

My Notes....

NATIONAL

37TH UNESCO HERITAGE SITE

India's nomination of the "Victorian and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai" has been inscribed on **UNESCO's World Heritage list**. The decision was taken at the 42nd session of the World Heritage Committee of UNESCO at Manama in Bahrain on 30 June 2018. As recommended by the World Heritage Committee, India accepted the renaming of the ensemble as "Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai". **Rajabai Clock Tower** as part of the Victorian Gothic and Art Deco Ensemble of Mumbai.

What

- India has been successful in securing the inscription of the "Victorian Gothic and **Art Deco Ensembles of Mumbai**" on **UNESCO's World Heritage List under Criteria (ii) and (iv)** as defined in the UNESCO's Operational Guidelines.
- This makes Mumbai city the second city in India after Ahmedabad to be inscribed on the World Heritage List.
- In the past 5 years alone, India has managed to get inscribed seven of its properties/sites on the World Heritage List of UNESCO.
- India now has overall 37 World Heritage Inscriptions with 29 Cultural, 07 Natural and 01 mixed sites.
- India stands second largest in number after China in terms of number of World Heritage properties in ASPAC (Asia and Pacific) region; it is overall sixth in the world.
- The Ensemble comprises of two architectural styles, the 19th century collection of Victorian structures and the 20th century Art Deco buildings along the sea, conjoined by means of the historical open space of the Oval Maidan.
- Together, this architectural ensemble represents the most remarkable collection of Victorian and Art Deco buildings in the world which forms the unique character of this urban setting, unparalleled in the world.
- The Ensemble consists of 94 buildings primarily of 19th century Victorian Gothic revival and early 20th century Art Deco style of architecture with the Oval Maidan in the centre.
- The 19th century Victorian buildings form part of the larger Fort precinct situated to the east of the Oval Maidan.
- These public buildings include the Old Secretariat (1857-74), University Library and Convention Hall (1874-78), the Bombay High Court (1878), the Public Works **Department Office (1872)**, **Watson's Hotel (1869)**, **David Sassoon Library (1870)**, the Elphinstone College(1888), etc.
- The Art Deco styled buildings to the west of the Oval Maidan were raised in early 20th century on the newly reclaimed lands at Marine Drive and symbolised the shift in expression to represent contemporary aspirations.

Flashback

- The inscription has been done under Criteria (ii) and (iv) as defined in the UNESCO's Operational Guidelines.
- Criterion (ii) refers to the important interchange of human values, over a span of time on development of architecture, monumental arts, town planning and landscape.
- Criterion (iv) refers to being an outstanding example of a type of building, architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrates a significant stage (s) in human history. This achievement is especially remarkable in the view of the successive inscription of another Indian city after Ahmedabad last year.
- In addition, 42 sites from the country figures in the Tentative List of World Heritage and the Ministry of Culture would be recommending one property every year for nomination to UNESCO.

FIRST DELTA RANKING OF ASPIRATIONAL DISTRICTS

The NITI Aayog launched the first Delta ranking (incremental progress) for the Aspirational Districts, based on self-reported data of districts between March 31, 2018 to May 31, 2018, across five developmental areas of Health and Nutrition, Education, Agriculture and Water Resources, Financial Inclusion and Skill Development, and Basic Infrastructure. Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog, highlighted the keen interest displayed by the districts to provide real-time data points by filling up the Champions of Change Dashboard.

What

- The purpose of this ranking is to spur a sense of competition among the dynamic teams in the districts. Since these districts face many challenges including legacy, unexploited or weak resource base, deficit of manpower at different levels due to difficult living conditions etc, the ranking is also a tool to identify sectors and indicator specific challenges so that Team India, which is driving this programme, can take immediate corrective measures.
- The Districts started entering data from 1st April, 2018 in the Champions of Change Dashboard and 108 districts out of total 112, participated in this ranking. Data entry by remaining four districts is also in progress, though they are not part of this ranking.
- The delta ranking is computed in a transparent manner for combined improvements made during April and May 2018.
- Some of the data points have been sourced from Central Ministries viz. Financial Inclusion, Skill Development and 3 indicators of Basic Infrastructure - Household Electricity Connections, Household Toilets and Rural Drinking Water. Most of the data points, however, have been self-reported by the various districts themselves.
- Asifabad district of Telangana, which was ranked 100 in Baseline ranking released in March this year, has made significant improvements in past two months and stood at 15 in Delta ranking. Dahod district of Gujarat improved 19.8 points to rank first in the Delta ranking (was Ranked 17 in Baseline ranking).
- West Sikkim district in Sikkim stood second with 18.9 points, a huge improvement from being in the 30th position in Baseline ranking. Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh also made significant strides by improving 14.7 points and ranked 6th position in Delta ranking from 45th position in Baseline ranking
- This Delta ranking takes a step further and looks into specific aspects of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and analyses how districts have performed in last two months across important sectors.
- This grouping and positioning would aid the District Magistrates/Collectors to focus more on these sectors and improve their ranking in future.
- The knowledge partners of NITI Aayog – Tata Trusts, and Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (ID Insights) - are expected to provide data on 13 survey indicators and have validated values for 29 data-points. The next ranking will take into account these inputs and will be released soon thereafter.

DELTA RANKINGS

| District | State | Delta score | Rank |
|-------------------|----------------|-------------|------|
| Dahod | Gujarat | 19.8 | 1 |
| West Sikkim | Sikkim | 18.9 | 2 |
| Ramanathapuram | Tamil Nadu | 17.7 | 3 |
| Vizianagaram | Andhra Pradesh | 17.5 | 4 |
| YSR | Andhra Pradesh | 14.9 | 5 |
| Bijapur | Chhattisgarh | 14.7 | 6 |
| Washim | Maharashtra | 13.8 | 7 |
| Udham Singh Nagar | Uttarakhand | 13.7 | 8 |
| Korba | Chhattisgarh | 13.6 | 9 |
| Virudhunagar | Tamil Nadu | 13.1 | 10 |

10. **‘Transformation of Aspirational Districts’ programme launched by the Hon’ble PM** in January this year, the ‘Transformation of Aspirational Districts’ programme aims to quickly and effectively transform some of the most underdeveloped districts of the country.
11. The broad contours of the programme are Convergence (of Central & State Schemes), **Collaboration (of Central, State level ‘Prabhari’ Officers** & District Collectors), and Competition among districts driven by a Mass Movement or a Jan Andolan. With States as the main drivers, this program will focus on the strength of each district, identify low-hanging fruits for immediate improvement, measure progress, and rank districts.
12. After several rounds of consultations with various stakeholders, 49 key performance indicators have been chosen to measure progress of the districts.

SOLAR CHARKHA MISSION

President Ram Nath Kovind launched Solar Charkha Mission under which Government will disburse subsidy of Rs 550 crore to thousands of artisans, generating employment in rural areas. It was launched during the event of Udyam Sangam (National MSME Conclave) on the occasion of World MSME Day (observed on 27 June).

What

1. Under this mission, Ministry of Micro Small and Medium Enterprise (MSME) will cover 50 clusters across the country including in the Northeast and each cluster will employ 400 to 2,000 artisans.
2. Its ultimate aim is to generate employment in rural areas and contribute to the green economy.
3. It also aims at linking five crore women across the country to the initiative. The mission is expected to create one lakh jobs during the first two years.

UGC REPLACE BY HECI

The Centre is set to replace the apex higher education regulator body University Grants Commission (UGC) with Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) by repealing the UGC Act, 1951, HRD Minister Prakash Javadekar. The draft act is in accordance with the commitment of the government to reform the regulatory mechanism to provide "more autonomy" to higher education institutes to promote excellence and facilitate holistic growth of the education system.

What

1. The proposed Higher Education Commission of India would focus solely on academic matters and monetary grants would be under the purview of the ministry, according to the draft.
2. Presently, the University Grants Commission (UGC), which came into existence in 1953, provides financial assistance to eligible colleges.
3. The new Act will be called the Higher Education Commission of India Act, 2018 (Repeal of University Grants Commission Act).
4. The new Act is likely to be tabled in the Parliament during the monsoon session.
5. The government was earlier planning a single regulator for technical education, national council teachers training and UGC.
6. However, it has been decided to strengthen the higher education regulator as it was felt that the current commission remains preoccupied with disbursing funds to institutes and is unable to concentrate on other key areas such as mentoring institutes, focusing on research to be undertaken and other quality measures required in the sector.

NHP 2018 RELEASED

Shri J P Nadda, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare released the National Health Profile (NHP)-2018 prepared by the Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI), in New Delhi on 19 June 2018. The E-book (digital version) of the annual

document was also released. The National Health Profile covers demographic, socio-economic, health status and health finance indicators, along with comprehensive information on health infrastructure and human resources in health.

What

1. Shri J P Nadda also launched the National Health Resource Repository (NHRR) - **Country's first ever national healthcare facility registry** of authentic, standardized and updated geo-spatial data of all public and private healthcare establishments.
2. Shri Nadda stated that the Health Profile is a very important tool as it has helped in designing various programmes. He cited the examples of initiatives like Free Drugs and Diagnostics and Mission Parivar Vikas that have benefitted from the Health Profiles.
3. India has made substantial progress on several indicators in the recent years and stated that its national health indicators like Infant Mortality Rate (IMR), Maternal Maternity Rate (MMR) and Total Fertility Rate (TFR) are declining faster a than the world pace.
4. India has shown impressive gains with 22% reduction in Maternal Mortality since 2013.
5. Ayushman Bharat will provide comprehensive healthcare to the people as 1, 50,000 sub-centres will be converted into Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs).
6. The H&WC would provide preventive, promotive, and curative care for non-communicable diseases, dental, mental, geriatric care, palliative care, etc. He further stated that the Government has initiated universal screening of common NCDs such as diabetes, hypertension and common cancers along with Tuberculosis and Leprosy, which will eventually help in reducing the disease burden of the country. This will again change the Health Profile of the people in future.
7. The vision of the NHRR Project is to strengthen evidence-based decision making and develop a platform for citizen and provider-centric services by creating a robust, standardized and secured IT-enabled **repository of India's healthcare resources**.
8. The Central Bureau of Health Intelligence (CBHI) has actively engaged with key stakeholders including leading Associations, Allied Ministries, and several private healthcare service providers.
9. This resource repository shall enable advanced research towards ongoing & forthcoming healthcare challenges arising from other determinants of health like - disease, environment etc.

