

AROUND U

MONTHLY CURRENT AFFAIRS- NOVEMBER 2017



Mass bathing in Ganga aggravates AMR woes

- **What is AMR?**

Antimicrobial resistance occurs when microorganisms such as bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites change in ways that render the medications used to cure the infections they cause ineffective. When the microorganisms become **resistant** to most **antimicrobials** they are often referred to as “superbugs”.

- In 2014, India was the highest consumer of antibiotics, followed by China and US

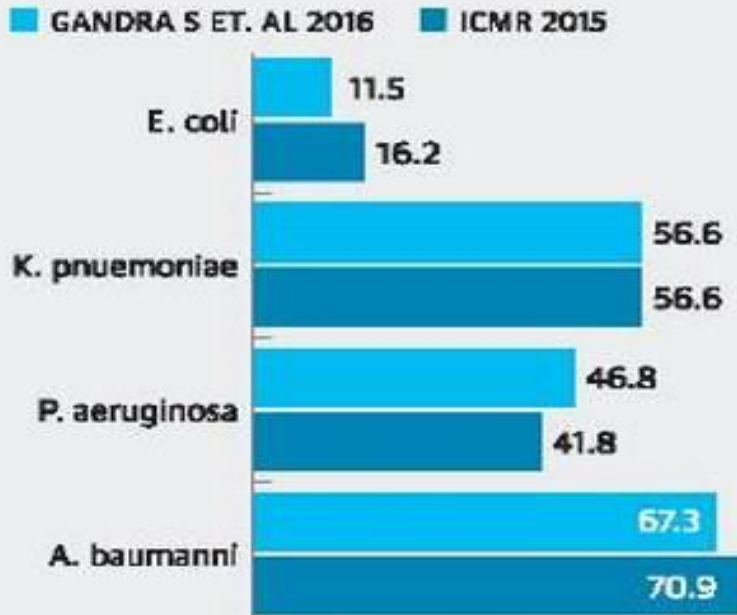
What are major causes of AMR?

- Mass Bathing in Ganga
- Excessive use of anti-biotics in livestock industry
- Unchecked discharge of effluents by pharma industry
- Injudicious use of antibiotic FDCs
- Self-medication
- access to antibiotics without prescription, use of pharmacies and informal healthcare providers as sources of healthcare

A public health tussle Tracing the threat from anti-microbial resistance in India

Carbapenem resistance

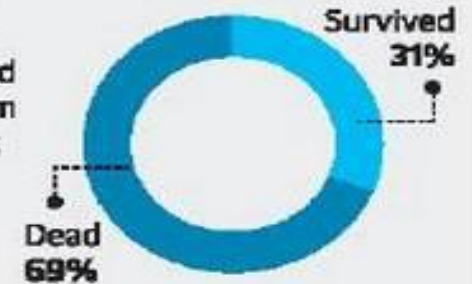
- India has some of the highest antibiotic resistance rates.
- The carbapenem class of antibiotics is one of the last-resort antibiotics to treat serious bacterial infections in humans. A look at carbapenem resistance (in %) in bacteria



The highest carbapenem resistance was observed in *A. baumannii* (67.3%; 70.9%)

Colistin resistance

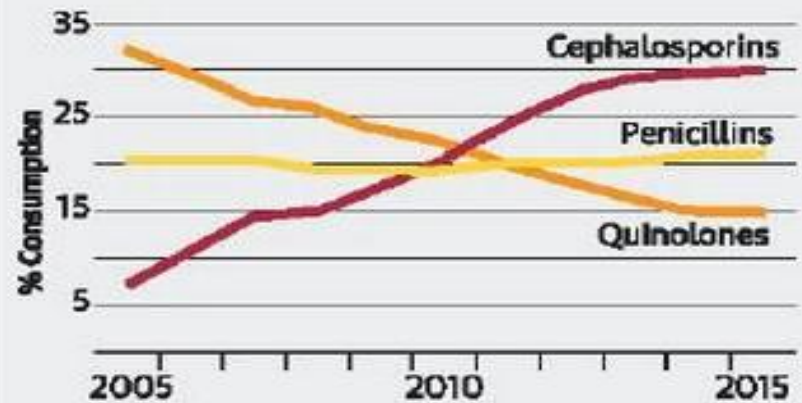
- Mortality associated with dual carbapenem and colistin-resistant *K. pneumoniae* bloodstream infections



SOURCE: KAUR ET AL. (2017)

Antibiotic use in India (2005-15)

- Between 2000 and 2015, cephalosporins prescriptions increased significantly, penicillin remained constant and the use of fluoroquinolones decreased



SOURCE: QUINTILES IMS

SOURCE: SCOPING REPORT ON ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE IN INDIA. NOV. 2017. MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

What are the existing frameworks to tackle the issue?

In India, the issue of AMR came to the attention of policymakers with the 2010 discovery of NDM-1

Year	Activity
2010	Establishment of the National Task Force on AMR Containment
2011	Publication of the Situation Analysis on AMR
2011	Publication of National Policy on AMR Containment
2011	Jaipur Declaration on AMR Containment
2011	The Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations in seafood
2011	Establishment of the National Programme on AMR Containment under the Twelfth Five Year Plan (2012–2017)
2012	National Program on Antimicrobial Stewardship, Prevention of Infection and Control by ICMR
2013	Establishment of a National AMR Surveillance Network by NCDC and ICMR
2014	Inclusion of antibiotics in Schedule H1 category to avoid nonprescription sales of antibiotics
2016	Launch of the Red Line Campaign on Antibiotics to create awareness on rational use of antibiotics
2016	Publication of National Treatment Guidelines for Antimicrobial Use in Infectious Diseases by NCDC
2016	National address by prime minister on the issue of antibiotic resistance in his <i>Man Ki Baat</i> (a radio program hosted by the honorable prime minister of India) in August
2017	Publication of the National Action Plan for Containment of AMR and Delhi Declaration
2017	The Food Safety and Standards (Contaminants, Toxins and Residues) Regulations in food animals

How can the situation be improved?

- Waste Management at pilgrimage sites
- Proper regulations for use of anti-biotics
- Stringent actions against pharma industries who violates rules.
- Improving standards established by CPCBs.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=16116>

Nirmala flags Indian Ocean Issues

- **Caution: increasing militarisation in Indian Ocean and the extra regional nations setting up a “near permanent presence”** in the region by creting naval outposts as well as dual use infrastructure in the region.
- **Chinese presence:** In the last few years, China has set up or acquired stakes in a series of infrastructure facilities in the region and has recently opened **its first overseas military base at Djibouti in the Horn of Africa.**
- The Chinese Navy has also maintained a steady presence of warships and submarines in the Indian Ocean under the garb of **anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.**
- **India - The Indian Navy has now put in place a new concept of ‘mission based deployment’ to maintain round the clock surveillance on India’s vital areas of interest across the length and breadth of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).**
- **<http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/imac-will-help-navy-step-up-coastal-surveillance/article6622612.ece>**

Drones for e-commerce deliveries likely next year

- Govt recently brought in a draft for the regulation of drones in India
- **It envisage a virtually unregulated flight at heights up to 50 feet for nano drones that weigh 250 grams or lower.**
- All drones will have to operate within a visual line of sight, will be allowed only during day time and below 200 feet.
- Barring the nano drones that could also be used indoors, **all drones will have to register with the Director General of Civil Aviation.** Dropping human payload, animals or hazardous material will not be permitted
- The other classifications of drones, officially termed unmanned aircraft systems, are Micro (250 gm to 2 kg), Mini (more than 2 kg to 25 kg), Small (more than 25 kg till 150 kg) and Larger (over 150 kg).

UN says carbon emissions gap could affect climate target

The UN Environment Emissions Gap Report 2017 – Highlights

- a big carbon emissions gap exists between the levels that can be achieved in 2030 with present climate commitments.
- full implementation of the unconditional Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and comparable action afterwards “could result in a temperature increase of about 3.2° C by 2100 relative to pre-industrial levels.
- indicates that governments will need to deliver much stronger pledges to cut greenhouse gas emissions when they are revised in 2020
- **Fossil fuels and cement production** account for about 70% of greenhouse gases

- The Paris accord pledges *only a third* of what is needed to avoid climate catastrophe, and adopting new technologies in key sectors, at investments of under \$100 per tonne of emissions, could cut them by up to 36 gigatonnes per year by 2030, which is more than sufficient to bridge the current gap.

What is required to be done?

- Invest in solar and wind energy, efficient appliances and passenger cars, afforestation and stopping deforestation.
- Strong action on plugging other greenhouse gases, such as hydrofluorocarbons, through the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, and other short-lived climate pollutants such as black carbon, could contribute.

GI Tags

- Banaganapalle mangoes of Andhra Pradesh
- Tulaipanji rice of West Bengal
- Pochampally Ikat of Telangana
- Gobindobhog rice of West Bengal
- Durgi stone carvings
- Etikoppaka toys of Andhra Pradesh
- Chakshesang shawl of Nagaland
- *Rosogolla* of West Bengal

- A GI is primarily an agricultural, natural or a manufactured product (handicrafts and industrial goods) originating from a definite geographical territory.
- Typically, such a name conveys an assurance of quality and distinctiveness, which is essentially attributable to the place of its origin.
- This tag gave protection to the producers of these genuine products, which commanded premium pricing in the markets, both domestic and international.
- Total 317 in the list

Delhi LG cannot sit on govt. schemes: SC

- He [the LG] is bound to pass the difference of opinion [between the LG and the Council of Ministers] to the President for early resolution.
- **Constitutional Position**

The 69th Amendment of the Constitution in 1992 gave the National Capital of Delhi special status with its own democratically elected government and legislature.

