



Current Affairs Monthly Compilation for IAS/PCS Exams April 2018

Powered by :



gradeup



Daily Current Affairs for UPSC IAS Preparation

02. 04. 2018

1. **Haryana's Mewat is most backward district in Niti Aayog's ranking of 101 backward districts**

- Mewat in Haryana is the most backward district of the country followed by Asifabad (Telangana), Singrauli (MP), Kiphire (Nagaland) and Shrawasti (UP).
- It was revealed in Niti Aayog's ranking of 101 aspirational (backward) districts.
- The Aayog released the baseline ranking for 101 aspirational districts based on 49 indicators across five sectors that includes-
 - (a) Health and nutrition (30% weightage)
 - (b) Education (30%)
 - (c) Agriculture and water resources (20%)
 - (d) Financial inclusion and skill development (10%)
 - (e) Basic infrastructure (10%)
- The 35 worst Naxal-affected districts are included in the list.
- As part of its "**naming and shaming**" strategy, the government think tank will come out with delta ranking of these districts every month from May 2018 based on their "incremental progress" to be monitored on a real-time basis.

Topic- GS-2-Governance

Source- Times of India

2. **Madhya Pradesh's black chicken Kadaknath wins GI tag**

- Madhya Pradesh has won Geographical Indication (GI) tag for Kadaknath, an indigenous chicken breed found in tribal-dominated Jhabua district in the state.

- The GI registry office at Chennai awarded the GI tag for Kadaknath chicken to MP and dismissed claim of similar recognition to its Kadaknath breed by Chhattisgarh.
- Tribals in south Bastar district Dantewada in Chhattisgarh undertake Kadaknath chicken farming in large-scale which prompted Chhattisgarh to stake claim for the GI tag.
- However, MP had staked its claim for GI tag for its Kadakanth 12 years ago.

Kadaknath

- Kadaknath, the black chicken, also lays black eggs.
- Besides, its blood is also black in colour.
- The breed is also popular abroad due to high iron content.

Related Information

GI Tag

- A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g. a town, region, or country).
- India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999.
- This Act is administered by Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, who is also Registrar of Geographical Indications.
- Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India.

GI Tag awarded in 2018

- Araku coffee (Andhra Pradesh)
- Kadaknath Chicken (Madhya Pradesh)

Topic- GS-1- Indian Culture

Source- Hindustan Times

Free Test for
UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

3. **Scientists discovered a new human organ "Interstitial"**

- An organ has been identified by scientists which might be the "biggest organ" in the human body.
- It is named as Interstitium.
- Interstitium would be the 80th organ in the human body.
- Before the study, it was thought that the connective tissue underneath the skin and lining other organs was a dense layer.
- The new human organ is actually a network of compartments filled with liquid.
- These interstitial spaces are organized by a collagen "mesh" and can shrink and expand "and may thus serve as shock absorbers."
- Interstitium spaces may play a crucial role in helping cancer spread to different parts of the body making it metastatic.

Note- Metastasis is the medical term for cancer that spreads to different part of the body from where it started.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

4. **Chandra Bhusan appointed Deputy Election Commissioner**

Related Information

Election commission of India-

- Election Commission of India is a permanent Constitutional Body established under Article 324 of the Constitution.
- The body administers elections to the Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha, state Legislative Assemblies in India, and the offices of the President and Vice President in the country.
- It consists of **Chief Election Commissioner and two Election Commissioners**. Until 1989, the commission was a single member

body, but later two additional Election Commissioners were added.

- The President appoints Chief Election Commissioner and Election Commissioners.
- The chief election commissioner or an election commissioner shall hold office for a term of 6 years or age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- The Chief Election Commissioner of India can be removed from his office by the Parliament with a two-thirds majority in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on the grounds of proved misbehaviour or incapacity.
- Other Election Commissioners can be removed by the President of India on the recommendation of the Chief Election Commissioner.

Topic- GS-2-Indian Polity

Source- Times of India

5. **Delhi becomes first city to roll-out Euro VI fuel**

- With an aim to combat the rising levels of air pollution in Delhi-NCR region, petrol pumps in the Delhi started supplying ultra-clean Bharat Stage VI grade fuel (both petrol and diesel).
- This move makes New Delhi the first city in the country to switch from BS-IV grade fuels to BS-VI (equivalent to fuel meeting Euro-VI emission norms).

Deadline for rest of the country

- Other cities like Noida, Ghaziabad, Gurugram and Faridabad along with 13 major cities, including Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad and Pune, will also switch over to cleaner BS-VI grade fuel from January 1, 2019.
- However, BS- VI fuel will be rolled out in rest of the country by April 2020.

Related Information

Bharat stage emission standards

- Bharat stage emission standards (BSES) are emission standards instituted by the Government of India to regulate the output of air pollutants from internal combustion engines and Spark-ignition engines equipment, including motor vehicles.
- The standards and the timeline for implementation are set by the Central Pollution Control Board under the Ministry of Environment & Forests and climate change.
- The standards, based on European regulations were first introduced in 2000.
- Bharat Stage IV emission norms have been enforced for entire country since April 2017.
- In 2016, the Indian government announced that the country would skip the BS-V norms altogether and adopt BS-VI norms by 2020.

Difference between BS-IV and the new BS-VI

- The newly introduced fuel is estimated to reduce the amount of sulphur released by 80 percent, from 50 parts per million to 10 ppm.
- The emission of NO_x (nitrogen oxides) from diesel cars is also expected to reduce by nearly 70 percent and 25 per cent from cars with petrol engines.

Issues

- Using BS-VI fuel in the current BS-IV engines or, conversely, running BS-VI engines on the current-grade fuel may damage the engine in the long run.

Topic- GS-3-Environment

Source- Indian Express

6. India's first insect museum opened in Tamilnadu

- India's first insect museum inaugurated in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University, Coimbatore.

- The museum is fully dedicated to insects and claimed to be the first of it's kind in the country.
- It would display insects preserved as specimens as also live ones depicting their different developmental stages, images, videos and models of their unique behaviour, habits and habitats.

Topic- GS-2- Biodiversity

Source- Business Standard

7. West Bengal govt introduced a scheme 'Rupashree' for marriage assistance to girls

- The West Bengal government introduced a new scheme "Rupashree" for marriage assistance to girls coming from economically weaker families.
- Under the scheme one-time assistance of Rs 25,000 provided to the family of the girl with an annual income up to Rs 1.5 lakh at the time of marriage after attaining the age of 18 years.

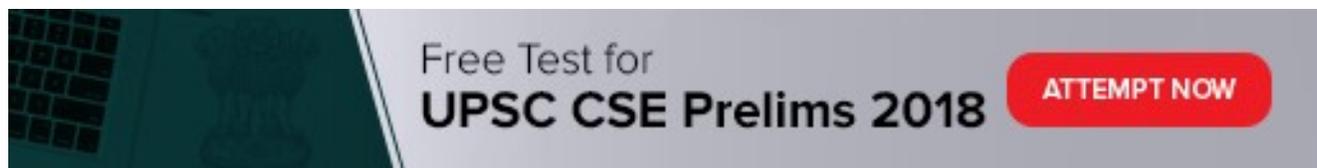
Topic- GS-2- Welfare Schemes

Source- Business Standard

03. 04. 2018

1. New plant species found in Western Ghats

- The Researchers have reported the discovery of a new plant species from the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot.
- The grass-like plant has been named "Fimbristylis agasthyamalaensis", after the locality from which it was found.
- The researchers came across the species during an expedition to the marshy grasslands in the Ponmudi hills within the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- The researchers have recommended a preliminary conservation assessment of the plant as 'critically endangered,' according to IUCN criteria.
- The species is highly prone to wild grazing.

About *Fimbristylis agasthyamalaensis* Species

- The new species belongs to the Cyperaceae family.
- Many of the known Cyperaceae species are medicinal plants or used as fodder.

Related Information

Biodiversity Hotspots

- A biodiversity hotspot is a biogeographic region that is both a significant reservoir of biodiversity and is threatened with destruction.
- To qualify as a biodiversity hotspot, a region must meet two strict criteria:
 - it must contain at least 0.5% or 1,500 species of vascular plants as endemics, and
 - it has to have lost at least 70% of its primary vegetation.

Biodiversity Hotspots in India

(a) Himalaya-

- Includes the entire Indian Himalayan region (and that falling in Pakistan, Tibet, Nepal, Bhutan, China and Myanmar).

(b) Indo-Burma

- Includes entire North-eastern India, except Assam and Andaman group of Islands (and Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and southern China).

(c) Sundalands

- Includes Nicobar group of Islands (and Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, Philippines)

(d) Western Ghats and Sri Lanka

- Includes entire Western Ghats (and Sri Lanka)

IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature)-

- The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) is an international organization working in the field of nature conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.
- The organization is best known to the wider public for compiling and publishing the IUCN **Red List of Threatened Species**.
- IUCN has observer and consultative status at the United Nations.
- Its headquarter is located in Gland, Switzerland.

Topic- GS-3-Biodiversity

Source- The Hindu

2. European Union's New Law "General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)" for data protection

- The European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) is the most notable change in the data protection regime in the last two decades.
- The law has been designed to protect the personal data of E.U. residents.
- Personal data is data that relates to an identifiable living individual and includes names, email IDs, ID card numbers, physical and IP addresses.
- Under the GDPR, a data controller will have to provide consent terms that are clearly distinguishable.
- Individuals will also have the right to have personal data deleted under certain conditions.
- The GDPR also makes reporting obligations and enforcement stronger: data breaches will normally have to be reported within 72 hours and failure to comply with the new laws could result in a fine up to 4% of global turnover or €20 million.



How did it come about?

- It sought to replace the existing data privacy directive, which enables and guides laws in each of the 28 EU member states, with a regulation (GDPR), a stronger instrument which harmonises data protection laws across the 28 countries.

Why does it matter?

- Apart from its profound significance for Europe, the GDPR has global implications as it also applies to those outside the E.U. who either monitor the behaviour of EU residents or sell goods and services to them.

What lies ahead?

- The alleged data breach around Facebook and Cambridge Analytica has alerted people to the challenges of protecting data in a hyper-digitised environment.
- The issue has once again raised questions about what constitutes legitimate uses of data and how businesses, governments and political parties can and cannot use data.
- A government-appointed committee, headed by retired judge B.N. Srikrishna, which is formulating a national data protection law for India, has suggested a hybrid approach to privacy.
- This combines the EU rights-based approach, the U.S. approach of using data with consent to encourage innovation, and an Indian approach, which takes note of the Supreme Court's ruling that privacy is a fundamental right subject to reasonable restrictions.

Topic- *GS-3-Cyber Security*

Source- *The Hindu*

3. Phthalates disrupt hormones in Humans

- A study has warned that people who eat too much fast-food may be exposed to potentially harmful chemicals "Phthalates" that disrupt hormone balance.

- The study was published in the journal Environment International.
- This study suggests food prepared at home is less likely to contain high levels of phthalates.

Issues

- These chemicals linked to fertility problems, pregnancy complications and other health issues.

Related Information

Phthalates

- A group of chemicals used in food packaging and processing materials, are known to disrupt hormones in humans and are linked to a long list of health problems.

Topic- *GS-2-Issue related to Health*

Source- *Times of India*

4. Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan

- The Ministry of Human Resource Development has launched the Rashtriya Avishkar Abhiyan (RAA).
- It is a convergent framework across School Education and Higher Education aiming to encourage children towards learning Science and Mathematics and to develop their interest through activities related to Science and Mathematics.
- One of the interventions under RAA is strengthening of school Science and Mathematics laboratories, through the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan (RMSA).
- Further, under RMSA, important interventions are-
 - (a) Science Fair/Exhibition and Talent Search at district level
 - (b) Mathematics and science kits to schools etc

Topic- *GS-3-Science and Technology*

Source- *PIB*

5. Atal Innovation Mission

- It was launched by NITI Aayog



- The program aims to **promote innovation and entrepreneurship nationwide in schools, universities and industry**, has selected additional 2441 Schools for establishment of Atal Tinkering Labs (ATLs).
- ATLs are innovation play workspaces for students between Grade VI to Grade XII, stimulating innovations combining science & technology.
- The active participation by Schools and their students in ATL will power the transformations of 'New India' through their creativity and innovation.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- PIB

04. 04. 2018

1. **External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj to visit Azerbaijan to attend NAM meet**
 - Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj will attend the Mid-Term Ministerial Meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement from April 4-6 in Azerbaijan's capital city Baku.

Related Information

Non-Aligned Movement (NAM)

- The Non-Aligned Movement as an organization was founded on the Brijuni islands in Yugoslavia in 1956.
- The founding fathers of the Non-Aligned Movement were Josip Broz Tito of Socialist Yugoslavia, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, Sukarno of Indonesia, Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt and Kwame Nkrumah of Ghana.
- Their actions were known as '**The Initiative of Five**'.
- The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a group of states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc.

- As of 2012, the movement has 120 members.
- The objective of the organization is to ensure-
 - (a) The national independence
 - (b) Sovereignty
 - (c) Territorial integrity and
 - (d) Security of non-aligned countries
 - (e) Struggle against imperialism, colonialism, neo-colonialism, racism etc.These were announced by Fidel Castro in the Havana Declaration of 1979.

Topic-GS-2- Important International Institutions

Source- Indian Express

2. **Nasa completes test launch of Mars landing parachute "ASPIRE"**
 - NASA is planning to launch "Mars rover mission" in 2020.
 - For that NASA started the mission's parachute-testing series, with launch of the **Advanced Supersonic Parachute Inflation Research Experiment or ASPIRE in October 2017**.
 - Recently NASA successfully completed test launch of Mars landing parachute "ASPIRE".
 - The test was meant to mimic the conditions that a spacecraft would experience during a red planet entry, descent and landing (EDL).
 - Analysis of the recovered chute, and data gathered by the cameras and other instruments, will help researchers complete the design of the chute for Nasa's 2020 Mars rover.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- Livemint

3. **Scientist detected the farthest star "Icarus"**
 - Scientists have detected the most distant star ever viewed, located more than halfway across the universe and named it after the ancient Greek mythological figure "**Icarus**".

- Researchers used NASA's Hubble Space Telescope to spot the star.
- The star which is million times more luminous and about twice as hot as our sun, residing 9.3 billion lights years away from Earth. It is a type of star called a blue supergiant.
- The scientists took advantage of a phenomenon called "gravitational lensing" to spot the star.
- It involves the bending of light by massive galaxy clusters in the line of sight, which magnifies more distant celestial objects.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

4. **OPCW to meet to discuss poisoning of former Russian spy and his daughter in UK**
 - The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) will meet at The Hague to discuss the poisoning of a former Russian spy and his daughter in the UK.
 - The emergency session was called by Russia, which denies being behind the attack.
 - Britain has blamed Russia for the poisoning of Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in Salisbury in March.

Related Information

Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

- It is an intergovernmental organisation and the implementing body for the Chemical Weapons Convention, which entered into force in 1997.
- The OPCW, with its 192 member states, has its seat in The Hague, Netherlands.
- The organisation promotes and verifies the adherence to the Chemical Weapons Convention, which prohibits the use of chemical weapons and requires their destruction.

Topic- GS-2- Important International institutions

Source- AIR

5. **Chinese chemical sachets replace calcium carbide in fruit market**

- Ethylene-producing chemical sachets imported from China have replaced calcium carbide for artificial ripening of mangoes at an Agricultural Market Yard of Kothapet, popularly known as Kothapet fruit market.
- Following the Hyderabad High Court's direction for strict implementation of the ban on Carbide led to commission agents and traders shifting to the Ethylene-producing chemical sachets (*Chinese Pudi*).

Issues with the Carbide

- It releases acetylene gas which is carcinogenic and harmful for human consumption.

How ethylene helped in fruit ripening?

- It releases a chemical which is named as "ethephon", helps in faster fruition in plants.

Is Ethylene allowed?

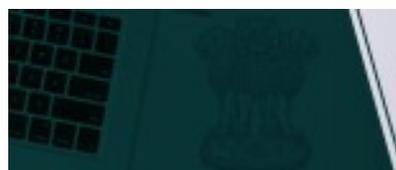
- Ethylene is permitted only in its gaseous form in limited doses (up to 100 parts per million), and not in its powder form.
- The ethylene ripeners available in powder form too are forbidden under the Food Safety and Standards (Prohibition and Restrictions on Sales) Regulations, 2011.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

6. **Commonwealth Games 2018**

- The 21st edition of the Commonwealth Games has begun at Carrara Stadium, Gold Coast in Queensland, Australia.
- India has represented at the opening ceremony by a contingent of over 200 athletes, led by flag-bearer Olympic Silver Medallist, P V Sindhu.
- Indian contingent is the presence of double Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar, and London Olympic bronze medallists Mary Kom, Saina Nehwal and Gagan Narang.



Free Test for
UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

- It is the fifth time Australia has hosted the Commonwealth Games.
- **Motto:**The official motto for the 2018 Commonwealth Games is "Share the Dream".
- **Emblem:**The emblem of the 2018 Commonwealth Games is a silhouette of the skyline and landscape of the Gold Coast, the host city of the games.
- **Mascot:**Borobi was named as the mascot of the 2018 Commonwealth Games. Borobi is a blue koala, with indigenous markings on its body. The term "borobi" is an Aboriginal term for koala.

Topic- Important for PCS Exams

Source- Hindustan Times

05. 04. 2018

1. **Cabinet approved the Protection of Human Rights (Amendments) Bill, 2018**

Salient Features

- It proposes to include "National Commission for Protection of Child Rights" as deemed Member of the Commission
- It proposes to add a woman Member in the composition of the Commission
- It proposes to enlarge the scope of eligibility and scope of selection of Chairperson, National Human Rights Commission as well as the State Human Rights Commission
- It proposes to incorporate a mechanism to look after the cases of human rights violation in the Union Territories.
- It proposes to amend the term of office of Chairperson and Members of National Human Rights Commission and State Human Rights Commission.

Background

- The amendment to the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 will make

National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) and State Human Rights Commission (SHRC) more compliant with the Paris Principles.

- These Principles concern regarding autonomy, independence, pluralism and wide-ranging functions of NHRC in order to effectively protect and promote human rights.

Related Information

UNHRC

- The United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC) is a United Nations System inter-governmental body responsible for promoting and protecting human rights around the world.
- Its 47 seats are filled by member states elected for three-year terms.

NHRC

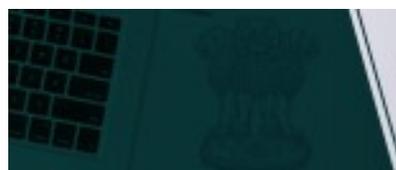
- It is an autonomous body constituted under the Protection of Human Rights Act in 1993.
- It is responsible for the protection and promotion of human rights, defined by the Act as "rights relating to life, liberty, equality and dignity of the individual guaranteed by the Constitution".
- NHRC Chairperson should be retired Chief Justice of India.
- The current chairman of the NHRC is Justice H. L. Dattu.
- The Chairperson and members of the NHRC are appointed by the President of India.

Topic- GS-2- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies

Source- PIB

2. **Centre decided to emulate Telangana model of health coverage scheme "Aarogyasri"**

- The Central government decided to emulate Telangana model of health coverage for its proposed universal health insurance scheme covering secondary and tertiary healthcare.



Related Information

Ayushman Bharat

- The Government announced two major initiatives in the health sector, as part of Ayushman Bharat programme.
- The initiatives are-
(i) Health and Wellness Centre
(ii) National Health Protection Scheme
- The scheme will subsume the ongoing centrally sponsored schemes-
(a) Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)
(b) Senior citizen health insurance scheme (SCHIS)

National Health Protection Scheme

- The National Health Protection Scheme that will cover over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families, or around 50 crore people.
- The scheme, set to be the world's largest government-funded healthcare programme.
- The **coverage of up to ₹5 lakh a family a year** will be provided for secondary- and tertiary-care hospitalisation.
- The scheme will also include pre- and post-hospitalisation expenses.
- Benefits of the scheme will be portable across the country and a beneficiary covered under Ayushman Bharat will be allowed to take cashless benefits from any public/private empanelled hospitals across the country.
- For rural areas, the families, included in the scheme, will need to match one of the following conditions-
(a) Households without shelter (b) Destitute (c) Living on alms (d) Manual scavenger families (e) Primitive tribal groups (f) Legally released bonded labour.
- For urban areas, there are 11 defined occupational categories that will be entitled under the scheme.