RANI RASHMONI INDUCTED

Rani Rashmoni, the last of the five fast patrol vessels (FPV) of Indian Coast Guard constructed at Hindusthan Shipyard Ltd (HSL), was inducted into the Indian Coast Guard in Visakhapatnam on 18 June 2018. Earlier, four such ships - ICGS Rani Abbakka, ICGS Rani Avanti Bai, ICGS Rani Durgavati and ICGS Rani Gaidinliu - had **been commissioned and "they are in active service at various locations on the eastern seaboard**. Rani Rashmoni is the last in the series of five FPVs.

What

1. FPVs are equipped with advanced sensors and latest equipment and are designed to perform multifarious tasks such as surveillance, interdiction, search and rescue, anti-smuggling and anti-poaching operations.
2. The 51-metre ship is propelled by three MTU 4,000 series diesel engines of 2,720 capacities each, coupled with Rolls Royce Kamewa jets.
3. The patrol vessel is fitted with an advanced global maritime distress and safety system to carry out search and rescue operations.
4. Other features include integrated bridge system, machinery control system, infra-red communication system and the armament includes one CRN 91 naval gun along with its fire control system.

5. The shipyard had done a remarkable job in overall weight reduction and achieving a contractual speed of 34 knots.
6. ICGS Rani Rashmoni, with a crew of four officers and 34 men, will be based in Visakhapatnam.

NDLI DEDICATES TO THE NATION

The Union Human Resource Development Minister, Shri Prakash Javadekar launched the **new digital initiative of HRD Ministry 'National Digital Library of India'** on the occasion of National Reading Day in New Delhi on 19 June 2018. This National Digital Library of India (NDLI) is a project of the Ministry of Human Resource Development under the aegis of National Mission on Education through Information and Communication Technology (NMEICT).

What

1. The objective of NDLI is to make digital educational resources available to all citizens of the country to empower, inspire and encourage learning. National Digital Library of India is developed by IIT Kharagpur.
2. NDLI is the Single Window Platform that collects and collates metadata from premier learning institutions in India and abroad, as well as other relevant sources.
3. It is a digital repository containing textbooks, articles, videos, audio books, lectures, simulations, fiction and all other kinds of learning media.
4. The Minister said that a new era of Digital India has begun as we dedicate this Digital Library to the Nation. The National Digital Library is a 24x7 ubiquitous knowledge resource that is accessible to anyone with internet access and it is built to enable the rise of Digital India.
5. Anybody can access the digital library anytime and anywhere absolutely free of cost **and will contribute greatly to the Government's commitment towards "Padhe Bharat Badhe Bharat"**.
6. NDLI is a digital library that makes quality learning resources available to all learners and has 1.7 Crore content from more than 160 sources, in over 200 languages, everywhere and 30 lakh users are registered on NDLI as on date and our target is to increase the users 10 times in a year.
7. NDLI platform is collaborative in nature and extended his regards to contributing institutions which have made available their digital repositories for integration with NDLI.
8. NDLI is also available on the Mobile app. NDLI Mobile app is enabling access to rich digital content of libraries across the country and even foreign repositories to users even in the remotest of areas.
9. National Digital Library initiative by MHRD together with National virtual Library of India platform by Ministry of Culture will enable India leave an indelible mark on the World stage.

AFSPA EXTENDED IN NAGALAND

The Central government on 30 June 2018 declared the whole of Nagaland as a 'disturbed' area under the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958, for a further period of six months. A gazette notification said the Centre was of the opinion that the area comprising whole of Nagaland is in such a disturbed condition that the use of armed forces in aid of civil power is necessary. Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by Section 3 of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 (No. 28 of 1958) **the Central government hereby declares that whole of the said State to be a 'disturbed area'** for a period of six months with effect from 30th June, 2018 for the purpose of that Act.

What

1. The decision to maintain status quo in Nagaland regarding coverage of AFSPA, a law slammed by many civil society groups as 'draconian', comes even as insurgency has shown a declining trend in the state.
2. According to home ministry data, violent incidents have fallen from 77 in 2014 to 19 in 2017, while extremists' killings slid from 296 to 171. One security force personnel

- was killed in the state last year, while the number of civilian killings was higher at 3 compared to 1 in 2014.
3. On March 31 this year, the home ministry withdrew AFSPA totally from Meghalaya as well as 8 of the 16 police stations in Arunachal Pradesh where it had been in force for past few decades. The home ministry underlined that incidents of insurgency in northeast region were down by 96% from the levels recorded in 1997.
 4. In 2015, the Tripura government had lifted AFSPA from the state after 18 years. Until September 30, 2017, all areas falling within a 20-km belt in Meghalaya **bordering Assam were notified as “disturbed” areas. Effective from October 1, 2017, this was reduced to a 10-km belt.**
 5. However, on March 31, 2018, it was decided that given the improved situation, AFSPA need no longer be in force even in this 10-km stretch.
 6. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act is now in force in the whole of Assam and Nagaland, all of Manipur (except Imphal municipal area) and in three districts and eight police station areas of Arunachal Pradesh.
 7. While the review for Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland is still handled by the Centre, Assam and Manipur governments have been notifying **‘disturbed’ areas** — a prerequisite for imposing the law — on their own since last year.

CMS’ SUB-GROUP SET UP TO SYNERGISE AGRICULTURE POLICY

The Centre has set up a Chief Ministers’ sub-group to coordinate policy approaches for agriculture and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). A NITI Aayog statement said the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh will be the convener while his counterparts in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Sikkim, along with NITI Aayog Member Ramesh Chand will be members of this group.

What

1. The group will suggest a wider choice of State-specific interventions, both for pre-sowing and post-harvest, to further improve the thrust on incomes, water conservation and waste-to-wealth.
2. It will also seek to align works under MGNREGS fully to the requirements of **achieving the goal of doubling farmers’ income by 2022.**
3. This is expected to improve the thrust on water conservation, individual beneficiary schemes, construction of rural haats and vermi-composting, among others.
4. The sub-group will meet for the first time by July and submit its report within three months from its date of constitution.
5. It will make recommendations on interventions of MGNREGS that can help bring down agrarian distress, including work availability, wage rates and seasonality.
6. Aligning MGNREGS and its livelihood thrust with women self-help groups, producer groups and producer companies will be on the agenda of the sub-group.
7. It will also explore successful convergence of programme resources across departments to ensure optimal fund utilisation, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability.
8. The sub-group was formed after a unanimous decision taken at the fourth meeting of the Governing Council of NITI Aayog on June 17.

INDIA'S LARGEST NATIONAL DATA CENTRE

The government will be setting up the **country’s largest national data centre in Bhopal**, with capacity for 500,000 virtual servers. The country has four such centres for hosting government websites, services and apps. These are at Pune, Hyderabad, Delhi and Bhubaneswar. With growing digitalisation of government services, this capacity needs to be increased.

What

1. Electronics and information technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said data protection and privacy were important and its misuse would not be allowed.

- The rural Business Process Outsourcing scheme would be extended to 100,000 seats from the current 48,000, as it was a good job creator.
- A strong defence of Aadhaar, the citizen identification and monitoring system. The **programme, the world's largest biometric identification ones**, "has already established its benefits for the public.
- Nearly Rs 4 trillion has been disbursed till date on direct benefits transfer, with a saving of Rs 900 billion from removing fictitious beneficiaries over these four years.

360-DEGREE APPRAISAL

The first and only legal challenge so far, to the 360-degree review process that the Prime Minister instituted to appraise IAS officers for top positions at the Centre, has fizzled out. In response to an order of **Central Administrative Tribunal's orders** to review its decision, the Union government has stuck to its review process, show documents. Using it, the union government has yet again found the senior IAS officer who challenged his negative appraisal, Vineet Chawdhry, unfit to serve as a secretary at the Centre. Chawdhry, who the Union government repeatedly found unfit for the top position at the Centre, has instead been appointed to the top position in Himachal Pradesh as the **state's chief** secretary. His case against the Union government has fallen, show records of the tribunal.

What

- The 360-degree appraisal system was instituted in 2015. It supplemented the existing appraisal process by putting in place a discreet, informal and subjective review of each applicant on top of the objective review that seniors usually carried out of applicants under set rules.
- The first challenge to this 360-degree review process came from a Parliamentary Standing Committee.
- The committee in August 2017 found **the appraisal process to be "illegal, arbitrary, non-transparent and susceptible to manipulation. But the committee's views are only recommendatory in nature and the union government did not budge.**

OXYTOCIN BAN TO COME INTO EFFECT

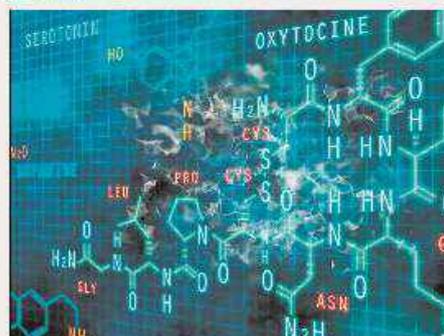
From July 1, no private manufacturer will be allowed to manufacture Oxytocin for domestic use. Oxytocin is a naturally-occurring hormone that causes uterine contractions during labour and helps new mothers lactate. But its misuse is widespread in the dairy industry where livestock are injected with oxytocin to make them release milk at a time convenient to farmers. The hormone is also used to increase the size of vegetables such as pumpkins, watermelons, brinjals, gourds and cucumbers.