Sub-section (4) of Article 239AA mandates that a Council of Ministers shall aid and advise the LG in his functions regarding laws made by the Assembly.

The LG vs Council of Ministers

- The focus of the current controversy is a proviso to Article 239AA (4), which mandates that in case of a difference of opinion between the LG and the Council of Ministers, the former has to refer the issue to the President.
- In the meanwhile, while that decision is pending before the President, the LG, if the matter is urgent, can use his discretion to take immediate action.
- Delhi government's ability to 'aid and advise' the Lieutenant Governor is limited to subjects other than public order, police and land in the National Capital.
- It said that the proviso to Article 239AA (4), on plain reading, seems to give primacy to the Lieutenant Governor.

Crypto currencies now come under SEBI lens

Reason: The increasing popularity of crypto currencies and the increasing number of entities looking at raising funds through Initial Coin Offerings (ICO)

- **Who should regulate? RBI or SEBI**

The central bank is of the view that these instruments are securities and so SEBI should be the regulating body.

SEBI is evaluating whether these instruments can be regulated under the current SEBI Act or if there is a need for the government to give additional powers or amend the existing law.

What is Initial Coin Offering?

- An ICO, like an equity initial public offer (IPO), is an issuance of digital tokens that can be converted into cryptocurrencies and are mostly used to raise funds by start-up firms dealing in blockchain technology and virtual currencies like bitcoins and ethereum.
- Unlike an IPO, which is governed by SEBI regulations, there is no regulatory body for ICOs in India.
- According to a recent study, more than 2,500 Indians invest in bitcoin daily.
- Start-ups like Zebpay, Unocoin, Coinsecure, Searchtrade, Belfrics and Bitxoxo are some of the well-known players in the bitcoin and blockchain segment in India.
- Bitcoin players, feel that instead of a regulator, the industry is in more urgent need of a **self-regulatory organisation** (SRO) that could formally lay down principles to take care of concerns like money laundering and other possible misuse.

Private sector must invest more in contract farming: PM

- The private sector to invest more in contract farming, raw material-sourcing and creating agri-linkages
- a venture based on ‘nutrition-rich and climate-smart crops’ to boost production and supply of India’s coarse grains and millets that ‘not only have high nutritional value, but can also withstand adverse agro-climatic conditions’.
- opportunities in post-harvest management, including in primary processing and storage, preservation infrastructure, cold chain, and refrigerated transportation.
- States to come up with attractive food processing policies to attract investment in at least one food product for specialisation.
- Dairy sector to be taken to next level by increasing production levels of multiple products based on milk.
- India currently ranks sixth in production and export in honey now ripe for a ‘sweet revolution’.

- Ocean economy through the 'blue revolution – Focus on development of untapped areas, such as ornamental fisheries and trout farming.
- The entire north-east offers opportunities to create functional infrastructure for organic produce.

Major Govt Schemes in Food Processing

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Sampada Yojana, which aims to create world-class food processing infrastructure, is expected to leverage investment of \$5 billion, benefit two million farmers and generate more than half a million jobs over the next three years.

The creation of Mega Food Parks is a key component of this scheme

Nivesh Bandhu : The portal would provide information on Central and State Governments' investor friendly policies, agroproducing clusters, infrastructure, and potential areas of investment in the food processing sector.

CHENNAI IN UNESCO'S CREATIVE CITIES NETWORK LIST

- The 7 creative fields, on basis of which the cities are awarded the status, are Crafts & Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Music and Media Arts.
- **Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple in Srirangam in Tamil Nadu has won the UNESCO Asia Pacific Award of Merit 2017 for cultural heritage conservation.**
- It is a **Vaishnava** temple built in the **Tamil or Dravidian style of architecture**. The temple and 1000 pillared hall were constructed in the Vijayanagar period (1336–1565).
- The Gopuram of Sri Ranganathaswamy Temple is the biggest gopuram in Asia. It is also called as “Raja Gopuram

SAMPADA scheme

- (Scheme for Agro-Marine Processing and Development of Agro-Processing Clusters)
- The scheme will be implemented by Ministry of Food Processing Industries (MoFPI)
- Creation of modern infrastructure with efficient supply chain management from farm gate to retail outlet
- **Aims**
 - doubling of farmers income
 - creating huge employment opportunities especially in the rural areas
 - reducing wastage of agricultural produce
 - increasing the processing level
 - enhancing the export of the processed foods.

What is contract farming?

- Contract farming can be defined as **agricultural production** carried out according to an agreement between a buyer and farmers, which establishes conditions for the production and marketing of a farm product or products
- Typically, the farmer agrees to provide agreed quantities of a specific **agricultural product**
- These should meet the quality standards of the purchaser and be supplied at the **time determined** by the **purchaser**
- In turn, the buyer commits to purchase the product and, in some cases, to support production through, for example, the supply of farm inputs, land **preparation** and the **provision of technical advice**

Article 35(A) was never part of Indian constitution: J&K advocate general

What is Art 35 A?

- Article 35A is a provision incorporated in the Constitution giving the Jammu and Kashmir Legislature power to decide who all are 'permanent residents' of the State and confer on them special rights and privileges in public sector jobs, acquisition of property in the State, scholarships and other public aid and welfare.
- The provision mandates that no act of the legislature coming under it can be challenged for violating the Constitution or any other law of the land

How did it come about?

- Article 35A was incorporated into the Constitution in 1954 by an order of the then President Rajendra Prasad on the advice of the Jawaharlal Nehru Cabinet.
- The controversial Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order of 1954 followed the 1952 Delhi Agreement entered into between Nehru and the then Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Sheikh Abdullah, which extended Indian citizenship to the ‘State subjects’ of Jammu and Kashmir.
- The Presidential Order was issued under Article 370 (1) (d) of the Constitution.
- This provision allows the President to make certain “exceptions and modifications” to the Constitution for the benefit of ‘State subjects’ of Jammu and Kashmir.

Why does it matter?

- A five-judge Bench of the Supreme Court in its March 1961 judgment in *Puranlal Lakhanpal vs. The President of India* discusses the President's powers under Article 370 to 'modify' the Constitution.
- Though the court observes that the President may modify an existing provision in the Constitution under Article 370, the judgment is silent as to whether the President can, without the Parliament's knowledge, introduce a new Article.
- A writ petition filed by NGO We the Citizens challenges the validity of both Article 35A and Article 370

J & K Advocate General's view

- The fact of the matter is Article 35 (A) is not part of the Constitution of India. It's a part of the Constitution only applicable to J&K.
- Parliament as such had no powers to add any article of the Constitution to J&K's Constitution except to Article 370.
- “Every Article has been made applicable to J&K through Article 370. In Article 370, the President has been given powers to amend, alter or modify any article viz-a-viz J&K, with exceptions and modifications”

DRDO successfully tests guided bomb

- Successfully tested an indigenously developed light weight glide bomb, Smart Anti Airfield Weapon (SAAW), which can target large enemy infrastructure, like airfields.
- The guided bomb released from an Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft and guided through precision navigation system, reached the targets at greater than 70 km range with high accuracies.
- There are two variants of the guided bombs-*Garuthmaa* (winged version with range upto 100 kms) and *the Garuda* (non winged with range of 30 kms to scalable upto 100 kms). The latter also has on board navigation and guidance systems.
- SAAW are Precision Guided Smart Glide Bombs that can be dropped from a safe distance from the intended target.
- They are considered Force Multipliers and add Punch to a Force.

India Successfully Test Fires Indigenous Nuclear-Capable Cruise Missile- Nirbhay

- The country's first indigenously designed and developed long-range cruise missile.
- The Nirbhay is a subsonic long-range land attack cruise missile that can be armed with a 300-kilogram warhead.
- The missile is capable of reaching speeds of 0.6-0.7 Mach and has an estimated strike range of around 1,000 kilometers.
- The Nirbhay, designed to be launched from air, sea, and land, reportedly is highly maneuverable and has loitering capabilities.

India-Iran Relations

- India's hopes fade for Farzad-B gas field deal
- Iran accuses India of inflexibility, while India charges Iran with “changing goal posts” and adopting “delay tactics”.

Background

The Indian consortium — comprising ONGC Videsh, Indian Oil Corporation, and Oil India — discovered gas reserves in the field under an exploration contract signed in 2002. The field in the Persian Gulf holds about 19 trillion cubic feet of gas, according to Indian estimates. The contract expired in 2009.

The contract for development of the field was blocked due to

- by the sanctions against Iran imposed by the U.S. between 1995 and 2016.
- due to protracted negotiations, forcing both sides to alter their offers several times.

Recently six provisional deals worth about \$30 billion had been signed with Russian oil companies during President Vladimir Putin's visit to Tehran.

Why the Project is important for India?

- Geopolitically, the future is all Iran, where earlier it was Saudi Arabia.
- Geographically, Iran is the closest to India of all the countries in that region. It is the shortest pipeline distance if we do manage to get gas from there.
- On energy side, we need energy sources to fuel our developments.
- The impasse over the deal has affected the oil trade, with India recently reducing its crude oil purchases from Iran (down 30-40% from a year ago). Iran, in retaliation, slashed the number of days of credit offered to Indian companies from 90 to 60 days.
- While India is committed to develop Chabahar Port investment, there is talk of Iran looking to Chinese partners for the overall management of the port, which would be a big blow to India's strategic interests in the region.