Health and Wellness Centre

- National Health Policy, 2017 has envisioned Health and Wellness Centres as the foundation of India's health system.
- These centres will provide comprehensive health care, including for non-communicable diseases and maternal and child health services.
- These centres will also provide free essential drugs and diagnostic services.

Aarogyasri Scheme

- Aarogyasri is the flagship scheme of all health initiatives of the Telangana Government with a mission to provide quality healthcare to the poor.
- The scheme provides financial protection to families living below poverty line upto Rs. 2 lakhs in a year for the treatment of serious ailments requiring hospitalization and surgery.
- The State Government has set up the Aarogyasri Health Care Trust.

Topic- GS-2-Welfare Schemes

Source- The Hindu

3. **India pips Japan to become second largest crude steel manufacturer**
- India has overtaken Japan to become the world's second largest producer of crude steel in February, according to the Steel Users Federation of India (SUFI).
- At present, China is the largest producer of crude steel in the world, accounting for more than 50% of the production.
- India overtook the U.S. in 2015 to become the third largest producer of crude steel.

Related Information

Important Iron Ore Mines in India

- Barabil – Koira Valley (Orissa)
- Bailadila Mine (Chhattisgarh)
- Dalli-Rajhara (Chhattisgarh)

Topic- GS-3-Economic Development

Source- The Hindu

4. **Cabinet approved rightsizing the Competition Commission of India**

- The Union Cabinet has given its approval for rightsizing the Competition Commission of India (CCI) **from One Chairperson and Six Members (totalling seven) to One Chairperson and Three Members (totalling four)**.
- The proposal is expected to result in reduction of three Posts of Members of the Commission in pursuance of the Government's objective of "Minimum Government - Maximum Governance".

Related Information

Competition Commission of India

- The Competition Commission of India is a statutory body of the Government of India responsible for enforcing The Competition Act, 2002 throughout India.
- It is quasi-judicial statutory body.
- It is also required to give opinion on competition issues on a reference received from a statutory authority established under any law and to undertake competition advocacy, create public awareness and impart training on competition issues.
- Section 8(1) of the Competition Act, 2002 (the Act) provides that the Commission shall consist of a Chairperson and not less than two and not more than six Members.
- Presently, the Chairperson and four Members are in position.
- The Commission has been functioning as a collegium right from its inception.

Topic- GS-2- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies

Source- PIB

5. **Wildlife Protection Act 1972 (in context of recent Blackbuck Poaching Case)**

- The Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 is an Act of the Parliament of India enacted for protection of plants and animal species.

- It extends to the whole of India, except the State of Jammu and Kashmir which has its own wildlife act.
- It has six schedules which give varying degrees of protection.
- Schedule I and part II of Schedule II provide absolute protection - offences under these are prescribed the highest penalties.
- Species listed in Schedule III and Schedule IV are also protected, but the penalties are much lower.
- Schedule V includes the animals which may be hunted.
- The specified endemic plants in Schedule VI are prohibited from cultivation and planting.

Topic- GS-3-Environment

Source- Indian Express

06. 04. 2018

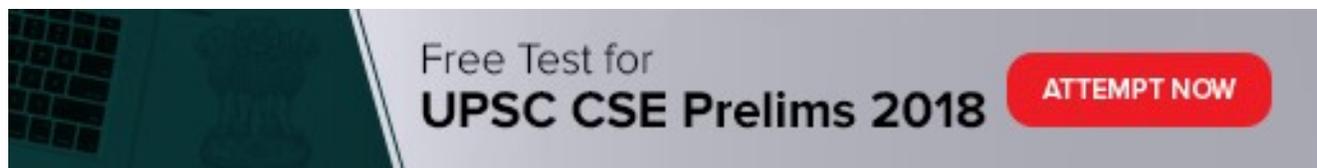
1. **Schemes for welfare of Women and Children**

SwadharGreh Scheme

- MWCD (Ministry of Women and Child Development) implements SwadharGreh Scheme which targets the **women victims of unfortunate circumstances** who are in need of institutional support for rehabilitation so that they could lead their life with dignity.
- The Scheme envisages providing shelter, food, clothing and health as well as economic and social security for the women victims of difficult circumstances which includes widows, destitute women and aged women.

Ujjawala Scheme

- The Scheme is being implemented for Prevention of trafficking and for Rescue, Rehabilitation, Re-integration and Repatriation of victims of trafficking for commercial sexual exploitation.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) Scheme

- The Ministry is administering 'Support to Training and Employment Programme for Women (STEP) Scheme' to provide skills that give employability to women and to provide competencies and skill that enable women to become self-employed/entrepreneurs.
- The Scheme is intended to benefit women who are in the age group of 16 years and above across the country.

National Nutrition Mission (NNM)

- It aims to achieve improvement in nutritional status of Children, pregnant women and lactating mothers and reduce anaemia among children and women.
- It strives to reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anaemia and low birth weight babies.
- It will create synergy, ensure better monitoring, issue alerts for timely action, and encourage States/UTs to perform, guide and supervise the line Ministries and the States/ UTs to achieve the targeted goals.

Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG)

- The scheme aims at empowering out of school adolescent girls of 11 to 14 years by improving their nutritional and health status, upgrading their skills.
- The scheme is being implemented using the platform of Integrated Child Development Services Scheme.

Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)

- Launched in 1975.
- Provides food, education, and primary healthcare via Anganwadi Centres to children under 6 years of age and their mothers.
- Six services provided under ICDS which are-

(1) Supplementary nutrition (SNP) (2) Immunization (3) Health check-up (4) Referral services (5) Pre-school non-formal education (6) Nutrition & health education are provided.

One Stop Centre (OSC)

- The scheme is being implemented to support women affected by violence.
- It is effective from 1st April 2015.
- It aims to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid/case management, psychosocial counselling and temporary support services.

Universalisation of Women Helpline

- The Ministry also implements the scheme of Universalisation of Women Helpline through States/UTs Government since 2015 to provide 24-hour emergency and non-emergency response to women affected by violence.

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP)-

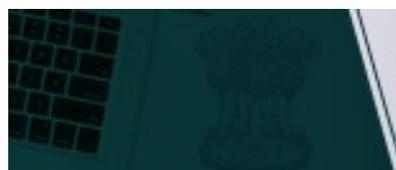
- Launched by the PM in 2015 at Panipat, Haryana.
- Objective- Improve Child Sex Ratio, Protection and education of girl child.
- Three ministries are involved which are -Ministries of Women and Child Development, Health & Family Welfare and Human Resource Development.

Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY)

- Maternity Benefit Programme has been contributing towards better enabling environment by providing cash incentives for improved health and nutrition to pregnant and nursing mothers.

Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra scheme

- Promote community participation through involvement of Student Volunteers for empowerment of rural women.



National Creche Scheme

- To provide day care facilities to children of age group of 6 months to 6 years of working women who are employed.

Rastriya Mahila Kosh (RMK)

- Provide micro-credit to poor women for various livelihood support and income generating activities at concessional terms in a client-friendly procedure to bring about their socio-economic development.

Indira Gandhi Matritva Sahayog Yojana

- Provide financial aid of Rs 6,000 to pregnant women who undergo institutional delivery for hospital admission.
- Across 650 districts of the country.
- The scheme provided cash transfer to pregnant women above the age of 18 years for up to two live births.

'SABLA' Scheme-

- Also known as Rajiv Gandhi Scheme for Empowerment of Adolescent Girls.
- Launched in 2010.
- Development of adolescent girls of 11-18 years by making them 'self-reliant'.
- Focus areas- Nutrition, Skill development and Health.

Tejaswini Project-

- Initially the project has been implemented in 17 districts in Jharkhand.
- Tejaswini Socio-Economic Empowerment of Adolescent Girls and Young Women (AGYW) Project.
- Project is financed by World Bank.

Stree Swabhiman

- It aims to create a sustainable model for providing adolescent girls and women an access to affordable sanitary products by leveraging common services centres (CSCs).

Mahila e-Haat

- It is a unique direct online digital marketing platform for women entrepreneurs/ SHGs/ NGOs.

Topic- GS-2- Welfare Schemes

Source- PIB

2. **Indian, Korean coast guards held joint exercise "SAHYOG-HYEOLYEOG 2018"**

- Indo-Korean joint anti-piracy, search and rescue exercise 'SAHYOG-HYEOLYEOG 2018' was conducted off the Chennai coast.
- The Korean Coast Guard ship 'BADARO' took part in the exercise.
- The mission of the joint exercise is to develop working level co-operation and enhance inter-operability in the fields of maritime search and rescue, anti-piracy operations.

Topic- GS-3-Defence

Source- AIR

3. **Govt. forms committee to regulate news portals**

- The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has instituted a committee to regulate online portals, including news websites, entertainment sites and media aggregators.
- The 10-member committee will include secretaries of the departments of Home, Legal Affairs, Electronics and Information Technology, and Industrial Policy and Promotion.
- The committee, broadly, will look at three things-

(a) Bring online information dissemination under regulation

(b) Propose a policy for foreign direct investment in this media

(c) International best practices on such existing regulatory mechanism

Issues with current system

- It is noted that both print and electronic media are regulated but online media does not come under the ambit of regulatory mechanism.
- Information and Broadcasting Ministry was working on bringing online news too under regulation mechanism.



Related Information

- The content **telecast** on **television** channels are regulated in terms of the programme and advertisement codes **under the Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994**.
- Similarly, the autonomous body **Press Council of India regulates the print media**.

Topic- GS-2- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Source- The Hindu

4. **Schemes for Promoting Self Employment in Textiles Sector**

Scheme for Incubation in Apparel Manufacturing (SIAM)

- It was launched on pilot basis in January 2014 under which infrastructure in the form of an integrated workspace is provided to the new entrepreneurs along with training support.
- Three Incubation Centres have been sanctioned under the scheme.
- They are
 - (a) Spinning Mills Federation Ltd (SPINFED) in Bhubaneswar, Odisha
 - (b) Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIIDC) in Panipat
 - (c) Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (IIDC) in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY)

- It is basically a loan scheme launched by GOI April 2015 to provide funding to the non-corporate, non-farm sector income generating activities of micro and small enterprises whose credit needs are below ₹10 Lakh.
- Under the scheme government created a MUDRA (Micro Units Development & Refinance Agency Ltd. (MUDRA) Bank to provide loan to MSME's.

- MUDRA has created three categories for the loans to the MSME's. These are-

- (a) Shishu- covering loans up to ₹50,000
- (b) Kishore: covering loans above ₹50,000 and up to ₹5,00,000
- (c) Tarun: covering loans above ₹5,00,000 and up to ₹10,00,000

Topic- GS-3- schemes in Infrastructure

Source- PIB

5. **Ministry of Coal launched UTTAM APP for Coal Quality Monitoring**

- UTTAM stands for – Unlocking Transparency by Third Party Assessment of Mined Coal (uttam.coalindia.in).
- The Ministry of Coal and Coal India Limited (CIL) developed UTTAM which aims to provide an App for all citizens and coal consumers to monitor the process of Third Party Sampling of coal across CIL subsidiaries.
- UTTAM App ensures accountability, transparency, effectiveness and efficiency in coal ecosystem.

Topic- GS-2-eGovernance

Source- PIB

07. 04. 2018

1. **India banned imports of hormone oxytocin to halt misuse in livestock industry**

- India banned imports of the hormone oxytocin to stop its misuse in the livestock industry.
- The government has decided to rely on domestic production to satisfy requirements of the hormone, ordering an immediate ban on imports, whether for human or animal use.
- India halted retail sales of the prescription-only drug in 2014, but regulators have struggled to curb illegal sales.



Free Test for

UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

- The government also recommended that sale be limited to registered government hospitals and clinics, a bar code system used on all forms of the drug to ensure tracking and prevent abuse.

Issues with oxytocin hormone

- It shortens their lives and makes them barren sooner.

Related Information

Oxytocin Hormone

- Oxytocin is a peptide hormone and neuropeptide.
- Oxytocin is normally produced by the paraventricular nucleus of the hypothalamus (Part of brain) and released by the posterior pituitary.
- It was discovered by Henry Dale in 1906.
- Often called the "love hormone", oxytocin is released naturally in human bonding activities such as sex, childbirth and breastfeeding.
- It may also have benefits as a treatment for several conditions, including depression, anxiety, and intestinal problems.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- Economic Times

2. RH300 sounding rocket to be launched in Kerala

- The RH300 sounding rocket, developed by Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) as part of a study to enrich available atmospheric data, would be launched from Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS).
- This will be the 21st launch of RH300 sounding rocket.
- It is a part of a study undertaken by VSSC under the Sounding Rocket Experiment (SOUREX) programme, which utilises the RH-300 MKII sounding rocket to study the Equatorial E and lower ionosphere regions of the atmosphere.

- The objective of the experiment is to measure neutral wind in the dynamo region (80-120 km) of equatorial ionosphere using the
 - indigenously developed Electron Density and Neutral Wind Probe (ENWi) and
 - perform cross-validation using an independent Tri Methyl Aluminium (TMA) release technique.
- The study will enrich available atmospheric data and refine the models used for tropical weather prediction.

Related Information

Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC)

- Located in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, it is a major space research centre of the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO), focusing on rocket and space vehicles for India's satellite programme.
- The centre had its beginnings as the Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS) in 1962.
- It was renamed in honour of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, often regarded as the father of the Indian space program.

Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station (TERLS)

- It is in Thumba, Thiruvananthapuram which is near the southern tip of mainland India, very close to earth's magnetic equator.
- It is currently used by ISRO for launching sounding rockets.

Sounding Rocket

- A sounding rocket, sometimes called a **research rocket**, is an instrument-carrying rocket designed to take measurements and perform scientific experiments during its sub-orbital flight.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- Economics Times



Free Test for
UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

3. **Indian government ready to revise 1950 India-Nepal peace treaty**

- Prime Minister expressed his readiness to revise and update the 1950 Treaty of Peace and Friendship between India and Nepal and is likely to convey this to the visiting Prime Minister of Nepal K P Oli during their conversations.

Related Information

1950 India-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship

- It is a bilateral treaty between Nepal and India establishing a close strategic relationship between the two South Asian neighbours.
- The treaty was signed at Kathmandu on 31 July 1950 by the last Prime Minister of Nepal Mohan Shamsheer Jang Bahadur Rana and Indian ambassador to Nepal, Chadreshwar Narayan Singh.
- The treaty allows **free movement of people and goods** between the two nations and a close relationship and collaboration on matters of defense and foreign policy.

Criticism of the treaty

- This treaty is called unequal by most Nepalese as Nepalese law does not permit an open border and Indians, by law, should not be able to buy lands and properties in Nepal or carry out businesses in their names.
- They often regard it as a breach of its sovereignty.

Topic- GS-2- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Source- Indian Express

4. **Ganga Hariteema Yojana launched in Uttar Pradesh**

- In Uttar Pradesh, Ganga Hariteema Yojana (Ganga Greenery scheme) has been launched in 27 districts of the state located on the bank of river Ganga.

- Chief Minister launched the scheme at Allahabad in a function organised on the bank of Sangam (the confluence of rivers of Ganga, Yamuna and mythical Saraswati).
- The objectives of the schemes include enhancing green cover in the catchment areas of the river Ganga and to control the land erosion.
- Plantation will be carried out in one-kilometre areas from the banks of river under the scheme.

Topic- GS-3- Environment

Source- AIR

5. **IAF to conduct biggest combat exercise "Gaganshakti"**

- The Indian Air Force will carry out one of its biggest combat exercise "Gaganshakti" to check its operational preparedness with a focus on **dealing with any possible security challenges from China and Pakistan.**
- The two-week long exercise will involve almost the entire assets of the IAF including its fighter squadrons and the main objective of the day and night drill will be to check war waging capability of the force.
- The first phase of the exercise will focus on northern borders and second phase will be carried out to check preparedness in case of a war-like situation along the western borders.

Topic- GS-3- Defence

Source- AIR

6. **World Health Day**

- World Health Day is a global health awareness day which is observed on April 7.
- The day is **one of eight official global health campaigns** marked by World Health Organisation (WHO), along with World Tuberculosis Day, World Immunization Week, World Malaria Day, World No Tobacco Day, World AIDS Day, World Blood Donor Day, and World Hepatitis Day.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- This year marks the 70th anniversary of World Health Day.
- Theme for this year is- "**Universal health coverage: everyone, everywhere**"
- Slogan is- "Health for All"

Related Information

World Health Organization

- The World Health Organization (WHO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations that is concerned with international public health.
- It was established on 22 July 1946 headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The WHO is a member of the United Nations Development Group.
- The WHO is responsible for the World Health Report, the worldwide World Health Survey, and World Health Day.

Topic-GS- Important International institutions

Source- WHO

09. 04. 2018

1. **NASA's Parker Solar Probe- Humanity's first flight to Sun**
 - NASA's Parker Solar Probe — humanity's first mission to the Sun — is undergoing final preparations for its launch scheduled for July 31.
 - It will be launched from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.
 - After launch, it will orbit directly through the solar atmosphere -the corona- closer to the surface than any human-made object has ever gone.
 - The mission will reveal fundamental science behind what drives the solar wind, the constant outpouring of material from the Sun that shapes planetary atmospheres and affects space weather near Earth.

Related Information

Three Major structural areas of the sun

- **Core-** The centre of the sun, comprising 25 percent of its radius. It is the hottest region, where the nuclear fusion reactions that power the Sun occur.

- **Radiative zone-** The section immediately surrounding the core, comprising 45 percent of its radius.
- **Convective zone-** The outermost ring of the sun, comprising the 30 percent of its radius.

Atmosphere of the Sun

Above the surface of the sun is its atmosphere, which consists of three parts-

- **Photosphere-** The innermost part of the sun's atmosphere and the only part we can see.
- **Chromosphere-** The area between the photosphere and the corona. It is hotter than the photosphere.
- **Corona-** The extremely hot outermost layer, extending outward several million miles from the chromosphere.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

2. **Walmiki and Malhar, 2 languages unknown to linguists, discovered by Hyderabad University**
 - The professor of linguistics in the University of Hyderabad discovered two languages which were lying hidden from linguists.
 - One of them is called **Walmiki** and is spoken in the district of **Koraput of Odisha and on the bordering districts of Andhra Pradesh**.
 - The name of the language, Walmiki, "is also interesting and indicative because the speech community claims descent from the great Indian saint-poet Valmiki".
 - The second language "**Malhar**" is spoken in a remote and isolated hamlet about **165 km away from Bhubaneswar**.
 - The preliminary data shows that Malhar belonged to the "North Dravidian subgroup of the Dravidian family of languages" and that it has close affinities with the other North Dravidian languages like Malto and Kurukh spoken in West Bengal, Jharkhand and Bihar.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

Topic- GS-1-Indian Culture

Source- Hindustan Times

3. **RBI switched back to GDP scale from GVA scale to measure economy**

- The Reserve Bank switched back to the gross domestic product (GDP)-based measure to offer its growth estimates from the gross value added (GVA) methodology.
- The government had started analysing growth estimates using GVA methodology from January 2015 and had also changed the base year to 2018 from January.

Reasons for selecting GDP Scale

- RBI said that the switch to GDP scale is mainly to conform to international standards.
- "Globally, the performance of most economies is gauged in terms of gross domestic product (GDP).
- This is also the approach followed by multilateral institutions, international analysts and investors, and primarily they all stick to this norm because it facilitates easy cross-country comparisons.

Related Information

What is gross value added?

- GVA is the measure of the value of goods and services produced in an area, industry or sector of an economy, in economics.
- It provides the rupee value for the amount of goods and services produced in an economy after deducting the cost of inputs and raw materials that have gone into the production of those goods and services.

How is it measured?

- It is the sum of a country's GDP and net of subsidies and taxes in the economy.
- When measured from the production side, it is a balancing item of the national accounts.

What is GDP?

