- The SDG India Index has been developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI), United Nations in India, and Global Green Growth Institute.
- The world is now in the fifth year of the SDG era.
- India's National Development Agenda is mirrored in the SDGs.
- India's progress in the global Goals is crucial for the world as the country is home to about one-sixth of the world's population.

- The SDG India Index 2019 tracks progress of all States and UTs on 100 indicators drawn from the MoSPI's National Indicator Framework (NIF).
- The SDG India Index 2019 is more robust than the first edition on account of wider coverage of goals, targets, and indicators with greater alignment with the NIF.
- The **Index spans 16 out of 17 SDGs** with a qualitative assessment on Goal 17.
- The SDG India Index acts as a bridge between these mandates, aligning the SDGs with various government schemes.
- **Focus is on five Ps of the global SDG movement: People, Planet, Prosperity, Partnership And Peace.**

175. FTA with Switzerland, Norway, Iceland

EFTA

The European Free Trade Association is a regional trade organization and free trade area consisting of four European states:

- Iceland
- Liechtenstein
- Norway
- Switzerland.

Why in News

- India is making efforts to speed up free trade negotiations with the EFTA countries
- Parallel discussions with the European Union on a similar pact. It is called Broad-based Trade and Investment Agreement (BTIA).

Issues

- Crucial issues of services
- Intellectual property rights
- Rules of origin

Important Contentious Issue

IPR

Switzerland is home to a large number of pharmaceutical giants.

- EFTA wants India to make its IPR laws favourable to patent holding drug majors.
- India has to protect the interests of its generic producers.

Rule of Origin

- India wants strict ROO so that third countries can't take advantage of the free trade pact by supplying their items through the markets of the partner country.

Services Sector

- India wants good offers in Service Sector.
- India has a booming service economy and is especially interested in greater access for its work force in other countries.

EFTA Trade with India

- India exported goods worth about \$2 billion in 2018
- Imports were around \$1.7 billion.

176. India–Mauritius FTA

Free Trade Agreement

- Two trading partners cut or eliminate duties on majority of goods besides liberalising norms to promote services trade and boost investments.
- Mauritius was the second top source of foreign direct investment (FDI) into India in 2018-19. India received \$8 billion foreign inflows from the country.

Major Exports

- India exports petroleum products, pharmaceuticals, cereals, cotton and electrical machinery, apparel and clothing accessories to Mauritius.

Major Imports

- The island nation's exports to New Delhi include iron and steel, pearls, precious/semi-precious stones and optical, photographic and precision instruments.

Proposed

- India-Mauritius Comprehensive Economic Cooperation and Partnership Agreement (CECPA)

Important Negotiations include

- Goods & Services
- Rules of origin
- Technical barriers to trade
- Sanitary and phyto-sanitary measures
- Trade remedies
- Dispute settlement.

177. World Dairy Summit

- Annual flagship Summit of International Dairy Federation (IDF).
- It is a platform for dairy stakeholders, including:
 - ✓ Farmers

✓ Processors

✓ Researchers, and

✓ Marketers,

to exchange knowledge and ideas and experiments on better dairying practices.

- The government has involved National Dairy Development Board (NDDB), the apex dairy development body in the country, besides private players, cooperatives and Indian Dairy Association (IDA) as its stakeholders.
- In 2019, the event was held in Istanbul, Turkey.
- The next is planned in September-October 2020 at Cape Town, South Africa.
- Puerto Rico will host in 2021, followed by India in 2022, and China in 2023

178. India & FDI

India & FDI

- Foreign direct investment into India grew 15 per cent to \$26 billion during the first half of the current financial year.

Top Sectors

- Services (\$4.45 billion)
- Computer software and hardware (\$4 billion)
- Telecommunications (\$4.28 billion)
- Automobile (\$2.13 billion)
- Trading (\$2.14 billion)

Top Countries

- Singapore
- Mauritius
- The US
- The Netherlands
- Japan

179. Rupee Depreciation & Exports

Crisis in Middle-East

- Adverse geo-political situation in the Middle East.
- Due to factors like:
 - ✓ Dependence of Oil Import

✓ Remittances

- Indian rupee may witness some volatility.

Why the Concern

- But depreciation of the home currency does not always help exporters.

Case of Indian Engineering Exports to Middle East

- Rupee depreciated in 2019.
- Ideally, this should have helped engineering exports grow.
- But, the reverse happened, exports contracted during all these months.

Reasons of Decline

Currency advantage can occur if a persistent trend is maintained over a long period of time. This combines with several other factors, such as:

- The cost of raw materials
- Cost of capital
- Transaction costs
- Geopolitical Stability in the region
- Global Growth and Demand of the output, etc.

When can the currency make a difference

- When combined along with several other factors.
- Currency is not the only factor in securing the competitive advantage.
- If the rupee depreciation results from the troubled geo-political situation in the Middle East, it may not be of advantage.
- Rather the trade disruption can be much more severe for shipments to the region.

180. World Bank & India's Growth Estimate

News

- World Bank lowered Indian Economy's growth estimate to 5 per cent from the earlier projection of 6 per cent.
- RBI and the GoI also projected 5 per cent growth rate for 2019-20.

Reason for Lowering of the Forecast

- Weakness in credit from non-bank financial companies
- Slow Domestic Demand
- Slow but gradually improving business confidence
- Support from infrastructure investments in future years

- Slower than anticipated growth among advanced economies as a group
- Weaker-than-expected exports and investment

Steps to Improve

- Improve
 - ✓ The business climate
 - ✓ The rule of law
 - ✓ Debt management
 - ✓ Productivity

Seizing opportunities to undertake structural reforms that boost broad-based growth, which is essential to poverty reduction. This can help achieve sustained growth.

181. Rising Inflation & Lowering Demand

Most important Cause of Rising Inflation

- Rising vegetable prices

It's Impact

- Lack of possibility of dropping Repo Rate further.

Inflation & Core Inflation

- Core Inflation - Excludes volatile components like food and energy.
- It has been declining.