Andaman's new taste is sweet-and-sour

- the islands are a biodiversity hotspot that hosts seven different species of wild banana
- The latest discovery, published in the *Nordic Journal of Botany*, is of a species of wild banana named *Musa paramjitiana*, in honour of Paramjit Singh, who happens to be the director of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI).
- The species was found in North Andaman
- Its conservation status has been declared as 'Critically Endangered' as it has so far been spotted in only two locations on the islands
- The fruits and seeds have ethno-medicinal importance. Pseudo-stem and leaves of these species are also used during religious and cultural ceremonies

First fauna survey begins in Krishna sanctuary

- The area was declared as wildlife sanctuary in 1998 .
- The sanctuary is sandwiched between the Bay of Bengal and the Krishna river and geographically falls in Krishna and Guntur districts.
- The pilot project (2014-16) recorded the presence of a whopping 15 fishing cats.
- The recent documentation of the **smooth-coated otter** has highlighted the need for carrying out the survey.

Why the survey?

- It is the need of the hour to have an authentic data on the presence of the wildlife to prepare conservation strategies.
- The credit for the rise of the fishing cat population goes to the conservation of the mangrove cover. The cover, the habitat of the fishing cat, has been increasing since the early 2000s due to afforestation measures.
- The India State of Forest Report-2015 shows that there has been a net increase of 17 sq. km. of mangrove forest cover in Krishna district since 2013.

Centre approves creation of National Testing Agency

- a Society registered under the Indian Societies Registration Act, 1860, and as an autonomous and self-sustained premier testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for higher educational institutions.

Features:

- The NTA would initially conduct those entrance examinations which are currently being conducted by the CBSE.
- Other examinations will be taken up gradually after NTA is fully geared up.
- The entrance examinations will be conducted in online mode at least twice a year, thereby giving adequate opportunity to candidates to bring out their best.
- In order to serve the requirements of the rural students, it would locate the centres at sub-district/district level and as far as possible would undertake hands-on training to the students.

Constitution:

- NTA will be chaired by an eminent educationist appointed by MHRD.
- The CEO will be the Director General to be appointed by the Government.
- There will be a Board of Governors comprising members from user institutions.
- The Director General will be assisted by 9 verticals headed by academicians/ experts.

Finances:

- NTA will be given a one-time grant of Rs.25 crore from the Government of India to start its operation in the first year. Thereafter, it will be financially self-sustainable.

It will relieve CBSE, AICTE and other agencies from responsibility of conducting these entrance examinations, and also bring in high reliability, standardized difficulty level for assessing the aptitude, intelligence and problem solving abilities of the students.

Can an FIR be filed against a sitting judge?

- The answer is found in the majority judgment delivered by a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in the *K. Veeraswami* case.
- No criminal case shall be registered under Section 154 of the Criminal Procedure Code (an FIR) against a judge of the High Court, Chief Justice of the High Court or a judge of the Supreme Court ***unless the government first “consults” the Chief Justice of India.***
- The justification given was that the CJI’s assent was imperative as he was a “participatory functionary” in the appointment of judges.
- Section 77 of the Indian Penal Code exempts judges from criminal proceedings for something said or done during judicial duties.
- the government can initiate criminal proceedings against a sitting or former judge of a superior court under Section 3 of Judges (Protection) Act, 1985 if it can produce material evidence to show that a judgment was passed after taking a bribe.

- The *Veeraswami* case specifically dealt with the Prevention of Corruption Act in judiciary, but the majority judgment had extended its ambit to “any criminal case”.
- Due regard must be given by the government to the opinion expressed by the Chief Justice.
- If the Chief Justice is of opinion that it is not a fit case for proceeding under the Act, the case shall not be registered.
- The verdict held that if the Chief Justice of India himself is the person against whom the allegations of criminal misconduct are received, the government shall consult any other judge or judges of the Supreme Court.
- If the CJI allows the FIR to be registered, the government shall, for the second time, consult him on the question of granting sanction for prosecution.
- The majority in the Constitution Bench classifies a judge as a “public servant”.
- Consultation with the CJI while registering a criminal case against a judge, whether of the High Court or the Supreme Court, has been made mandatory to protect the independence of judiciary.
- Similarly, the Supreme Court has also laid down guidelines for the arrest of a judicial officer of the subordinate judiciary.

The Judicial Standards and Accountability Bill, 2010 – An Overview

- Replace Judges Inquiry Act 1968
- The Bill seeks to (a) lay down judicial standards, (b) provide for the accountability of judges, and (c) establish mechanisms for investigating individual complaints for misbehaviour or incapacity of a judge of the Supreme Court or High Courts. It also provides a mechanism for the removal of judges.
- Judges will also be required to declare their assets and liabilities, and also that of their spouse and children and have to be reviewed annually.

- The Bill establishes two authorities to investigate complaints against judges. The Two authorities are:
 1. National Judicial Oversight Committee; and
 2. Scrutiny Panel.
- Initial complaints will be made to the Oversight Committee, and they will be referred to the Scrutiny Panel.
- A Scrutiny Panel will be constituted in the Supreme Court and every High Court. It shall consist of a former Chief Justice and two sitting judges of that court. If the Scrutiny Panel feels there are sufficient grounds for proceeding against the judge, it shall report on its findings to the Oversight Committee.
- The Oversight Committee will consist a retired Chief Justice of India as the Chairperson, a judge of the Supreme Court nominated by the sitting Chief Justice of India, a Chief Justice of the High Court, the Attorney General for India, and an eminent person appointed by the President.
- If the Scrutiny Panel recommends investigation into a complaint against a judge, the Oversight Committee will constitute an investigation committee to investigate into the complaint. The inquiry committee will consist of not more than three members. It will have some powers of a civil court and also the power to seize documents and keep them in its custody.

- The investigation committee will frame definite charges against the judge and shall communicate the same to the judge.
- The judge shall be given an opportunity to present his case, but if he/ she chooses not to be heard, the proceedings may be heard without him present.
- If the charges against a judge are proved, the Oversight Committee may recommend that judicial work shall not be assigned to the judge.
- If the Committee feels that the charges proved merit the removal of the judge, it shall (a) request the judge to resign voluntarily, and if he fails to do so, (b) advise the president to proceed with the removal of the judge. In such a case, the President shall refer the matter to Parliament.
- The Bill requires judges to practise universally accepted values of judicial life.

31st ASEAN Summit, Manila, Philippines

- **Consensus document on migrant rights**
- ensuring the protection of migrant workers by signing the “ASEAN Consensus on the Protection and Promotion of the Rights of Migrant Workers”
- it includes provisions on fair treatment of migrant workers, visitation rights by family members, prohibition against confiscation of passports and overcharging of placement or recruitment fees, protection against violence and sexual harassment in the workplace, regulation of recruiters for better protection of workers, and the right to fair and appropriate remuneration benefits and their right to join trade unions and association.

North Korea discussions

- Extended support for the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula in a peaceful manner and called for the exercise of self restraint and the resumption of dialogue in order to de-escalate tensions and create conditions conducive to peace and stability
- ASEAN did not waver in its wordings when dealing with North Korea, condemning it in strong, clear language

Code of Conduct talks with China

- Leaders of ASEAN and China agreed to start talks on a Code of Conduct (COC) in the South China Sea.
- The COC is a document to ensure peace and stability in the South China Sea, building on the non-legally binding Declaration on the Conduct of Parties on the South China Sea.
- It reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, security, stability, maritime safety and security, rules-based order and freedom of navigation in and overflight above the South China Sea.

Regional counter-terrorism strategy

- They placed strong emphasis on the aspect of deradicalization in rehabilitation and reintegration programs as part of comprehensive measures in countering terrorism,” according to the "Manila Declaration To Counter The Rise of Radicalization and Violent Extremism“.
- commitment to sustain long-term efforts to propagate moderation in conflict areas, especially among the youth through dialogue, education, community engagement, and strategic messaging on social media.

PROGRAM TO TRAIN ELECTED WOMEN REPRESENTATIVES OF PANCHAYATI RAJ INSTITUTIONS

- It will include simple engineering skills to give them an insight into women's issues as well as focus on education and financial matters
- It is the first ever initiative which will train approximately twenty thousand EWRs covering nearly 50 EWRs from each district (by March, 2018) who will go out and administer the villages professionally.
- It will help in creating model villages, ensure their effective participation in governance process and help preparing women as political leaders of the future.

NORTH EAST RURAL LIVELIHOOD PROJECT

- It is a central sector externally aided multi-state project which was launched in 2012 with World Bank assistance.
- It is being implemented in four states – Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim with an aim of assisting over 10,000 Self Help Groups which would further benefit over 3 lakh households.
- The project has four major components namely – Social empowerment, Economic empowerment, Partnership development and management and Project Management.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/printrelease.aspx?relid=173791>

SC terms Delhi smog life-threatening

- Major Causes

1. Urbanisation
2. incessant construction
3. the rising number of cars and two wheelers on the road
4. lengthening traffic jams
5. Diwali firecrackers
6. the burning of garbage in the open air
7. burning of millions upon millions of tonnes of rice straw in the fields of Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh after the crop has been harvested

Solutions

- To not burn the straw and stubble but *gasify* it in a two-stage process that yields a fuel gas that can meet cooking, heating and power generation needs in the village in the first stage, and any type of transport fuel – diesel, aviation turbine fuel, methanol or CNG – in the second.
- Odd even Scheme
- Plantation drive.
- Closure of brick kilns, hot-mix plants.
- Shutdown all stone crushers.
- More buses on road.
- Greater frequency of metro, lower fares in off-peak hours.
- Centre to launch BSVI fuel in Delhi from 2018.