What

- The Ministry of Health has restricted the manufacture of Oxytocin formulations for domestic use to public sector only. Now only Karnataka Antibiotics and Pharmaceuticals Ltd (KAPL), a public sector company, would be manufacturing this drug for domestic use from that date.

What is oxytocin

- Oxytocin is a hormone secreted by the pituitary gland
- It plays a role in reproduction, child birth and lactation, apart from social interaction
- Oxytocin is used both for humans and animals, to accelerate normal labour
- It is supposed to act directly on the uterus to induce rhythmic contractions



- In certain animals, especially farm animals, it is used to achieve 'milk let down'

- Oxytocin is believed to stimulate the mammary gland and induce milk production in farm animals, provided the udder is prepared to do so

2. The government has also banned the import of oxytocin and its formulations, besides bringing in some more regulations on the manufacture and sale of the controversial hormone.
3. Oxytocin formulations meant for domestic consumption will be supplied by the manufacturer, i.e. KAPL, to registered hospitals and clinics in public and private sector directly. Oxytocin in any form or name will not be allowed to be sold through retail chemist, a health ministry statement said.
4. The ministry has advised all registered hospitals and clinics in public and private sector in the country to contact KAPL and place their orders with the company as the drug will not be available with retail chemists or any other manufacturer.
5. The move is part of an effort to check the misuse of oxytocin by dairy operators and some farmers, a senior ministry official said.
6. The Himachal Pradesh High Court had in its judgment in 2016 observed that large-scale clandestine manufacture and sale of oxytocin was leading to its grave misuse, which was harmful to animals and humans.
7. Oxytocin, often called love hormone, is released naturally in human bonding activities such as childbirth, breastfeeding and sex.
8. It is uterine stimulant hormone, prescribed for initiation of uterine contractions and induction of labour in women as well as stimulation of contractions during labour.
9. It is also used to help abort fetus in cases of incomplete abortion or miscarriage, and control bleeding after childbirth. It may be used for breast engorgement.

'REUNITE' LAUNCHED

Union Minister of Commerce & Industry and Civil Aviation, Suresh Prabhu launched a mobile application called ReUnite which helps to track and trace missing and abandoned children in India. Speaking on this occasion the Minister appreciated the work being done by the NGO, BachpanBachaoAndolan & Capgemini for developing this app. The Minister said that this effort to reunite parents whose children have gone missing is a wonderful use of technology to address real life social challenges.

What

1. The app is multiuser where parents and citizens can upload pictures of children, and provide detailed description like name, birth mark, address, report to the police station, search and identify missing kids.
2. **The photographs will not be saved in the mobile phone's physical memory.** Amazon Rekognition, web facial recognition service, is being used to identify missing kids. The app is available for both Android and iOS.
3. **BachpanBachaoAndolan, (BBA) is India's largest movement for the protection of children** and works along with law enforcement agencies and policymakers.
4. BBA has played a very important role in formulation of several laws for protection of **child's rights**. It began from the Nithari case in 2006 which finally culminated with the Supreme Court passing the landmark judgement in 2013 ordering that FIR has to be lodged in all cases of missing children.
5. Nobel Laureate and founder of BachpanBachaoAndolan, Kailash Satyarthi, was also present on this occasion.

GNFC, NITI AAYOG JOIN HANDS ON BLOCKCHAIN

Niti Aayog and fertiliser major Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers & Chemicals Limited (GNFC) on 30 June 2018 entered into an agreement to undertake joint research and exchange and disseminate learnings to use BlockchainTechnology for fertiliser subsidy management. The two bodies signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) to work together towards implementing a Proof-of-Concept (POC) application.

What

1. Under the SOI, the two organisations would also undertake interaction and discussions on use of block chain technology for specific needs of fertiliser subsidy management.

2. Insights and outcomes of the POC will enable NITI Aayog to suggest policy recommendations and actions in strengthening the subsidy mechanism, making it more transparent and immune to leakages.
3. Fertiliser units manufacture approximately 31 million tonnes of fertilisers across country, where total approximately Rs 70,000 crore of subsidy is disbursed to the manufacturing units. The current system of fertiliser sales and distribution is multilayer, multi-agency and multi-functional.
4. With adoption of Blockchain Technology, it is expected that the distribution will become effective and efficient, and subsidy transfer would be automated and made real time.
5. Benefits of the use of blockchain technology would include reduced turnaround time for subsidy distribution to a 3 to 4 week time, transparency, elimination of need of multiple authorizations and movement of documents and efficient sales and distribution of fertilisers.
6. The system will also be integrated with soil card in the next phase, which will be useful in advising farmers to use a particular type of fertiliser based on soil health.

WEP SIGNS SOI

NITI Aayog's Women Entrepreneurs Platform (WEP) on 27 June 2018 signed five separate Statement of Intent (SoIs) with Shri Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank Limited, Indiabulls Housing Finance Limited, SREI Infrastructure Finance Limited, Sreemanta Sankar Mission and the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA). The WEP was **established on the occasion of International Womens' Day in March 2018** to substantially increase the number of women entrepreneurs who will create and empower a dynamic New India.

What

1. The WEP intends to undertake this task through its partner organizations, private as well as public organizations; by bringing their existing as well as new women specific initiatives on a single platform, which in turn will also address knowledge gaps, promote partner connects and will increase the outreach of partner programmes.
2. The SoIs signed with financial institutions such as the Shri Mahila Sewa Sahakari Bank, Indiabulls Housing Finance and SREI Infrastructure Finance shall be housed under the WEP-Finance vertical and will provide financial assistance to women entrepreneurs and address the finance related challenges faced by them through WEP.
3. WEP will partner with the Sreemanta Sankar Mission of Guwahati to empower established as well as aspiring women entrepreneurs in North East India through WEP North East Chapter and will work to popularize WEP in North East so that more women entrepreneurs in that region can avail benefits under the WEP initiative. Similarly, the Sol with the Self **Employed Women's Association** (SEWA), a trade union and as an organization of poor, self-employed women workers, includes commitments to mobilize women entrepreneurs in rural areas and promote them in Livelihood Entrepreneurship.
4. Through its partner organizations, WEP aims to create opportunities and support women in order to help them realize their entrepreneurial aspirations, scale up innovative initiatives, and chalk out sustainable and long-term strategies for their

Flashback

1. The WEP is an initiative under the NITI Aayog which was launched on March 8, 2018 on the occasion of the **International Women's Day**.
2. The idea of the Platform was first mooted by Shri Amitabh Kant, CEO, NITI Aayog who announced the setting-up of a Women Entrepreneurship Platform in NITI Aayog at the conclusion of the 8th Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES) held in Hyderabad in 2017 with an overarching theme of 'Women first, Prosperity for All'.

businesses. WEP website which will be enriched with entrepreneurial initiatives and support programmes would guide you to schemes, initiatives and products relevant to your requirement.

INTERNATIONAL

US QUITS UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL

The United States withdrew from the United Nations Human Rights Council, condemning the "hypocrisy" of its members and its alleged "unrelenting bias" against Israel. The US ambassador to the United Nations, Nikki Haley, came to Washington to announce the decision alongside President Donald Trump's top diplomat, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Both insisted the United States would remain a leading champion of human rights, but for many, the decision will reflect Trump's general hostility to the world body and to multilateral diplomacy in general.

What

1. The announcement came after the top UN human rights official criticised Washington for separating migrant children from their parents who are seeking asylum after crossing into the country from Mexico.
2. The Geneva-based body was established in 2006 to promote and protect human rights worldwide, but its pronouncements and reports have often clashed with US priorities.
3. In particular, the council's focus on Israeli behavior towards Palestinians in the territory it occupies on the West Bank and in Gaza has infuriated Washington.
4. Since its creation, the council has adopted more resolutions condemning Israel than against the rest of the world combined.

'3RD NEIGHBOUR' POLICY

India appreciates the 'Third Neighbour' policy of land-locked Mongolia, Home Minister Rajnath Singh has said, asserting New Delhi's commitment to further strengthen its cultural bond with Ulaanbaatar. He was in Ulaanbaatar on a three-day official visit to further strengthen bilateral relations and security cooperation as part of sustained high-level exchanges between Mongolia and India.

What

1. The 'Third Neighbour' policy of Mongolia, a land-locked nation between Russia and China, refers to its building ties with countries other than these two.
2. India and Mongolia, joined by the common thread of Buddhism, are spiritual neighbours, the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement in New Delhi.
3. Mongolia broke ground for the construction of the landlocked country's first oil refinery with the help of a \$1 billion loan from India which Singh described as an important milestone in the bilateral ties.
4. Mongolia is seen as an important strategic partner of India and New Delhi wants to realize the huge potential of bilateral relations with Ulaanbaatar.
5. The relationship between India and Mongolia was upgraded to a 'Strategic Partnership' in 2015 during Modi's visit, which coincided with the 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

Flashback

1. The year 2015 marked increasing diplomatic engagement for Mongolia in East Asia, the Persian Gulf, and even the Americas.
2. Last year, the Mongolian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) turned the third neighbor policy into bilateral dialogues and agreements with a number of nations, including but not limited to Hungary, Iran, Brazil, the United States, and Japan.

CANADA SENATE APPROVES RECREATIONAL USE OF MARIJUANA

Canada's upper house of parliament approved a revised bill to legalise recreational marijuana, setting the stage for the country to become the first Group of Seven nations to legalise cannabis. The Senate voted 52-29 in favor of the revised bill from the elected House of Commons, paving the way for a fully legal cannabis market within eight to 12 weeks. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberals had made legalizing recreational use of marijuana part of their successful 2015 election campaign, arguing the new law would keep pot out of the hands of underage users and reduce related crime.