Meaning: There's weak underlying demand.

Impact on Economy

- If the CPI exceeds the RBI's medium-term target of 4%,
- It could prompt RBI to raise the Policy Rates to curb inflation.
- Which can further suppress the domestic demand.

182. End-use Restrictions & Coal Mine Auctions

News

- Ordinance to open up coal mining in the country to non-coal companies.
- Restrictions on end-use of the fuel also removed.

Also

- Concluding auction of iron ore and other mineral mines before the expiry of their current mining lease on March 31, so as to avoid disruption in production.

How is it done

Promulgation of:

- Mineral Laws (Amendment) Ordinance 2020 to amend
- Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act 1957
- Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act 2015

Amendments Done

- Amending the current condition in the law that allows only companies in coal mining to bid for coal mines.
- Any company meeting the minimum criteria will now be allowed to bid for coal mines.
- Allocation of coal/lignite blocks for composite prospecting license cum mining lease
- Requirement of previous approval in cases where the allocation of blocks was made by the central government has been dispensed with
- Continuity of all Forest and Environment clearances for Iron-Ore mines for a period of 2 years

Benefits

- It will help create an efficient energy market
- India gain access to high-end technology for underground mining used by global miners
- Increase competition
- Reduce coal imports
- Ending the monopoly of state-owned Coal India Ltd.
- Speed up the process of implementation of projects
- Increase ease of doing business
- Simplification of procedure
- Increase FDI in Coal and Mining Sector

Indian Coal & Imports

- India has the world's fourth-largest coal reserves.
- India imported 235 million tonnes of coal (for Rs 1.71 lakh crore) last fiscal.
- Of these imports, about 100 million tonnes is non-substitutable as they are tied to the power plant or user factories.
- The rest can be cut down.

Indian Coal & Nationalisation

- India's coal sector was nationalised in 1973.

183. Viability Gap Funding

News

- Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved a Capital Grant as the Viability Gap Funding to Indradhanush Gas Grid Ltd for setting up the North East Natural Gas Pipeline Grid.

Plan

- A 1,656-km gas pipeline grid would connect the eight states of the North-Eastern region.
- These are Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura

About Indradhanush Gas Grid Ltd

- IGGL is a joint venture company of five central public sector enterprises, namely:
 - ✓ Indian Oil
 - ✓ Oil and Natural Gas Corporation
 - ✓ GAIL
 - ✓ Oil India
 - ✓ Numaligarh Refinery Ltd.

The joint venture was incorporated in August 2018 to develop and operate a natural gas pipeline grid in the North-East.

Viability Gap Funding

- VGF means a grant which could be one-time or deferred.
- It is provided to support infrastructure projects that are economically justified but fall short of financial viability.
- The lack of financial viability usually arises from long gestation periods and the inability to increase user charges to commercial levels.
- Infrastructure projects also involve externalities that are not adequately captured in direct financial returns to the project sponsor.
- Through the provision of a catalytic grant assistance of the capital costs, several projects may become bankable and help mobilise private investment in infrastructure.

184. National Food Processing Policy

Food processing industry has urged the government to formulate a model National Food Processing Policy.

Aim

- Increasing farmers' incomes
- Strengthening the value-addition ecosystem for agri-produce in the country.

Confederation of Indian Industries (CII)

- Centre should formulate a comprehensive National Model Food Processing Policy for states to adopt.
- It will help capitalise on the diverse food production base and encourage investments in the sector.
- Also, SAMPADA scheme of Ministry of Food Processing should be extended to industry outside mega food parks.

Sampada

- Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters.
- An umbrella scheme which incorporates various initiatives and schemes of the Ministry of Food Processing aimed at promoting expansion of food processing and preservation capacities, cold-chain infrastructure, mega food parks and agro-processing clusters.
- The following schemes will be implemented under PM Kisan SAMPADA Yojana:
 - ✓ Mega Food Parks
 - ✓ Integrated Cold Chain and Value Addition Infrastructure
 - ✓ Creation/ Expansion of Food Processing/ Preservation Capacities (Unit Scheme)
 - ✓ Infrastructure for Agro-processing Clusters
 - ✓ Creation of Backward and Forward Linkages
 - ✓ Food Safety and Quality Assurance Infrastructure
 - ✓ Human Resources and Institutions

More On Sampada Can Be Learnt [Here](#)

185. Agrarian Distress

Major Issues

- Crop failures
- Indebtedness
- Non-remunerative prices, Higher input costs, Low returns
- Knee-jerk reactions to price volatility (like import ban or export ban)
- Climate risk
- Productivity issues
- Fragmenting landholding

Key Initiatives To Mitigate Agriculture Distress Fasal Bima Yojana

- Financial support in the event of crop failure.
- Farmers are required to pay a uniform premium of 2 per cent for kharif crops, 1.5 per cent for rabi crops and 5 per cent for commercial and horticultural produce.

- Required to use
- Remote-sensing
- Drones
- Satellite imagery
- Digitisation of land records

Drawback

- It does not guarantee any assured income for the produce.
- Unification of the insurance system covering yield and price risk will ensure increased participation

Krishi Sinchayee Yojana

- Assured irrigation through reduced water wastage and improving efficiency.

Target:

- To create irrigation potential for additional 4,293 thousand hectares by 2019.
- Only 67 percent of the target has been completed. Land acquisition and delay in tendering process are the main reasons for the delay.

Kisan Samman Nidhi

- Direct payment of ₹6,000 per year.
- Three equal installments of ₹2,000 each to small and marginal landholding families.

E-NAM

- It aims to facilitate better price discovery, a nationwide electronic trading portal that links all APMCs.
- The farmers have the freedom to sell their produce without the intervention of any middlemen and with more options to sell.
- It helps them get a more competitive return for their produce.