- Compliance with orders :The (NGT) has issued directions to all authorities to strictly implement earlier orders regarding the ban on burning of waste and fine on the emission of construction dust.
- The Supreme Court has ordered that all taxis plying in the city must convert to CNG from March next year.
- The green cess on commercial vehicles entering Delhi has been hiked by the top court by a whopping 100 per cent.
- The apex court has also banned the registration of luxury SUVs and diesel cars above 2000cc in the national capital. Diesel cars are believed to be a major source of vehicular emissions.
- The NGT has also asked the central and state government not to buy diesel vehicles for its personnel

Tejas aircraft capability to be enhanced

- The production of Tejas Mk-1A will begin in 2019.
- Most of the 43 improvements have already been made and the tender process to install an Advanced Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar and Self-Protection Jammer is under way.
- A refuelling probe would also be added to increase range
- The Tejas, or 'radiance', is an indigenous fighter aircraft jointly developed by Aeronautical Development Agency and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited.
- It is the smallest lightweight, multi-role, single-engine tactical fighter aircraft in the world and is being developed in single-seat fighter and twin seat trainer variants for the Indian Air Force and Indian Navy.

U.P. IAS officer throws his weight behind blackbuck

- A wildlife conservation reserve dedicated exclusively to the blackbuck or *Antelope cervicapra* is coming up in Uttar Pradesh.
- There are a few national parks and sanctuaries inhabited by the blackbuck in the country, like the Velavadar Wildlife Sanctuary in Gujarat and the Ranibennur Blackbuck Sanctuary in Karnataka.
- Blackbuck, known for their majestic spiral horns (in males) and coat colour contrasts, are found in grasslands and open forests.
- They once ruled the open savannahs of north and central India, but are now restricted to just a few patches and habitats, primarily due to human population growth, ecosystem degradation and hunting.
- The U.P. government evoked Section 36 A (1) and (2) of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972 to set up the conservation reserve.

Paradise Papers: Biggest data leak reveals trails of India's corporates in global secret tax havens

- **What are the Paradise Papers?**
- The **Paradise Papers** are a huge leak of financial documents that throw light on the top end of the world of offshore finance.
- The Paradise Papers name was chosen because of the idyllic profiles of many of the offshore jurisdictions whose workings are unveiled, including Bermuda, the HQ of the main company involved, **Appleby**. It also dovetails nicely with the French term for a tax haven - paradis fiscal.
- Tax haven is the term usually used in the media and public, whereas the industry would prefer the term offshore financial centre (OFC). It is essentially a financial jurisdiction outside the regulations of your own nation used by companies and individuals to lower their taxes on profits or assets. They are usually secretive and stable.

- Among the 180 countries represented in the data, **India ranks 19th in terms** of the number of names. In all, there are 714 Indians in the tally.
- Interestingly, it's an Indian company, Sun Group, founded by Nand Lal Khemka, that figures as Appleby's second-largest client internationally, with as many as 118 different offshore entities.

How are Paradise Papers different from Offshore Leaks (2013), Swiss Leaks(2015) and Panama Papers (2016)?

- Like the three major global financial leaks in the past Paradise Papers also reveal tracks of veiled offshore financial activities.
- Like Mossack Fonseca (of Panama Papers, 2016), Appleby helps set up companies and bank accounts overseas, provides nominee office-bearers, and facilitates bank loans or transfer of shares, in multiple secrecy jurisdictions.
- But unlike in the previous leaks, **the latest revelations are more about mega corporates than individual players** and how they took advantage of and, in many cases, misused offshore jurisdictions.

Impact

- The Paradise Papers are *a treasure trove of such leads and evidence.*
- For example, in its bouquet of services, Appleby provides proxy directors for companies set up in tax havens.
- These directors, either persons or shell companies, obviously have no real authority to decide the fate of the millions of dollars they move on the directions of their clients — holding companies or beneficiaries, or their representatives. Most often, these directors are no more than puppets.
- Many offshore companies, the Papers reveal, are “sham” entities engaged in tax evasion/avoidance, manipulation of the market, money laundering, round tripping (taking untaxed money out of the country through inflated invoices and then bringing it back as investment), parking black money, bribing, etc.
- *Such insight into corporate ingenuity allows regulators to step in, besides strengthening the case for better laws and global tax reforms.*

What constitutes a fraud, and what are the remedies in Indian law?

- The obvious malpractices, as evidenced by the Paradise Papers, are tax fraud, money laundering, round tripping, parking black money, bribing, etc.
- Also, treaty shopping, by which a resident of a third country can take advantage of the provisions of DTAA.
- If an entity without any commercial/business substance, that is, a shell company that exists only on paper, is placed in a holding structure only to avoid tax, **the test of “fiscal nullity” — substance over form** — is applied.
- If the decision making powers of an offshore subsidiary’s directors are fully subordinate to the holding company (or beneficiary) such that they are mere puppets, the offshore subsidiary, irrespective of its legal residency, may for all practical purposes be considered a resident of the same jurisdiction to which its holding company (or beneficiary) belongs.
- With effect from April 2017, Section 6(3) of the Income Tax Act 1961 provides that **if “the place of effective management” of a company is in India, the company will be considered “resident in India”**.
- The clause explains “place of effective management” as the “place where key management and commercial decisions that are necessary for the conduct of business of an entity as a whole are in substance made”.

UDAN: Airfields set for checks

- Officers from the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) would visit the 64 unserved and under-served airports for which bids had been received in the second round of bidding as part of the UDAN scheme to ascertain if the airports were ready to cope with commercial flight operations.
- A total of 18 out of the 43 unserved/under served airports that were to be connected under the first round are in the process of being upgraded.
- The cost of upgrading these airports was being borne by the Central government.

- Airports Authority of India (AAI) will connect 22 airports under regional connectivity scheme in the first phase.
- 22 airports include one is in Andaman Nicobar, three in Assam, two each in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Rajasthan.
- Under RCS plans are to connect these underserved airports to key airports through flights that will cost Rs 2,500 for per hour flight. RCS envisages to provide subsidy to airlines to offer these fares. AAI would invest **Rs 17,500 crore in upgrading airport infrastructure over a period till 2019-20.**
- The regional connectivity scheme will be applicable on route length between 200 to 800 km with no lower limit set for hilly, remote, island and security sensitive regions.
- The Central government will provide concessions to the tune of 2 per cent excise on Value Added Tax (VAT) and service tax at 1/10th the rate and liberal code sharing for regional connectivity scheme airports.
- A Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF) will be created to fund the scheme via a levy on certain flights. States are expected to contribute 20 per cent to the fund.
- For balanced regional growth, allocations will be spread equitably across 5 regions - North, West, South, East and North East with a cap of 25 percent.

An app to get tiger numbers right

- In the forthcoming All-India Tiger Estimation, to be taken up in December-January, the authorities plan to eliminate the process of manual recording of signs of the carnivore and other habitat details.
- Instead, an app named **M-STRiPES (Monitoring System For Tigers-Intensive Protection and Ecological Status)** developed by the **Wildlife Institute of India**, Dehradun, will be used for the first time.
- It is a free app that will be made available to staff participating in the tiger census exercise, and they will feed in their observation during the carnivore sign survey and transect marking.
- Details such as pellet density, vegetation status and human disturbance, if any, will also be recorded.
- The national tiger estimates are conducted once in four years, with the first conducted in 2006.

Cabinet approves the establishment of the National Anti-profiteering Authority under GST

- It is to be headed by a senior officer of the level of Secretary to the Government of India with four Technical Members from the Centre and/or the States
- The "anti-profiteering" measures enshrined in the GST law provide an institutional mechanism to ensure that the full benefits of input tax credits and reduced GST rates on supply of goods or services flow to the consumers
- This institutional framework comprises the NAA, a Standing Committee, Screening Committees in every State and the Directorate General of Safeguards in the Central Board of Excise & Customs (CBEC).
- There will be a screening committee in each state that consumers can complain to.
- In case the incident of profiteering relates to an item of mass impact with 'All India' ramification, the application may be directly made to the Standing Committee.
- the Standing Committee shall refer the matter for detailed investigation to the Director General of Safeguards, CBEC, which shall report its findings to the NAA.

Powers and functions of NAA

- In the event the NAA confirms there is a necessity to apply anti-profiteering measures,
 1. It has the authority to order the supplier / business concerned to reduce its prices or return the undue benefit availed by it along with interest to the recipient of the goods or services.
 2. If the undue benefit cannot be passed on to the recipient, it can be ordered to be deposited in the Consumer Welfare Fund.
 3. In extreme cases, the NAA can impose a penalty on the defaulting business entity and even order the cancellation of its registration under GST.