- Total value of all final goods and services produced within the geographical boundary of the country during a period.
- In this we considered all produce by both resident citizens and foreign nationals who reside within the boundary of that country.
- It gives the economic output from the consumers' side.
- It is the sum of private consumption, gross investment in the economy, government investment, government spending and net foreign trade.

What is the difference between the two?

- While GVA gives a picture of the state of economic activity from the producers' side or supply side, the GDP model gives the picture from the consumers' side or demand perspective.
- Both measures need not match because of the difference in treatment of net taxes.

Which of the two measures is considered more appropriate gauge of the economy?

- A sector-wise breakdown provided by the GVA measure helps policymakers decide which sectors need incentives or stimulus and accordingly formulate sector specific policies.
- But GDP is a key measure when it comes to making cross-country analysis and comparing the incomes of different economies.

Topic- GS-3-Indian Economy

Source- The Hindu + Economic Times

4. **Tamilnadu government launched mobile app "Uzhavan" and 'Amma Bio-Fertiliser' scheme for farmers**

- In a bid to use technology for farmers' benefit, the Tamil Nadu Government has come out with a mobile application "Uzhavan" that will allow ryots to have access to nine types of services, including details about their crop insurance.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- Chief Minister also launched the 'Amma Bio-Fertiliser' scheme, named after late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa. The initiative was aimed at better management of nature farming and help boost and maintain soil fertility.

Topic- GS-2-e-governance, GS-3- Agriculture
Source- The Hindu Business Line

5. **New source of global nitrogen discovered**

- For centuries, the prevailing science has indicated that all the nitrogen on Earth available to plants comes from the atmosphere.
- But a study from the University of California, Davis, indicates that more than a quarter comes from Earth's bedrock.
- **The study found that up to 26 percent of the nitrogen in natural ecosystems is sourced from rocks, with the remaining fraction from the atmosphere.**
- The discovery could greatly improve climate change projections, which rely on understanding the carbon cycle.
- This newly identified source of nitrogen could also feed the carbon cycle on land, allowing ecosystems to pull more emissions out of the atmosphere.
- This nitrogen may allow forests and grasslands to sequester more fossil fuel CO2 emissions than previously thought.

Weathering Is Key factor

- Ecosystems need nitrogen and other nutrients to absorb carbon dioxide pollution, and there is a limited amount of it available from plants and soils.
- If a large amount of nitrogen comes from rocks, it helps explain how natural ecosystems like boreal forests are capable of taking up high levels of carbon dioxide.
- But not just any rock can leach nitrogen.

- **Rock nitrogen availability is determined by weathering**, which can be physical, such as through tectonic movement, or chemical, such as when minerals react with rainwater.

Geology and Carbon Sequestration

- Areas with higher levels of rock nitrogen weathering may be able to sequester more carbon.

Note-

Carbon sequestration is the process involved in carbon capture and the long-term storage of atmospheric carbon dioxide or other forms of carbon to mitigate or defer global warming.

- Geology might have a huge control over which systems can take up carbon dioxide and which ones don't.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology, GS-1- Physical Geography

Source- Space daily

10. 04. 2018

1. **Right to marry person of one's choice is integral to right to life & liberty (A-21)- SC on Hadiya case**

- The right to marry a person of one's choice is integral to Article 21 (right to life and liberty) of the Constitution", the Supreme Court said.
- The SC set aside a 2017 order of the Kerala High Court which annulled the marriage of Kerala Muslim convert girl Hadiya and Shefin Jahan.
- The choice of a partner whether within or outside marriage lies within the exclusive domain of each individual.
- The Constitution guarantees to each individual the right freely to practise, profess and propagate religion.
- Choices of faith and belief as indeed choices in matters of marriage lie within an area where individual autonomy is supreme.

- Neither the state nor the law can dictate a choice of partners or limit the free ability of every person to decide on these matters.

Background

- Hadiya's father moved the Kerala High Court Claiming that her daughter had been "brainwashed" by Shefin Jahan.
- The Kerala HC annulled the marriage and sent Hadiya to her parents' custody.
- On appeal by Shefin Jahan, the Supreme Court summoned Hadiya, interacted with her in open court and then sent her to continue her studies in a Salem college.
- The Supreme court also said that the duty of the court is to uphold the right and not to abridge the sphere of the right unless there is a valid authority of law.

Related Information

Important rights which have been declared by Supreme Court as a part of A-21

- Right to live with human dignity
- Right to decent environment including pollution free water and air and protection against hazardous industries
- Right to livelihood
- Right to privacy
- Right to health
- Right to free education up to 14 years of age
- Right to free legal aid
- Right to fair trial
- Right to information
- Right to marry person of one's choice

Topic- *GS-2-Indian Polity*

Source- *Indian Express*

2. FPI investment limit in Govt Securities hiked

- In a move that could temporarily soften bond yields, the RBI, in consultation with the Government, hiked the foreign portfolio investors

(FPI) investment limit in Central government securities (G-Sec).

- FPI investment limit in Govt Securities has been hiked from 5 percent of outstanding stock currently to 5.5 percent in FY2019 and 6 per cent in FY2020.
- The FPI investment in state development loans (SDLs) has been left unchanged at 2 percent of outstanding stock of securities.

Related Information

Foreign portfolio investment (FPI)

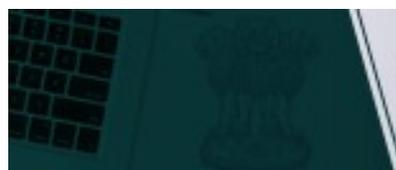
- Foreign portfolio investment (FPI) consists of securities and other financial assets passively held by foreign investors.
- It does **not provide the investor with direct ownership of financial assets** and is relatively liquid depending on the volatility of the market.
- Foreign Investors portfolio are managed by financial professionals.
- FPI is part of a country's capital account and shown on its balance of payments (BOP).

FDI (Foreign Direct Investment)

- A foreign direct investment (FDI) is an investment in the form of a **controlling ownership in a business in one country by an entity based in another country**.
- There are two routes by which India gets FDI.
(1) Automatic route- By this route FDI is allowed without prior approval by Government or Reserve Bank of India.
(2) Government route- Prior approval by government is needed via this route. Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) which was the responsible agency to oversee this route was abolished on May 24, 2017.

Government Security (G-Sec)

- It is a tradeable instrument issued by the Central Government or the State Governments.



- Such securities are short term (usually called treasury bills, with original maturities of less than one year) or long term (usually called Government bonds or dated securities with original maturity of one year or more).
- In India, the Central Government issues both, treasury bills and bonds or dated securities while the State Governments issue only bonds or dated securities, which are called the State Development Loans (SDLs).
- G-Secs carry practically no risk of default and, hence, are called risk-free gilt-edged instruments.

How G-Sec are issued?

- G-Secs are issued through auctions conducted by RBI.
- Auctions are conducted on the electronic platform called the **E-Kuber**, the Core Banking Solution (CBS) platform of RBI.

Treasury bills or T-bills

- These are money market instruments, are short term debt instruments issued by the Government of India and are presently issued in three tenors, namely, 91-day, 182-day and 364-day.
- Treasury bills are **zero coupon securities** and pay no interest.
- They are issued at a discount and redeemed at the face value at maturity.

Topic- GS-3-Indian Economy

Source- The Hindu Business line + RBI Website

3. **Over-the-counter sales of 14 steroids creams stopped**
 - To prevent indiscriminate sale of topical preparations containing steroids and antibiotics without prescription, the Health Ministry has banned over-the-counter sale of around 14 such creams.

- The Ministry has put 14 steroid-based creams and ointments **under the Schedule H category by making amendments to certain Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945.**
- The decision was taken following consultation with the Drugs Technical Advisory Board which had recommended a ban on the sale of such creams without prescription and had also submitted their recommendations to the Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation.

Related Information

Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945

- The Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 are the set of rules under The Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.
- It contains provisions for classification of drugs under given schedules and there are guidelines for the storage, sale, display and prescription of each schedule.

Schedule H

- The drug label must display the texts "Rx" and "Schedule H drug."
- It cannot be sold without a prescription and only the amount specified in the prescription should be sold.
- The time and date of prescription must be noted.
- If a Schedule H drug also comes under the purview of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, it must carry the texts "NRx" and "Schedule H drug."

Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO)

- It is the national regulatory body for Indian pharmaceuticals and medical devices.
- Within the CDSCO, the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) regulates pharmaceutical and medical devices, under the gamut of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

- The DCGI is advised by the Drug Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) and the Drug Consultative Committee (DCC).

Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB)

- It is the highest decision-making body under the Union health ministry on technical matters.
- Director General of Health Services (DGHS) is the ex-officio chairman of this statutory body which is constituted by the ministry under section 5 of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

Topic- GS-2- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies

Source- The Hindu

4. Finance Ministers from South India met to discuss their concerns over the Terms of Reference of the 15th Finance Commission

- Finance ministers of four southern states met to discuss their concerns over the Terms of Reference of the 15th Finance Commission.
- The meeting was hosted by Kerala.
- Officials from Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Puducherry attended the meeting. Officials from Telangana and Tamil Nadu skipped the meeting.

Concerned raised by Southern States

- South Indian states have raised concerns over a new population-based formula for tax sharing between the Centre and states.
- The 15th Finance Commission, constituted in November 2017, has recognised population as an important criterion for distribution of taxes and said it will use data from the 2011 census while making recommendations for the five-year period beginning from 2020.
- The southern states, however, want the recommendations to be based on 1971 census data.

- This is because, as compared to northern states, south India has recorded significant progress in population control or in the replacement rate of population growth.

Related Information

Finance Commission

- The Finance Commission was established by the President of India in 1951 under **Article 280 of the Indian Constitution**.
- It was formed to define the financial relations between the central government of India and the individual state governments.
- **The Finance Commission (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act of 1951** additionally defines the terms of qualification, appointment and disqualification, the term, eligibility and powers of the Finance Commission.
- As per the Constitution, the Commission is appointed **every five years and consists of a chairman and four other members**.

14th Finance Commission

- It was headed by former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor Y.V. Reddy.
- The recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission are valid from 2015 to 2020.
- The 14th Finance Commission is considered to have fundamentally reset the centre-state fiscal relationship by raising the untied share of states in net central taxes to 42% from 32%.

15th Finance Commission

- It is headed by Former bureaucrat NK Singh.
- The recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission will be implemented in the period 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

Topic- GS-3- Indian Economy and issues relating to planning, mobilization of resources, growth, development and employment.

Source- Indian Express

11. 04. 2018

1. **ISRO's IRNSS-1I satellite scheduled to be launched on April 12**

- ISRO will launch the IRNSS-1I satellite on April 12 from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre, Sriharikota, through its PSLV-C41.
- The satellite IRNSS-1I is the replacement of IRNSS-1A satellite launched back in 2013 whose three atomic clocks onboard have stopped working over two years ago.
- In August 2017, ISRO launched IRNSS- 1H to replace IRNSS-1A but it failed to deploy.

What is IRNSS?

- The Indian Regional Navigation Satellite System (IRNSS) with an operational name of NAVIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) is an autonomous regional satellite navigation system, that provides accurate real-time positioning and timing services.
- It covers India and a region extending 1,500 km around it, with plans for further extension. The system at present consist of a constellation of 7 satellites, with two additional satellites on the ground as stand-by.
- Three of the seven satellites in the constellation are located in geostationary orbit (GEO) and four in inclined geosynchronous orbit (GSO).
- These satellites are- (1) IRNSS-1A (2) IRNSS- 1B (3) IRNSS- 1C (4) IRNSS-1D (5) IRNSS- 1E (6) IRNSS- 1F (7) IRNSS- 1G (8) IRNSS- 1H (for replacing IRNSS-1A) (failed to deploy)

- The last IRNSS, 1H, which was launched in August, 2017 was unsuccessful as the satellite did not come out of its heat shield.

What are the applications of IRNSS?

- These satellites help not just in land navigation but also in marine and aerial navigation.
- The data from these satellites can be used to give vehicle drivers visual and voice navigation assistance.
- They also help in disaster management and in proper time-keeping.

Specifications of IRNSS-1I

- Like all other IRNSS satellites, IRNSS-1I will also carry two payloads – navigation payload and ranging payload.
- Navigation payload- to transmit signals for determining position, velocity and time
- Ranging payload- for determining the frequency range of the satellite.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

2. **FSSAI introduced "Project Dhoop" to spread awareness about availing Vitamin D through natural sunlight**

- The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched a nationwide campaign "Project Dhoop" on April 9 in Delhi.
- Project Dhoop is an innovative and effective concept to ensure that school students get adequate Vitamin D through sunlight, while also opting to choose food products like milk and edible oils that are fortified with Vitamins A and D.
- Project Dhoop urges schools to shift their morning assembly to noon time, mainly between 11 am and 1 pm to ensure maximum absorption of Vitamin D in students through natural sunlight.

Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

Note: There is a popular belief that morning sunshine is the best for our bones, however, it is actually the sunshine from 11 am to 1 pm that is most beneficial in increasing Vitamin D levels in the human body because of the best ultraviolet B (UVB) radiation.

- Vitamin D deficiency occurs due to overuse of sunscreen, wearing clothes that cover most of the skin, working all day in an air-conditioned atmosphere, and other factors.

Topic- *GS-3-Science and Technology*

Source- *Down to earth*

3. **Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon elected chairman of Boao Forum for Asia**

- Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was elected chairman of the Boao Forum for Asia, which is currently underway in China's Hainan province.

Boao Forum for Asia

- The Boao Forum for Asia is a non-profit organisation that hosts high-level forums for leaders from government, business and academia in Asia and other continents to share their vision on the most pressing issues in this dynamic region and the world at large.
- BFA is modelled on the World Economic Forum held annually in Davos, Switzerland.
- Its secretariat is located in Beijing.
- The forum is also known as the "**Asian Davos**".
- The forum takes its name from the town of Boao, located in China's southern Hainan province, which has been the permanent venue for its annual conference since 2002.

Topic- *GS-2- Important International institutions*

Source- *Business Standards*

4. **Regional rural banks come under prompt corrective action plans**

- Prompt corrective action framework for banks will also be applicable for regional rural banks.

- The National Bank for Agriculture & Rural Development, which supervises RRBs, has directed them to initiate self-corrective action based on parameters such as
 - (a) Capital adequacy
 - (b) Asset quality and
 - (c) Profitability

which largely follows the framework for bigger commercial banks.

- Accordingly, RRBs will have to slow down business if
 - (a) Their capital adequacy falls below 9%
 - (b) Net non-performing assets ratio rises over 10% of total advances and
 - (c) Return on assets falls below 0.25%.
- The objective is to ensure financial soundness and functional efficiency of RRBs with statutory and regulatory compliance.
- NABARD also tightened its supervisory noose around RRBs and said that failure of treading the corrective path when required would attract harsher regulatory actions such as monetary penalties and issuing of show cause notices to the management.

Related Information

What is Prompt Corrective Action (PCA)?

- A prompt Corrective action is a qualitative tool introduced by the Reserve Bank of India under which direct action is taken on weak banks to ensure the financial health of a bank is maintained and it does not go bust.
- It does so by putting some trigger points that will help in assessing, monitoring, controlling and taking corrective measures on troubled banks.

The parameters on which banks are judged for prompt corrective action are-



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

(a) CRAR or Capital to Risk Weighted Ratio

- It is a measure of bank's financial strength.
- If it is above 9% then the bank is considered as fit to handle any turbulence.
- If it falls below 9%, then the bank is considered to be in danger zone and an alarm is raised for PCA.

(b) NPA or Non-Performing Assets

- If the NPA percentage exceeds 6% - 9% due to the bad loans then the bank is considered to be a troubled bank and is subjected to prompt corrective action.

(c) Returns on Assets (ROA)

- If the returns on assets fall below 0.25% then the bank is subjected to prompt corrective action.
- It is calculated as $ROA = \frac{\text{Net Income}}{\text{Total Assets}}$.

(d) Leverage Ratio

- If bank Tier-1 leverage ratio is between 3.5 to 4.0 percent then the bank is subjected to prompt corrective action.

Note-

The Tier 1 leverage ratio is the relationship between a banking organization's core capital and its total assets.

Regional Rural Banks

- RRBs are jointly owned by the central government, the state government where they operate concerned and sponsor banks in the proportion of 50 percent, 15 percent and 35 percent respectively.
- The objective is to increase credit flow to rural areas.

NABARD (National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development)

- The apex development financial institution in India.
- Headquarter- Mumbai

- Established in July 1982 under NABARD Act 1981.
- Formed On the recommendation of B. Sivaraman Committee.
- It is a specialised bank for Agriculture and rural development in India.
- Rural Innovation Fund and Rural Infrastructure Development Fund have been set under NABARD.
- Important Functions-
 - (i) Recommends about licensing for RRBs and Cooperative banks to RBI.
 - (ii) Refinances the financial institutions which finance the rural sector.

Topic- GS-3-Indian Economy

Source- Economic Times

5. India hosted 16th International Energy Forum Ministerial

International Energy Forum (IEF)

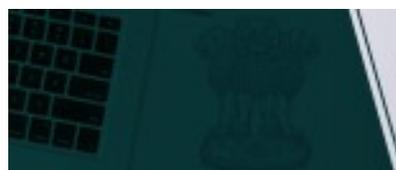
- It is the world's largest recurring gathering of energy ministers.
- It is unique in that participants not only include IEA and OPEC countries, but also key international actors such as Brazil, China, India, Mexico, Russia, and South Africa.
- The IEF is promoted by a permanent Secretariat based in the Diplomatic Quarter of Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

International Energy Agency (IEA)

- The International Energy Agency (IEA) is a **Paris-based** autonomous intergovernmental organization established in the framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 1974 in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis.
- IEA member countries are required to maintain total oil stock levels equivalent to at least 90 days of the previous year's net imports.
- Currently there are 29 states that are part of it.
- India is not a member of it.

Topic- GS-2- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Source- AIR



12. 04. 2018

1. **The Supreme Court said CAMPA funds cannot be used for civic or municipal purposes**

- The Supreme Court pulled up the Centre for not using around Rs 90,000 crore assigned for environment restoration.
- The apex court also criticized the government for not utilizing this Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) fund for the right purpose.

Related Information

Compensatory afforestation (CA)

- It refers to the afforestation and regeneration activities carried out as a way of compensating for forest land which is diverted to non-forest purposes.
- The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 provide that whenever a forest land is to be diverted for non-forestry purposes, the equivalent non-forest land has to be identified for compensatory afforestation and funds for raising compensatory afforestation are to be imposed.
- The act further requires many amendments such as non- forest land for compensatory afforestation etc.

CAMPA (Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority)

- The ad hoc CAMPA body was created by the order of the Supreme Court on July 10, 2009.
- The ad hoc CAMPA was created as National Advisory Council under the chairmanship of the environment minister for monitoring, technical assistance and evaluation of compensatory afforestation activities.
- In the absence of permanent institutional mechanism more than Rs. 40, 000 crores have accumulated with the said ad-hoc Body i.e. CAMPA.

Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act 2016

- It established National Compensatory Afforestation Fund (NCAF) under the public account of India and State Compensatory Afforestation Funds under public accounts of states.
- These funds will receive payments for-
 - (a) Compensatory afforestation
 - (b) Net present value of forest (NPV)
 - (c) Other project specific payments
- The National Fund will receive 10% of these funds, and the State Funds will receive the remaining 90%.
- The Act provides statutory status for two ad-hoc institution which are named as-
 - (a) National Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (CAMPA) for management and utilisation of NCAF
 - (b) State Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (State CAMPA) for utilisation of State Compensatory Afforestation Fund.
- The act also provides for annual audit of the accounts by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Topic- GS-3-Environment

Source- Down To Earth + PRS

2. **NASA to study how tiny sea creatures affect Earth's climate**

- NASA is conducting a study of the world's largest phytoplankton bloom in the North Atlantic to see how the tiny sea critters influence the climate in every season.
- The North Atlantic Aerosols and Marine Ecosystems Study (NAAMES) mission began its fourth and final deployment, which will study how phytoplankton's give rise to small organic particles that leave the ocean and end up in the atmosphere, ultimately influencing clouds and climate.