186. Gold Jewellery Hallmarking

- Hallmarking of gold jewellery has been made compulsory.
- Jewellers will get one year to comply with the order.
- Ministry of Consumer Affairs has issued a notification for the same.
- Once the notification comes into force, only ornaments of 14 Carat, 18 Carat and 22 Carat would be allowed.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

Each gold item sold in India will carry four distinct marks:

- BIS mark

- Hallmarking (both caratage and purity)
- Identification mark of assaying lab
- Identification mark of jeweller

187. National Fisheries Policy

- Budget of Rs 45,000 crore for next five years to promote:
 - ✓ Marine fishery
 - ✓ Aquaculture
 - ✓ Mariculture
 - ✓ Addressing the traceability issues
- Only existing policy is on marine fisheries.
- Marine production stands at 4.3 million tonnes annually.
- There is no policy on inland fisheries.
- It produces the 23 million tonnes.

Fishery scheme being implemented:

- Fishery Infrastructure Development Fund
 - ✓ A five year scheme.
- Fishery development scheme
 - ✓ Funded partially by the World Bank.
 - ✓ It is for eight years.
- Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana
 - ✓ Announced in July 2019 Budget.
 - ✓ Aims to boost fish and aquatic products through appropriate policy, marketing and infrastructure support.

188. India-China Trade

- The bilateral trade between India and China declined by about \$3 billion in 2019.
- India's trade deficit continues to be high amounting to \$56.77 billion.
- The bilateral trade in 2018 totalled to \$95.7 billion raising hopes of India-China trade touching the landmark \$100 billion in 2019.
- But the total trade amounted to \$92.68 billion last year about \$3 billion less than 2018.
- India has been demanding China to open up its IT and pharmaceutical sectors to enable it to increase its exports.

Investment Scenario

- Cumulative Chinese investment in India till the end of September 2019 amounted to \$5.08 billion.
- Cumulative Indian investment in China until September 2019 is \$0.92 billion.
- These figures do not capture investment routed through third countries like Singapore, Hong Kong, etc. especially in sectors such as start-ups etc which has seen significant growth in Chinese investment.

189. Open Market Sale Scheme

Food Corporation of India (FCI) sells surplus stocks of wheat and rice under Open Market Sale Scheme (Domestic). This is done:

- At pre-determined prices through e-auction in the open market from time to time.
- To enhance the supply of food grains, especially wheat during the lean season
- To moderate the open market prices specially in the deficit regions.

The reserve price, of both of rice and wheat, has become lower than the economic cost of FCI. Economic cost includes:

- MSP
- Cost of logistics
- Storage
- Handling and distribution for FCI

Why is it being done?

- To cut the sale price on grains for OMSS due to the excess stock with FCI
- FCI running out of storage space.
- Demand for rice and wheat in the open market has been poor in recent months, prompting government has cut prices.

190. Banking Distress

Major Issues

- Galloping bad loans
- Falling credit growth
- Rising bank frauds
- NBFC crisis
- Heightened stress in a few corporate groups
- Governance issues & Lack of much-needed governance reforms at PSBs
- Capital issues of PSBs

- Adhoc mergers of PSU banks

Major Initiatives

- Constitution of an independent Bank Boards Bureau (BBB)
 - ✓ BBB is to take care of an independent selection process for top bank officials.
- Extension of restructuring of MSME loans
- Interest subvention scheme for investment credit for agriculture infrastructure
- Partial credit guarantee scheme
- Streamlining certain operational issues under GST
- Public Sector Asset Rehabilitation Agency (PARA) (planned)

191. Housing for All By 2022

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban)

- It has made limited progress since 2015 (the year of its launching).
- Sanctioned Houses: 1.03 Crore
- Constructed: 32 lakh
- The fact that the top 10 States alone account for over 80 per cent of the houses constructed so far under PMAY (U). It suggests that progress in many States is dismal.

PMAY (U)

- Launched – 2015
- Central Assistance for providing houses to all eligible families/beneficiaries.
- Mandatory provision for the female head of the family to be the owner or co-owner of the house under this Mission.

Four Options

1. “In-situ” Slum Redevelopment (ISSR)
2. Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS)
3. Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP)
4. Beneficiary-led individual house construction/enhancements (BLC)

In-situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR)

- Under Slum redevelopment Central Assistance of Rs.1 lakh per house is admissible for all houses built for eligible slum dwellers under the component of In-situ Slum Redevelopment (ISSR) using land as Resource with participation of private developers.
- This slum rehabilitation grants can be utilised by States/UTs for any of the slum redevelopment projects.

- After redevelopment, de-notification of slums by State/UT Government is recommended under the Mission guidelines.

Credit Linked Subsidy Scheme (CLSS)

- Interest Subsidy up to 2.67 lakh per house is admissible for Beneficiaries.
- The interest subsidies of 6.5%, 4% and 3% on various loan amounts.

Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP)

- Central Assistance of Rs.1.5 Lakh per EWS house is provided by Government of India in projects where at least 35% of the houses in the projects are for EWS category and a single project has at least 250 houses.

Beneficiary-led individual house construction/enhancements (BLC)

- Central Assistance of Rs.1.5 lakh is available to individual eligible families belonging to EWS categories to either construct new houses or enhance existing houses on their own to cover the beneficiaries who are not able to take advantage of any other component of the Mission.

192. India & FDI

Report:

- Global Investment Trend Monitor

By:

- United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)

News:

- India among the top 10 recipients of Foreign Direct Investment in 2019
- \$49 billion in inflows
- A 16 per cent increase from the previous year.

The majority of FDI went into:

- Services Industries, including information technology.
- 1st - United States (\$251 billion)
- 2nd - China (\$140 billion)
- 3rd - Singapore (\$110 billion)

193. EIU's Democracy Index

Report

- Democracy Index

By

- The Economist Intelligence Unit

News

- India slipped 10 places to 51st position
- India's overall score fell from 7.23 in 2018 to 6.90 in the Index.
- It provides a snapshot of the current state of democracy worldwide for 165 independent states and two territories.
- The primary cause of the democratic regression was an erosion of civil liberties in the country.