Infra status for logistics sector

- The Centre has granted infrastructure status to the logistics sector, allowing it to avail loans at competitive terms that come along with the status.
- The need for integrated logistics sector development was imminent in view of the fact that the logistics cost in India is very high compared to developed countries.
- High logistics cost reduces the competitiveness of Indian goods both in domestic as well as export markets. Development of logistics would give a boost to both domestic and external demand thereby encouraging manufacturing and ‘job creation.’
- the infrastructure status will reduce the cost of capital in transportation and warehousing, thereby reducing the cost of logistics

'Logistics infrastructure' means

- According to the definition that has been included, 'logistics infrastructure' means and includes
 1. multi-modal logistics park comprising inland container depot (ICD) with minimum investment of ₹50 crore and minimum area of 10 acre,
 2. cold chain facility with minimum investment of ₹15 crore and minimum area of 20,000 square feet,
 3. warehousing facility with investment of minimum ₹25 crore and minimum area of 1 lakh square feet.

There are a number of benefits that the infrastructure status has

1. Infrastructure industries get longer maturity loans compared to typical manufacturing sector.
2. They are also eligible for slightly higher equity ratios while applying for the loans.
3. The third is that the external commercial borrowing guidelines say that the infrastructure sector has certain advantages and flexibility, and they can also do refinancing with specialised lenders like IDFC, IIFCL, etc.

India unlikely to cut malaria by half in 2020: WHO

- India accounted for 6% of global malaria cases and 7% of deaths caused by it in 2016, according to a report by (WHO).
- In contrast, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Kyrgyzstan achieved malaria-free status in 2015 and 2016 respectively.
- About 80% of the deaths were accounted for by 15 countries, namely, India and 14 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- A key impediment to eliminating malaria is a weak surveillance system.
- India and Nigeria, two major contributors to the global burden of malaria, were able to detect only 8% and 16% of cases, respectively, via the system.

- 51% of plasmodium vivax cases — the milder cousin of the p. falciparum — were traced in India.
- This could at least be partially explained by resistance to chloroquine, the first line treatment to p. vivax infections that has been detected in pockets of the country
- Bhutan, Nepal, Thailand, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Indonesia, says the WHO, are among the countries poised to reduce malaria incidence by over 40% by 2020.
- India — *due to low funding per person at risk and resistance to certain frontline insecticides* — is only expected to achieve a 20%-40% reduction.

Indian Navy gets logistics base east of Malacca in Singapore

- India now has an arrangement to have its naval warships refuelled and restocked at Singapore, located at gateway to the contested waters of the South China Sea through which passes some 35 per cent of Indian trade.
- Both countries would increase more participation and activity in the Malacca Straits and the Andaman Sea.
- Singapore sits at the eastern edge of this crucial water channel that is the shortest route between Indian Ocean with the Pacific Ocean.
- The Navy will have a full-fledged logistics facility that is 2,177 km east from its nearest base at Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal.
- This is the first such military logistics agreement with a country east of Malacca indicating a shift eastwards for the Indian Navy.
- Indian Navy has started its Malacca patrol in June this year to protect the sea lanes of communication (SLOCs)
- China continues to look primarily to the Persian Gulf, Africa to satisfy its growing oil and gas demands, making the Malacca Straits even more important.

- France will like to deepen cooperation with India in the Indo-Pacific bilaterally and not as a part of a multilateral arrangement.
- this new cooperation would be discussed as part of the strategic partnership along with cooperation in counter-terrorism, defence hardware, nuclear energy, and space cooperation during the upcoming visit
- India and France have both a geographical presence as well as a traditional connection of trust in the Indian Ocean

France in Indian Ocean

- France is the only western country with large territory in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) including the Reunion Islands, that spans about two million square kilometres of an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and it has a population of one million French Citizens in the region, including about 30% of Indian origin.
- The French navy maintains bases in the UAE, Djibouti as well as in Reunion, with a total of 20,000 forces permanently based in the IOR.
- France is India's oldest strategic partner, and has conducted India's first international 'Varuna' joint naval exercises since 1983.

Futuristic combat vehicle plan a game changer: Army

- The two ambitious projects The Futuristic Infantry Combat vehicle (FICV) and Future Ready Combat Vehicle (FRCV) programmes ,to equip the Army with futuristic combat vehicles are a game changer for the Indian industry.
- The FICV is an ambitious effort to indigenously design and manufacture a futuristic infantry vehicle by the private industry by roping in foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers.
- The Army has a requirement for more than 2,600 vehicles.
- The FRCV is a tender for the procurement of futuristic tanks through the Strategic Partnership model.

Highways to be rated on safety features

- A global charity unveiled an India Road Assessment Programme (IndiaRAP) that will rate highways' safety levels, and seek to eliminate the most unsafe roads.
- As India invests in large-scale road upgrades across the country, maximising the safety of this investment will deliver strong transport, health and economic benefits
- The ratings are assigned on the basis of the level of safety which is 'built-in' to a road for vehicle occupants, motorcyclists, bicyclists and pedestrians.
- Five-star roads are the safest while one-star roads are the least safe.
- The IndiaRAP programme is being supported by FedEx Express and will be hosted by the Asian Institute of Transport Development, and will work with government agencies as well as investors, researchers and NGOs to assess existing highways and promote the use of better design to make roads safer.

EESL launches \$454 million 'Creating and Sustaining Markets for Energy Efficiency' project in partnership with the GEF

- EESL has proposed Energy Efficiency Revolving Fund (EERF) for sustainable funding mechanism of energy efficiency projects in the country.
- Will support the 'proof of concept' investments for the new technologies of super-efficient ceiling fans, tri-generation technologies & smart grid-application
- This unique model will help in addressing the upfront risks of new technologies.
- The GEF project further brings together many technical and financing partners including United Nations Environment (UN Environment), Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KfW) which aims to mitigate 60 million tons of CO₂

Deen Dayal SPARSH Yojana

- Scholarship for Promotion of Aptitude & Research in Stamps as a Hobby
- It is proposed to award annual scholarships to children of Standard VI to IX having good academic record and also pursuing Philately as a hobby through a competitive selection process in all postal circles. Philately is the hobby of collection and study of Postage stamps.

Mission 11 million initiative launched

- a football initiative aimed towards taking the game to 12,000 schools in 37 cities across the country
- Through the project, school children will be encouraged to play football regularly and help them gain healthy habits, fine tune motor skills, learn life lessons in team work and cultivate sportsman spirit.
- Attempts are made towards developing a sports culture in the country with projects like Khelo India that gave everyone a chance to play the game they liked.

MSME Delayed Payment Portal –

MSME Samadhaan

- empowering micro and small entrepreneurs across the country to directly register their cases relating to delayed payments by Central Ministries/Departments/CPSEs/State Governments
- The Portal will give information about the pending payment of MSEs with individual CPSEs / Central Ministries, State Governments, etc.
- The CEO of PSEs and the Secretary of the Ministries concerned will also be able to monitor the cases of delayed payment under their jurisdiction and issue necessary instructions to resolve the issues.
- The portal will greatly facilitate the monitoring of the delayed payment in a more effective manner.
- The information on the portal will be available in public domain, thus exerting moral pressure on the defaulting organisations.
- The MSEs will also be empowered to access the portal and monitor their cases.

Grahak Sadak Koyla Vitaran App

- *The launching of the app is also one of the initiatives of CIL towards achieving the much cherished goal of 'Digital India' and transparency.*
- Helps achieve transparency in despatch operations, as a tool to monitor, whether the despatches are made on the fair principle of 'First in First Out' and keeps track of all the activities from issuance of Sale Order to physical delivery of coal by road.
- Helps in logistics planning for lifting of coal in tune with the loading programmes
- The app provides date-wise, truck-wise quantity of coal delivered against the Sale Orders.

She-Box Online Complaint Management System

- To ensure the effective implementation of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act (the SH Act), 2013
- Once a complaint is submitted to the portal, it will be directly sent to the ICC/LCC of the concerned employer. Through this portal, WCD as well as complainant can monitor the progress of inquiry conducted by the ICC/LCC.
- This is a proactive step taken by MWCD in the wake of the worldwide social media campaign #MeToo, where women have related their experience of facing sexual harassment and abuse.

Policies and institutional mechanisms to advance India's climate actions

- Achieving about 58.3 GW of Renewable Energy Capacity out of a targeted 175 GW for 2022
- **Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana** for providing free LPG connections and Ujala for embracing energy efficient LED bulbs dedicated towards supporting citizens move towards sustainable lifestyle.
- As part of our **mission on strategic knowledge on climate change**, we have established 8 Global Technology Watch Groups in the areas of Renewable Energy Technology, Advance Coal Technology, Enhanced Energy Efficiency, Green Forest, Sustainable Habitat, Water, Sustainable Agriculture and Manufacturing.
- India is one of the few countries where, despite ongoing development, **forest and tree cover has increased** transforming country's forests into a net sink owing to national policies aimed at conservation and sustainable management of forests.
- A number of schemes for transformation and rejuvenation of urban areas have been launched including **Smart Cities Mission, Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation**. These schemes have integrated appropriate adaptation and mitigation measures for environment protection.

- **Swachh Bharat Mission** has been launched with aim to make India clean and litter free. Government has recently revised following waste management rules to make them more effective, efficient and stringent.
- **Government has revised six waste management rules which are more effective, efficient and stringent.** These include rules for solid waste, Plastic waste, E-waste, bio-Medical and Hazardous and Construction and Demolition Waste.
- **Greening of India's extensive Railway routes and Highways is being undertaken.**
- **Air Quality Index** launched in over 30 cities to provide real-time data of air pollution on daily basis.
- **Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana** has been formulated with the vision of extending the coverage of irrigation and improving water use efficiency 'More crop per drop'.
- Second Phase of **Science Express Climate Action Special train** with the aim to create awareness among various sections of society, especially students, on the science of climate change, the observed and anticipated impacts, and different possible responses as to how climate change can be combated.
- **Zero Effect, Zero Defect** is a policy initiative to enhance energy efficiency and resources efficiency in Medium & Small Industries.
- Another important initiative relating to rivers is the **National Mission for Clean Ganga** which seeks to rejuvenate the river along its length of more than 2,500 km.