What

1. **It's been too easy for our kids to get marijuana** – and for criminals to reap the profits. Today, we change that. Our plan to legalise & regulate marijuana just passed the Senate.
2. As the first major economy to fully legalise cannabis, **Canada's regulatory rollout** will be closely watched by other nations considering the same path – and by global investors, who have already poured billions into Canadian marijuana firms.
3. Canadian marijuana companies like Canopy Growth Corp, Aphria Inc, Horizons Marijuana Life Sciences ETF and Aurora Cannabis Inc have been at the center of investor frenzy surrounding attempts to legalise marijuana for recreational use nationwide.
4. **Legalization has already been delayed from the government's initially planned July launch.**
5. While production of cannabis is regulated by the federal government, provinces and cities have more powers over retail sales either through private or government-owned stores.

BREXIT BILL BECOMES LAW

A bill enacting Britain's decision to leave the European Union has become law after months of debate, the House of Commons speaker announced 26 June 2018, to cheers from eurosceptic lawmakers. Speaker John Bercow said the EU (Withdrawal) Bill, which repeals the 1972 European Communities Act through which Britain became a member of the bloc, had received royal assent from Queen Elizabeth II. The bill transfers decades of European law onto British statute books, and also enshrines Brexit day in British law as March 29, 2019 at 11pm (2300 GMT) -- midnight Brussels time. Prime Minister Theresa May said the approval was a "historic moment for our country, and a significant step towards delivering on the will of the British people".

Flashback

1. Brexit is an abbreviation for "British exit," referring to the UK's decision in a June 23, 2016 referendum to leave the European Union (EU).
2. The vote's result defied expectations and roiled global markets, causing the British pound to fall to its lowest level against the dollar in 30 years.
3. Prime Minister David Cameron, who called the referendum and campaigned for Britain to remain in the EU, resigned the following month.
4. Home Secretary Theresa May replaced him as leader of the Conservative party and as Prime Minister.
5. Following a snap election on June 8, 2017, she remains Prime Minister. The Conservatives have lost their outright majority in Parliament, though, and with it – May's critics argue – a mandate for a "hard Brexit," in which Britain leaves the EU's single market and customs union. (Alternatives are known as "soft Brexit.")

What

1. The bill has undergone more than 250 hours of acrimonious debate in the Houses of Parliament since it was introduced in July 2017.
2. Eurosceptics celebrated the passing of the bill through parliament last week as proof that, despite continuing uncertainty in the negotiations with Brussels, Brexit was happening.

3. "Lest anyone is in any doubt, the chances of Britain not leaving the EU are now zero," International Trade Minister Liam Fox said.
4. The government had a tough time getting the bill through parliament and was forced to concede some power to lawmakers over the final Brexit deal agreed with Brussels.
5. Further battles are expected in the House of Commons in the coming weeks, when MPs debate two bills on trade -- with pro-Europeans seeking to force the government to keep close ties with the bloc.
6. May has yet to set out her plans for customs arrangements after Brexit, which have become a major stumbling block in talks with Brussels.
7. She will gather her top ministers after the EU summit, which starts on Thursday, to thrash out their differences with the aim of publishing a Brexit blueprint shortly after.

AIIB CONCLUDES ITS 3RD ANNUAL MEETING

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) concluded its third Annual Meeting in Mumbai on 26 June 2018, on a high note to improve connectivity within the region and in turn enable citizens in the region to reach their potential and enjoy prosperity and security. Participating in a panel discussion during the day, Shri Amitabh Kant, Chief Executive Officer, NITI Aayog, pointed out that "Make in India is about laying emphasis on manufacturing in India, not protectionism. India believes in globalization and has opened its economy in every single sector that you can name. As a result, India has stood numerouno in terms of attracting foreign direct investment in the past three years.

What

1. Earlier in the day, the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi called upon the need to deepen **India's** engagement with AIIB. In his speech, Prime Minister called upon Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to increase its lending to US\$40 billion by 2020 and US\$100 billion by 2025 from US\$4 billion now.
2. Quantifying the infrastructure needs of **Asian region**, Mr JinLiqun, President, AIIB, said, "Between now and 2030, Asia's investment in infrastructure must rise to US\$2 trillion a year, or roughly triple of **what it has been in the past.**"
3. In summary, AIIB has established a strong corporate culture focused on embedding our core values of being lean, clean and green and a work-place environment free of corruption and harassment.
4. The Third Annual Meeting of AIIB was attended by over 3,000 delegates from 86 member countries.
5. The Meeting also had several concurrent sessions that discussed critical issues pertaining to environment, low carbon emissions, connectivity through railway network across borders among several others.

Flashback

1. The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is a multilateral development bank that aims to support the building of infrastructure in the Asia-Pacific region.
2. The bank currently has 86 member states from around the world. The bank started operation after the agreement entered into force on 25 December 2015, after ratifications were received from 10 member states holding a total number of 50% of the initial subscriptions of the Authorized Capital Stock.
3. Major economies that are not members include Japan, Mexico, Nigeria, and the United States.
4. The bank was proposed by China in 2013 and the initiative was launched at a ceremony in Beijing in October 2014.
5. It received the highest credit ratings from the three biggest rating agencies in the world, and is seen as a potential rival to World Bank and IMF.

PAKISTAN PLACED ON FATF'S 'GREY LIST'

Pakistan has been placed on the grey list by the Financial Action Task Force for failing to curb anti-terror financing despite its diplomatic efforts to avert the decision, an official said. The decision was taken late last night at the global financial watchdog **Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) plenary session in Paris** where Finance Minister Shamshad Akhtar represented Pakistan, according to official sources. He had earlier urged the organisation to remove Pakistan from its grey list.

What

1. The announcement comes a day after Pakistan submitted a comprehensive 26-point action plan to the FATF to choke the funding of militant groups, including Mumbai attack mastermind Hafiz Saeed-led JuD and its affiliates, to avoid being blacklisted by it. The placement on to grey list could **hurt Pakistan's economy** as well as its international standing.
2. The FATF is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 to combat money laundering, terrorist financing and other related threats to the integrity of the international financial system.
3. As the 37-nation FATF plenary **began its proceedings on Pakistan's 26-point** action plan spanning over a period of 15 months, the Pakistani delegation appraised the watchdog of steps Islamabad had taken to weed out money laundering and terror financing to avoid the country being placed on the grey list.
4. Official sources in the Foreign Office said that being placed officially on the grey list **was not a surprise for Pakistan. "It is political decision and nothing to do with the performance of Pakistan against terrorism.**
5. They said that Pakistan will stay on the list for a year or so and will eventually be out of it as has happened in the past. Pakistan remained on the FATF grey list from 2012 to 2015.
6. On June 20, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan issued Anti Money Laundering and Countering Financing of Terrorism Regulations 2018, in compliance with FATF recommendations.
7. On June 8, the National Security Committee (NSC) reaffirmed its commitment to cooperate with FATF. By January next year, Pakistan will publish updated lists of persons and entities proscribed under the Anti-Terrorism Act and the UN-designated entities.

About FATF

1. FATF is an inter-governmental policy making body that aims to establish international standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing.
2. It was established in 1989 during the G7 Summit in Paris (France) to combat the growing problem of money laundering.
3. It comprises over 39 member countries including India.
4. FATF Secretariat is housed at headquarters of OECD in Paris, France.
5. Initially, FATF was only dealing with developing policies to combat money laundering. But in 2001 its purpose was expanded to act against terrorism financing.

GREECE, MACEDONIA SIGN HISTORIC DEAL

Greece and Macedonia on 17 June 2018 signed a historic preliminary agreement to rename the country the Republic of North Macedonia, ending a row that has poisoned relations between the two neighbours since 1991. This is a brave, historic and necessary step for our peoples.

What

1. The accord begins to unravel one of the world's longest -- and arguably most arcane -- diplomatic disputes, which began 27 years ago with Macedonia's declaration of independence but whose roots date back centuries.

2. UN under-secretary-general for political affairs Rosemary DiCarlo, longterm UN negotiator Matthew Nimetz, EU diplomatic chief Federica Mogherini and EU enlargement commissioner Johannes Hahn were at hand.
3. After the signature, Tsipras will cross over to the Macedonian side of Lake Prespa for lunch, becoming the first Greek prime minister to visit the neighbouring state.
4. Since 1991, Athens has objected to its neighbour being called Macedonia because it has its own northern province of the same name, which in ancient times was the cradle of Alexander the Great's empire -- a source of intense pride for modern-day Greeks.
5. The two premiers, born just months apart in 1974, have bucked strong hostile reactions at home to push ahead with the agreement.

CHINA, NEPAL SIGN 14 AGREEMENTS

China and Nepal on 21 June 2018 signed 14 agreements, including construction of a railway network following Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's meetings with the top Chinese leadership, including President Xi Jinping. Oli, who is china on a five-day visit since June 19, held in-depth talks with President Xi on 20 June 2018 which included a lengthy one-on-one meeting followed by the delegation-level talks with Premier Li Keqiang on 21 June 2018.

What

1. The agreement reached between the two sides also included promoting energy cooperation. They have also reached understanding regarding the use of highway in Tibet, energy, economic and technical cooperation and human resources development.
2. The two sides signed eight agreements worth USD 2.4 billion yesterday, ranging from hydroelectric to water resources projects, cement factories and fruit production, the Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post reported.
3. The key takeaway, however, was the reported railway link connecting Tibet with Nepal which could open up more trade and transport goods for the landlocked country.
4. During his talks with Oli, Xi assured him that he is keen to see the Nepal-China cross-border connectivity come to fruition.
5. China already had built a vast network of rail and road connectivity in Tibet, which it wants to extend to Nepal.
6. The train to the Tibetan highland has been hailed as a technological wonder. But many experts here caution building the trans-Himalayan railways will pose a great engineering challenge-perhaps even more demanding than the Tibetan railways. A huge chunk of the 70-120-km track will be studded with long and difficult tunnels and bridges.