- It is the first research mission to conduct an integrated study of all four distinct phases of the world's largest phytoplankton bloom.
- NAAMES research challenges traditional ideas about **bloom dynamics and species succession**.
- Satellites such as **CALIPSO, a joint NASA and CNES mission**, also help to study the ocean and the atmosphere – from the depths of the phytoplankton bloom, to the clouds and atmospheric particles in the sky above.

Related Information

Ecological Succession

- The process by which communities of plant and animal species in an area are replaced or changed into another over a period of time is known as ecological succession.
- The first species to colonize an area is called pioneer community.
- The final stage of succession is called the climax community.
- The stages leading to climax community are
- called successional stages or seres.

Types of Succession

Primary Succession

- Succession is hence a process that starts where no living organisms are there – these could be areas where no living organisms ever existed.

Secondary Succession

- In areas that somehow, lost all the living organisms that existed there. It is termed as secondary succession.

Autogenic Succession

- Autogenic succession is driven by the biotic components of the ecosystem.

Allogenic succession

- Allogenic succession is succession driven by the abiotic components of an ecosystem. Succession of micro-organisms including fungi

Topic- GS-3-Environment

Source- Indian Express

3. India jumped 13 places in latest annual Index of Economic Freedom

- India has jumped 13 places in the last one year to 130th spot in the latest annual Index of Economic Freedom released by a top American think-tank the Heritage Foundation.
- In 2017, India was ranked at 143 among 180 countries.
- The report said Economic liberalisation measures, including industrial deregulation, privatisation of state-owned enterprises and reduced controls on foreign trade and investment, that began in the early 1990s, accelerated growth.
- The report also mentioned that Corruption, underdeveloped infrastructure, a restrictive and burdensome regulatory environment, and poor financial and budget management continue to undermine overall development.

Related Information

Heritage Foundation

- It is an American conservative public policy think tank based in Washington, D.C.

Topic- GS-3-Economic Development

Source- AIR

4. CJI has authority to allocate cases- SC

- In the backdrop of the four most senior judges holding an unprecedented presser earlier this year over the Chief Justice of India's role as 'master of the roster', the Supreme Court dismissed a plea seeking transparent guidelines and framework for allocation of cases and setting up of benches.
- Supreme Court judgment said-
(a) Constitution puts CJI at the helm of affairs of Supreme Court
(b) CJI is the head of institution, authority vested with him is to ensure smooth administrative and judicial functioning of the court



(c) The Chief Justice of India is first among equals and has the authority to decide allocation of cases and setting up of benches

(d) The CJI is a high constitutional functionary, there cannot be "any distrust about the responsibilities he discharges" to ensure that the Supreme Court carries out the work required under the Constitution

Topic- GS-2-Indian Polity

Source-Indian Express

5. **Cabinet approved Exploration and Exploitation of Coal Bed Methane (CBM)**

- The Cabinet gave its approval for amendment in Section 12 of the Oil Fields (Regulation and Development) Act, 1948 (ORD Act, 1948).
- Due to this amendment, relaxation is granted to Coal India Limited (CIL) and its subsidiaries for not applying for grant of license/lease under the PNG Rules, 1959 for extraction of Coal Bed Methane (CBM) under their Coal Bearing Areas.

Impact

- The decision is in line with the Government's initiatives of 'Ease of Doing Business'.
- It will expedite the exploration and exploitation of CBM, enhance the availability of natural gas and reduce the gap in demand and supply of natural gas.
- The increased development activities for exploration and exploitation of CBM gas reserves in-and-around the block will generate economic activities which in turn has potential to create employment opportunities in CBM operations and in the industries.

Related Information

Coalbed methane (CBM)

- It is a form of natural gas extracted from coal beds.
- It is called 'sweet gas' because of its lack of Hydrogen Sulphide.

Issues with the Hydrogen Sulphide-

The presence of this gas is well known from its occurrence in underground coal mining, where it presents a **serious safety risk**.

- Coalbed methane is distinct from a typical sandstone or other conventional gas reservoir, as the methane is stored within the coal by a process called adsorption.

Note-

Adsorption is the adhesion of atoms, ions or molecules from a gas, liquid or dissolved solid to a surface. This process creates a film of the adsorbate on the surface of the adsorbent.

- The methane is in a near-liquid state, lining the inside of pores within the coal (called the matrix).
- The open fractures in the coal (called the cleats) can also contain free gas or can be saturated with water.
- Unlike much natural gas from conventional reservoirs, coalbed methane contains very little heavier hydrocarbons such as propane or butane, and no natural-gas condensate. It often contains up to a few percent carbon dioxide.

Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP)

- Four main facets of this policy are-
 - (a) Uniform license for exploration and production of all forms of hydrocarbon
 - (b) An open acreage policy
 - (c) Easy to administer revenue sharing model and
 - (d) Marketing and pricing freedom for the crude oil and natural gas produced
- The uniform licence will enable the contractor to explore conventional as well as unconventional oil and gas resources including CBM, shale gas/oil, tight gas and gas hydrates under a single license.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- The concept of Open Acreage Policy will enable E&P companies to choose the blocks from the designated area.

Topic-GS-1-Distribution of key natural resources
Source- PIB

13. 04. 2018

1. **India's first offshore wind energy project**

- MNRE (Ministry of New and Renewable Energy) plans to install at least 5 GW of offshore wind capacity by 2022.
- The government invited expression of interest (EoI) for the country's first offshore wind energy project in Gulf of Khambat, off the coast of Gujarat. The proposed area is located 23-40 km seaward side from Pipavav port.
- The global EoI is intended to shortlist prospective offshore wind energy developers for a 1,000 MW (1 GW) offshore wind energy project.
- At the global level, it has been observed that offshore wind energy, while being better than onshore wind in terms of efficiency, is also becoming competitive and comparable in terms of tariffs.
- National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE), Chennai is the nodal agency to carry out the necessary studies/surveys before final bidding and act as a single window for facilitating necessary clearances required for development of offshore wind projects in India.

Background

- Areas off the coasts of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu are two identified areas for development of offshore wind power.
- The first offshore LiDAR (a sensor) was installed in Gulf of Khambhat in Gujarat for measurement of wind resource and NIWE is collecting wind speed data from November, 2017 onwards.

- The second LiDAR would be installed off Tamil Nadu coast by September, 2018.
- This would help the country towards attaining energy security and achievement of National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC) targets.

Related Information

Offshore wind energy project

- It is the use of **wind farms constructed in bodies of water**, usually in the ocean on the continental shelf, to harvest wind energy to generate electricity.
- Higher wind speeds are available offshore compared to on land, so offshore wind power's electricity generation is higher per amount of capacity installed.

Onshore wind energy project

- In this type of energy project, **turbines are installed on the land** Onshore wind refers to turbines located on land.

National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC)

- The Action Plan was released on 30th June 2008.
- It effectively pulls together a number of the government's existing national plans on water, renewable energy, energy efficiency agriculture and others – bundled with additional ones – into a **set of eight missions**.
- The Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change is in charge of the overall implementation of the plan.

These Missions are-

1. **National Solar Mission-**

- Aims to encourage the advancement and utilization of solar energy for power generation
- A target of increasing the production of photovoltaic to 1000 Mega Watt annually.

2. **National Mission for Enhanced Energy Efficiency**



- Strategies based on escalating the energy use efficiency were anticipated to yield savings of 10,000 MW by 2012.
3. **National Mission on Sustainable Habitat**
 - Priority on urban waste management and recycling it in an effective manner.
 - Intensification the application of automotive fuel economy standards
 - Incentives for the use of public transportation.
 4. **National Water Mission**
 - Target of a 20% enhancement in water utilization efficiency by means of pricing and other relevant and pragmatic measures.
 5. **National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem**
 - The mission endeavours to preserve forest cover, biodiversity and other environmental assets in the Himalayan area.
 6. **National Mission for a Green India**
 - The target comprises the forestry of 6 million hectares of tarnished forest lands.
 - It also includes mounting forest cover from 23% to 33% of the country.
 7. **National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture**
 - The mission intent to support the climate adaptation in farming through the advancement of climate-resilient crops, the extension of climate insurance mechanisms, and other farming techniques.
 8. **National Mission on Strategic Knowledge for Climate Change**
 - The mission envisages an innovative Climate Science Research Fund, better climate modelling, and augmented global alliance.
 - It also persuades private sector establishments to build up adaptation and mitigation technologies via venture capital funds.

Topic- GS-3- Infrastructure: Energy
GS-3- Environment

Source- Business Standards + Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change

2. **Fertiliser industry gets new pollution norms after almost 3 decades**

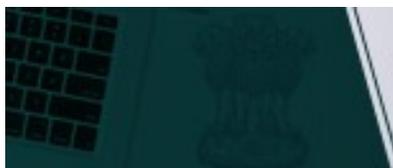
- The Indian fertiliser industry is set to implement new pollution norms notified by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change in December 2017.
- So far, the industry had emission norms only for urea and phosphatic fertiliser plants.
- New emission norms will be applicable to ammonia, ammonium nitrate and calcium ammonium nitrate, complex fertilisers and nitric acid plants.
- The industry emits major air pollutants such as particulate matter, gaseous NH₃, oxides of nitrogen, sulphur and carbon dioxide.

Background

- There are three categories of fertilisers manufactured in India- nitrogenous, phosphatic and complex fertilisers (which includes nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium nutrients in different ratios).
- Depending on the type of fertiliser and the plant, the pollutants generated vary and thus, the need for different pollution norms.
- The new set of emission norms include limits for nitrogen oxides in ammonia and nitric acid plants, which were missing earlier.
- Norms have also been introduced for particulate matter, gaseous ammonia and total fluoride for Ammonium Nitrate, Calcium Ammonium Nitrate (AN/CAN) and complex fertiliser (NPK) plants.

Norms are still relaxed for old urea plants

- There are two kinds of plants, those commissioned before 1982 and those commissioned after.



- The emission norms for particulate matter from urea prilling towers continues to be 150 mg/Nm³ for older plants commissioned before 1982.
- On the other hand, the norms are 50mg/Nm³ for plants commissioned after 1982.
- Since almost 50 per cent of the plants in India were set up before 1982, it means that most of the urea plants will continue to run with relaxed norms even in the coming years.

Banned use of Heavy metals

- The new set of norms has scrapped the limits for heavy metals (vanadium, arsenic and Chromium).
- Chromium-based chemicals that were used earlier as algacide in cooling water system of urea plant are not in use anymore.
- Similarly, vanadium and arsenic which were being used earlier in carbon dioxide removal process in ammonia plant has also been phased out.

Topic- GS-3-Environment

Source- Down To Earth

3. **Delhi HC blow to Monsanto on patent for Bt cotton seed technology**

- Plant varieties and seeds cannot be patented under Indian law by companies like Monsanto Inc., and any royalties on genetically modified (GM) technology will be decided by a specialized agency of the agriculture ministry.
- As a result, the patent held by Monsanto, through its Indian arm Mahyco-Monsanto Biotech Ltd (MMBL) over its **Bollgard-II Bt cotton seed technology**, a genetically modified variant which resists the bollworm pest, was decreed to be unenforceable in India.
- The court's order came in a case filed in 2015 by Monsanto, through MMBL, against Nuziveedu Seeds and its

subsidiaries for selling Bt cotton seeds using its patented technology despite termination of a licence agreement in November 2015.

Related Information

GM crops-

- Genetically modified crops are plants used in agriculture, the DNA of which has been modified using genetic engineering techniques.
- The aim is to introduce a new trait to the plant which does not occur naturally in the species.

Bt (Bacillus thuringiensis) cotton

- Bt cotton is a genetically modified organism (GMO) cotton variety, which produces an insecticide to bollworm.
- Strains of the bacterium Bacillus thuringiensis produce over 200 different Bt toxins, each harmful to different insects.
- Bt toxins are insecticidal to the larvae of moths and butterflies, beetles, cotton bollworms and ghtu flies but are harmless to other forms of life.
- The gene coding for Bt toxin has been inserted into cotton as a transgene, causing it to produce this natural insecticide in its tissues.

Topic- GS-3- Biotechnology

Source- Livemint

4. **US announced GSP eligibility review of India**

- US announced eligibility review of India for the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP).
- US has also announced eligibility review of other two countries -- Indonesia and Kazakhstan, which it said was based on concerns about the countries' compliance with the programme.
- The GSP is the largest and oldest US trade preference programme and is designed to promote economic development by allowing duty-free entry for thousands of products from designated beneficiary countries.

Generalized System of Preferences (GSP)

- It is a preferential tariff system which provides for a formal system of exemption from the more general rules of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- GSP exempts WTO member countries from MFN (most favoured nation) for the purpose of lowering tariffs for the least developed countries, without also lowering tariffs for rich countries.

Topic- GS-2- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Source- AIR

5. **Govt announced task force to prepare a road map and fast-track the implementation of UAV technology**
- The Central govt announced setting up of a 13-member task force to prepare a road map and fast-track the implementation of UAV (Unmanned Aerial Vehicle) technology headed by Minister of State for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha.
 - The committee's road map would also focus on R&D, acquisition and commercialisation, application and adoption in specific sectors, regulatory framework as well as preference for Make in India.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- Indian Express

14. 04. 2018

1. **NASA's "Tess spacecraft" to be launched on April 16**
- The Tess spacecraft will prowl for planets around the closest, brightest stars.
 - Scientists expect Tess to find thousands of exoplanets — the term for planets outside our solar system.

- Tess (Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite)- is the apparent heir to the wildly successful Kepler Space Telescope, the pioneer of planetary census.
- Kepler's fuel tank is running precariously low after nine years of flight. Kepler alone has discovered more than 2,600 confirmed exoplanets.
- Most of the Kepler-identified planets are so far away that it would take monster-size telescopes to examine them more.
- So, astronomers want to focus on stars that are vastly brighter and closer to home — close enough for NASA's upcoming **James Webb Space Telescope** to scrutinize the atmospheres of planets lurking in their sun's shadows.

Topic- GS-3- Science and Technology

Source- Indian Express

2. **Chemical attacks at Douma in Syria**
- On April 7, 2018, there was a chemical attack in Douma city of Syria in which many people lost their life.

What are chemical weapons?

- It is a toxic chemical in a delivery system such as bomb or artillery.
- The definition was expanded for the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)- that seeks to limit availability of chemicals that can be used as tools of mass destruction while allowing member states to retain rights to use some of these chemicals for peaceful purposes such as riot control.

What is nerve gas?

- It is a compound that acts by incapacitating the mechanism within the body responsible for the conduction of nerve impulses.
- This is usually done by blocking the action of **acetyl choline esterase** — a compound that catalyses the breakdown of the neurotransmitter acetylcholine.

- When acetylcholinesterase is prevented from performing its normal function of breaking down acetylcholine, muscles go into a state of uncontrolled contraction — a sign of paralysis or a seizure-like state.
- Death usually happens because paralysis extends to the cardiac and respiratory muscles.
- Nerve agents can also be absorbed through the skin.

How do nerve gases compare with other chemical weapons?

- They are among the most lethal.
- In the CWC list of chemicals under various degrees of manufacturing restriction, nerve gases are among the most restricted.
- When countries started to develop newer weapons to bypass these restrictions, they preferred nerve agents. That is how **Novichok** evolved: because restrictions are based on chemical formulae, newer molecules can bypass restrictions.
- Novichok is said to be 5-8 times more lethal than VX nerve agent and its effects are rapid, usually within 30 seconds to 2 minutes.

Which are the ones not restricted?

- For example, Teargas shells are frequently used for riot control.

How many countries possess or use chemical weapons?

- Of the 192 CWC signatories, Albania, India, Iraq, Libya, Russia, Syria, and the US declared possession.
- Albania, India, Libya, Russia and Syria declared completion of destruction of chemical weapons.

Other chemical weapons

- The Chemical Weapons Convention defines a chemical weapon, which includes nerve gas, as anything specifically designed or intended for use in direct connection with the

release of a chemical agent to cause death or harm is itself a chemical weapon.

Choking agents

- Fluid builds up in lungs, choking the victim.
- Examples include chlorine, phosgene, diphosgene and chloropicrin.

Blister agents

- Burns skin, mucous membranes and eyes
- Causes large blisters on exposed skin
- Blisters windpipe and lungs
- Large casualties
- Examples: sulphur mustard, nitrogen mustard, phosgene oxime, Lewisite

Blood agents

- Cyanide destroys the ability of blood tissues to utilise oxygen, causing them to 'starve' and strangling the heart.
- Examples include hydrogen cyanide, cyanogen chloride, Arsine, VX

Riot control agents

- Causes tears, coughing and irritation of eyes, nose, mouth and skin
- Constrict airway and shut eyes
- Tear gas and pepper spray are examples of such agents

Related Information

Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)

- The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is an arms control treaty that outlaws the production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons and their precursors.
- It is administered by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), an intergovernmental organization based in The Hague, The Netherlands.
- The treaty entered into force in 1997.
- Currently, there are 192 countries signatories of the treaty.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- Indian Express



3. **Schemes Ministry of Minority Affairs**

Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/ Crafts for Development (USTTAD)

- Scheme has been launched in 2015 to preserve the rich heritage of traditional arts/crafts of minorities.
- The training programme support will be provided to ensure that the desired outcomes are achieved for the preservation of traditional art/craft, the establishment of market linkages and generating interest among young generation for taking up traditional arts/crafts as a profession.

Nai Manzil

- The scheme has been launched in 2015 with an aim to benefit the minority youth who do not have a formal school education.
- The scheme provides them formal education and skills, and enable them to seek better employment in the organized sector and thus to equip them for better lives.

Nai Roshni

- Nai Roshni- "The Scheme for Leadership Development of Minority Women" with an aim to empower and instil confidence in minority women.
- The scheme provides knowledge, tool and techniques for interacting with the government system, banks and other institutions at all levels.
- It is implemented through Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) all over the country.
- The scheme permits a mix of women from non-minority communities not exceeding 25% of a project proposal.

Minority Cyber Gram

- The Ministry of Minority Affairs launched a pilot project for minority Cyber Gram for digital literacy in a minority dominated village Chandauli in Alwar district of Rajasthan.

- The initiative covers students of Class VI to Class X belonging to notified minority communities.

Jiyo Parsi

- Jiyo Parsi is a Government of India supported scheme to arrest the decline in the population of the Parsi Zoroastrian Community in India.
- The Government of India through Ministry of Minority Affairs had initiated the Jiyo Parsi Scheme in 2013.
- The scheme will continue in the remaining period of the 14th Financial Commission, i.e., next three years (2017-18, 2018-19, 2019-20).
- Under the scheme, government provide financial assistance for the Infertility treatment.

Hamari Dharohar

- The Scheme was launched during the year 2014-15.
- The scheme aims to preserve rich culture and heritage of minorities through selective intervention under the overall concept of Indian culture.

'Garib Nawaz'

- The government will set up '**Garib Nawaz**' skill development centres in 100 districts of the country to offer employment-oriented training to the youth from minority communities.

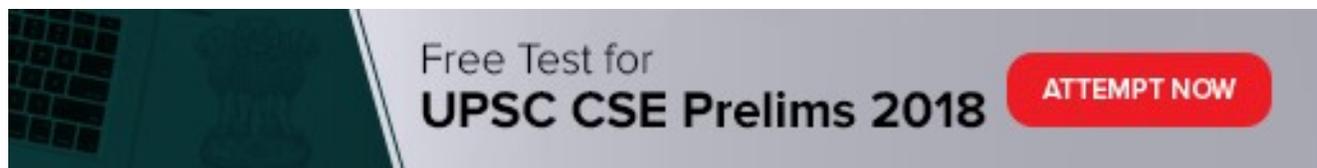
"Seekho aur Kamao (Learn & Earn)"

- This is a placement linked skill development scheme for minorities aiming to upgrade the skills of minority youth in various modern/traditional skills.
- The scheme ensures placements of minimum 75% trainees, out of which at least 50% placement is in the organized sector.

Topic- GS-2- Welfare Schemes

Source- PIB

4. **Airports Authority of India to develop (AAI) Myanmar's Kalay Airport**



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- The AAI has signed an agreement with the Ministry of External Affairs, for preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) on the first phase for development of the Kalay Airport as a green airport in Myanmar.