'Aadi Mahotsav' – Mega National Tribal Festival

- To introduce this wonderful cultural heritage to all over India and the world
- Objects and artifacts made by tribals will have an opportunity to sell them and get financial benefits
- *The national object of inclusive development (Sabka Vikas) includes the development of tribes as an important component. Our constitution enjoins upon the Government the responsibility of addressing the special needs of the tribals.*

Continuation of sub-schemes under Umbrella Scheme “Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS)”

- The approved Schemes include:
- Anganwadi Services
- Scheme for Adolescent Girls
- Child Protection Services
- National Crèche Scheme

Anganwadi Services (ICDS) aims at holistic development of children under the age of six years and its beneficiaries are children of this age group and Pregnant Women & Lactating Mothers.

The objective of the **Scheme for Adolescent Girls** is to facilitate, educate and empower Adolescent Girls so as to enable them to become self-reliant and aware citizens through improved nutrition and health status, promoting awareness about health, hygiene, nutrition, mainstreaming out of school AGs into formal/non-formal education and providing information/guidance about existing public services.

The objectives of **Child Protection Services** are to provide safe and secure environment for children in conflict with law and children in need of care and protection, reduce vulnerabilities through a wide range of social protection measures, prevent actions that lead to abuse, neglect, exploitation, abandonment and separation of children from families etc., bring focus on non-institutional care, develop a platform for partnership between Government & Civil Society and establish convergence of child related social protection services.

National Creche Scheme aims at providing a safe place for mothers to leave their children while they are at work, and thus, is a measure for empowering women as it enables them to take up employment. At the same time, it is also an intervention towards protection and development of children in the age group of 6 months to 6 years.

Northeast is all set to get India's first-ever "Air Dispensary" based in a helicopter

- helicopter will be based at two locations, namely Imphal in Manipur and Meghalaya in Shillong.
- Both of these cities have premier postgraduate medical institutes from where specialist doctors, along with the necessary equipment and paramedical staff, would be able to move into the helicopter and hold a dispensary/OPD in different locations across the eight States of North Eastern Region.
- On its way back, the same helicopter can also transport a sick patient, requiring admission to a city hospital.

Expansion of umbrella scheme “Mission for Protection and Empowerment for Women” and introducing a new scheme ‘ Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra’

- **Pradhan Mantri Mahila Shakti Kendra’** will empower rural women through community participation to create an environment in which they realize their full potential
- It will also aim at improvement in declining Child Sex Ratio; ensuring survival. & protection of the girl child; ensuring her education, and empowering her to fulfil her potential
- Community engagement through Student Volunteers is envisioned in 115 most backward districts as part of the PMMSK Block level initiatives.
- Student volunteers will play an instrumental role in awareness generation regarding various important government schemes/ programmes as well as social issues.
- The revised NMEW Scheme aims to achieve holistic empowerment of women through convergence of schemes/programmes of different Ministries/Department of Government of India as well as State Governments.

<http://pib.nic.in/newsite/PrintRelease.aspx?relid=173722>

National Mission for Empowerment of Women

- The salient features of the National Mission for Empowerment of Women (NMEW) are:
 1. To ensure economic empowerment of women.
 2. To ensure that violence against women is eliminated progressively.
 3. To ensure social empowerment of women with emphasis on health and education.
 4. To oversee gender mainstreaming of programmes, policies, institutional arrangements and processes of participating Ministries, Institutions and Organizations.
 5. To undertake awareness generation as well as advocacy activities to fuel demand for benefits under various schemes and programmes and create, if required, structures at district, tehsil and village level with the involvement of Panchayats for their fulfillment.

BLUE REVOLUTION

- To fully tap the total fish potential of the country both in the inland and the marine sector and triple the production by 2020.
- To transform the fisheries sector as a modern industry with special focus on new technologies and processes
- To double the income of the fishers and fish farmers with special focus on increasing productivity and better marketing postharvest infrastructure including e-commerce and other technologies and global best innovations
- To ensure inclusive participation of the fishers and fish farmers in the income enhancement
- To triple the export earnings by 2020 with focus on benefits flow to the fishers and fish farmers including through institutional mechanisms in the cooperative, producer companies and other structures
- To enhance food and nutritional security of the country

Components of Blue Revolution

- The Blue Revolution scheme has the following components:
 - A. National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) and its activities
 - B. Development of Inland Fisheries and Aquaculture
 - C. Development of Marine Fisheries, Infrastructure and Post-Harvest Operations
 - D. Strengthening of Database & Geographical Information System of the Fisheries Sector
 - E. Institutional Arrangement for Fisheries Sector
 - F. Monitoring, Control and Surveillance (MCS) and other need-based Interventions
 - G. National Scheme of Welfare of Fishermen

- Blue Revolution, the **Neel Kranti Mission** has the vision to achieve economic prosperity of the country and the fishers and fish farmers as well as contribute towards food and nutritional security through full potential utilization of water resources for fisheries development in a sustainable manner, keeping in view the bio-security and environmental concerns.

Rashtriya Krishi Vikas Yojana (RKVY)

- Brought in changes with a focus on value chain, postharvest infrastructure and agri-entrepreneur development, among others.
- Now, the scheme has been rebranded as **RKVY-Remunerative Approaches for Agriculture and Allied sector Rejuvenation (RAFTAAR) to be implemented for three years till 2019-20.**
- It will provide considerable flexibility and autonomy to states in planning and executing programmes for investment in agriculture and allied sectors.
- The funds would be provided to the States as 60:40 grants between Centre and States (90:10 for North Eastern States and Himalayan States)
- It will also strengthen farmer's efforts through creation of agriculture infrastructure that help in supply of quality inputs, market facilities etc.
- It will further promote agri-entrepreneurship and support business models that maximize returns to farmers.
- Innovation and agri-entrepreneur development through creating end-to-end solution, skill development and financial support for setting up the agri-enterprise -10% of annual outlay including 2% of administrative costs.

South Asia Regional Training and Technical Assistance Center (SARTTAC)

- It is a collaborative venture between the IMF, the **member countries (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka)**.
- SARTTAC's goal is to help its six member countries strengthen their capacity to design and implement policies that promote macroeconomic stability, sustainable growth, and poverty reduction in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

India Pitches for Strong Pre-2020 Climate Action by Developed Countries

- The much forgotten, pre-2020 agenda, *under which developed countries are to ratify the second commitment period of the Kyoto Protocol (KP II) to undertake greenhouse gas emission cuts and also provide finance and technology support to developing countries for enhancing their ambition*, found a place in the COP 23 agenda.
- Enhanced pre-2020 action will reduce
 1. the overall costs and economic challenges for making a transition to low carbon growth pathway
 2. reduce climate risks
 3. help realize immediate co-benefits such as improved public health as a result of lower air pollution, improved energy security, reduced crop yield losses among others.

India along with the Like Minded Developing Countries (LMDC) group strongly voiced the need for urgent time bound action on climate change by developed countries in the pre-2020 period

NDMA conducts brainstorming session on use of UAVs in Disaster Management

- UAVs can provide high-resolution, real-time images of even the inaccessible locations.
- These images can then be used to produce accurate hazard maps so that prevention and mitigation measures for reducing disaster risks are planned accordingly.
- In a post-disaster situation, UAVs can be used to map the affected areas in high resolution within a short time, which, in turn, can aid swift and efficient response.

The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), headed by the Prime Minister of India, is the apex body for Disaster Management in India.

Setting up of NDMA and the creation of an enabling environment for institutional mechanisms at the State and District levels is mandated by the Disaster Management Act, 2005

India Youth Development Index and Report 2017

- **Objective:**
- To track the trends in Youth Development across the States. The Index enables recognizing the high and low performing states, identifies the weak domains and informs the policy makers the priority areas of intervention for youth development in the states

The Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development (RGNIYD), Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu, an Institute of National Importance has come out with Youth Development Index and Report 2017.

How is India Youth Development Index different from Global YDI?

1. In the India Youth Development Index 2017, the first five dimensions are retained same as that of Global YDI.
2. YDI for India adds a new domain, social inclusion, to assess the inclusiveness of societal progress as structural inequalities persist in Indian society.
3. India has been ranked 133rd out of 183 countries in the 2016 Global Youth Development Index (YDI) compiled by the Commonwealth Secretariat.
4. Global YDI has five domains measuring levels of education, health and well-being, employment and opportunity, political participation and civic participation for young people.

Hunar Haat

- Under Ministry of Minority Affairs
- where exquisite pieces of Handicraft & Handloom prepared by inmates of Tihar Jail and master artisans from across the country are displayed.
- Ministry of Minority Affairs is organising “Hunar Haat” under “**USTTAD**” scheme at different parts of the country
- “Hunar Haat” have become a successful mission to provide employment and employment opportunities and national as well international markets for thousands of master a
- The scheme “Upgrading the Skills and Training in Traditional Arts/Crafts for Development (USTTAD) was launched in May, 2015rtisans, craftsmen and culinary experts.