FRANCE, GERMANY PUSH FOR DEAL TO END MIGRATION ROW

The leaders of France and Germany said 24 June 2018 they were prepared to side-step anti-migrant EU members and do deals with individual countries on how to respond to a migrant influx that has caused deep splits in the bloc. The talks among 16 of the European Union's 28 leaders began after Italy's new populist government turned away another ship packed with migrants.

What

1. The meeting, which began amid a flurry of mutual fingerpointing by France and Italy, is seen as crucial for German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who faces her own political crisis at home.
2. The European Council will not yet provide an overall solution to the migration problem, Merkel said conceding a lack of consensus among EU members.
3. But several countries with anti-migrant governments, including Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, did not attend.

4. French President Emmanuel Macron urged his counterparts to take advantage of the sharp drop in migrant arrivals since a 2015 peak -- Europe's worst such crisis since World War II -- to find solutions.

5. The immigration emergency continues in Italy, partly because France keeps pushing back people at the border," Italian deputy prime minister Luigi Di Maio shot back on his Facebook page, warning Macron risked turning France into "Italy's number one enemy" on the issue.

6. Under the EU's so-called Dublin rules, asylum-seekers must be processed in the country where they first arrive, usually Mediterranean countries such as Italy, Greece and Spain.

Flashback

1. The Dublin Regulation is a European Union (EU) law that determines the EU Member State responsible for examining an application for asylum seekers seeking international protection under the Geneva Convention and the EU Qualification Directive, within the European Union.
2. It is the cornerstone of the Dublin System, which consists of the Dublin Regulation and the EURODAC Regulation, which establishes a Europe-wide fingerprinting database for unauthorised entrants to the EU.
3. The Dublin regime was originally established by the Dublin Convention, which was signed in Dublin, Ireland on 15 June 1990, and first came into force on 1 September 1997 for the first twelve signatories (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and the United Kingdom), on 1 October 1997 for Austria and Sweden, and on 1 January 1998 for Finland.

NAVAL BASE AT ASSUMPTION ISLAND

India and Seychelles on 25 June 2018 agreed to work together on a project to develop a naval base at the Assumption Island keeping each other's concerns in mind after talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Danny Faure. India also announced a \$100-million credit to Seychelles for augmenting its defence capabilities.

What

1. With this credit, Seychelles will be able to buy defence equipment to boost its maritime capacity, Prime Minister Modi said in his joint media statement with Faure.
2. On the project to develop a naval facility at the island, which would give India a strategic advantage in the Indian Ocean Region.
3. Faure, in his remarks, said the Assumption Island project was discussed and the two countries equally engaged to work together bearing each other's interests.

ECONOMY

DRAFT GUIDELINES FOR COOPERATIVE BANKS

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has come out with draft guidelines on constituting a board of management (BoM) in addition to the board of directors, for urban cooperative banks (UCBs), with the aim of strengthening the governance in these banks. The BoM will be responsible for credit, risk and liquidity management of the banksaid in a circular released on 25 June 2018. As UCBs are accepting public deposits, it is imperative that a separate mechanism be put in place to protect the interests of depositors. Accordingly, RBI it is proposed to implement a Board of Management consisting of members with special knowledge and practical experience in banking to

facilitate professional management and focused attention to banking related activities of UCBs, said the circular.

What

1. The move follows the recommendation of a 2010 expert committee, headed by Y.H. Malegam, on the licensing of UCBs.
2. In its June credit policy, the central bank had also announced that it would come out with a scheme to allow conversion of large UCBs into small finance banks to avoid risks to the system because of their size and complexity.
3. Under the current regulations, the board of directors of a UCB performs both the executive and supervisory roles and oversees the functioning of the UCB as a co-operative society and a bank.
4. According to the draft guidelines, the BoM will report to the BoD, which will continue to oversee the general direction and control of a UCB.
5. The BoM will be responsible for the day-to-day functions, including considering loan proposals, recovery of bad loans, borrowings and overseeing audit and inspection functions.
6. According to the draft guidelines, existing UCBs with deposit sizes exceeding Rs100 crore shall put in place the BoM within one year, while others banks may take two years.
7. UCBs with deposit sizes up to Rs100 crore will have BoMs of a minimum of three members, while those with deposit sizes of more than Rs100 crore will have at least five members in the BoMs. The maximum number of members in the management shall not exceed 12.
8. The circular also said that at least 50% of the members of the BoM should have specialisation or practical experience in fields such as accountancy, agriculture, law.
9. The chief executive officer of the bank will be an ex-officio member of the BoD and BoM and he will be under the general superintendence, direction and control of the board.
10. RBI shall have powers to supersede the BoM if the functioning of BoM is found unsatisfactory.

INDIA STANDS AT WIPO MEET

A proposal that paves the way for small countries to delegate others to process patents for them has caused a flutter in public health circles. The proposal is to come up for discussion at a Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) working group meeting that got under way at the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) headquarters in Geneva. India is expected to voice its objection to this attempt to amend a treaty regulation.

What

1. The move affects the sovereign rights of smaller countries who do not have the capacity to process their own patents.
2. Countries delegated to process a patent by a smaller country may not use the flexibilities that the Trade-related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) Agreement allows developing countries in the interest of public health.
3. Besides, the WIPO-PCT meeting is not the right forum to discuss this, the official said, **adding that the focus should instead be on “capacity building” so smaller countries can improve their patent processing abilities.**
4. **The PCT’s aim is to streamline the process for patent applicants in the 152-** member countries under its umbrella. But the proposal to introduce a new Rule 50bis in the PCT Regulations will compromise TRIPS flexibilities in terms of how the countries view patentability criteria and the scope of patentability.
5. It could affect Indian exports if smaller countries end up not using their TRIPS flexibilities and grant patents on products they would not have given otherwise.
6. In the interest of public health, the TRIPS agreement had allowed developing countries certain flexibilities; IP experts caution this could get compromised by the proposed amendment.

7. The World Trade Organisation-administered TRIPS agreement requires patents to be granted to innovations that involve a new or inventive step, but leaves it to country laws to define the criteria.

SEBI APPROVES AMENDMENTS TO TAKEOVER

Markets regulator Sebi on 21 June 2018 approved changes to takeover regulations wherein entities would get additional time for upward revision of open offer price during share tendering period. Besides, buyback regulations would also be amended. These proposals were cleared at the board meeting of Sebi.

What

1. It has been decided to grant additional time for upward revision of open offer price till one working day before the commencement of the tendering period.
2. According to the regulator, the amendments are mainly aimed at simplifying the language, removing redundant provisions and inconsistencies as well as update references to Companies Act, 2013.
3. In this regard, changes would be made to the Sebi (Substantial Acquisition of Shares and Takeovers) Regulations, 2011.
4. Talking to reporters after the board meeting, Sebi Chairman Ajay Tyagi said changes to takeover as well as buyback regulations have been approved.
5. The watchdog would be reframing buyback regulations, with inclusion of definition of buyback period.

SEBI EASES IPO NORMS

The capital markets regulator, Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) on 21 June 2018 eased disclosure norms for initial public offerings (IPOs) and tightened the **definition** of 'promoter group' to prevent fraudulent transactions. IPO issuers will now be allowed to announce the price bands two days before the issue opens for subscription instead of the previous five days, the new Sebi guidelines said. The new IPO norms **include** 'immediate relatives' within the definition of promoter and promoter groups. Sebi also said that financial disclosures will need to be made for three years, compared with the earlier five years. Besides, institutional investors, such as alternative investment funds, will be able to contribute up to 10% of what the promoter is required to offload in an IPO.

What

1. The easier disclosure requirements are aimed at encouraging genuine companies to raise funds through the capital markets route, while the stricter definition of promoter group will ensure that IPOs are not misused to evade taxes.
2. The move to permit issuers to announce the IPO price band two days before the issue opening date will enable them to budget for volatility in both the domestic and global markets.
3. The amendments in ICDR (Issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations relating to rights issue and public issue will simplify the disclosures in the offer documents, which was otherwise a tedious and a cumbersome process.

Flashback

1. An initial public offering is when a private company or corporation raises investment capital by offering its stock to the public for the first time.
2. Growing companies seeking capital to expand are those that generally use initial public offerings, but large, privately owned companies or corporations looking to become publicly traded can also do them.
3. In an initial public offering, the issuer, or company raising capital, brings in an underwriting firm or investment bank, to help determine the best type of security to issue, offering price, amount of shares and timeframe for the market offering.

- These changes will ease the manner and the time generally taken to raise funds from the public.
4. The changes were based on the recommendations made by a panel led by capital markets expert Prithvi Haldea. He had submitted the report to Sebi on 4 May.
 5. Under the new regulations, **the buyback period of a company's stock has been redefined as the time between the board's resolution to that effect and the date on which the payment will be made to shareholders.**
 6. Sebi also said that at least 15% of the securities a company proposed to buy back should be reserved for small shareholders, while the maximum limit was capped at **25% of the company's paid-up capital.** Sebi also allowed companies to buy back as much as 10% of **shares outstanding without shareholders' resolution.**
 7. It was not an exercise to fundamentally change the primary market regulations. It was taken up because the ICDR regulations had become unyielding and obsolete, and was still referring to the Companies Act, which were redundant and the language was tedious.
 8. The markets watchdog has updated the references to the new Companies Act that came into force in April 2014.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

WORLD'S MOST POWERFUL SUPERCOMPUTER UNVEILED

US scientists have unveiled the **world's most powerful and smartest scientific** supercomputer that can complete over 200,000 trillion calculations per second – providing unprecedented computing power for research in energy, advanced materials and artificial intelligence (AI). The **US Department of Energy's Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL)** supercomputer called Summit will be eight times more powerful than its previous top-ranked system, Titan.