Topic- GS-2- Bilateral Relations

Source- Business Standards

5. **NHAI signs the agreement for its First International Project**

- To provide seamless vehicular movement for enhancing trade, business, health, education and tourism between **Indian, Myanmar and Thailand**, the NHAI has signed an agreement for upgradation of **Yagyi – Kalewa section of highway in Myanmar** to two lane with earthen shoulder.
- The project has been funded by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India.

Topic- GS-2- Bilateral Relations

Source- PIB

6. **Child rights body NCPDR warns media against the identification of a minor victim**

- The National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR) issued a notice warning media houses that the offence is punishable with imprisonment of up to six months and/or a fine of up to Rs 2 lakh under the JJ Act 2015.
- NCPDR cautioned media organisations against disclosing the identity of the minor rape victim or sexually-abused children.
- The notice adds that publication of photographs of rape victims or sexually-abused children is prohibited under section 74 (1) of the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015.

Related Information

National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPDR)

- It is an Indian governmental commission, established by an Act of Parliament, the Commission for Protection of Child Rights Act in December 2005.
- The commission works under the aegis of Ministry of Women and Child development, GOI.
- The Commission considers that its Mandate is "to ensure that all Laws, Policies, Programmes, and Administrative Mechanisms are in consonance with the Child Rights perspective as enshrined in the Constitution of India and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Topic- GS-2- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies

Source- Indian Express

16. 04. 2018

1. **European-origin pathogen "Phytophthora infestans" poses a big threat to potato crop in India**

- Scientists at the West Bengal State University have found 19 unique and highly aggressive variants of **Phytophthora infestans**, a microorganism that **causes late blight disease** in potato **shrinking it from outside and rotting it from the inside**.
- These variants were responsible for the 2013-14 epidemic of late blight in West Bengal that shrank potato yield by 8,000 kg per hectare resulting in many indebted farmers who ended their lives.
- Pathogen population diversity, studied in eastern and north eastern India, was found to be highest in areas near international borders with Bangladesh and Nepal.
- India produced over 43 million tonnes of potato in 2015-16 with West Bengal accounting for 19.41 per cent of the produce.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

Issues

- Infestans, the organism that causes late blight, has the largest genome among its category of pathogens.
- The genome mostly consists of repetitive DNA that aids in adaptation and thus makes the pathogen difficult to control.
- Late blight can destroy a field of potato within 2-3 days.
- There are regional variations in the pathogen and hence there can't be a uniform control measure across India.

Remedies

- The research team is now screening the variants for seven different fungicides and plans to build a database of all the variants and their characteristics including response to currently used fungicides.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- Down to Earth

2. NASA's 'Advanced Plant Habitat (APH)' in International Space Station

- The Advanced Plant Habitat (APH), a recent addition to the International Space Station, is the largest growth chamber aboard the orbiting laboratory.
- The habitat is designed to test the growth conditions that plants prefer in space.
- Its monitoring and environmental control systems regulate temperature, oxygen, and carbon dioxide levels, and the system settings can be adjusted for growing different types of plants.
- All systems can be monitored and controlled from a computer on the ground that interfaces directly with the habitat to relay instructions and detailed adjustments to ensure investigation integrity.
- Because gravity is a constant downward force on Earth, researchers

take advantage of the microgravity environment of the space station to achieve a clearer perspective of plant growth habits.

- APH is equipped with white, red, blue, green, and far red LEDs and has a wide variety of settings capable of producing light from zero to 1,000 micromoles, a unit of measurement used to describe the intensity of a light source.
- By expanding the spectrum of light, researchers can broaden the types of plants they study in space and tailor the light to that plant's unique needs because each of the lights within APH can be set to any level within that range.
- APH also provides the first true foray into studies involving space-based agricultural cycles.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- Space daily

3. Turtle with punk hairdo on endangered species list

- Boasting a green, punk hairdo and the unusual ability to breathe through its backside, an Australian turtle has become famous overnight.
- Australian turtle with green punk hairdo has become the latest creature to join the "EDGE of Existence" list of endangered species compiled by the Zoological Society of London (ZSL).
- The species is known to scientists as *Elusor macrurus*.
- It is the native of Queensland, Australia. It lives only in the Mary River from which it takes its name.
- It can breathe underwater through specialised glands in the cloaca — orifices through which the turtle excretes urine and waste, and lays eggs.
- But turtle's most distinguishing feature is the bright green, spiky mohawks sprouting on the heads of some.

- The Mary River Turtle (Penny Turtle) spends so much time submerged underwater that some individuals become covered in algae - and can end up with some pretty impressive bright green hairstyles.

Why these species are in danger?

- Destruction of the creatures' natural habitat through the building of dams,
- The collection of its eggs for the pet trade.

Topic- *GS-3-Bio Diversity*

Source- *The Hindu*

4. Project 'Samarthan' for Prisoners to adopt WHO's mental health drive

- The Tihar Jail will soon adopt the World Health Organisation's (WHO) Psychological First Aid programme (PFA) to sensitise its inmates towards mental health issues.
- The project, titled 'Samarthan', will enable inmates who suffer from mental health issues to avail expert medical assistance from staff working in the prisons.
- The prison staff will be trained to provide assistance to those who are depressed or facing mental health issues.

Topic- *GS-2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health etc.*

Source- *The Hindu*

5. A new 3 D imaging tool "iLIFE" to screen for biological specimen by IISc scientists

- Scientists from IISc and Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR) have demonstrated a new type of 3-dimensional imaging platform, called iLIFE, that provide detailed images of biological specimen flowing in a fluid.
- iLIFE stands for **integrated light-sheet imaging and flow-based enquiry**.

- Light-sheet microscopy is a technique used to image fast moving or imaging-sensitive biological samples.
- For iLIFE, the scientists used a "diffraction-limited light-sheet, with a large field-of-view, to optically section the specimens flowing through the microfluidic channel".
- Once the parameters were optimized, the setup could then be used to cross sectional imaging of the biological specimen as the moved through the optimized microfluidic channel, illuminated by a light-sheet.
- The cross-sectional images are then used to create a complete 3D image reconstruction of the biological specimen.

Topic- *GS-3-Science and Technology*

Source- *Research Matters*

6. UN launched road safety trust fund

- The United Nations took a major step to address the tragedy of road accidents by launching the UN Road Safety Trust Fund to spur action that could save lives and prevent the loss of opportunity associated with road accidents.
- The UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE), the development arm of the UN in Europe, is designated as the Secretariat for the Trust Fund.
- The UNECE secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The Road Safety Trust Fund will serve as a catalyst for much-needed progress towards the road safety targets of the Sustainable Development Goals.
- The trust fund will support efforts along the five pillars of the Global Plan for the Decade of Action for Road Safety, which includes-
 - (a) Strengthened road safety management capacities
 - (b) Improved safety of road infrastructure and broader transport networks



- (c) Enhanced the safety of vehicles
- (d) Improved behaviour of road users and
- (e) Improved post-crash care

Topic- GS-2- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Source- DD News

17. 04. 2018

1. The Pathalgadi rebellion

- Many Adivasi villages in Jharkhand have put up giant plaques, declaring their gram sabha as the only sovereign authority and banning 'outsiders' from their area.
- The villages spread across four districts in the State, namely Khunti, Gumla, Simdega and West Singhbhum have come up with Pathalgadi (huge stone plaques) at the entry points of tribal hamlets which have messages engraved on them including warnings for outsiders, prohibiting them from entering the village.

What is Pathalgadi?

- In Munda tribal custom, *Patthalgari* is actually a tradition in which villagers use to bury a large inverted U shaped stone on the head side of grave or simply put, it is a headstone in which family tree of the dead person was written.
- The Pathalgadi movement draws on this tradition of honouring the community's ancestors.
- Activists say that the movement derives inspiration from the provisions of the PESA.
- The leaders of the movement decided to carve the key provisions of the PESA as messages on huge stones in order to enlighten Adivasi people about this law, which empowered a village as an administrative unit.

PESA (Panchayats Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996

- The PESA Act, 1996 is a law enacted by the Government of India for ensuring self-governance through traditional Gram Sabha's for people living in the Scheduled Areas of India.
- Scheduled Areas are areas identified by the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution of India.
- Scheduled Areas are found in ten states of India which have predominant population of tribal communities.
- The Scheduled Areas, were not covered by the 73rd Constitutional Amendment.

Topic- GS-2- Indian Polity

GS-1- Regionalism

Source- The Hindu

2. India ranked 10th on new Commonwealth innovation index

- India was ranked 10th on a new Commonwealth Innovation Index, topped by the UK, Singapore and Canada.
- The index was launched as part of a new Commonwealth Innovation Hub on the side-lines of the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).
- It has been created in partnership with the United Nations World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and its annual Global Innovation Index (GII).
- It is aimed at providing a tool that allows member states, organisations and citizens to benchmark themselves against 53 countries of the Commonwealth.
- The Commonwealth Secretariat has also partnered with the Global Innovation Fund (GIF) to promote innovation that can accelerate inclusive and equitable socio-economic development across the Commonwealth.



Free Test for

UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

- The Global Innovation Fund (GIF) will work as the delivery partner to host a new Commonwealth Innovation Fund (CIF).
- The GIF will manage the fund and its investments, which will be targeted at innovative projects across Commonwealth countries that "save and improve lives".

Related Information

Global Innovation Fund (GIF)

- The Global Innovation Fund is a non-profit innovation fund headquartered in London with an office in Washington D.C. that invests in the development, rigorous testing, and scaling of innovations targeted at improving the lives of the world's poorest people.
- The innovations they fund can be located in any developing country and can focus on any sector relevant to international development and improve the lives of the poor people.

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

- The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is a specialized agencies of the United Nations (UN).
- WIPO was created in 1967 "to encourage creative activity, to promote the protection of intellectual property throughout the world".
- WIPO currently has 191-member states.
- It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Commonwealth of Nations

- The Commonwealth of Nation also known as simply the Commonwealth, is an intergovernmental organisation of 53-member states that are mostly former territories of the British Empire.
- The Commonwealth operates by intergovernmental consensus of the member states, organised through the Commonwealth Secretariat and non-governmental organisations,

organised through the Commonwealth Foundation.

- Queen Elizabeth II is the nominal Head of the Commonwealth.
- Its headquarter is located in Marlborough House, London, United Kingdom.
- The main decision-making forum of the organisation is the biennial **Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM)**, where Commonwealth presidents or prime ministers assemble for several days to discuss matters of mutual interest.
- The most important statement of the Commonwealth's principles is the 1991 **Harare Declaration**, which dedicated the organisation to democracy and good government, and allowed for action to be taken against members who breached these principles.

Topic- GS-2- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Source- Economic Times

3. **India would coordinate with China and other Asian countries to raise voice against the "Asian Premium"**
 - India would coordinate with China and other Asian countries to raise voice against the "Asian premium" being charged by the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).
 - India, China, Japan and Korea — Asian countries are the primary consumers of the energy market.
 - There will be consensus to put a point of view in front of the OPEC that we must get reasonable and responsible price for our consumption.

Asian Premium

- Asian Premium is the extra charge being collected by OPEC countries from Asian countries when selling oil.

Related Information

OPEC (Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries)

- It is an intergovernmental organization of 14 nations, founded in 1960 in Baghdad by the first five members (Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Venezuela).
- It is headquartered in Vienna since 1965.
- As of May 2017, OPEC's members (14 countries) are Algeria, Angola, Ecuador, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Libya, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia (the de facto leader), United Arab Emirates, and Venezuela, while Indonesia is a former member.

Topic- GS-2- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Source- The Hindu

4. Prime Minister launched the 'Innovation for Defence Excellence' scheme

- The Defence Expo -2018 was held in Mahabalipuram near Chennai from 11-14th of April 2018.
- In the event, Prime Minister launched the 'Innovation for Defence Excellence' (IDEX) scheme.
- The scheme aimed for setting up Defence Innovation Hubs throughout the country, to provide necessary incubation and infrastructure support to the start-ups in defence area.

Topic- GS-3- Defence

Source- The Hindu

5. China developed a 3D conic device to increase solar-thermal conversion

- Chinese scientists have developed a new device of 3D hollow-cone structure that can greatly increase the solar-thermal conversion efficiency.
- The device, named 'Artificial Transpiration', is inspired by the transpiration process of trees.

- It has a special 1D water path within it, which can reduce the energy loss in conduction.
- The cone structure, based on a graphene film, can collect more sunlight throughout the day when compared with a flat device, as about 10 percent to 50 per cent of sunlight is diffusive.
- As a result, the device can enhance the solar-thermal conversion rate to 85 percent, which is much higher than the 40 percent rate of common devices.

Topic- GS-3- Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

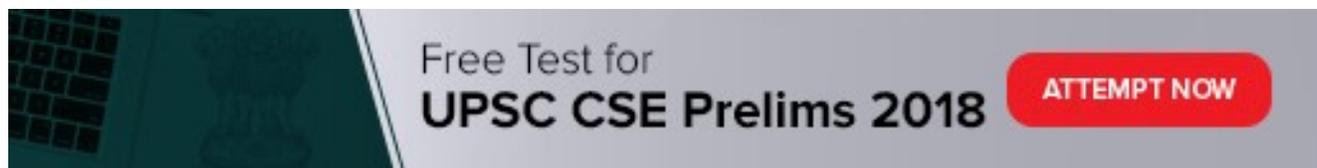
18. 04. 2018

1. India wins elections to key UN subsidiary bodies

- India has won an election to a crucial non-governmental organisation committee in the UN.
- The UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) held elections to a number of its subsidiary bodies.
- The ECOSOC focusses on advancing the three dimensions of sustainable development - economic, social and environmental.
- India topped the election to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations.
- The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations is a standing committee of ECOSOC and its main tasks include consideration of applications for consultative status and requests for reclassification submitted by NGOs and consideration of quadrennial reports submitted by NGOs in General and Special categories.

Related Information

- India was also elected by acclamation to the Commission on Population and Development for a term beginning April 16, 2018 and expiring in 2021.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- Under its terms of reference, the Commission is to assist the Council by arranging for studies and advising the Council on population issues and trends, integrating population and development strategies and population and related development policies and programmes.
- India was among the 17 members elected by acclamation to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.
- The elected members, to serve a three-year term beginning on January 1, 2019 and expiring on December 31, 2021.
- The Commission acts as the principal policymaking body of the UN in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice.

Six main organs of UN

(a) General Assembly (GA)

- The General Assembly is the main deliberative, policymaking and representative organ of the UN.
- It is Comprise of all 193 Members of the United Nations.
- Decisions on important questions, such as those on peace and security, admission of new members and budgetary matters, require a two-thirds majority of the General Assembly. Decisions on other questions are by simple majority.
- The General Assembly, each year, elects a GA President to serve a one-year term of office.

(b) Security Council

- The Security Council has primary responsibility, under the UN Charter, for the maintenance of international peace and security.
- It has 15 Members, consisting of 5 permanent members (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) and 10 non-permanent members.

- Five permanent members have veto powers.
- 10 non-permanent members, elected on a regional basis to serve **two-year terms**.
- It is the only UN body with the authority to issue binding resolutions to member states.
- The Security Council also recommends to the General Assembly the appointment of the Secretary-General and the admission of new Members to the United Nations.
- And, together with the General Assembly, it elects the judges of the International Court of Justice.
- The Security Council has a Presidency, which rotates, and changes, every month.

(c) Economic and Social Council

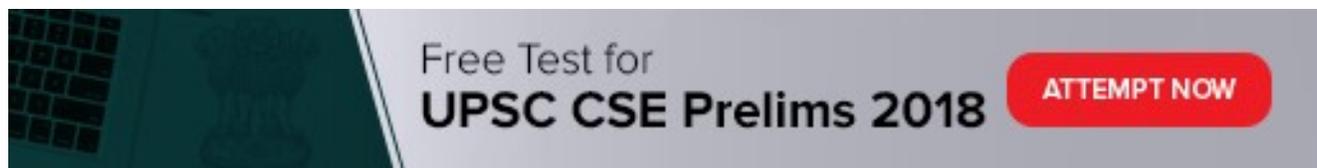
- It serves as the central mechanism for activities of the UN system and its specialized agencies in the economic, social and environmental fields, supervising subsidiary and expert bodies.
- It has 54 Members, elected by the General Assembly for three-year terms.
- The work of specialised agencies and programmes of UN like WHO, FAO, UNESCO etc. is coordinated by ECOSOC.

(d) Trusteeship Council

- The Trusteeship Council was established in 1945 by the UN Charter to provide international supervision for 11 Trust Territories that had been placed under the administration of seven Member States and ensure that adequate steps were taken to prepare the Territories for self-government and independence.

(d) International Court of Justice

- The International Court of Justice is the principal judicial organ of the United Nations.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- The court settles legal disputes submitted to it by states and provides **advisory opinions** on legal questions submitted to it by duly authorized international branches, agencies, and the UN General Assembly.
- The ICJ is composed of **fifteen judges** elected to **nine-year terms** by the UN General Assembly and the UN Security Council from a list of people nominated by the national groups in the Permanent Court of Arbitration.
- **Five judges** elected **every three years** to ensure continuity within the court.
- The election process is set out in Articles 4–19 of the ICJ statute.

(e) Secretariat

- The Secretariat comprises the Secretary-General and tens of thousands of international UN staff members who carry out the day-to-day work of the UN as mandated by the General Assembly and the Organization's other principal organs.
- The Secretary-General is chief administrative officer of the Organization, appointed by the General Assembly on the recommendation of the Security Council for a five-year, renewable term.

Topic- GS-2- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Source- Times of India + UN

2. UK joined International Solar Alliance

- Britain formally announced its membership of the alliance, which aims to raise \$1 trillion of private and public finance to provide affordable and sustainable energy for all by 2030.

- The UK becomes the 62nd country to join ISA, which includes countries like France, Australia, Bangladesh, Tuvalu, Benin, UAE, Brazil, Vanuatu, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone, Tanzania and Uganda.
- The new collaboration means ISA will be able to make solar power cheaper by helping countries join forces to procure solar energy systems.

Related Information

International Solar Alliance (ISA)

- The ISA is an Indian initiative, jointly launched by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi and the President of France on 30th November 2015 in Paris, on the side-lines of COP-21, the UN Climate Conference.
- The alliance's primary objective is-
 - (a) Work for efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil fuels.
 - (b) Mobilise \$1 trillion in funds for future solar generation, storage and technology across the world.
- The ISA, headquartered in India, has its Secretariat located in the Gwalpahari, Gurgaon, Haryana.
- India has offered to meet ISA Secretariat expenses for initial five years.
- ISA is an alliance of more than 121 countries, most of them being sunshine countries, which come either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.

Programmes by ISA

- **Current Programme**
 - (1) Scaling Solar Applications for Agriculture Use
 - (2) Affordable Finance at Scale
 - (3) Scaling Solar Mini-grids
- **Future Programme**
 - (1) Scaling Solar Rooftops
 - (2) Scaling Solar E-mobility and Storage.



Free Test for

UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

(3) **Common Risk Mitigating Mechanism (CRMM)** for de-risking and reducing the financial cost of solar projects in the ISA member countries
(4) **Digital Infopedia** which will serve as a platform to enable policy makers, Ministers and corporate leaders from ISA countries to interact, connect, communicate and collaborate with one another.

Topic- GS-2- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Source- Livemint

3. **India hosted India-Wiesbaden Conference on April 16-17**

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in cooperation with Germany and the United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA) hosted the India-Wiesbaden Conference 2018 in New Delhi on April 16-17.
- The title of the Conference is 'Securing Global Supply Chains through Government-Industry Partnerships towards Effective Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540'.
- The conference provides an opportunity to participants to share experiences on their export control systems and to identify legal and technical assistance, action plans and challenges in the national implementation of **UNSC 1540**.
- The UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) establishes **legally binding obligations** on all States to adopt and enforce appropriate and effective measures to prevent the proliferation to non-State actors of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their delivery systems.
- It requires, therefore that States implement appropriate and effective measures to prevent non-state actors such as terrorists, from obtaining access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD).

Related Information

- The Wiesbaden Process was initiated by the Government of Germany in 2012 to strengthen the implementation of UNSC 1540 through Government-Industry partnerships.