Moscow declaration

- Aims to eliminate additional deaths from HIV co-infection by 2020 and achieving synergy in coordinated action against TB and non-communicable diseases.
- The Moscow declaration emphasised the need for fixing multi-sectoral responsibility towards ending TB by 2035, the global target.
- The Indian government will ensure access to care for some vulnerable populations such as tribals, people in urban slums etc. Early diagnosis of all patients and putting them on the right treatment and ensuring their complete treatment is crucial

Manipur Sangai Festival 2017

- The 'Festival' is named after the State animal, Sangai, the brow-antlered deer found only in Manipur
- Every edition of the festival showcases the tourism potential of the state in the field of Arts & Culture, Handloom, Handicrafts, Indigenous Sports, Cuisine, Music and Adventure sports of the state etc.
- The State's classical dance form, '**Ras Leela**' is quite famous all over the world for its distinctiveness from any other dance forms in India.
- The other folk dance performances like the Kabui Naga dance, Bamboo dance, Maibi dance, Lai Haraoba dance, Khamba Thoibi dance etc. which will be showcased at the festival.
- Thang Ta (a combination Spear & Sword skills), Yubi-Lakpi (a game played with greased coconut like rugby), Mukna Kangjei (a game that combines hockey and wrestling), and Sagol Kangjei- Modern Polo (believed to have evolved in Manipur) will all form part of the festival

Cabinet approves India's Membership for European Bank for Reconstruction & Development

- Necessary steps will be initiated by the Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance to acquire the membership of the EBRD.
- Membership of EBRD would enhance India's international profile and promote its economic interests.
- EBRD's core operations pertain to private sector development in their countries of operation. The membership would help India leverage the technical assistance and sectoral knowledge of the bank for the benefit of development of private sector.
- This would open up new vistas for Indian professionals on the one hand, and give a fillip to Indian exports on the other.
- Increased economic activities would have the employment generating potential.
- It would also enable Indian nationals to get the employment opportunity in the Bank.

Brahmos Flight test from IAF's Su-30MKI fighter aircraft

- Brahmos, the world's fastest supersonic cruise missile created history on 22nd Nov 2017 after it was successfully flight-tested first time from the Indian Air Force's (IAF) frontline fighter aircraft Sukhoi-30MKI against a sea based target.
- Brahmos, the world-class weapon with multi-platform, multi-mission role is now capable of being launched from Land, Sea and Air, completing the tactical cruise missile triad for India. • Brahmos is a joint venture between DRDO of India and NPOM of Russia.
- The air version of BrahMos missile is a 2.5 tonne supersonic air-to-surface cruise missile with range of more than 400 km

Pradhan Mantri Khanij Kshetra Kalyan Yojana (PMKKKY)

- The programme is meant to provide for the welfare of areas and people affected by mining related operations, using the funds generated by District Mineral Foundations (DMFs).
- To ensure long-term sustainable livelihoods for the affected people in mining areas.
- High priority areas like drinking water supply, health care, sanitation, education, skill development, women and child care, welfare of aged and disabled people, skill development and environment conservation will get at least 60 % share of the funds
- The Mines and Minerals (Development & Regulation) Amendment Act, 2015, mandated the setting up of District Mineral Foundations (DMFs) in all districts in the country affected by mining related operations.

Economy gets thumbs-up from Moody's

- Upgraded the Indian government's rating as a local and foreign currency issuer from Baa3 with a positive outlook to Baa2 with a stable outlook.
- Borrowing obligations rated Baa2 are subject to moderate credit risk. They are considered medium grade and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics. Baa3, by contrast, was the lowest investment grade rating.
- The decision to upgrade the ratings is underpinned by Moody's expectation that continued progress on economic and institutional reforms will, over time, enhance India's high growth potential and its large and stable financing base for government debt, and will likely contribute to a gradual decline in the general government debt burden over the medium term

India's heritage city races to save icons from ruin

- The 600-year-old enclave was named India's first 'World Heritage City' - Ahmedabad
- Ahmedabad hosts the towering Bhadra fort, the legendary stone latticework of the 16th-century Sidi Saiyyed mosque, and countless relics fusing the unique Hindu and Muslim architectural styles of its conquerors.
- Conservation experts warn Ahmedabad, one of the world's most polluted cities, faces a mammoth task in defend the status.
- the chronic air pollution, crushing traffic and chaotic urban sprawl are the major causes.
- Many traditional 'pols' — clusters of settlements identified by UNESCO as bearing "enormous" historical value — are all but abandoned, the iconic wooden homes collapsing from neglect.

India thanks the world for its support in ICJ

- The ICJ has its seat at The Hague, the Netherlands, and has the jurisdiction to settle disputes between countries and examine cases pertaining to violation of human rights according to the tenets of international law. It is the judicial arm of the United Nations.
- The ICJ was established in 1945 by the UN Charter following its precursor, the Permanent Court of International Justice.
- The UN Security Council is authorised by Chapter XIV of the United Nations Charter to enforce Court rulings, but enforcement is subject to veto by permanent members of the Security Council.
- The ICJ has a total strength of 15 judges who are elected to nine-year terms of office. They are elected by members of the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, where polling takes place simultaneously but independent of each other. In order to be elected, a candidate must have an absolute majority in both bodies, which often leads to much lobbying, and a number of rounds of voting.

- Judges are eligible to stand for re-election.
- After the Court is in session, a President and Vice-President are elected by secret ballot to hold office for three years.
- The Court also adheres to a rigid ethno-cultural matrix to ensure that it is representative of the 'main forms of civilization and the principal legal systems of the world.
- The 15 judges of the Court are distributed as per the regions:
 - Three from Africa
 - Two from Latin America and Caribbean
 - Three from Asia
 - Five from Western Europe and other states
 - Two from Eastern Europe
- The Charter also makes it mandatory for judges to have recognised competence in international law.

ICJ Election 2017

- India scored a major diplomatic victory as its nominee to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Dalveer Bhandari, was re-elected after the United Kingdom withdrew its candidate, Christopher Greenwood.

Significance

1. This is the first time in the 70-year history of the United Nations that the U.K. will not be on the ICJ;
2. This is the first time that one of the five permanent members of the UNSC lost out to an ordinary member in a race.
3. This is also the first time that one sitting member of the ICJ lost to another sitting member.

- The U.K. had nine of the 15 UNSC votes in the previous rounds, leading to a stalemate though India had an overwhelming majority in the GA.
- It initially wanted to suspend the voting process and move to a conference mechanism that has never been used in the history of the U.N. to break the stalemate. But this move needed the approval of the UNSC in an open voting while voting for the ICJ is through a secret ballot.
- As Monday progressed it became clear that the U.K. would not have nine members to publicly support the proposal to suspend further rounds of voting.
- India made it clear that it had no intention to back off, as its support among the member states was clear and demonstrated.
- At last just before elections, UK withdrew.

Penal law soon on triple talaq

- The Union government has set up a ministerial committee to frame a new law that would attract penal provisions in the case of use of triple talaq or talaq-e-biddat for divorce between Muslim couples.
- The Supreme Court had, in August this year, in a majority judgement set aside the practice of talaq-e-biddat, an arbitrary and unilateral decision by a Muslim husband to end the marriage by utterance of the word talaq three times.
- **Why a law is required?**
- It was found that divorce by way of talaq-e-biddat was taking place even after the SC judgment.

First-time offenders to go scot-free in J&K

- The Centre has advised the Jammu and Kashmir government to withdraw cases against first-time offenders involved in stone-throwing incidents in the 2016 unrest in Kashmir Valley.
- It has also offered to bear the cost of treatment of those who were blinded, partially blinded or injured in firing by security forces.
- Deliberations are on to engage the separatists but the focus is on Kashmiris who have been affected by the ongoing violence.
- The Centre's decisions are also in consonance with the recent initiatives of the J&K police for surrender and rehabilitation of young men who have joined terror groups.
- The Home Ministry has also decided to increase its share in providing ex gratia relief to J&K Police personnel killed in the line of duty and it will be at par with the central armed police force (CAPF) personnel now.
- The Home Ministry has also decided to reimburse the expenditure of the State government in providing relief to people living in the border areas who have suffered loss of property and livestock.

President signs Ordinance to amend Bankruptcy Code

- Aimed to disallow wilful defaulters and unscrupulous entities from bidding for stressed assets.
- It also places restrictions for such persons to participate in the resolution or liquidation process. Accordingly, companies, promoters and associate companies undergoing insolvency resolution or liquidation under the Code would not be eligible to bid for the stressed assets.
- The Ordinance provides such checks by specifying that the Committee of Creditors (CoC) ensure the viability and feasibility of the resolution plan before approving it.
- The Ordinance has also provided for a fine between ₹1 lakh and ₹2 crore for contraventions of provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy law.

China, Djibouti forge 'strategic' ties

- African nation is hosting China's first overseas military base.
- The two countries agreed to form a "strategic partnership"
- China has described the base on the Horn of Africa, as "defensive in nature", saying it will provide support for naval escorts, UN peacekeeping, anti-piracy and evacuating Chinese nationals from the region in emergencies.
- The Chinese base is just a few kilometres from Camp Lemonnier, the United States' only permanent base in Africa.
- along with regular naval vessel visits to foreign ports, both reflects and amplifies China's growing influence, extending the reach of its armed forces.
- The Horn of Africa denotes the region containing the countries of Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Somalia

Rohingya repatriation deal signed

- Bangladesh and Myanmar have signed a memorandum of understanding on the return of Rohingya people who fled the Rakhine state in the wake of a military crackdown.
- At least 600,000 Rohingya people have fled Myanmar to the neighbouring Bangladesh since the army started an operation in August following an attack by Rohingya militants.
- The two countries agreed to form a joint working group at the Foreign Secretary-level to start the repatriation process.
- The U.S., in what appeared to be a policy reversal, called the military operation in Rakhine “ethnic cleansing” and threatened targeted sanctions against those responsible for it.