Five categories:

1. Electoral process and pluralism
2. The functioning of government
3. Political participation
4. Political culture
5. Civil liberties

Countries are classified as one of four types of regime:

1. Full democracy (scores greater than eight)
2. Flawed democracy (scores greater than six and less than or equal to eight)
3. Hybrid regime (greater than four and less than or equal to six)
4. Authoritarian regime (less than or equal to four)

India was included in the "flawed democracy" category.

- Brazil was ranked 52nd.
- Russia stood at 134th.
- China is 153rd.
- Pakistan - 108th
- Sri Lanka - 69th
- Bangladesh - 80th.

Topped by Norway, followed by Iceland and Sweden.

194. Women, Business and Law (WBL) Index 2020

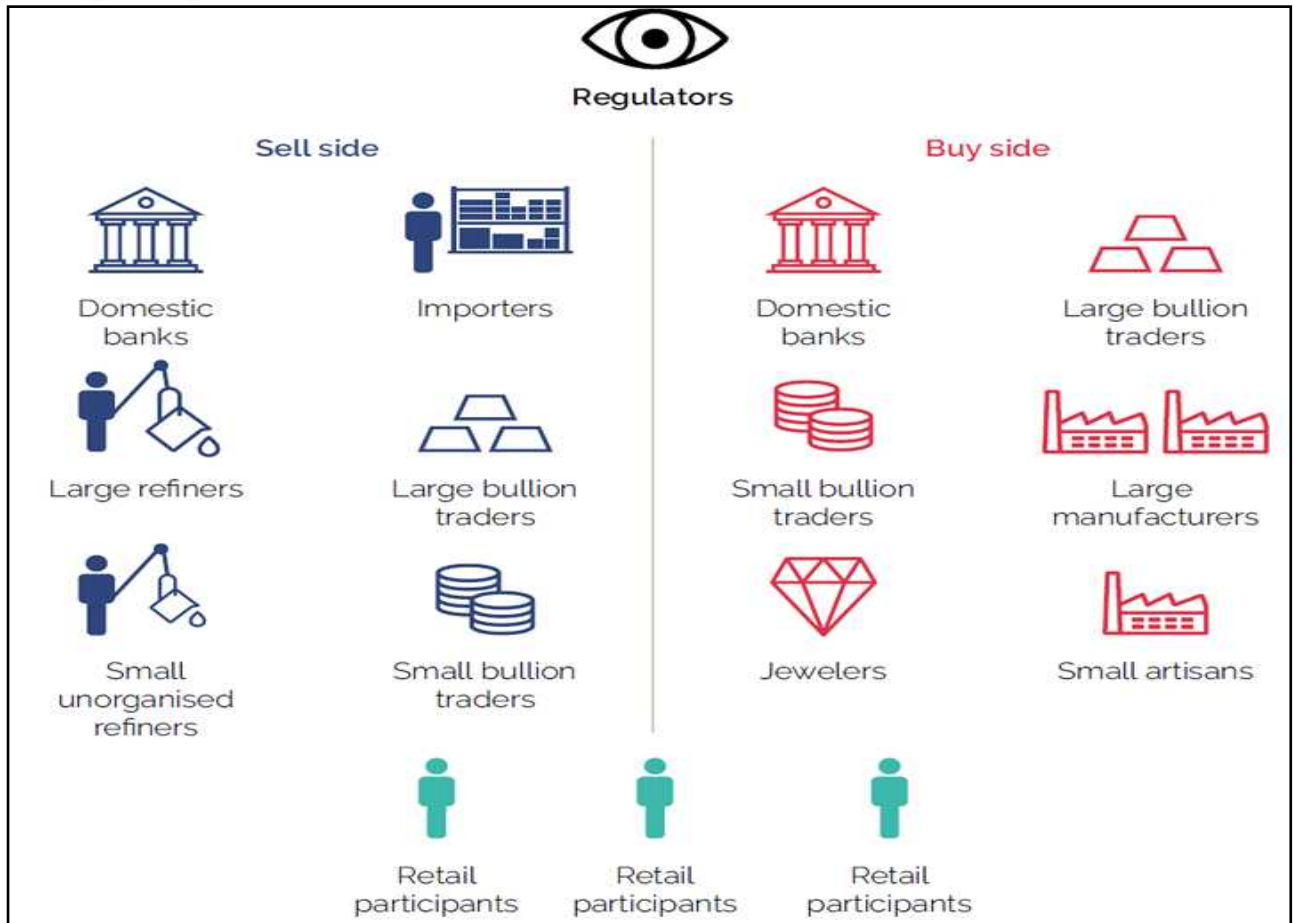
Report

- Women, Business and Law (WBL) Index 2020

By

- World Bank

News



- India has taken the top spot in the South Asian region

Examining

- Laws and regulations affecting women's economic opportunities across 190 economies.

Eight parameters

- Workplace, pay, mobility, marriage, parenthood, pensions, assets and entrepreneurship.
- Compared to other BRICS countries India: Second-to-last.
- South Africa topped the WBL index among the BRICS grouping.
- Only eight economies among the 190 scored a perfect 100 on the WBL Index.
- These are Belgium, France, Latvia, Sweden, Canada, Denmark, Iceland and Luxembourg.
- The study measured only the formal laws and regulations governing women's ability to work or own businesses — it did not cover a country's norms and practices.

195. Gold Policy

Steps in that direction

- International Gold Exchange
- Gold Monetisation Scheme (2015)

- National survey to gauge the Gold consumption trends (by India Gold Policy Centre (IGPC) – a joint initiative of World Gold Council and IIM Ahmedabad)

Gold Spot Exchange

- India is the second largest consumer of gold globally with annual gold demand of approximately 800-900 tonnes, and it holds an important position in the global markets.
- However, the domestic market is currently plagued by challenges such as lack of quality assurance, weak price transparency and high market fragmentation.
- A gold spot exchange can address these challenges and eliminate resulting market inefficiencies.