Topic- GS-2- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Source- Business Standard

The Minister of Commerce & Industry launched digital platform for MSME Exporters

- The Minister of Commerce & Industry Shri Suresh Prabhu launched the "**FIEO Global Linker**"- a digital platform for MSME exporters to digitise their businesses and join a global community of growing businesses.
- Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO) will help in expanding India's multi-focused export strategy and also aid in connecting art and artisans to the market.
- Benefits of the Portal-
 - (a) Business Opportunities
 - (b) Improved Efficiencies

Topic- GS-3-Economic Development

Source- PIB

19. 04. 2018

1. **HRD Ministry launched "Study in India programme"**
 - The "Study in India' is an innovative initiative to attract students from our partner countries in South Asia, South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa to come and experience the very best of academic learning from the top institutions in India.
 - NIRF ranked and NAAC accredited institutions with a 3.26 score have been included in the programme.

- The Study in India programme is a joint initiative of Ministry of HRD, Ministry of External Affairs, Ministry of Home Affairs and Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The integration of e-SANAD portal and NAD – National Academic Depository (of HRD Ministry), was also launched by government.

Related Information

e-Sanad

- It is a project aimed at online submission/verification of documents with an ultimate object to extend contact less, cashless, faceless and paperless document attestation service for apostille and normal attestation to applicants in India.

National Academic Depository (NAD)

- National Academic Depository (NAD) is an online store house of all academic awards viz. certificates, diplomas, degrees, mark-sheets etc. duly digitised and lodged by academic institutions / boards / eligibility assessment bodies.

Topic- GS-2- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Source- PIB

2. **Sea turtles use “geomagnetic imprinting” to navigate- Study**
 - Sea turtles use the Earth’s magnetic fields to navigate back to the area where they were born decades earlier.
 - The new study suggests that the turtles learned their home beach’s distinctive magnetic signature, through what is called geomagnetic imprinting.
 - The turtles can perceive both the magnetic field’s intensity and its inclination angle, the angle that the field lines make with respect to the Earth’s surface.

- The current study is based on genetic data, not experimental evidence.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

3. **Vice President launched Assam govt's cashless health scheme “Atal Amrit Abhiyan”**
 - Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu has launched a health scheme of the Assam government that offers free medical care of up to 2 lakh rupees for every individual from Below Poverty Line (BPL) and Above Poverty Line (APL) families.
 - The cashless scheme “Atal Amrit Abhiyan” will cover 92 percent of the state's population with annual income below 5 lakh rupees.

Topic- GS-2- Welfare Schemes

Source- AIR

4. **Kalbaisakhi killed 18 people in West Bengal**
 - At least 18 persons were killed in Kalbaisakhi (nor’wester) that hit the state.

Related Information

Kalbaishakhi or Nor’westers

- It is a local wind and thunder storm which occurs in India and Bangladesh.
- Kalbaishakhi occurs, with increasing frequency, from March till monsoon establishes over North-East India.
- During this time Odisha, West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Bangladesh and North-Eastern states of India are affected by violent thunderstorms.
- They cause considerable damage to life and property and are known as Kalbaisakhi.
- However, the rainfall in these storms is beneficial for the tea cultivated in Assam and for the jute and rice and tea cultivated in West Bengal and Bangladesh.

Topic- GS-1- Indian Geography

Source- Indian Express



Free Test for
UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

5. **World's largest superconducting camera "DARKNESS" can spot nearby exoplanets**

- Scientists have developed the world's largest superconducting camera that can spot planets around stars near our solar system.
- The team from California Institute of Technology and Jet Propulsion Laboratory in the US created a device named **DARKNESS (the DARK-speckle Near-infrared Energy-resolved Superconducting Spectrophotometer)**.
- DARKNESS is an attempt to overcome some of the technical barriers to detecting planets.
- It can take the equivalent of thousands of frames per second without any read noise or dark current, which are among the primary sources of error in other instruments.
- It also has the ability to determine the wavelength and arrival time of every photon.
- It employs Microwave Kinetic Inductance Detectors that, in conjunction with a large telescope and an adaptive optics system, enable direct imaging of planets around nearby stars.

Issues faced by instruments while taking picture of exoplanet

- The star is much brighter than the planet
- The planet is very close to the star

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- Indian Express

6. **Prime Minister attended first ever India-Nordic Summit**

- Prime Minister attended first ever India-Nordic Summit in Stockholm.
- This is the first bilateral visit by an Indian Prime Minister to the Nordic nation in 30 years.
- The summit will also be attended by the prime ministers of Finland, Norway, Denmark and Iceland.

Related Information

Scandinavian countries

- The term Scandinavia in local usage covers the three kingdoms of **Denmark, Norway and Sweden.**

Nordic Countries

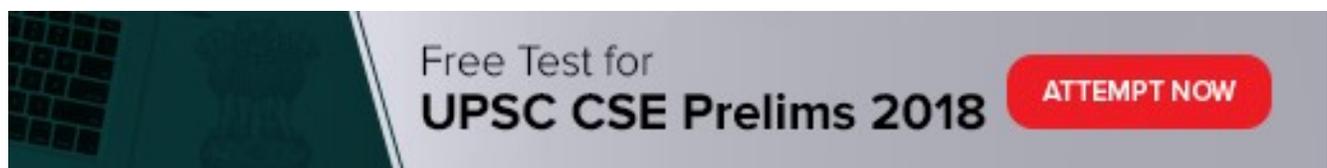
- The Nordic countries or the Nordics are a geographical and cultural region in Northern Europe and the North Atlantic, where they are most commonly known as Norden (literally "the North").
- After inclusion of the **Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland and Iceland** in Scandinavian countries, the broader region is known as Nordic countries.

Topic- GS-1-World Geography

Source- Indian Express

7. **India Signed Loan agreement with World Bank for USD 48 million for Meghalaya Community - Led Landscapes Management Project**

- A Loan Agreement for IBRD loan of USD 48 million for the "Meghalaya Community - Led Landscapes Management Project (MCLLMP)" was signed with the World Bank.
- The Objective of the Project is to strengthen community-led landscapes management in selected landscapes in the State of Meghalaya.
- The Project consists of three components-
(i) Strengthening Knowledge and Capacity for Natural Resource Management
(ii) Community-led landscape planning and implementation and
(iii) Project Management and Governance.
- Meghalaya's natural resource such as land, water sources and forests is a source of livelihood for a majority of the population in the State.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- The Project will help manage these depleting resources, by strengthening the communities and traditional institutions.

Topic- GS-3 Environment

Source- PIB

20. 04. 2018

1. **Punjab proposes to give 7.19 percent share in BBMB project to Himachal Pradesh**

- Punjab has proposed to give Himachal Pradesh its 7.19 percent share of power from electricity projects of Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) in phased manner as part of the settlement of an inter-state dispute over share in power projects.
- Punjab has proposed that it will give Himachal its 7.19 percent share of electricity in BBMB power projects within a period of 15 years.

Background

- Himachal Pradesh has been demanding its share in electricity generated from BBMB power projects for long.
- In 2011, the Supreme Court had upheld the state's claim of 7.19 per cent share in BBMB power projects located in Himachal Pradesh's territory under the Punjab Reorganisation Act 1966.
- Earlier, its share in power projects was 2.50 percent.

Related Information

Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB)

- Bhakra Management Board (BMB) was constituted in 1966 for the administration, maintenance and operation of Bhakra Nangal Project.
- Its members are appointed by the government of India and by the states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Chandigarh.

- **Bhakra Management Board was renamed Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB) on 15 May 1976 to also manage dams on river Beas.**

- Since then the Bhakra Beas Management Board is engaged in the regulation of the supply of water and power from Bhakra Nangal Project and Beas Projects to the states of **Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Chandigarh government.**

- The Bhakra Beas Management Board regulates, operates and manages Bhakra Dam, Dehar Hydroelectric Project, Pong dam, Ganguwal and Kotla power stations.

Topic- GS-2-Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies

Source- Indian Express

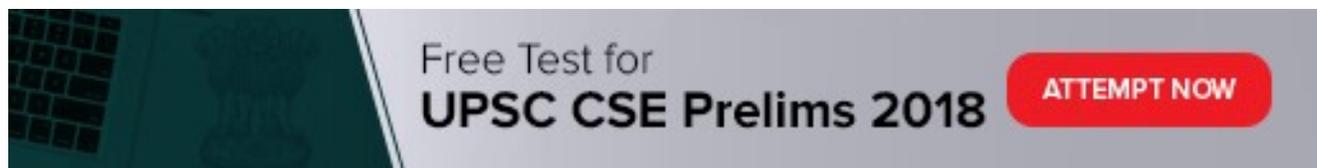
2. **Chhattisgarh government to distribute smartphones under the Sanchar Kranti Yojana (SKY) scheme**

- Chhattisgarh government will distribute 5 million mobile phones to women and college going students under the Sanchar Kranti Yojana (SKY) scheme.
- The Chhattisgarh government plans to initiate smartphone distribution in May 2018 and complete it by the end of March 2019.
- It is a big step towards financial inclusion, it will bridge digital divide in the state and also empower people to avail a wide range of government services from health to education, and security to justice.

Related Information

Sanchar Kranti Yojana (SKY) scheme

- The scheme was launched in August 2017 by the Chhattisgarh government to reduce the digital difference between the people of the state.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- Under this scheme nearly 5.5 Million Smartphone will be distributed among the citizens of rural as well as urban areas in the state.
- People belonging to below poverty line and low-income group (Don't have more than Rs 2 Lac yearly income) will be eligible for the scheme.
- Also, people who are living in rural areas or Gramin people will be eligible.
- There are two phases of the scheme. In the first phase that is in between financial year 2017-18 and 2018-19 the state government will distribute 5.08 Million phones among the villagers and urban poor people.
- In the second phase remaining 4.8 Lakhs phones will be distributed.

Topic- GS-2-Welfare schemes by States

Source- Hindustan Times

3. **India is world's sixth largest economy at \$2.6 trillion- IMF**

- According to International Monetary Fund's World Economic Outlook (WEO) for April 2018

India's GDP, clocked in at \$2.6 trillion for 2017.

- India is now the world's sixth largest economy, displacing France.
- The five economies ahead are the United States, China, Japan, Germany and United Kingdom.

Related Information

Important reports published by Various organization

Name of the Reports	International Organization
World Economic Outlook	International Monetary Fund (IMF)
Global Financial Stability Report	International Monetary Fund (IMF)
Global Money Laundering Report	Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

Global Economic Prospects	The World Bank
World Development Report	The World Bank
Ease of Doing Business	The World Bank
Environmental Performance Index	World Economic Forum
Global Competitive Index	World Economic Forum
Global Gender Gap Report	World Economic Forum
The Global Risk Report	World Economic Forum
Human Capital Report	World Economic Forum
Human Development Index	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Sustainable development Goals	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Gender Inequality Index	United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
Global Hunger Index	International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI)
World Happiness Report	Sustainable Development Solution Network (SDSN)

Topic- GS-3- Indian Economy

Source- Hindustan Times

4. **National portal "I-STEM" to share research facilities soon**

- Soon researchers in any college or institution and research organisations can check, reserve and have easy access to even expensive research equipment and facilities anywhere in India.
- The portal "Indian Science, Technology and Engineering Facilities Map" (I-STEM) — will soon become operational.



Free Test for

UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

- The institutions and organisations that have the equipment and facilities will provide access to researchers for both academic and non-academic work through an online reservation system.

Benefits of the Portal

- It will provide access to researchers to any equipment or facility that has been procured using public funds, the equipment will be better utilised and it will avoid duplication of expensive equipment as much.

Topic- GS-3- Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

21. 04. 2018

1. Supreme Court rules NCMEI has wide powers

- The Supreme Court held that the National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions (NCMEI) has original jurisdiction to determine which institution should be granted minority status.
- The court held that the NCMEI had the power to decide any question that might arise, which relate directly or indirectly, with respect to the status of an institution as a minority educational institution.

Related Information

National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions

- The National Commission for Minority Educational Institutions was set up in 2004.
- The NCMEI Act was passed in January 2005.
- It was established to protect and safeguard the educational institutions which are established by the minorities in India.
- This also ensure rights of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice as provided in the Article 30 of the Constitution of India.

- This Commission is a quasi-judicial body and has been endowed with the powers of a Civil Court.
- The commission is headed by a Chairman who belongs to a minority community and has been a Judge of a High Court.
- Two members are nominated by Central Government. They too must belong to a minority community and must be "persons of eminence, ability and integrity.
- The Commission has 3 roles namely adjudicatory function, advisory function and recommendatory powers.
- The 2006 amendments to the NCMEI Act introduced a "sea change" to the Commission's powers.
- The 2006 amendments even conferred powers of appeal against orders of the competent authority to the NCMEI.
- A power of cancellation was also vested in the NCMEI to cancel a certificate granted either by an authority or the NCMEI.

Topic- GS-2- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies

Source- The Hindu

2. Pre-historic rock art site unearthed in Guntur

- A pre-historic rock art site discovered in the eastern banks of Naguleru near Dachepalli (Andhra Pradesh) has thrown light on the **Neolithic** civilisation that flourished in Guntur during 1500-2000 BC.
- The site, has been unearthed by freelance archaeologist Kadiyala Venkateswara Rao at Kesanapalli village in Dachepalli mandal.
- The rock art site on natural lime stone is the first of its kind in the country.



Free Test for
UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

- The motifs in the form of engraving, pecking and brushing throw fascinating insights into the social and cultural practices of ancient civilisations.
- The interesting finding is a rare and mythical oval-shaped labyrinth engraving with multi circles by the side of cultic motifs.
- The labyrinth is a mythical and sacred symbol of the early pre-historic times.

Other Information

- The region in later years was also synonymous with the flourishing of Buddhism.
- A stupa established on the pre-historic rock art site during 1-2 BC, was unearthed during excavations by the Department of Archaeology and Museums in 1969.

Topic- GS-1-Indian History

Source- The Hindu

3. How is the Chief Justice of India be Impeached?

- In an unprecedented move, opposition parties submitted a notice to Rajya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu requesting impeachment proceedings against Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra.

Procedure to impeach the Chief Justice of India

- The Constitution lays down the procedure for the removal of a judge of Supreme Court, which is applicable in the case of the Chief Justice of India as well.
- The Chief Justice is impeached on the grounds of misbehaviour or incapacity.
- A notice of motion is issued by 100 MPs from the Lok Sabha or 50 MPs from the Rajya Sabha.
- This motion for removal can be moved in either House.
- The motion can either be accepted or rejected by the Speaker/Chairman of the House.

- If the motion is admitted, the Speaker or the Chairman of the House forms a three-member committee comprising a senior judge of the Supreme Court, a judge of the High Court and a distinguished jurist to investigate the charges.
- This committee would look into the alleged charges levelled against the Chief Justice of India.
- If the three-member committee decides to support the motion, it is taken up for discussion in the House, where it had been introduced and must be passed by a special majority.
- **Special Majority-** It is a majority of the total membership of that House and a majority of not less than two-thirds of the members of that House present and voting.
- Once it is passed, it is taken up in the next House where again it needs to be passed by a special majority.
- After the motion is passed through both the Houses with two-third majority, the President of India is approached to remove the Chief Justice of India.

Topic- GS-2-Indian Polity

Source- NDTV

4. Kayakalp initiative of Health Ministry

- The Health Ministry has decided to name those health facilities from next year onwards which are not up to the mark on various parameters, including sanitation, waste management and infection control under its 'Kayakalp' initiative.
- Also, to fix accountability at various levels, the ministry will declare names of hospitals to which patients have not given positive feedback through its Mera Aspataal (My Hospital) app.

Related Information

- The Mera Aspataal initiative aims at empowering patients by seeking their views on the quality of experience in a public healthcare facility, was launched in August 2016.
- Patient satisfaction is the ultimate test for assessing the quality of services, provided by a healthcare facility under this initiative.

'Kayakalp' Programme

- 'Kayakalp' programme was launched by the health ministry in May 2015.
- "Kayakalp", an initiative for awarding public health facilities, aims to incentivise such facilities that show exemplary performance in adhering to standard protocols of cleanliness and infection control as well as inculcate a culture of ongoing assessment and peer review of performance related to hygiene, cleanliness and sanitation.

Topic- GS-2- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.

Source- Indian Express

23. 04. 2018

1. **Six countries suspend membership in UNASUR regional bloc**
 - A South American bloc created a decade ago to counter US influence in the region has temporarily lost half its members after six countries suspended their memberships amid differences over who should lead the group.
 - Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Paraguay and Peru had decided to temporarily (for one year) leave the UNASUR, given differences over choosing the secretary general of the group.

Related Information

Union of South American Nations (USAN or UNASUR or UZAN)

- It is an international organization made up of all twelve countries in the South American region- Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Ecuador, Guyana, Paraguay, Peru, Suriname, Uruguay and Venezuela.
- The UNASUR Constitutive Treaty was signed in 2008, at the Third Summit of Heads of State, held in Brasília, Brazil. (Cusco Declaration).
- According to the Constitutive Treaty, the Union's headquarters will be located in Quito, Ecuador.
- The headquarters of its bank, the Bank of the South are located in Caracas, Venezuela.

Topic- GS-2- Important International institutions, agencies and fora- their structure, mandate.

Source- DD News + UNASUR

2. **Pune hosted the 12th edition of South Asian Climate Outlook Forum (SASCOF)**

What is SASCOF? What is the purpose of such a forum?

- SASCOF was established in 2010 as a platform where meteorologists from South Asian Association of Regional Cooperation (SAARC) countries along with Myanmar, could discuss some of the common weather and climate related matters.
- All these South Asian countries — except for Afghanistan, which is located in extreme northwest — experience common weather and climatological characteristics, like Southwest monsoon.
- Such a platform was needed to plan risk management and adaptation for minimising the impacts of climate variability.
- India has hosted six editions so far.

- Since 2015, the forum issues Climate Outlook even for the Northeast monsoon.

How significant is India's role in this region in carrying out weather services?

- The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) encourages co-operation and establishment of Regional Climate Outlook Forums in every region that share similar weather and climate.
- For the South Asian region, we have SASCOF.
- India is leading the forum since other countries in this region do not have capabilities or infrastructure like High Performance Computing (HPC) for carrying out Long Range Forecast (LRF) or extended range forecasts.
- WMO has recognised Pune office of IMD as the Regional Climate Centre (RCC).

Related Information

World Meteorological Organization (WMO)

- The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is an intergovernmental organization with a membership of 191 Member States and Territories.
- It originated from the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), which was founded in 1873.
- Established by the ratification of the WMO Convention on 23 March 1950, WMO became the specialised agency of the United Nations for meteorology.
- The Organization is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

Topic- GS-2- Bilateral, regional and global groupings and agreements involving India and/or affecting India's interests

Source- Indian Express

3. **Ramsar tag likely for Sunderbans**
 - The Sunderban Reserve Forest, spread over 4,260 sq. km. with over 2,000 sq. km. of mangrove forests and creeks, is likely to be declared a Ramsar Site soon.

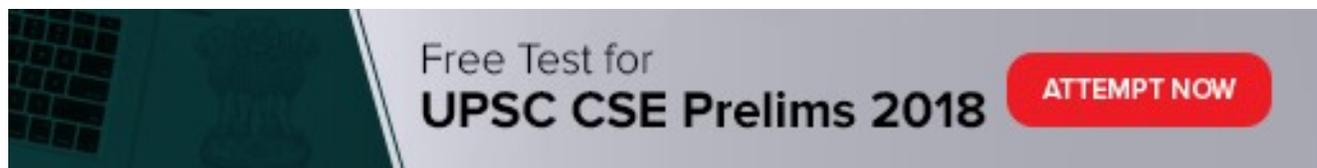
- The West Bengal government gave its approval to the State Forest Department to apply for recognition under the Ramsar Convention.
- The State Forest Department through the Government of India, will apply to the Ramsar Convention Secretariat.
- Being conferred the status of a wetland of international importance will not only be a matter of pride for the Sunderbans but also bring a lot of international scientific attention and intervention to the area.
- The Indian Sunderbans comprise almost 43% of the mangrove cover in the country according to a 2017 Forest Survey of India report.
- Other than the forests, home to about 100 Royal Bengal tigers, the creeks and river systems of the Sunderbans are also part of the reserve forest and once conferred a Ramsar site status, **it will be the largest protected wetland in the country.**
- There are currently 26 sites in India recognised as Ramsar wetland sites of international importance, including the East Kolkata Wetlands also in West Bengal.