What

1. For certain scientific applications, Summit will also be capable of more than three billion billion mixed precision calculations per second, or 3.3 exaops.
2. Summit will empower scientists to address a wide range of new challenges, accelerate discovery, spur innovation and above all, benefit the American people.
3. The IBM AC922 system consists of 4,608 compute servers, each containing two 22-core IBM Power9 processors and six NVIDIA Tesla V100 graphics processing unit accelerators, interconnected with dual-rail Mellanox EDR 100 Gb/s InfiniBand.
4. Summit also possesses more than 10 petabytes of memory paired with fast, high-bandwidth pathways for efficient data movement.
5. The combination of cutting-edge hardware and robust data subsystems marks an evolution of the hybrid CPU-GPU architecture successfully pioneered by the 27-petaflops Titan in 2012.
6. ORNL researchers have figured out how to harness the power and intelligence of **Summit's state-of-art architecture to successfully run the world's first exascale scientific calculation.**
7. **Scientists led by ORNL's Dan Jacobson and Wayne Joubert has leveraged** the intelligence of the machine to run a 1.88 exaops comparative genomics calculation relevant to research in bioenergy and human health.
8. Supercomputer, Oak Ridge National Laboratory, fastest supercomputer, calculation speeds, supercomputer processing power, graphics processing, AI-optimised system, machine learning, bioenergy Summit also possesses more than 10 petabytes of memory paired with fast, high-bandwidth pathways for efficient data movement.
9. The mixed precision exaops calculation produced identical results to more time-consuming 64-bit calculations previously run on Titan. In addition to scientific modeling and simulation, Summit offers unparalleled opportunities for the integration of AI and scientific discovery, enabling researchers to apply techniques like machine

- learning and deep learning to problems in human health, high-energy physics, materials discovery and other areas.
- Summit takes accelerated computing to the next level, with more computing power, more memory, an enormous high-performance file system and fast data paths to tie it all together.
 - Summit's AI-optimised hardware** also gives researchers an incredible platform for analyzing massive datasets and creating intelligent software to accelerate the pace of discovery.

INDIAN SCIENTISTS DISCOVER 'SUB-SATURN' PLANET

A team of scientists and engineers of Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad have discovered a sub-Saturn or super-neptune size planet around a Sun-like star. The planet discovered by the team led by Prof. Abhijit Chakraborty for PRL will be known as EPIC 211945201b or K2-236b. The mass of the new planet is about 27 Earth mass; and its size about of six Earth radii.

What

- The discovery gains significance as it helps the scientists to understand the formation mechanism of such super-Neptune or sub-Saturn kind of planets, that are too close to the host star and as well as planet formations around Sun-like stars.
- The official statement said that was made by measuring the mass of the planet using the indigenously designed "**PRL Advance Radial-velocity Abu-sky Search**" (PARAS) **spectrograph integrated with 1.2m Telescope at PRL's Gurushikhar Observatory in Mount Abu, India.**
- Only 23 such planetary systems (including this discovery) are known to this date with masses between 10 and 70 Earth mass and size of 4 to 8 Earth radii with such precise measurement of mass.
- With this discovery, India has joined a handful of countries, which have discovered planets around stars beyond our solar system.
- Further, PARAS is the first of its kind spectrograph in Asia, which can measure the mass of a planet going around a star. Very few spectrographs exist around the world that can do such precise measurements.
- The research work has also been published in *Astronomical Journal* of the American Astronomical Society.

FIRST SATELLITE TO COLLECT SPACE JUNK

The first-ever satellite to test possible solutions in cleaning up space junk has been deployed by the International Space Station (ISS) and would soon begin experiments in orbit. The Britain-built satellite, named Remove DEBRIS mission, is one of the **world's first attempts to tackle the build-up of dangerous space debris orbiting the Earth**, the British space agency said in a statement.

What

- The 100-kg RemoveDebris spacecraft will attempt to capture simulated space debris using a net and a harpoon while also testing advanced cameras and radar systems.
- The experiment is important as there are thousands of pieces of space debris circulating the planet, many travelling faster than a speeding bullet, posing a risk to valuable satellites and even the International Space Station itself.
- Once the experiments are complete, it will unfurl a drag sail to bring itself and the **debris out of orbit, where it will burn up as it enters the earth's atmosphere.**

Flashback

- Space debris also known as space junk is a term for the mass of defunct, artificially created objects in space, most notably in Earth orbit, such as old satellites and spent rocket stages.
- It includes the fragments from their disintegration, erosion and collisions. As of December 2016, five satellite collisions have resulted in generating space waste.

4. If successful, the technologies found in RemoveDEBRIS could be included in other missions in the very near future.
5. The RemoveDEBRIS mission is led by the varsity and built by the **world's leading** small satellite manufacturer Surrey Satellite Technology Limited (SSTL), with technology on board designed by Airbus. It was launched on a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft from Florida in April.

AI RECREATES PERIODIC TABLE

Stanford scientists have developed a new artificial intelligence (AI) programme that organised the periodic table of elements in just a few hours – a feat that took mankind nearly a century of trial and error. Called Atom2Vec, the program successfully learned to distinguish between different atoms after analysing a list of chemical compound names from an online database. The unsupervised AI then used concepts borrowed from the field of natural language processing – in particular, the idea that the properties of words can be understood by looking at other words surrounding them – to cluster the elements according to their chemical properties.

What

1. Researchers modelled Atom2Vec on an AI program that Google engineers created to parse natural language.
2. Called Word2Vec, the language AI works by converting words into numerical codes, or vectors. By analysing the vectors, the AI can estimate the probability of a word appearing in a text given the co-occurrence of other words.
3. **For example, the word 'king' is often accompanied by 'queen', and 'man' by 'woman'. Thus, the mathematical vector of 'king' might be translated roughly as 'king = a queen minus a woman plus a man.'** “We can apply the same idea to atoms. Instead of feeding in all of the words and sentences from a collection of texts, we fed Atom2Vec all the known chemical compounds, such as NaCl, KCl, H₂O, and so on.
4. From this sparse data, the AI program figured out, for example, that potassium (K) and sodium (Na) must have similar properties because both elements can bind **with chlorine (Cl)**. **Scientists can harness Atom2Vec's knowledge to discover and design new materials.**

INSTRUMENT TO MONITOR PLANT WATER USE FROM SPACE

NASA plans to install on the International Space Station (ISS) an instrument that will measure the temperature of plants from space, enabling researchers to determine plant water use and to study how drought conditions affect plant health. The instrument, called ECOSTRESS, or ECOSystem Spaceborne Thermal Radiometre Experiment on Space Station, will hitch a ride to the space station on a SpaceX cargo resupply mission scheduled to launch from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station in Florida on June 29, NASA said. Plants draw in water from the soil, and as they are heated by the Sun, the water **is released through pores on the plants' leaves through a process called transpiration.**

What

1. This cools the plant down, much as sweating does in humans. However, if there is not enough water available to the plants, they close their pores to conserve water, causing their temperatures to rise.
2. Plants use those same pores to take up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere for photosynthesis — the process they use to turn carbon dioxide and water into the sugar they use as food.
3. **If they continue to experience insufficient water availability, or “water stress,” they eventually starve or overheat, and die.**
4. The data from ECOSTRESS **will show these changes in plants' temperatures,** providing insight into their health and water use while there is still time for water managers to correct agricultural water imbalances.
5. ECOSTRESS will allow us to monitor rapid changes in crop stress at the field level, enabling earlier and more accurate estimates of how yields will be impacted.

ORGANIC MOLECULES FIND FROM ENCELADUS

NASA's Cassini spacecraft has detected complex organic molecules originating from Saturn's icy moon Enceladus, strengthening the idea that this ocean world hosts conditions suitable for life, says a study. The sixth largest of Saturn's moons, **Enceladus is only about 314 miles (505 km) in diameter**. Previously, Cassini had detected small, relatively common organic molecules at Enceladus that were much smaller.

What

1. Now, it has showed powerful hydrothermal vents mix up material from the **moon's water**-filled, porous core with water **from the moon's massive subsurface ocean** and it is released into space, in the form of water vapour and ice grains, said researchers led by Frank Postberg from the University of Heidelberg in Germany.
2. The large molecules come from hydrothermal activity driving complex chemistry in the core of the moon.
3. The fragments found are of hydrothermal origin; in the high pressures and warm temperatures we expect there, it is possible that complex organic molecules can arise.
4. Moreover, the bubbles of gas on Enceladus, rising through miles of ocean, could bring up organic material from depths, where they could form a thin film floating on the ocean surface and in cracks of vents, in the interior of the moon, beneath its icy shell. After rising near the top of the ocean, the bubbles may burst or otherwise disperse the organics, Cassini data showed.
5. Complex molecules comprising hundreds of atoms are rare beyond Earth. The presence of the large complex molecules, along with liquid water and hydrothermal activity, bolsters the hypothesis that the ocean of Enceladus may be a habitable environment for life.

WORLD'S FIRST MEDICINE FROM MARIJUANA

In a landmark decision, the US Food and Drug Administration on June 25 approved the first medical drug made from marijuana. Created by GW Pharmaceuticals, Epidiolex is an oral solution of cannabidiol (OSC) and does not cause intoxication or a high. The drug will be used to cure severe forms of epilepsies in children. The New England Journal of Medicine had first provided the evidence that marijuana can cure epilepsy. **Today's approval of Epidiolex is a historic milestone**, offering patients and their families the first and only FDA-approved CBD medicine to treat two severe, childhood-onset epilepsies.

What is Epidiolex?

1. According to GW Pharmaceuticals, Epidiolex is the first prescription pharmaceutical formulation of highly-purified, plant-derived cannabidiol (CBD), a cannabinoid lacking the high associated with marijuana, and the first in a new category of anti-epileptic drugs (AEDs).
2. CBD is a chemical component of the Cannabis sativa plant, more commonly known as marijuana. However, CBD does not cause intoxication or euphoria (the **"high"**) that comes from tetrahydrocannabinol (THC).