196. WTO IT Agreement

Issue at hand

- Budget imposed higher duties on certain mobile phone parts.
- It is seen as violation of the IT Agreement of World Trade Organization (WTO).
- Certain countries like EU, Japan and Taiwan might challenge it.

Budget Announcement

- Budget raised import duties on printed circuit board assemblies (PCBA) to 20 per cent from 10 per cent.
- The Customs duty on vibrators/ringers and display panels of mobile phones, which was nil, has been set at 10 per cent.

The IT Agreement (ITA)

- It requires each participant to eliminate and bind Customs duties at zero for all products specified in the Agreement, including mobile phones and parts.
- It was signed by a number of WTO members including India in 1996 (total 82).

India's Defence

- The import duties on the items did not breach the ITA as the items, in the present form, were not covered under the pact.

197. Self-sufficiency in Pulses Production

- India, the world's largest consumer and importer of pulses.
- Pulses produced - 23.40 million tonnes (2018-19)
- Domestic demand - 26-27 million tonnes.
- The gap is met through imports.
- Current year- Targeting pulses output of 26.30 million tonne

Steps taken to improve domestic production of Pulses

- Hike in the MSP (Pulses covered are (5) – 2 Rabi (Gram, Lentil), 3 Kharif (Arhar/Tur, Moong, Urad))

- Promoting organic range of pulses
- R&D at the government's research body Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR)
- National food security mission
- Seed Hubs
- Encouraging Farmer producer organisations (FPO) to grow seeds, to buy, and to use efficient technology

Required

- Measures to improve the yield level of pulses (which at present are lower than the pre-Green Revolution days of 1965)
- Climate Change
- Cropping Pattern
- Irrigation

198.Foreign Investment in Financial Services, Critical Infrastructure and Technology Affecting National Security (Regulation) Bill

Idea

- There was a need to ensure that foreign direct investments (FDI) in sectors such as financial services are scrutinised.

Why the need?

- There is no limit for foreign ownership of NBFCs. 100 per cent ownership is allowed in this through automatic route.

How to do it?

- To set up a committee to scrutinise foreign investments in financial services, critical infrastructure and technology sectors having bearing on national security.
- Introduced as a Private member's Bill.
- The Bill seeks to establish a committee on foreign investment headed by the Economic Affairs Secretary to effectively guard against the risk to national security posed by certain types of foreign investment in financial services, critical infrastructure and technology sectors.

199.Amending Major Port Trusts Act

- A bill has been approved by the cabinet to replace the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963.

Why?

- The earlier Act did not have any provisions to resolve disputes between those operating under the PPP model.

- The act aims to empower the port authorities to take many decisions that otherwise require the approval of the Centre.
- It will enable speedier implementation of decisions.
- It will also allow major ports to compete with their private counterparts.
- The operation of 12 major ports is according to the Major Port Trusts Act, 1963.
- But now there are private ports and many States have developed their own ports.
- Major ports in India are also operating under the public-private partnership (PPP) model.

200. Force Majeure

Meaning

- Literally, it means *superior force*.
- It means chance occurrence or an unavoidable accident.

Why in News?

- Because of Coronavirus outbreak

Because

- Firms are invoking *force majeure* on contracts due to the virus.

Usage in Contracts

- It is a common clause in contracts that essentially frees both parties from liability or obligation when an extraordinary event or circumstance beyond the control of the parties prevents one or both parties from fulfilling their obligations under the contract.

What are the various Events that lead to invoking of Force Majeure Clauses?

- Events such as a war, strike, riot, crime, or an event described by the legal term act of God (hurricane, flood, earthquake, volcanic eruption, etc.).

Can it be invoked as an excuse of a party's non-performance?

- Usually No.
- In practice, most force majeure clauses do not excuse a party's non-performance entirely, but only suspend it for the duration of the force majeure.

Impact of Corona Virus

- Firms have halted production activities in factories as well as construction activities to disinfect areas and is continuing to assess the impact on the project concerned.
- Authorities are rejecting visa and other applications from workers with recent travel history to China.
- Governments are also preventing employers from hiring foreign staff if rules are breached.

Indian provisions

- Force Majeure is recognised under the Indian Contract Act, 1872.

- Force majeure gives a party more time to perform its contractual obligations for things beyond its control.

201. IISc ranks 16th

The Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has ranked 16th among the top 100 universities of emerging economies.

But who Ranked?

- Top 100 Times Higher Education's (THE) Emerging Economies University Rankings 2020.
- Only China has more universities than India in the top 100 at 30 from a total of 47 countries and territories.

How come this sudden jump

- A lot is being attributed to Indian government's **Institutes of Eminence** scheme.
- It was established in 2017.

Examples

- IIT Kharagpur, IIT Delhi improving by 28 places to joint 38th and IIT Madras climbing 12 places to joint 63rd.
- Amrita Vishwa Vidyapeetham, entered the top 100 for the first time, moving up a huge 51 places from joint 141st in 2019.

About Institutions Of Eminence

- It was announced in the budget speech of 2016.
- Institutions of Eminence scheme has been launched in order to implement the commitment of the Government to empower the Higher Educational Institutions and to help them become world class teaching and research institutions.
- Ten public and ten private institutions are to be identified to emerge as world-class Teaching and Research Institutions.
- This will enhance affordable access to high quality education for ordinary Indians.
- Accordingly, applications were invited from the eligible and interested applicants to become Institutions of Eminence (IOEs) under the following categories:-
 1. Existing Government educational institutions.
 2. Existing private higher educational institutions to upgrade themselves to Institutions of Eminence.
 3. Sponsoring organizations for setting up of new Institutions of Eminence

Worldwide Education for the Future Index 2019

- Published by: The Economist Intelligence Unit India's Rank: 35th
- India jumped five ranks compared to last year.

There are Three categories:

- Policy environment
- Teaching environment
- Overall socio-economic environment

Topped by: Finland. Followed by Sweden.