Related Information

Topic- GS-3-Environment

Source- The Hindu

4. **Nitish Kumar Launched 3 Books On Mahatma Gandhi's Champaran Movement**
 - Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar released three books based on Mahatma Gandhi's Champaran movement of 1917.
 - These books are-
 - (a) 'Mr. M K Gandhi Ki Champaran Diary' written by Arvind Mohan,
 - (b) 'Champaran Andolan 1917' edited by Ashutosh Partheshwar and
 - (c) 'Pir Muhammad Munis: Kalam Ka Satyagrahi' collected and edited by Srikant



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

The Champaran movement is acknowledged as the first Satyagraha movement inspired by Mahatma Gandhi.

Topic- GS-1-Indian Art and Culture

Source- NDTV

24. 04. 2018

1. **One out of eight bird species in the world faces extinction**

- According to The State of the World's Birds report, as of 2017 update, 1,469 bird species or 13 per cent of the total or one in eight is threatened with extinction.
- The key reasons behind the declining population of birds are-
 - (a) Agricultural expansion (Mostly Affected)
 - (b) Logging
 - (c) Overexploitation
 - (d) Urbanisation
 - (e) Pollution and
 - (f) The effects of invasive alien species.
- Natural habitats are soon turning into farmlands as during the past three centuries, the land under cultivation has seen a six-fold increase.
- Another reason is deforestation as more than seven million hectares of forest are destroyed each year and this is when two-third of the bird species can live nowhere else but in forests.
- Hunting or illegal killing of birds has led to the death of around 12 to 38 million birds in the Mediterranean region alone every year.
- Climate change represents an emerging and increasingly serious threat—currently affecting 33 percent of globally threatened species—and one that often exacerbates existing threats.

Related Information

Critically Endangered Bird species from India

Species	Distribution
The Jerdon's Courser	Andhra Pradesh.
The Forest Owlet	South Madhya Pradesh, in north-west Maharashtra and north-central Maharashtra.
The White-bellied Heron	Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Bhutan, and Myanmar
The Bengal Florican (known for its mating dance)	Cambodia, India and Nepal. In India, it occurs in 3 states, namely Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.
The Himalayan Quail	Western Himalayas
Pink-headed Duck	North-East India, Bangladesh and Myanmar.
Sociable Lapwing	Central Asia, Asia Minor, Russia, Egypt, India, Pakistan. In India, habitat / distribution is restricted to the north and north-west of the country
Spoon Billed Sandpiper	West Bengal, Orissa, Kerala and Tamil Nadu
Siberian Crane	Keoladeo National Park in Rajasthan
Great Indian Bustard	India and Pakistan. Currently, in India it is found in Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan
Red Headed Vulture	Norther India
Slender-billed vulture	It is found in India, Bangladesh, Southern Nepal, Burma and Cambodia. In India, it is found in Gangetic plain north, West to Himachal Pradesh, Northern Odisha, and Assam.
White-rumped vulture	Northern and central India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh and southeast Asia.
Baer's pochard	Eastern Asia including India, China, Russia, Japan, Vietnam
Bugun liocichla	Arunachal Pradesh and Bhutan

Topic- GS-3-Biodiversity

Source- downtoearth



Free Test for

UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

2. **Centre revoked the AFSPA from Meghalaya and Eight police stations in Arunachal Pradesh**

What is AFSPA, and where is it in force?

- In simple terms, AFSPA gives armed forces the power to maintain public order in “disturbed areas”.
- They have the authority to prohibit a gathering of five or more persons in an area, can use force or even open fire after giving due warning if they feel a person is in contravention of the law.
- If reasonable suspicion exists, the army can-
 - (a) Arrest a person without a warrant
 - (b) Enter or search a premise without a warrant and

(c) ban the possession of firearms.

What is a “disturbed area” and who has the power to declare it?

- A disturbed area is one which is declared by notification under Section 3 of the AFSPA.
- An area can be disturbed due to differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.
- The Central Government, or the Governor of the State or administrator of the Union Territory can declare the whole or part of the State or Union Territory as a disturbed area.
- The Ministry of Home Affairs would usually enforce this Act where necessary.
- There have been exceptions where the Centre decided to forego its power and leave the decision to the State governments. (Example- Assam etc.)

What’s the origin of AFSPA?

- The Act came into force in the context of increasing violence in the North-eastern States decades ago, which the State governments found difficult to control.

- The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Bill was passed by both the Houses of Parliament and it was approved by the President on September 11, 1958.
- It became known as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958.
- Jammu and Kashmir too has a similar Act.

Which States are, or had come under this Act?

- It is effective in the whole of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur (excluding seven assembly constituencies of Imphal) and parts of Arunachal Pradesh.
- The Centre revoked it in Meghalaya on April 1, 2018.

How this Act has been received by the people?

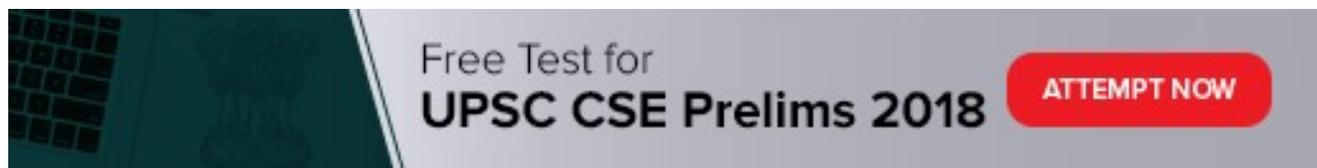
- It has been a controversial one, with human rights groups opposing it as being aggressive.
- Manipur’s Irom Sharmila has been one of its strong opponents, going on a hunger strike in November 2000 and continuing her vigil till August 2016.
- Her trigger was an incident in the town of Malom in Manipur, where ten people were killed waiting at a bus stop.

Topic- GS-2-Indian Polity

Source- The Hindu

3. **Prime Minister launched Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan from Mandla district of MP**

- Prime Minister launched the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA) at Ram Nagar in Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh on the occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day.
- The scheme will focus on training, building infrastructure and stepping up initiatives for e-governance under the e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- RGSA seeks to-
 - (a) Enhance capacities and effectiveness of Panchayats and the Gram Sabhas
 - (b) Enable democratic decision-making and accountability in Panchayats and promote people's participation;
 - (c) Strengthen the institutional structure for knowledge creation and capacity building of Panchayats;
 - (d) Promote devolution of powers and responsibilities to Panchayats according to the spirit of the Constitution and PESA Act etc.

Topic- *GS-2-Indian Polity*

Source- *AIR*

4. **Committee recommends setting up of 'Inter Country Parental Child Removal Disputes Resolution Authority'**
 - The Committee headed by Justice Rajesh Bindal has submitted its report on legal issues related to inter country removal & retention of children and recommends on addressing the problems of parents and children involved in such issues.
 - The Committee has recommended that the Government may establish an 'Inter Country Parental Child Removal Disputes Resolution Authority'.
 - The authority has been envisaged to provide a one window solution in cases of inter country removal and retention of Children.
 - The Authority may be chaired by a retired High Court Judge, with Members from Legal and Social sector background along with representatives from key Ministries.
 - The Authority will examine the inter country cases of removal and retention of children vis-a-vis the cultural context, merit of the case, and the best interest of the Child.

Topic- *GS-2- Statutory, regulatory and various quasi-judicial bodies*

Source- *PIB*

25. 04. 2018

1. **Adilabad Dokra and Warangal Durries get GI tag**

- Adilabad Dokra, an ancient bell metal craft popular in the tribal regions of Adilabad district in Telangana, and Warangal Durries, which has brought much acclaim to the weaver community of Warangal region, have been issued the Geographical Indication (GI) Registration Certificate by the GI Registry, Chennai.
- The GI certification of these crafts will help the authentic producers to earn a premium on their products, thereby helping in improving their livelihood.
- In addition, GI tag can be used as a marketing tool to promote the products in India and abroad.

Related Information

GI Tag-

- A geographical indication (GI) is a name or sign used on certain products which corresponds to a specific geographical location or origin (e.g. a town, region, or country).
- India, as a member of the World Trade Organization (WTO), enacted the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 has come into force with effect from 15 September 2003.
- This Act is administered by Controller General of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks, who is also Registrar of Geographical Indications. The office falls under **Ministry of Commerce and Industry.**
- The registration of a GI is valid for 10 years after which it needs to be renewed.
- Darjeeling tea became the first GI tagged product in India.

GI Tag status given in 2017

The products which have received the GI tag in 2017 include-

- (1) Pochampally Ikat of Telangana
- (2) Gobindobhog rice of West Bengal
- (3) Durgi stone carvings of Andhra Pradesh
- (4) Etikoppaka toys of Andhra Pradesh
- (5) Chakshesang shawl of Nagaland
- (6) Banaganapalle mangoes of Andhra Pradesh
- (7) Tulaipanji rice of West Bengal
- (8) Banglar Rasogolla of West Bengal

GI Tag awarded in 2018

- Araku coffee (Andhra Pradesh)
- Kadaknath Chicken (Madhya Pradesh)
- Adilabad Dokra (Telangana)
- Warangal Durries (Telangana)

Topic- GS- Indian Culture

Source- Financial Express

2. New system to measure air quality

- India is tying up with the United States and Finland to develop a pollution-forecast system that will help anticipate particulate matter (PM) levels at least two days in advance and at a greater resolution than what is possible now.
- The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will be coordinating this exercise and the plan is to have a system in place by winter.
- Currently, the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), operated out of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune, serves as the apex forecaster of pollution trends in Delhi, Mumbai, Pune and Ahmedabad.
- It generates a likely air quality profile, a day in advance, for these cities. IITM is an organisation under the MoES.

- Current system based on SAFAR will continue but New system will require our scientists to get special training, will use a different method of analysis.
- New System will provide better resolution and more accurate forecasts.

Related Information

Air Quality Index

- AQI is a number used to communicate to the public how polluted the air currently is or how polluted it is forecast to become.
- Different countries have their own air quality indexes, corresponding to different national air quality standards.
- There are six AQI categories, namely Good, Satisfactory, Moderately polluted, Poor, Very Poor, and Severe.
- Each of these categories is decided based on ambient concentration values of air pollutants and their likely health impacts (known as health breakpoints).
- AQ sub-index and health breakpoints are evolved for **eight pollutants (PM10, PM2.5, NO2, SO2, CO, O3, NH3, and Pb)**.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

3. Earth BioGenome Project (EBP)

- Scientists are proposing a massive project to sequence, catalog and analyze the genomes of all eukaryotic species on the planet,
- As per the scientists it will take 10 years and require more than 200 petabytes of digital storage capacity.
- Eukaryotes include all organisms except bacteria and archaea.
- Genomics has helped scientists develop new medicines and new sources of renewable energy, feed a growing population, protect the environment and support human survival and well-being.

- The Earth BioGenome Project will create a new foundation for biology, informing a broad range of major issues facing humanity, such as the impact of climate change on biodiversity, the conservation of endangered species and ecosystems, and the preservation and enhancement of ecosystem services.

Related Information

Genome

- A genome is the complete set of genetic information in an organism.
- In living organisms, the genome is stored in long molecules of DNA called chromosomes.
- In eukaryotes, each cell's genome is contained within a membrane-bound structure called the nucleus.
- Prokaryotes, which contain no inner membranes, store their genome in a region of the cytoplasm called the nucleoid.
- The full range of RNA molecules expressed by a genome is known as its transcriptome, and the full assortment of proteins produced by the genome is called its proteome.

Genomics

- Genomics is the study of the full genetic complement of an organism (the genome).
- It employs various methods such as recombinant DNA, DNA sequencing methods, and bioinformatics to sequence, assemble, and analyse the structure and function of genomes.

Topic- *GS-3-Science and Technology*

Source- *Science Daily*

4. **Western Ghats reveal world's smallest land fern**
 - Indian researchers have discovered the world's smallest land fern hiding in the Ahwa forests of the Western Ghats in Gujarat's Dang district.

- According to a recent study, the fingernail-sized fern belongs to a group known as the **adder's-tongue ferns**, named after their resemblance to a snake's tongue.
- The size of the new Malvi's adder's-tongue fern **Ophioglossum malviae** is just one centimetre.
- It had a unique thick outer layer which is lacking in similar species.

Topic- *GS-3-Science and Technology*

Source- *The Hindu*

5. **Pradhan Mantri Rashtriya Swasthya Suraksha Mission (PMRSSM)**
 - Ministry of Health and Family Welfare organized a National consultation with States/UTs to seek feedback on draft guidelines for implementing PMRSSM, on 23rd April, 2018 at New Delhi.

About the PMRSSM

- The Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY) was announced in 2003 with objectives of correcting regional imbalances in the availability of affordable/ reliable tertiary healthcare services and also to augment facilities for quality medical education in the country.
- PMSSY has two components-
 - (i) Setting up of AIIMS like Institutions
 - (ii) Upgradation of Government Medical College Institutions.
- Six AIIMS-like institutions, one each in the States of Bihar (Patna), Chhattisgarh (Raipur), Madhya Pradesh (Bhopal), Orissa (Bhubaneswar), Rajasthan (Jodhpur) and Uttaranchal (Rishikesh) have been setup under the PMSSY scheme.

Topic- *GS-3- Government policies and interventions for development in various sectors and issues arising out of their design and implementation.*

Source- *PIB*



Free Test for

UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

26th April 2018

1. **HRD Ministry Launched Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0**
 - Human Resource Development Ministry launched Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0 in New Delhi.
 - Under this Mission, students from colleges and universities will go to nearby villages to get acquainted with the life of the village people and the problems faced by them in day to day life.
 - Under the Unnat Bharat Abhiyan 2.0, the institutions have been selected on a Challenge Mode and the scheme has been extended to 750 reputed Higher Educational Institutes (both public and private) of the country.
 - IIT Delhi has been designated to function as the National Coordinating Institute for this programme and the Ministry intends to extend the coverage to all the reputed Higher Educational Institutes, in a phased manner.
 - Each selected institute would adopt a cluster of villages / panchayats and gradually expand the outreach over a period of time.

Related Information

Unnat Bharat Abhiyan

- Unnat Bharat Abhiyan is a flagship programme of the Ministry of Human Resources Development, with the intention to enrich Rural India.
- It was launched in Dec 2014.
- The knowledge base and resources of the Premier Institutions of the country are to be leveraged to bring in transformational change in rural developmental process.
- It also aims to create a vibrant relationship between the society and the higher educational institutes, with the latter providing the knowledge and technology support to improve the livelihoods in rural areas and to upgrade the capabilities of both the

public and private organisations in the society.

Topic- GS-2-Welfare Schemes

Source- PIB

2. **Tribal-dominated Rajasthan districts to be included under Fifth Schedule**
 - The Union Cabinet gave its approval for the inclusion of tribal-dominated areas in Rajasthan under the Fifth Schedule of the Constitution to extend the protective measures under it to the tribals living in these areas.
 - The promulgation of new order will ensure that the scheduled tribes of Rajasthan will get benefits of protective measures available under the Fifth Schedule to the Constitution of India.
 - The move is set to benefit the Scheduled Tribes residing in Banswara, Dungarpur, Pratapgarh and partial areas of Udaipur, Rajsamand, Chittorgarh, Pali and Sirohi
 - The areas will now be a part of the Tribal sub-plan (renamed as Tribal Sub-Scheme) within the existing schemes of central and the state governments for more focused attention in scheduled areas for speedy development.

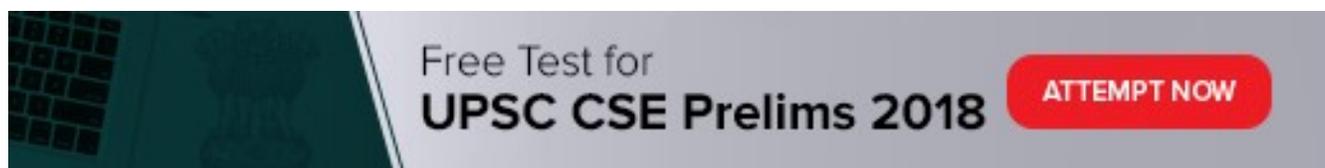
Related Information

- **Fifth Schedule-** contains provisions as to the Administration and Control of **Scheduled Areas and Scheduled Tribes.**
- **Sixth Schedule-** contains provisions as to the Administration of **Tribal Areas** in the States of **Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura and Mizoram.**

Topic- GS-2-Indian Polity

Source- Indian Express + PIB

3. **Scientists developed new method to 3D print food**
 - Scientists have developed a new technique to 3D print food that can allow users to cook according to their preferences.



Free Test for
UPSC CSE Prelims 2018 [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- 3D printing of food works much like 3D printing of other materials in which layers of raw material are deposited to build up a final product.
- Benefits of 3D print food-
 - (a) Customised food options
 - (b) Reduce food waste
 - (c) Reduce cost involved with storage and transportation
 - (d) It might also help meet the rapidly increasing food needs of a growing world population.
- Their new platform and optimised methods can turn carbohydrate and protein powers into food with microstructures that can be tuned to control food texture and how the food is absorbed by the body.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- DD News

4. **India, World Bank signed agreement for "Innovate in India for Inclusiveness Project"**
 - The World Bank announced signing of a loan agreement with India for IBRD credit of USD 125 for the "Innovate in India for Inclusiveness Project".
 - Objectives of the Project to
 - (a) Nurture indigenous innovation
 - (b) Foster local product development
 - (c) Accelerate commercialization process by bridging critical skill and infrastructure gaps to promote affordable and innovative healthcare products generation for inclusive development
 - (d) Increasing competitiveness in India
 - (e) Development of an innovative biopharmaceutical and medical devices industry in India.
 - The project consists of the following parts-
 - (a) Strengthening of pilot-to market innovation ecosystem
 - (b) Acceleration of the pilot-to-market process for specific products and

- (c) Project Management and monitoring & Evaluation

Topic- GS-III and GS-II

Source- Business Standards

5. **Bangladesh's first satellite "Bangabandhu-1" to be launched on May 7**

- Bangladesh is all set to become a member of the exclusive club of satellite-owning countries as its first commercial satellite "Bangabandhu-1" will likely be flying to space on May 7.
- The satellite will be launched from Florida's Cape Canaveral (USA).

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- Economic Times

6. **India highest recipient of remittances at \$69 billion- World Bank**

- India retained the top position as recipient of remittances with its diaspora sending about USD 69 billion back home last year.
- India was followed by China (USD 64 billion), the Philippines (USD 33 billion), Mexico (USD 31 billion), Nigeria (USD 22 billion), and Egypt (USD 20 billion).
- Remittances to India picked up sharply by 9.9 percent, reversing the previous year's dip, but were still short of USD 70.4 billion received in 2014.

Related Information

International migrants: Top 5 Countries

- India > Mexico > Russian Federation > China > Bangladesh

Topic- GS-3-Economic Development

Source- Hindustan Times

7. **Indo-Malaysian training exercise "HARIMAU SHAKTI" 2018**

- The Indian and Malaysian armies will hold a two-week military exercise beginning April 30 in Malaysia as part of efforts to bolster defence cooperation.



Free Test for

UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

- The joint exercise 'Harimau Shakti' will take place in the dense forests of Sengai Perdik in Hulu Langat district of Malaysia.

Topic- GS-3- Defence Exercise

Source- PIB

27. 04. 2018

1. **India's ranking in press freedom falls to 138**

- India's ranking in the Press Freedom Index has fallen two places to 138th position in a ranking of 180 countries.
- The Report is published by the Reporters Without Borders.
- The report is blaming "physical violence" against journalists like Gauri Lankesh as the key reason behind the country's low ranking.
- Norway topped the list of having the world's freest press while North Korea remained the most repressive country followed by Eritrea, Turkmenistan, Syria and then China.

Related Information

Reporters Without Borders

- It is an international non-profit, non-governmental organization that promotes and defends freedom of information and freedom of the press.
- The organization, with its head office in Paris, France, has consultant status at the United Nations.