Does Epidiolex have any side effects?

1. The most common side effects that occurred in Epidiolex-treated patients in the clinical trials were: sleepiness, sedation and lethargy, elevated liver enzymes, decreased appetite, diarrhea, rash, fatigue, malaise and weakness, insomnia, sleep disorder and poor quality sleep, and infections."

MISCELLANEOUS

INTERNATIONAL YOGA DAY

The 4th International Yoga day was celebrated on June 21, 2018 across the world to raise awareness about **benefits of practicing yoga**. **The theme this year was "Yoga for Peace"**. **The day's celebration** was led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi from Dehradun,

Uttarakhand. He was joined by thousands of volunteers, who performed Yoga asanas in the lawns of Forest Research Institute (FRI), Dehradun.

Flashback

1. International Day of Yoga is celebrated annually on 21 June since its inception in 2015.
2. An international day for yoga was declared unanimously by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA).
3. Yoga is a physical, mental and spiritual practice attributed mostly to India.
4. The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his UN address suggested the date of 21 June, as it is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere and shares special significance in many parts of the world.
5. The idea of International Day of Yoga was first proposed by the current Prime Minister of India during his speech at the UNGA, on 27 September 2014.

YOGA DAY IN SCO

For the first time, a Yoga event was on 16 June 2018 organised at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) headquarters in Beijing, kicking off this year's UN International Day of Yoga celebrations in China. The United Nations had declared June 21 as the UN International Day of Yoga in 2014. China, which has a huge Yoga following, celebrates Yoga Day every year with massive gatherings; this was the first time that the event was held at the SCO headquarters.

What

1. The SCO comprises China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. India and Pakistan were last year admitted as full member of the organisation.
2. India's Yoga techniques have proved to be extremely important in ensuring a healthy and fulfilling life for millions of people across the globe.
3. Yoga schools have sprouted all over the world, including in the SCO countries. The practice of Yoga and its benefits are becoming apparent to people in every corner of the world, including here in China where we even have an India-China Yoga School at the Yunnan Minzu University in Kunming.
4. Mohan Singh Bhandari, the founder of a popular Yoga institution in China, Yogi Yoga, conducted the exercises.

MEMBER APPOINTED OF NWC

The Union government has appointed Uday Vora the chief conservator of forest as the member of the National Wetland Committee (NWC). Vora will be the member along with Arvind Kumar, president, Chair Founder of India Water Foundation Hydrology, BC Jha, former principal scientist, ex-officio Head, Reservoir & Wetland Fisheries Division, CIFRI Fisheries and also director, School of Planning and Architecture, Delhi Landscape planning.

What

1. The Committee has been formed under the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2017 that were notified vide GSR 1203 (E) dated 26.09.2017 superseding the Wetlands (Conservation and Management) Rules, 2010.
2. The National Wetlands Committee (NWC) under the chairpersonship of secretary, MOEF&CC has been constituted vide Rule-6 of the said rules.
3. Vora is the third person from the state to find a place in national committee.
4. Earlier it was HS Singh who was appointed as the member of the standing committee of the National Board for Wildlife and later it was CN Pandey who was appointed as chairman of the 14-member Expert Appraisal Committee for Environment Clearance to Industry-I projects.
5. Industry-I category includes cement plants, minerals, metallurgical industries and leather industry, among others.

GOVERNOR'S RULE APPROVED IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR

President Ram Nath Kovind on 20 June 2018 approved the imposition of governor's rule in Jammu and Kashmir, a day after the BJP pulled out of its alliance with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in Jammu and Kashmir. Following the President's approval, Governor NN Vohra will be presiding over the state. He's doing do for the fourth time, having overseen governor's rule in 2008, 2015 and 2016. Vohra was set to complete his second term in a few days, but is now set to continue in Raj Bhavan at least till the conclusion of 'Amarnath Yatra' on August 26.

What

1. **With J&K having a provision for governor's rule for six months**, the BJP leadership is keen to let this period run as close to the end of 2018 as possible.
2. The calculation is that if the six months ended in December, it would be too close to the Lok Sabha elections to be scheduled ahead of the national polls. The electoral process for the Lok Sabha is expected to begin to unroll from March onward.
3. **The governor's rule — which is specific to J&K — could be followed by President's rule and this would also delay the assembly election. But the conversion of governor's rule to President's rule would need ratification by Parliament.**

INDIA SMART CITIES AWARD 2018

Nine awards in three categories, i.e., Project Award, Innovative Idea Award and City Award have been announced under the India Smart Cities Awards, which **was launched on June 25, 2017 by Hon'ble Housing and Urban Affairs Minister**. The city award is being given to Surat for showing great momentum in implementation of projects especially in the categories of urban environment, transport and mobility and sustainable integrated development.

What

1. The Innovative Idea award is being given to a project/idea particularly remarkable for its innovative, bottom-up and transformative approach towards achievement of sustainable integrated development.
2. Joint winners in this category are Bhopal for their Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) and Ahmedabad for Safe and Secure Ahmedabad (SASA) Project.
3. The Project awards are being given to most innovative and successful projects in seven categories that have been completed by April 1, 2018.
4. India Smart Cities Award was launched on 25 June 2017 with an objective to reward cities, projects and innovative ideas, promoting sustainable development in cities.
5. Eligible Participants were Smart Cities only, where respective ULBs / Smart City SPVs were to submit proposals.

The Projects selected are

1. **PMC Care from Pune under 'Governance' category,**
2. **Smart Place Making from Pune under 'Built Environment',**
3. Smart Class rooms from NDMC and Jabalpur, Smart Campus from Visakhapatnam, **Lighthouse from Pune under 'Social Aspects' category,**
4. B Nest Incubation Centre from Bhopal and Conservation of Rajasthan School of Arts **from Jaipur under 'Culture and Economy' category,**
5. Public Bike Sharing from Bhopal, Pune, Coimbatore and Waste to Energy Plant in **Jabalpur under 'Urban environment' category,**
6. Integrated Transit Management System (TMS) from Ahmedabad and Surat under **'Transport and Mobility' category and**
7. **Smart Water Management through SCADA from Ahmedabad under 'Water and Sanitation' category.**

There are 3 categories of awards

Innovative Idea Award

1. Recognize exceptional innovation across 7 Urban themes

2. Cross-cutting theme (integrating more than one category).
3. Should contribute to the successful transformation of cities
4. Demonstrated multi-stakeholder partnership models & civic collaboration

City Award

1. City need not submit any proposal
2. Multiple proposals submitted for **'Project Award' and 'Innovative Idea Award' and project implementation** will be considered for evaluation

Project Award

1. Completed projects (as on 1st April 2018).
2. Separate awards for each of the 7 (Seven) Urban themes given below

Evaluation

1. A technical committee of international/multilateral experts from UN Habitat, Asian Development Bank and NIUA evaluated the submissions based on Innovation, Impact, and Replicability/Scalability
2. The City Award was decided based on cities' performance on their Awards Score and on Weekly Ranking score as on 2 May 2018 (award application submission deadline). Equal weighting was given to both.

INTERNET TELEPHONY AMENDED

The government has amended norms to allow full fledged internet telephony by telecom operators which will enable calls from app to app of licenced service providers as well as on phone numbers. The new amendment allows only authorised licenced holder to provide full fledged internet telephony and not over-the-top players like WhatsApp, Google Duo etc that allow only app to app calling. With reference to the internet telephony services envisaged in the licences it is clarified that the said service is untethered from the underlying access network. Hence internet telephony service can be provided by access service provider to the customers using internet service of the other service providers, a note from the Department of Telecom issued said.

What

1. The new rule thus allow app from licenced telecom operators to make calls using data or wifi network of other service providers as well.
2. The calls made from these apps will be required to pay termination charges as applicable on normal phone calls.
3. Termination charge is payable to the local operator on whose network the call terminates.
4. Trai has fixed Interconnect Usage Charge (IUC) for telcos in the country at 6 paise per minute, and will be free from 2020 onwards. Besides, the service provider will be required to comply with all the interception and monitoring related requirements as per ammended rules.
5. The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India has fixed international termination charge at 30 paise per minute.

INDIA RETAINS TOP SPOT IN REMITTANCES

India continued to be the world's top recipient of remittance from its diaspora, gathering \$69 billion in 2017—**nearly 1.5 times India's defence budget for 2018-19**—an increase of 9.5% from the previous year, according to World Bank data. Remittances to India from its diaspora increased 22 times to \$69 billion in 2017 from \$3 billion in 1991, but as a proportion to gross domestic product (GDP) fell 1.2 percentage points to 2.8% in six years to 2017. Such remittances increased nine times worldwide to \$613 billion during the same period.

What

1. The countries that followed India in receiving remittances were China, The Philippines, Mexico, Nigeria and Egypt, according to the latest migration report by the World Bank.

2. Nearly \$6.5 trillion will be sent in remittances to developing countries between 2015 and 2030, involving over a billion senders and receivers, according to this June 2014 note by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), an international financial institution and United Nations agency.
3. Remittances are vital for millions of families, helping them to address their development goals.
4. The increase in remittances is likely to continue in 2018 due to strong economic conditions in advanced economies (particularly the United States) and an increase in oil prices that should have a positive impact on the Gulf Cooperation Council region (now known as Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf), including United Arab Emirates (UAE), Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar.
5. Kerala topped the share of remittances (40%) with the number of workers sending money to the state increasing in five years to 2014, IndiaSpend reported on April 20, 2016, followed by Punjab (12.7%), Tamil Nadu (12.4%), Andhra Pradesh (7.7%) and Uttar Pradesh (5.4%) respectively.
6. **Remittances contributed to 2.8% of India's GDP in 2017** based on projected figures, the World Bank report noted, the same as the previous year.
7. Over six years to 2017, the contribution to GDP fell 1.2 percentage points to 2.8% while the remittances averaged nearly \$68 billion.
8. In 1990-91, the contribution to GDP was 0.7%, which increased to 3.08% in 2005-06, Migration Policy Institute, a global think tank, reported on February 1, 2007.
9. In 2011-12, remittances accounted for 4% of GDP, the highest level over the last six years, Hindustan Times reported on October 8, 2012.
10. There are more than 30 million Indians overseas with over 9 million concentrated in the six Gulf nations.
11. In 2017, remittances sent by over 200 million migrants helped sustain 800 million people across the world, the IFAD said.