202. MPEDA & the New Microbiology Lab

An important problem of Indian Exports:

Quality

To overcome it:

- Marine Products Export Development Authority inaugurating its first state-of-the-art microbiology laboratory.
- It will help the seafood sector overcome the stiff competition in the global export market, particularly on the quality front.
- The laboratory would be used to test all sorts of seafood at various stages, including during production and prior to export, to avoid the presence of any bacteria.

About MPEDA

- The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) was **set up by an act of Parliament during 1972.**
- Mandate is to develop and augment the resources required for promoting the exports of all varieties of fishery products known commercially as shrimp, prawn, lobster, crab, fish, shell-fish, other aquatic animals or plants, etc.
- Based on the recommendations of MPEDA, Government of India notified new standards for fishing vessels, storage premises, processing plants and conveyances.
- MPEDA's focus is mainly on Market Promotion, Capture Fisheries, Culture Fisheries, Processing Infrastructure & Value addition, Quality Control, Research and Development.
- It falls under Ministry of Commerce and Industry

203. IMF & Global Growth Projections amid Coronavirus

Published in the report:

- World Economic Outlook

Expected Impact:

- There may be a cut in global growth of around 0.1-0.2 percentage because of Coronavirus epidemic.

Comparison with SARS (2002):

- Compared to the impact of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2002, China's economy then made up just 8.0 per cent of global economy. Now, it is 19 per cent.

Mitigating the impact of the Disease:

- The trade agreement between the US and China has reduced the disease's impact on global economy.

Challenges that still impact the Global Economy:

- Low productivity growth
- Low economic growth
- Low interest rates
- Low inflation

204. India, 'Permissible' Fishery Subsidies & WTO

India's Proposal

- Allowing a small and tight 'green box' of permissible subsidies for fisheries.

How?

- To include livelihood support for fishermen during the period when fishing is banned
- Subsidies for navigation and safety equipment

Agenda in Ministerial Conference in Kazakhstan in June 2020:

- To conclude an agreement on curbing harmful fishery subsidies.
- The US, Brazil and Australia want to place subsidy caps on countries with large fish stocks, like India and China, irrespective of their development status.

India's Stand:

- Retaining special and differential treatment for all developing countries and least developed countries (LDCs).
- It is also envisioned through an effective special and differential treatment given in SDG 14.6.

205. Laureus Award

Sporting Moment

- Sachin Tendulkar won the Laureus World Sports Award for Laureus Sporting Moment 2000-2020.
- He became the first Indian sportsperson to win a Laureus World Sports Award.
- With his win at the 20th-anniversary edition of the event dubbed as the 'Oscars of Sport.'
- The moment that bagged the award for Tendulkar happened during the 2011 ICC World Cup, when his team carried him on their shoulders in a lap of honour after India's win.
- Tendulkar was inducted into the ICC Cricket Hall of Fame in 2019.

206. Diammonium Phosphate (DAP)

What is DAP

- It is the most popular phosphatic fertiliser because of its high analysis and good physical properties.
- The composition of DAP is N-18% and P₂O₅ -46%.
- It's highly soluble and thus dissolves quickly in soil to release plant-available phosphate and ammonium.
- A notable property of DAP is the alkaline pH that develops around the dissolving granule.

DAP and Crops

- It is widely used in crops such as rice, wheat, sugar cane and cotton.

Why in News

- Ongoing lockdown of Hubei province in China.
- And India is the world's biggest buyer of diammonium phosphate (DAP).
- India gets about 50 per cent of its diammonium phosphate requirements from China.

Way Ahead

- India will now look to Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Morocco and the US to fill the gap in supply.

207. Net Foreign Exchange (NFE) Rules

- They are related with SEZ.

What are they?

- The net foreign exchange criteria is determined by subtracting the value of imported inputs, input services and capital goods along with the value of all payments made in foreign exchange from the value of exports.

What is the Change required?

1. It adds to transaction cost and operational hassles.
2. US Trade authorities have represented to the WTO that the existing NFE rule is tantamount to export subsidy (since the upfront exemption of taxes are deemed to be export-linked and therefore a prohibited export subsidy).
3. Following the trade war between the US and China, and the Coronavirus outbreak, companies abroad are looking at alternative destinations for manufacturing. However, they are going to countries like Vietnam and Thailand due to favourable policies rather than coming to India

Zone Alignment

New policy to do away with requirement for SEZs to be net forex earners

India lost dispute on its SEZ scheme at the WTO, must change policy

Will utilise idle SEZ capacity with job-work for domestic tariff area

SEZ exports as on Sept 30, 2019: ₹ **3.81 lakh cr**

Number of notified SEZs **349**

Operational SEZs **238**

Proposes domestic services payments to units to be in rupees

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Way Ahead

- The government may tweak eligibility criteria for Special Economic Zone units to link them to investments in R&D, innovation and employment generation rather than foreign exchange earnings.
- It will align it with global trade norms.
- The commerce department has proposed to replace the positive net foreign exchange (NFE) with the new eligibility criteria in the wake of the extant SEZ policy.
- Also recommended by the panel led by industrialist Baba Kalyani suggesting a revamp of the policy.

Source: The Economic Times

208. Pharmexcil

- Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Council (an arm of the Ministry of Commerce)
- It has asked pharma companies to provide data on the nature and quantum of their Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (APIs), and Key Starting Material/Intermediary imports from China

Some Data

In 2019:

- API Imports into India from China - \$2.5 billion
- Exports - \$230 million
- Total Export – Around \$19 billion
- USA being the largest Market

209. Renewable Energy Management Centres

What are they?

- As part of India's Green Energy Corridor scheme, the Ministry of Power in 2014 proposed setting up a host of Renewable Energy Management Centres (REMCs) across the country to help integrate renewables as their penetration increases.

Why are they required?

- India aims to emulate state-of-the-art renewables forecasting and monitoring systems already successfully operating in countries like Spain, Germany, US, Denmark, Belgium and Australia.

REMCs' Functions

- Forecast renewable energy generation at state and regional levels
- Schedule renewable generation with real time tracking
- Coordinate with the relevant load dispatch centre

Why in News?