Topic- GS-2- Development processes and the development industry- the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups.

Source- The Hindu

2. **What is H-4 visa? Why are spouses of Indian H1-B visa holders worried?**

- The Donald Trump administration is planning to withdraw work permits issued to H-4 visa holders, who are spouses of H1-B visa holders, a majority of whom are Indians and mostly women.

- If this legislation is terminated (started during Obama's administration), approximately 71,000 H-4 visa holders stand the risk of losing their work permits.
- According to a recent study by the Migration Policy Institute, around 94 percent of H-4 visa holders are women and the vast majority (93 percent) are from India while 4 percent are from China.

What are H-4 Visa and H1-B visa?

- H-4 visa is a work permit issued to the spouses of H1-B visa holders. In 2015 Obama administration allowed work permits for spouses who otherwise could not be employed without waiting for their spouses to receive permanent resident status.
- The H1-B Visa, meanwhile, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to hire foreign workers on a temporary basis in speciality occupations such as Science and Information Technology.

Why India should care?

- Indian IT giants like TCS, Infosys and Wipro are among the major beneficiaries of this programme as they rely on it for bringing in tens of thousands of employees with special skills each year.
- Without the H-4 work authorization rule, the spouses of H1-B high-skilled employees would be unable to work legally and contribute financially to their households and communities etc.

Topic- GS-2- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests, Indian diaspora.

Source- Indian Express

2. **'Shield India from anti-Russia sanctions'**



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- American defence companies and business bodies are lobbying the lawmakers and the Donald Trump administration to take measures to ensure that India is not caught in the crossfire of anti-Russia sanctions.

What are anti-Russian sanctions?

- Recent legislation of US congress, Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), requires the Trump administration to punish entities engaging in "significant transactions" with **the defence or intelligence sectors of Russia.**

Why is India worried?

- India has significant defence cooperation with Russia and is currently negotiating the purchase of five S-400 air defence system from it at an estimated cost of \$4.5 billion.
- S lawmakers must be "critically aware" of the disruption CAATSA could cause to America's significant defence ties with India.
- India has already lodged a strong protest with the U.S. government against any plans to implement the CAATSA provisions.

Are there other countries which are in the crossfire of the anti-Russia law?

- India is not the only country that is caught in the crossfire of the anti-Russia law.
- Former Soviet republics and NATO-member Turkey also have significant partnerships with Russia.

Related Information

Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)

- The Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act, CAATSA is a United States federal law that imposed sanctions on Iran, North Korea, and Russia.

Topic- GS-2- Effect of policies and politics of developed and developing countries on India's interests

Source- The Hindu

4. **New frog species takes historical name of Goa**

- In the highland plateaus of the Western Ghats of Goa, scientists have identified a new species of frog called **Fejervarya goemchi.**
- The new species is named after the historical name of the state of Goa where the species is discovered.
- Although most of these frogs are terrestrial, they need water bodies to continue for survival.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- The Hindu

5. **Bureau of Indian Standards grants first license for Liquid Chlorine on All India Basis**

- Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) granted First Licence to M/s Gujarat Alkalies and Chemicals Ltd for Liquid Chlorine on All India basis.
- This product is in liquid form and stored in metal containers.
- It is usually used as a gas obtained by evaporating the liquid from the metal container.
- The move will facilitate industry to get a quality Liquid Chlorine with Standard Mark under BIS Certification Marks scheme.

Related Information

Application of Liquid Chlorine

- It is used mainly in paper, pulp, textile bleaching, water sterilization and manufacture of chemicals.

Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)

- The Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) is the national Standards Body of India working under the aegis of Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution, Government of India.
- It is established by the Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986.
- Its headquarters are in New Delhi.
- It also works as WTO-TBT (Technical Barriers to Trade) enquiry point for India.



Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- PIB

6. **Home Minister chaired 23rd meeting of western zonal council**

- Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh chaired the 23rd meeting of Western Zonal Council at Gandhinagar.

Related Information

Zonal Council

- Zonal Councils are advisory councils and are made up of the states of India that have been grouped into five zones to foster cooperation among them.
- Five Zonal Councils were set up under Part-III of the States Reorganisation Act, 1956.
- The special problems of the North Eastern States' are addressed by another statutory body - The North-Eastern Council, created by the North Eastern Council Act, 1971.
- Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep are not members of any of the Zonal Councils. However, they are presently special invitees to the Southern Zonal Council.
- The Union Home Minister is the Chairman of each of these Councils.

Zonal Council	States/ UT's included in Zonal Council
Northern Zonal Council	Chandigarh, Delhi, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Punjab, and Rajasthan
North-Eastern Zonal Council	Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim
Central Zonal Council	Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh
Eastern Zonal Council	Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal
Western Zonal Council	Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu, Goa, Gujarat, and Maharashtra
Southern Zonal Council	Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala, Lakshadweep, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu, and Telangana

Topic- GS-2- Indian Polity

Source- AIR

28. 04. 2018

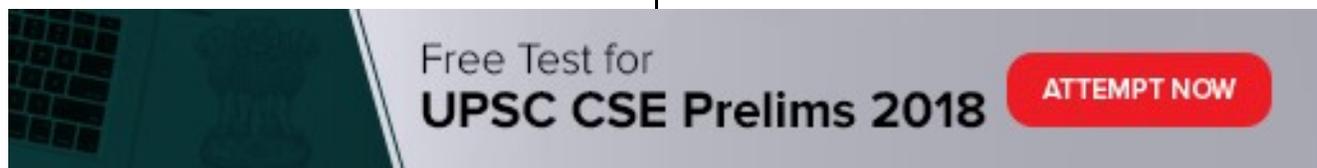
1. **States unable to implement support price schemes for farmers: NAFED**

- The Centre's proposals to decentralise price support schemes for farmers are not viable as State governments do not possess the infrastructure or willingness required to implement them.
- NAFED (National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd.) is responsible for the procurement of oilseed, pulses and copra under the current central price support scheme.
- The new proposals, made by NITI Aayog shifts the responsibility of procurement of oilseeds, pulses and coarse cereals from the Centre to the States.

Related Information

Minimum Support Price (MSP)

- Minimum Support Price (MSP) is a form of market intervention by the Government of India to insure agricultural producers against any sharp fall in farm prices.
- The minimum support prices are announced by the Government of India at the beginning of the sowing season for certain crops on the basis of the recommendations of the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
- The Centre declares minimum support prices (MSP) for 25 crops.
- Food Corporation of India (FCI) is the designated central nodal agency for price support operations for cereals, pulses and oilseeds.
- Cotton Corporation of India (CCI) is the central nodal agency for undertaking price support operations for Cotton.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

Schemes by government similar to MSP Market Intervention Scheme

- It is implemented on the request of State Governments for procurement of perishable and horticultural commodities in the event of fall in market prices.

Price Supports Scheme (PSS)

- The Department of Agriculture & Cooperation implements the PSS for procurement of oil seeds, pulses etc., through NAFED which is the Central nodal agency, at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) declared by the government.

Price Deficiency Procurement Scheme

- The scheme directly pays farmers the difference between the MSP and the sale price, instead of procuring his crop.

Topic- GS-3-Agriculture

Source- The Hindu

2. One of the biggest threats to the environment - desertification

- At a recent inauguration of a four-day workshop on desertification, the Environment Minister Harsh Vardhan said about achieving Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) by 2030 at the Asia-Pacific Regional Workshop of the UN Convention to Combat Desertification.
- This means that the amount and quality of land resources to support ecosystem and enhance food security remains stable or increases within specified time and place.

What is desertification?

- A slow process in which land productivity and resilience steadily decline.

What are the causes?

- Overgrazing, deforestation and unsustainable agricultural practices are the main causes of desertification.
- Mining and climate change are also major causes.

- In India, the main reason for desertification is loss of soil cover, mainly due to rainfall and surface runoff.
- Water erosion and wind erosion are the two other main reasons in India.

How is India threatened by desertification?

- Nearly 30 percent of India is degraded or facing desertification.
- Of India's total geographical area of 328.72 million hectares (MHA), 96.4 MHA is under desertification.
- In eight states—Rajasthan, Delhi, Goa, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Nagaland, Tripura and Himachal Pradesh—around 40 to 70 percent of land has undergone desertification.
- More to it, 26 of 29 Indian states have reported an increase in the area undergoing desertification in the past 10 years.

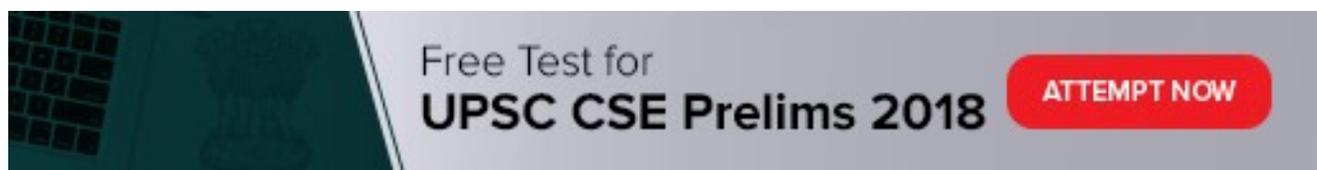
Is it preventable?

- Water management practises, community participation, and sustainable and climate smart agricultural practices are the major ways to prevent desertification.

Related Information

United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD)

- UNCCD is a Convention to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought through national action programs (NAP).
- NAP incorporate long-term strategies supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements.
- The Convention stemmed from a direct recommendation of the Rio Conference's Agenda 21, was adopted in Paris, France in 1994 and entered into force in 1996.
- It is the only internationally legally binding framework set up to address the problem of desertification.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

- It has 196 states plus European union, making it truly global in reach.
- UNCCD collaborates closely with Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Topic- GS-3- Environment

Source- Down to Earth

3. **Agreements between Govt. of India and World Bank on National Biopharma Mission**

National Biopharma Mission

- Towards strengthening the emerging biotechnology enterprise in India, Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Science & Technology had initiated the National Biopharma Mission programme.
- The National Biopharma Mission programme is entitled as "Innovate in India (I3)".
- It aspires to create an enabling ecosystem to promote entrepreneurship and indigenous manufacturing in the sector.
- The Mission is to be implemented by Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), a Public-Sector Undertaking of Department of Biotechnology.

Topic- GS-3- Biotechnology

Source- PIB

4. **New bulletproof jackets "Bhabha Kavach" for armed forces 50% lighter**

Bhabha Kavach

- Bhabha Kavach is made of boron carbide and carbon nanotube polymer composite.
- It is the lightest and strongest bullet proof jackets that is available in India.
- The materials used have been indigenously developed at BARC and is a spin-off from nuclear technology.
- Apart from being lighter, sturdier and more reliable, Bhabha Kavach will also be cost effective.

- If the jackets pass various tests, Bhabha Kavach will be manufactured by Mishra Dhatu Nigam Limited, a defence public sector unit.

Topic- GS-3-Defence

Source- Hindustan Times

5. **Five states in India are making it difficult to meet global SDG commitments**

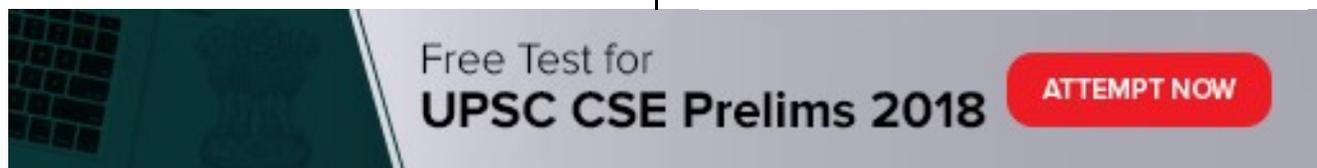
- On April 23, NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said, states like Bihar, UP, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are keeping India backward, especially on social indicators.
- NITI Aayog has recently completed a baseline ranking of 101 'aspirational' districts. Forty four out of these 101 districts are in these five states alone.
- These districts were ranked based on 49 indicators across five sectors. The five sectors included health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion and skill development and basic infrastructure.
- These parameters are almost similar to the 17 sustainable development goals that the world wants to achieve by 2030.

Poverty

- With a population of more than 508 million, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh are collectively larger than Russia and US.
- But the states are not able to reap demographic dividend because at least 28 percent (140 million) of their total population is living below poverty line.

Drinking water and sanitation

- According to a 2014 report of the United Nations, out of the world's one billion people defecating in the open, 60 percent live in four states of India—Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha and Jharkhand.



Free Test for **UPSC CSE Prelims 2018** [ATTEMPT NOW](#)

Health and well-being

- According to WHO, the infant mortality rate (IMR) has decreased globally from an estimated rate of 64.8 deaths per 1000 live births in 1990 to 30.5 deaths per 1000 live births in 2016.
- But according to National Family Health Survey data, Uttar Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have not made much progress since 1990.

Topic- GS-2- Issues relating to development and management of Social Sector/Services relating to Health, Education, Human Resources.

Source- Down to Earth

30. 04. 2018

1. Van Dhan Scheme launched by PM to help increase tribal income through Value Addition

- The Van Dhan Scheme is an initiative of the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and TRIFED.
- It was launched on 14th April, 2018 and seeks to improve tribal incomes through value addition of tribal products.
- Under Van Dhan, 10 Self Help Groups of 30 Tribal gatherers is constituted.
- The establishment of "Van Dhan Vikas Kendra" is for providing skill upgradation and capacity building training and setting up of primary processing and value addition facility.
- They are then trained and provided with working capital to add value to the products, which they collect from the jungle.
- Working under the leadership of Collector these groups can then market their products not only within the States but also outside the States.
- Training and technical support is provided by TRIFED.

Topic- GS-2- Welfare Schemes

Source- PIB + Vikaspedia

2. Forest fires in India increased by 125 percent in last two years

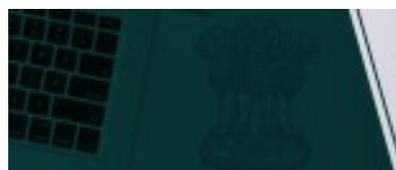
- India, which saw a 46 percent increase in the number of forest fires in the last 16 years (2003-17), witnessed a 125 percent spike (from 15,937 to 35,888) in such fires in just two years (2015 to 2017).
- In 2017, the maximum number of forest fires were reported in Madhya Pradesh (4,781) followed by Odisha (4,416) and Chhattisgarh (4,373).
- In fact, 23 out of 33 states and union territories reported an increase in forest fires.
- As much as 64.29 percent of the Recorded Forest Area (RFA) is prone to fires, said the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2015 published by the Forest Survey of India.
- Out of these, the fire prone areas that fall under heavy fire incidence class are 2.4 percent, moderate class are 7.49 per cent and mild are 54.4 percent.
- Most of the forest fires between 2003 and 2016 have occurred in open forests followed by moderately dense forests.

Related Information

- India loses around Rs 550 crore every year owing to damages caused by forest fires.
- However, in the last two years, nearly 46-65 per cent of the money allocated under the forest management schemes was not released.

India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2017

- India is ranked 10th in the world, with 8,02,088 sq. km or 24.4% of land area under forest and tree cover.
- **Largest forest cover in the country in terms of area-** Madhya Pradesh (77,414 sq. km)> Arunachal Pradesh (66,964 sq. km)> Chhattisgarh (55,547 sq. km)



Free Test for
UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

- **In terms of percentage of forest cover with respect to the total geographical area-**
Lakshadweep with (90.33%)> Mizoram (86.27%)> Andaman and Nicobar Island (81.73%)
- The India State of Forest Report (SFR) 2017 revealed that the mangrove cover in the country has increased by 181 sq. km.
- The increase in the forest cover has been observed as 6,778 sq. km and that of tree cover as 1,243 sq. km.
- The very dense forest in India has also increased by 1.36% as compared to 2015. Very dense forest (VDF) absorb maximum carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

Topic- GS-3-Environment

Source- Down to Earth

3. **'Brahmos will breach mach 7 barrier in next decade'**

- Brahmos, the fastest cruise missile in the world co-developed by India and Russia, will be breaching the mach 7 barrier to be a 'hypersonic' system in the next decade.
- The missile, which currently travels at mach 2.8 or 2.8 times the speed of sound, will touch mach 3.5 soon and mach 5 in three years.
- Over the years, the basic missile system has been modified in a such a way that it can be fitted on various platforms, including ships, submarines, the **Sukhoi-30 aircraft** as well as land, for launch.
- The engine, propulsion technology and seeker are developed by the Russians, while Indians do the control systems, guidance, software, airframes and fire control systems.

Related Information

BrahMos

- The BrahMos is a joint venture between the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) of

India and the Federal State Unitary Enterprise NPO Mashinostroyenia (NPOM) of Russia under BrahMos Aerospace.

- The BrahMos missile is named after two rivers, the **Brahmaputra (India) and the Moskva (Russia)**.

Mach Number-

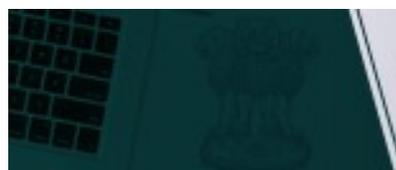
- It is the ratio of the speed of a body to the speed of sound in the surrounding medium.
- **Subsonic** if Mach no. < 0.8
- **Transonic** If Mach no. lies between 0.8 and 1.2
- **Supersonic** If Mach no. lies between 1.2 and 5.0
- **Hypersonic** If Mach no. lies between 5.0 and 10.0

Ballistic missile

- A ballistic missile is a missile that follows a ballistic trajectory with the objective of delivering one or more warheads to a predetermined target.
- An intercontinental ballistic missile trajectory consists of three parts-
(a) The powered flight portion
(b) The free-flight portion- constitutes most of the flight time
(c) The re-entry phase- where the missile re-enters the Earth's atmosphere.
- Ballistic missiles can be launched from fixed sites or mobile launchers, including vehicles (e.g., transporter erector launchers (TELs)), aircraft, ships, and submarines.

Cruise Missile

- A cruise missile is a guided missile used against terrestrial targets that **remains in the atmosphere** and flies the major portion of its flight path at approximately constant speed.
- Cruise missiles are designed to deliver a large warhead over long distances with high precision.
- Cruise missiles can also be launched from air and fly within Earth's atmosphere



Free Test for
UPSC CSE Prelims 2018

ATTEMPT NOW

Topic- GS-3- Defence

Source- The Hindu

4. **ESA's Gaia Mission Releases Catalog of Nearly 1.7 Billion Stars**

- ESA's (European Space Agency) Gaia mission released the largest catalogue ever of Milky Way stars.
- It includes the positions on the sky for approximately 1.7 billion stars, as well as a measure of their overall brightness at optical wavelengths.

Gaia Mission

- Launched on December 19, 2013, the Gaia satellite both rotates and orbits around the Earth, while surveying the sky with its two telescopes.
- Gaia is an ambitious mission that relies on a huge human collaboration to make sense of a large volume of highly complex data.
- It demonstrates the need for long-term projects to guarantee progress in space science and technology and to implement even more daring scientific missions of the coming decades.

Topic- GS-3- Science and Technology

Source- Science News

5. **A new DNA structure "i-motif" inside human cells identified by scientists**

- This form resembles a twisted "knot" of DNA, instead of the well-known double helix.
- The i-motif is a four-stranded 'knot' of DNA.
- The knot structure, C [cytosine] letters on the same strand of DNA bind to each other – so this is very different from a double helix, where 'letters' on opposite strands recognise each other, and where Cs bind to Gs [guanines]. (A-adenine, T-thymine, C-cytosine and G-guanine.)
- The structure of the DNA molecule comes from adenine binding with thymine and cytosine binding with guanine, but this is not the case with the i-motif.
- The scientists are not exactly sure what the function the i-motif is, but they suspect it is involved with the process of "reading" DNA sequences and converting them into useful substances.

Topic- GS-3-Science and Technology

Source- Science Alert



UPSC CSE PRE ONLINE TEST SERIES

Online Test Series

- Basic Solution as well as short tricks
- Detailed explanation of solutions
- Tricky questions as per exact paper
- Based on latest pattern
- High-quality question
- Available on web & mobile
- All India Rank & Performance Analysis