PLASTIC BAN IN MAHARASHTRA

The Maharashtra government's state-wide ban on the use of plastic items, including carry-bags and thermocol, came into effect from 23 June 2018. For the first time offenders, the fine will be Rs 5,000. For second time offenders, the fine will be Rs 10,000. Those who violate it for the third time will face a fine of Rs 25,000, along with imprisonment of three months.

What

1. The ban puts the onus on the polluters, but at the same time some exceptions have been made so that businesses are not hampered till alternatives have a strong presence in the market.
2. The ban will succeed only with the participation of all the stake-holders and that the government has made a committee to ensure trouble-shooting and smooth adaptation.
3. On March 23, the state government had imposed a ban on manufacturing, use, sale, distribution and storage of plastic materials such as one-time-use bags, spoons, plates, PET and PETE bottles and thermocol items. The government had given three months time for the disposal of the existing stocks.
4. All kinds of plastic bags, irrespective of their thickness, tea cups, glasses, thermocol glasses, thermocol used for decoration, plastic used in hotels to parcel food like boxes, spoons have been banned from today.
5. This decision will change the destiny of our future generations. The work towards the ban on plastic was initiated in August last year, when it was found that plastic had led to major water-logging in Mumbai following continuous downpour.

INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT TRAFFICKING

The International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking is observed every year on June 26 across the world to raise awareness of major problem that illicit drugs.

The day is also observed as an expression of United Nations' (UN) determination to strengthen action and cooperation to achieve goal of an international society free of drug abuse.

What

1. **The 2018 theme of this day is "Listen first** – Listening to children and youth is the first step to help them grow healthy and safe".
2. It seeks to highlights increased incidence of drug abuse in the youth and kids.
3. It aims at increasing support for science-based prevention of drug use and invests more in well-being of kids, youngsters and their families.
4. The day was officially instituted by UN in December 1987.
5. **The date was chosen to commemorate Lin Zexu's (Chinese scholar and official of the Qing dynasty) dismantling of the opium trade in Humen, Guangdong, just before the First Opium War in China (1839–42).**

'SAGARMALA' RECEIVES GOLD AWARD

The **Ministry of Shipping's flagship programme for port-led-prosperity 'Sagarmala'** received the 'Gold Award' in infrastructure sector in the recently concluded 52nd Skoch Summit 2018 in New Delhi, recognizing the programmes's contribution to **India's socio-economic** transformation and it's role in propelling fast-track growth and infrastructure development. The Sagarmala Programme also received the 'Order of Merit' at the Summit. **The Secretary (Shipping) Sh. Gopal Krishna** shared the award with Minister for Shipping, Road Transport & Highways, Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation Shri. Nitin Gadkari.

What

1. The Skoch Awards recognize leadership and excellence in accelerating socio-economic changes. These awards have become a benchmark of best practices in India in the fields of governance, infrastructure, finance, banking, technology, corporate citizenship, economics and inclusive growth.
2. Sagarmala is the flagship programme of the Ministry of Shipping for port-led-development of the country through harnessing **India's 7,500 km long coastline**, 14,500 km of potentially navigable waterways and strategic location of India on key international maritime trade route.
3. The Sagarmala Programme hinges on four pillars, namely; Port Modernization, Port Connectivity, Port-linked Industrialization and Coastal Community Development.
4. The programme aims to double the share of domestic waterways (inland & coastal) in the modal mix, generate logistic cost savings of Rs. 35,000-40,000 Cr per annum, boost merchandize exports by USD 110 Billion and enable creation of 1 Crore new jobs, including 40 Lac direct jobs, in the next 10 years.
5. Under Sagarmala programme, more than 576 projects with an estimated project cost of Rs. 8.7 Lac Crore have been identified for implementation over 20 years. Development would be done across areas of port modernization and new port development, enhancing connectivity of ports, industrialization linked to ports and coastal community development.
6. The Union Cabinet chaired by the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, had given its **'in-principle' approval for the concept and institutional framework of Sagarmala Project** on 25th May 2015.
7. The National Perspective Plan (NPP) was released by the Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi during the inaugural Maritime India Summit held in April 2016, in Mumbai.

WORLD BANK REPORT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change could cost India 2.8 per cent of GDP, and depress living standards of nearly half of its population by 2050, as average annual temperatures are expected to rise by 1-2 per cent over three decades, a World Bank report on 28 June 2018 said. If no measures are taken, average temperatures in India are predicted to increase

by 1.5-3 degrees, said the World Bank report titled 'South Asia's Hotspots: The Impact of Temperature and Precipitation Changes on Living Standards'.

What

1. Rising temperatures and changing monsoon rainfall patterns from climate change could cost India 2.8 per cent of GDP and depress the living standards of nearly half the country's population by 2050, the report said.
2. Even if preventive measures are taken along the lines of those recommended by the Paris climate change agreement of 2015, India's average annual temperatures are expected to rise by 1-2 degrees celsius by 2050.
3. According to it, almost half of South Asia's population, including India, now lives in the "vulnerable areas" and will suffer from declining living standards that could be attributed to falling agricultural yields, lower labour productivity or related health impacts.
4. About 600 million people in India today live in locations that could either become moderate or severe hotspots of climate change by 2050 under a business-as-usual scenario.
5. States in the central, northern and north-western parts of India emerge as most vulnerable to changes in average temperature and precipitation.
6. By 2050, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh are predicted to be the top two climate hotspot states and are likely to experience a decline of more than 9 per cent in their living standards, followed by Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. Seven out of the top 10 most-affected hotspot districts will belong to the Vidarbha region of Maharashtra.
7. These weather changes will result in lower per capita consumption levels that could further increase poverty and inequality in one of the poorest regions of the world.
8. The report provides options to prioritise investments and strategies to build local resilience to climate change.
9. To offset the negative economic impact in India, the report suggests enhancing educational attainment, reducing water stress, and improving job opportunities in the non-agricultural sectors.
10. It also predicts that a 30 per cent improvement on these measures could halt the decline in living standards by almost 1 per cent from 2.8 per cent to 1.9 per cent.

12TH STATISTICS DAY CELEBRATED

National Sample Survey Office, Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation celebrated 12th Statistics Day on 29th June, 2018 at Sankhyiki Bhawan, New Delhi in recognition of the notable contributions made by Professor PC Mahalanobis in the fields of statistics, statistical system and economic planning. In **2007, Government of India designated 29th June as the "Statistics Day"** in the category of Special Days to be celebrated every year at the National level.

What

1. Every year, one particular theme of current national importance is selected for focused discussions and efforts throughout the year aimed at bringing about improvements in the selected area.
2. **The theme selected for the Statistics Day this year is "Quality Assurance in Official Statistics". The theme has been chosen to underscore the importance of compliance with essential parameters of quality in statistical systems and products.**
3. The objective of celebration of this Day is to create public awareness about the importance of statistics in socio-economic planning and policy formulation, to acknowledge the contribution of Prof. Mahalanobis, and to pay homage to him.
4. Late Prof. Prasanta Chandra Mahalanobis (29th June, 1893 – 28th June, 1972) was a visionary Indian scientist whose prime contribution was in development of Statistics.
5. Since 2005, every year, the Ministry of Statistics & Programme Implementation organises an all India Essay Writing Competition on the subject relevant to Statistics/Official Statistics for the Post Graduate students of statistics studying in

the recognized universities / colleges/institutions to commemorate the birth anniversary of eminent statistician Prof. PC Mahalanobis.

6. This year a total of 11 prizes - one First Prize, two Second Prizes, three Third Prizes and five Consolation Prizes were also handed over to the winners during the aforesaid celebration.

AADHAAR VID NOW OPERATIONAL

The Aadhaar issuing authority Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) on 30 June 2018 said it has made Virtual ID (VID) system operational with its Authentication User Agencies (AUAs) which have migrated to VID and UID Token. The Virtual ID is a 16-digit random number mapped with the Aadhaar number. Meanwhile, UIDAI has also classified its AUAs in 'Global' and 'Local' categories for providing authentication facility for VID through UID Token and Limited KYC.

What

1. Telecom companies and E-sign provider AUAs not using API version 2.5 and e-KYC API 2.5 starting July 1 shall be charged Rs. 0.20 for every transaction performed.
2. However, as an incentive to expedite the migration process to VID (via Auth API 2.5), UIDAI has decided that in case an AUA has fully migrated to APIs 2.5 by July 31, then the authentication transaction charges imposed for the above said period of July 1-31 shall be waived off.
3. Also, for all the other AUAs including banks, it has been decided that they shall migrate to VID and UID Token using Auth API 2.5 and e-KYC API 2.5 by August 31.
4. In case of any failure, UIDAI shall be free to take actions under the Aadhaar Act including the imposition of financial disincentives and termination of license keys.
5. It is observed that in certain AUAs, the authentication is always done in a controlled environment in the presence of their own regular staff while in case of some AUAs, the authentication is performed in the presence of their agents who many a time cater to more than one AUA.
6. Sometimes these agents in addition to AUA specific activity are also involved in other business activities.
7. UIDAI, in near future, proposes to introduce other forms of Aadhaar data verification and the same may be provided to AUAs for identity verification in lieu of global or local, as per our review and assessment.
8. AUAs have been asked to make necessary changes in their front-end client application to accept Aadhaar number as well as Virtual ID and in Backend application to consume the UID Token and Limited KYC data immediately.