- 11 Renewable Energy Management Centres (REMCs) are to be inaugurated.

- One REMC will come up in the National Load Dispatch Centre, three in as many Regional Load Dispatch Centres and seven in the State Load Dispatch Centres of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

What do they attempt to achieve?

- They will make it possible for the country to have more of renewable energy, particularly wind.
- Without these, absorption of large packets of intermittent electricity from wind and solar plants would not be possible.

Who is Overseeing these REMCs?

- Power Grid Corporation of India on behalf of the Ministry of Power.

What are Load dispatch centres?

- They are like the control room that oversees how much and where the electricity is coming from and whom it should go to.

LDCs and REMCs

- REMCs are a unit of load dispatch centres that keep an eye on renewable energy plants.

What is the problem with wind and solar energy?

- It is Intermittency.
- Energy flows when wind blows and stops when wind stops.
- Similarly, when a cloud passes over the sun, electricity from the solar plants dips.
- This ebb-and-tide of power through the cables is a headache for the grid manager who has to keep a steady supply of electricity at the consumers' end.

210. Land Leasing Reforms

Issues

- Lack of Private Sector Participation in Farming because of Land Ownership Laws
- Lack of Legalising the land lease
- Prevalent Informal tenancy
- Revenue and Agriculture are state subjects, making standardization of laws difficult
- Increasing Fragmentation of Land

211. Treasury-Bills (T-Bills)

What are T-Bills?

- Treasury-Bills are government borrowings for less than one year.
- Issued in three tenors:

✓ 91

✓ 182

✓ 364-day

- T-Bills are zero coupon instruments.
- They are issued at a discount and redeemed at face value.

What is the move?

- Government is witnessing a temporary cash flow mismatch.
- Thus, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, government decided to mobilise ₹51,000 crore more through auction.

Why now:

- This is being done at a time, when cash receipts, both through tax or non-tax means, are estimated to be lower than even the Revised Estimate

Why the downfall in collection:

- Due to Covid-19, the GST collection in February is also likely to have been affected.
- Also, the disinvestment process has been affected due to heavy selling in the stock market.
- Earnings from other sources, such as recovery of dues, have not been up to expectation.

212. Long-term Repo Operation (LTRO)

Why in News

- In the last monetary policy, instead of cutting the policy rates, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) introduced a tool called long-term repo operation (LTRO) to inject liquidity in the system, as well as to ensure transmission of rates.

What is it

- Under LTRO, RBI provides longer term (one- to three-year) loans to banks at the prevailing repo rate.
- As banks get long-term funds at lower rates, their cost of funds falls, reducing interest rates for borrowers.

Why did RBI do it

- LTRO helped RBI ensure that banks reduce their marginal cost of funds-based lending rate, without reducing policy rates.

Other important step taken by RBI to boost long term investments:

1. **Operation Twist:** Attempted to manage bond yields and push transmission of earlier rate cuts.
2. **CRR Dispensation:** Commercial banks will be allowed to deduct the equivalent of incremental credit disbursed by them as retail loans for automobiles, residential housing and loans to MSMEs, over and above the outstanding level of credit to these segments as of the fortnight ended January 31, 2020 from their net demand and time liabilities (NDTL) – or deposits – for maintenance of CRR.

3. **Open Market Operations:** RBI announced it will buy Rs 10,000 crore in government bonds under the open market operations programme to cool-off bond yields which had started to rise.
4. **Forex Swaps:** RBI said it will conduct a \$2 billion sell/buy swap for dollar-rupee to ensure that there are no dollar shortages amid rising outflows. There will be more such swaps scheduled for days to come.

213. World Bank funds for Waterway Connectivity Grid

What is the news

- Shipping Ministry is seeking a technical assistance grant of \$70 million from the World Bank to build a transport connectivity grid.
- World Bank may provide a grant to develop India's under-utilised network of rivers and canals as an alternative mode of transport.

Connectivity between?

- The aim is to link the waterways in the Eastern region of India with India's South Asian neighbours.
- The project is being called Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid (EWaCTG)

Eastern Waterways Connectivity Transport Grid project (EWaCTG):

- It aims to provide seamless connectivity between National Waterway-1 (NW-1) and NW-2 through the Indo-Bangladesh Protocol (IBP) routes.
- It will also develop an economic corridor of 4,200 km of waterways and coastal shipping for Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and the North-Eastern States.
- The aim is to pave the way for the regional integration of five countries – India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and Myanmar – in the South Asian region,

Jal Marg Vikas

- The World Bank had earlier approved a \$375-million grant to the government to develop the 1,620-km NW1 between Haldia and Allahabad.
- The Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is implementing the project, called 'Jal Marg Vikas', on the Ganga.
- It seeks to develop and improve navigational infrastructure and maintain a depth of at least 3 metres to help commercial navigation of 1,500 tonne ships.

214. New NCLAT Bench in Chennai

What's the News

- Centre has set up a separate Bench of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) at Chennai.

What's the purpose of all this?

- The new bench will hear appeals against the orders of the Benches of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) having jurisdiction over Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Lakshadweep and Puducherry

What will be the change

- All the pending cases in NCLAT Delhi with jurisdictions related to the South will now be transferred to the Chennai Bench.

Plans for Other Benches?

- Centre may consider establishing similar NCLAT Benches in the Western and Eastern parts of the country.

Quick Reminder

- The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) and NCLAT had replaced the Company Law Board from June 1, 2016.
- NCLAT was constituted under Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013 for hearing appeals against the orders of National Company Law Tribunal(s) (NCLT), with effect from June 1, 2016.
- The NCLAT is also the appellate forum for:
 - ✓ All orders passed by NCLT under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC).
 - ✓ Appeals against any direction issued or decision made or order passed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI).

215. Excise Duty on Petrol and Diesel

Why in News:

- The Central Government hiked the Excise Duty on petrol and diesel by ₹3 a litre.

What does the Central Excise Duty comprise of?