Who are Rohingyas?

- The stateless Rohingya have been the target of communal violence and vicious anti-Muslim sentiment in mainly Buddhist Myanmar for years.
- They have also been systematically oppressed by the government, which stripped the minority of citizenship and severely restricts their movement, as well as their access to basic services.

Bamboo ceases to be a tree, treed of Forest Act

- The bamboo has legally ceased to be a tree with the government, amending the Indian Forest Act and axing the bamboo — taxonomically a grass — from a list of plants that also included palms, skumps, brushwood and canes.

Why?

To promote cultivation of bamboo in non-forest areas to achieve the “twin objectives” of increasing the income of farmers and also increasing the green cover of the country.

Bamboo grown in the forest areas would continue to be governed by the provisions of the Indian Forest Act.

Restrictions

- The classification of the bamboo — with its multifarious uses as an edible item, furniture and construction — as a tree meant that it couldn't be easily ferried across State borders.
- It also required permits from village councils and couldn't be cultivated in non-forest areas.

IMPACT

- It will encourage farmers and other individuals to take up plantation/block plantation of suitable bamboo species on degraded land, in addition to plantation on agricultural land and other private lands under the agro-forestry mission.
- Though the country has 19% share of the world's area under bamboo cultivation, its market share in the sector is only 6%.

BC Commission set to get constitutional status

- The Union government will reintroduce the **Constitution (123rd) Amendment Bill, 2017**, in the winter session of Parliament, which seeks to accord constitutional status to the National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC).
- If passed, the President may specify the socially and educationally backward classes in the various States and Union Territories, in consultation with the Governors, and a law of Parliament will be required for amending the list of backward classes.
- The NCBC, a statutory body created in 1993, was given limited powers: to recommend inclusion in or exclusion of a community from the Central list.
- The power to hear complaints of the OBCs and protect their interests remained with the National Commission for Scheduled Castes.
- Since the National Commission for Scheduled Castes deals with the grievances and safeguards of the SCs as well as the OBCs, it has limited capacity to address the needs of the OBCs.

- The proposed commission will have a chairperson, vice-chairperson and three other members and will hear the grievances of socially and educationally backward classes, a function discharged so far by the Scheduled Castes commission.
- The Bill will require the support of two-thirds of the members of the House for its passage.

India's Aditya-L1

- Sometime in 2019 or 2020 India will send ISRO's solar mission Aditya-L1 to a vantage point in space, known as the L₁ Lagrange point, to do imaging and study of the sun.
- This launch will happen in the early part of the next solar cycle - an occurrence in which sunspots form on the face of the sun, growing in size and number and eventually diminishing, all over a period of eleven years.
- The so-called L₁ point is 1.5 million kilometres away.
- The 1,500-kg class satellite will be programmed to orbit this point and image the sun's magnetic field from space for the very first time in the world

- Few other space agencies have successfully placed their satellites at this location
- The Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO), a NASA-ESA collaboration involving America and Europe, and NASA's Advanced Composition Explorer (ACE) are at L1 exclusively to study the sun and space weather, respectively.
- Aditya-L1 is expected to be the very first to study from space two months from the time of launch, the magnetic field of the sun's corona.
- The corona is the outer layer that we see during total solar eclipses.
- It will be the first 100% Indian mission which will not only negotiate a challenging orbit, but will also benefit the global scientific community in understanding the sun.
- The mission will carry seven payloads, consisting of a coronagraph, equipment that will image the sun using ultraviolet filters, X-ray spectrometers, and particle samplers all being made within the country.

INDIA -SRILANKA

- SL recently allowed India to jointly develop the Trincomalee port (oil tanks farm) in north-eastern part of the country.
- SL has invited Petronet LNG to set up a liquid gas import terminal in the country. It may help it straddle the gas sector, the dominant fuel for future economic growth.
- SL signed an agreement with India to build 1,200 houses in Hambantota.
- India has also bid to lease and manage the Mattala airport in Hambantota.

UN PARTNERSHIP FUND

- India has pledged an additional USD 100 million towards the UN partnership fund at the 2017 UN Pledging Conference for Development Activities.
- The India–UN Development Partnership Fund was set up in 2017 as a partnership between India and the United Nations Office for South–South Cooperation (UNOSSC).
- The first project from the fund is being executed in partnership with seven Pacific Island countries.
- It supports Southern-owned and led, demand-driven, and transformational sustainable development projects across the developing world, with a focus on least developed countries and small island developing states.

TRAI releases Recommendations on Net Neutrality

- No service provider can offer or charge discriminatory tariffs for data services on the basis of content.
- No service provider shall enter into any arrangement, agreement or contract, by whatever name called, with any person, natural or legal, that the effect of discriminatory tariffs for data services being offered or charged by the service provider for the purpose of evading the prohibition in this regulation.
- Reduced tariff for accessing or providing emergency services, or at times of public emergency has been permitted.
- Financial disincentives for contravention of the regulation have also been specified
- TRAI may review these regulations after a period of two years.

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) barred telecom service providers from charging differential rates for data services, effectively prohibiting Facebook's Free Basics and Airtel Zero platform by Airtel in their current form.
- The term “net neutrality” was coined to represent the idea that “a maximally useful public information network aspires to treat all content, sites and platforms equally
- TRAI said a fine of Rs. 50,000 would be levied per day, subject to a maximum of Rs. 50 lakh, for any violation of these regulations by the service providers.
- The TRAI said tariff for data services could not vary on the basis of the website/application/ platform/ or type of content being accessed. For example, a consumer could not be charged differently based on whether she was browsing social media site A or B, or on whether she was watching streaming videos or shopping on the Internet.
- this prohibition would not apply to other forms of tariff differentiation that were entirely independent of content.

Prevention of Torture Bill, 2017

- The proposed standalone anti-torture law directly makes the state responsible for any injury inflicted by its agents on citizens.
- It provides a wide definition to torture including inflicting physical, mental or psychological injury.
- Punishment for torture, ranging from fine to life imprisonment has also been recommended.
- It provides for a presumption that injuries of any person in police custody is inflicted by the police action, unless proven otherwise.
- Courts have been envisioned to provide a justiciable compensation for victims of torture.
- The Law Commission has also recommended the ratification of the UN Convention Against Torture.
- While India had signed the 1997 convention, it hasn't ratified it yet.

Bonnet macaques losing their ground in south India

- Bonnet macaques are endemic commensals: they are found only in peninsular India and live in close proximity with humans, adapting to habitats ranging from riverside temples to roadside fig trees.
- A study in 2011 suggested that rhesus macaques were invading the bonnet's habitats in south India.
- Other factors contributing to their decline include rapid urbanisation (as roadside trees are felled and vegetation lost) and their disappearance from temples and tourist spots

Glory of Kakatiya-era temple unveiled

- the 800-year-old Sri Kasi Visweswara Temple
- the Department of Archaeology and Museums (DAM) have been successful in excavating as much as seven feet of large portions of the temple buried under the earth.
- led to the discovery of pradakshina pada, or the circumambulation area. The adisthana , or the temple base, was also found.

Kambala: SC refuses to stay

Ordinance

- Kambala, the traditional buffalo slush track race, is set to begin in the coastal belt with the Supreme Court refusing to pass an interim stay on the Ordinance allowing kambala.
- The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), a non-governmental organisation, has challenged the Ordinance.
- Kambala is an annual buffalo race which is a tradition in the Karnataka's Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts' farming community. This area is called Tulunadu
- Kambala is a festival that originated in the farming community of Karnataka around 800 years back. The festival is dedicated to Kadri's Lord Manjunatha, an incarnation of Lord Shiva.

Vigilance panel to unveil 'Integrity Index'

MORE ACCOUNTABILITY

- **Data collected from 25 organisations where employees have been asked for inputs in five categories**
- **Based on their feedback Integrity Perception Index will be unveiled where the departments assess themselves**
- **Central Vigilance Commission has worked with Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, to develop the index**
- **Presently, snail mail and email facility is available for tipping off the CVC about corruption by public servants**



- The main objectives for which the Integrity Index is to be established are:
- Define what constitutes Integrity of Public Organizations
- Identify the different factors of Integrity and their inter-linkages
- Create an objective and reliable tool that can measure the performance of organizations along these above factors
- Validate the findings over a period of time to improve upon the robustness of the tool that measures Integrity
- Create an internal and external ecosystem that promotes working with Integrity where public organizations lead the way.

Megalithic, neolithic age tools discovered

- discovery of a Neolithic and Megalithic site in Bandipur National Park.
- Some of the megalithic stone tools measure upto 15 cm, while the slab stones in the burial sites measure about 10 feet in length, 5 feet in breadth.
- there was a stone axe, believed to belong to the Neolithic age, and all the artefacts are 3,000 years to 5,000 years

Miscellaneous

- Indo – Kazakhstan Joint Exercise “PRABAL DOSTYK 2017”
- Minister of Power and New & Renewable Energy, launched the Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana – ‘Saubhagya’ Web Portal
- 15th Finance Commission was set up under Chairmanship of N K Singh

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