- A Basic Excise Duty
- Special Additional Excise Duty
- Additional Excise Duty (Road and infrastructure Cess) on auto fuels.

An important impact:

- It would provide much needed resources for infrastructure and other developmental items of expenditure keeping in view of dampened fiscal position at the moment.

216. How to Save Agri-Supply Chain During The Lockdown

Use of eNAM

- Electronic-National Agriculture Market
- **Presently:** Only traders can buy on the platform from home.

- **What Could be Done:** Can now let farmers/FPOs (farmer producer organisations) to sell from the farm gate.
- MSP procurement across States can be re-initiated on eNAM.

Hedging via Futures

- FPOs can consider hedging on futures platform to avoid losses from drop in prices.
- More FPOs can be registered on the NCDEX for active trading.

Restricted time for Plying of Trucks and Operations of Mandis

- This can be done by announcing a time schedule for different villages.
- Otherwise various agri commodity mills will run out of their raw materials.
- Trucks carrying agri commodities can also be allowed to ply on roads and warehouses allowed to function normally.

Introducing eNWRs

Electronic-Negotiable Warehouse Receipts

- Warehousing Development and Regulatory Authority (WDRA) has brought several Primary Agriculture Co-operative Societies (PACS) and State, Central and private warehouses from across the country under its fold.
- Some of these warehouses are closer to villages and are quite cost effective.
- These warehouses can now issue electronic Negotiable Warehouse Receipts (eNWRs) when a farmer places stock in WDRA-accredited warehouses
- These eNWRs can then be easily pledged for loans.
- With eNWRs, it will also be possible to break up and avail finance for one portion of the stock.
- Further, the farmer may also get a better price for his produce when he sells it finally, as the stock stored in a WDRA-accredited warehouse is sorted and graded.

Encouraging FPOs

- There are about 5,000 registered farmer producer companies.
- These are entities registered under SFAC, NABARD and different State government projects.
- These FPOs can be used to aggregate the harvest of farmers which could then be lifted by the Centre/ State procurement agencies.
- These FPOs can also engage in door-to-door supply of perishable vegetables and other commodities.

217. MPLADS Funds & Covid-19

Why in News

- Government has permitted one-time use of funds from MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) for purchase of medical equipment to be used in government hospitals

What is MPLADS

- The MPLADS is a Plan Scheme fully funded by the Government of India.
- The annual MPLADS fund entitlement per MP (Member of Parliament) constituency is ₹5 crore.
- Lok Sabha Members can recommend works within their constituencies and elected Members of Rajya Sabha can recommend works within the State they are elected from.
- Nominated Members of both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha can recommend works anywhere in the country. As on date, there are 790 members.

Notification by MOSPI

- According to the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI), district authorities may utilise MPLADS fund for medical testing, screening and other facilities required to detect and contain Covid-19.
- It allows purchase of medical equipment costing not less than ₹5 lakh is permissible for Government Hospitals/Dispensaries.

218. Non Convertible Debentures (NCDs)

What is the news

- CRISIL downgraded its rating on the non-convertible debentures (NCDs) of government-owned Air India.

What are NCDs

- Non-convertible debentures (NCD) are fixed-income instruments, usually issued by high-rated companies in the form of a public issue to accumulate long-term capital appreciation.
- They offer relatively higher interest rates when compared to convertible debentures.

Some Features of NCDs

- They cannot be converted into equity or stocks.
- NCDs have a fixed maturity date and the interest can be paid along with the principal amount either monthly, quarterly, or annually depending on the fixed tenure specified.
- If NCDs are sold within a year or lesser STCG will be applicable as per the income tax slab rate.
- If the NCDs are sold after a year or more or before the maturity date, LTCG will be applicable at 20% with indexation.
- Companies are ranked by credit rating agencies such as CRISIL, CARE etc.

Types of NCDs

- **Secured NCDs:** Backed by the assets of the company. In the event of the company failing to pay on time, then the investors can recover their dues by liquidating the company's assets. However, the interest offered on NCDs is low.

- **Unsecured NCDs:** Relatively riskier than the secured NCDs as the assets of the company do not back these.
- However, the interest rate offered on unsecured NCDs is higher than that of secured NCDs.

219. Essential Commodities Act

What's the News

- Hand sanitisers and masks have been brought under the purview of the Essential Commodities Act (EC Act) until June 30 by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs

What is the Provision

Under the EC Act 1955:

- If the Central government thinks that it is necessary to maintain or increase supplies of any essential commodity or make it available at fair prices, it can regulate or prohibit the production, supply, distribution and sale of that commodity.

What will be the impact

- Producers have been urged to manufacture these up to full capacity.
- Action can be taken against hoarders, speculators and those jacking up prices or black-marketing.
- Quota restrictions on raw material holdings can be relaxed.
- For instance, State governments have been asked to issue licences and permit hand-sanitiser makers to store ethanol and extra neutral alcohol (ENA) without any quota restrictions.

220. WEF-CAP

Why in News:

- The World Economic Forum (WEF) has invited India to join its COVID Action Platform (CAP) launched earlier this month, with the support of the World Health Organization (WHO).

What will it have?

- It will allow them to collaborate with more than 400 global institutions through this platform, consisting of businesses, governments, international organisations and citizen bodies to fight coronavirus.
- It has 3 priority areas.

3 priority areas:

1. Collective Action by global business community like CEOs, CXOs, Chairpersons, etc. to improve coordination and pursue opportunities for accessing trusted information/analysis and engage in digital peer-to-peer interaction in real time.
2. To protect people's livelihoods, facilitate business continuity and prepare for the future of work by developing and sharing tools/best practices to assess risk, maintain operations and protect employees with trusted information to protect them from rumours and misinformation.

3. To mobilise cooperation and business support by strengthening supply chains to ensure that strategic commodities and equipment are available and accessible, harness big data and AI to mitigate impact and improve decision making and provide support mechanisms for business donations and contributions to public health response and development of available vaccines, treatments and cures.