

My Notes....

NATIONAL

INDIA POST PAYMENTS BANK LAUNCHED

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 1 September 2018 launched the payments bank of Indian postal department that will take banking to doorstep of every citizen through an unmatched network of post offices and almost 300,000 postmen and 'Grameen Dak Sewaks'. India Post Payments Bank (IPPB) will be like any other banks but its operations will be on a smaller scale without involving any credit risk. It will carry out most banking operations like accepting deposits but can't advance loans or issue credit cards.

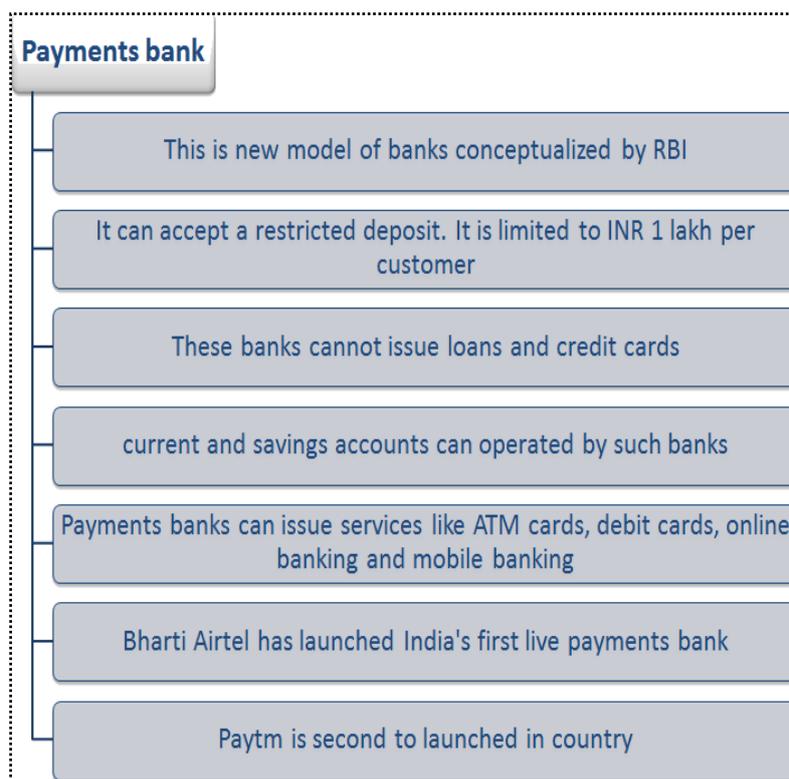
Features of IPPB

1. Leverage the strengths of India Post: The payments bank, where the Indian government holds 100 per cent equity, will leverage the vast network of the Department of Posts (DoP), which has more than 300,000 postmen and Grameen Dak Sewaks.

2. Pilot project: It started operations on 30 January 2017 by opening two pilot branches -- one each in Raipur and Ranchi.

3. Third licensee: This is the third entity to receive payments bank permit after Bharti Airtel and Paytm.

4. Opening a bank account: You can open an IPPB account only through an Aadhaar e-Know Your Customer process. The account is ready almost instantly. The account holder is given a plastic card with a QR code with account details, so they do not need to remember their account numbers.



5. Interest offered: It will offer a 4 per cent interest rate on savings accounts.
6. Balance requirement: The account can be opened with a zero balance and payments banks can accept deposits of up to Rs 100,000 per account from individuals and small businesses.
7. Products offered: The payments bank will offer a range of products such as savings and current accounts, money transfer, direct benefit transfers, bill and utility payments, and enterprise and merchant payments.
8. Services like doorstep banking: Customers can avail of mobile banking, digital banking and doorstep banking
9. Post office savings bank accounts: IPPB has a headstart over other banks in getting customers as they have a strong base of 170 million post office savings bank accounts.

10. Spending: The Cabinet had approved 80 per cent increase in spending for IPPB to Rs 14.35 billion, a move that will arm it with additional ammunition to compete aggressively with existing players like Airtel Payments Bank and Paytm Payments Bank.

SC VERDICT ON HOMOSEXUAL

A five-judge Supreme Court Constitution bench on 6 September 2018 unanimously decriminalised consensual gay sex. The apex court termed part of IPC's Section 377, which criminalises consensual unnatural sex, irrational, indefensible and manifestly arbitrary. The court also partly struck down Section 377 as violative of the right to equality. The historic judgement came on a batch of writ petitions filed by dancer Navtej Jauhar, journalist Sunil Mehra, chef Ritu Dalmia, hoteliers Aman Nath and Keshav Suri and business executive Ayesha Kapur and 20 former and current students of the IITs.

What

1. Any kind of sexual activity with animals shall remain penal offence under Section 377 of the IPC, it said while adding that Section 377 of IPC was a weapon to harass members of LGBT community, resulting in discrimination. The Supreme Court further added that the section is arbitrary and 'untenable'.
2. The apex court said that discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is a violation of freedom of speech and expression. It said that the homosexual community has the same rights as everyone else.
3. All the 5 judges

A brief timeline of the legal battle against Section 377

1. Section 377 was introduced by British India, modelled on the Buggery Act of 1533. This section of the Buggery Act was drafted by Thomas Macaulay in 1838 and was brought into effect in 1860. It defined **'buggery' as an unnatural sexual act against the will of God and man**, thus, criminalising anal penetration, bestiality and homosexuality, in a broader sense.
2. In 2001, non-governmental organisation Naz Foundation filed a petition challenging the constitutionality of Section 377 in the Delhi High Court. They filed a lawsuit seeking the legalisation of homosexual relations between consenting adults.
3. The Delhi High Court dismissed the Naz Foundation petition, saying the body had no standing in the matter. The Naz Foundation appealed against the dismissal in the Supreme Court in 2006. The Supreme Court instructed the Delhi High Court to reconsider the case.
4. In a landmark decision, the Delhi High Court decriminalised homosexuality among consenting adults, holding it violates the right to equality, right against discrimination and protection of life under the Indian Constitution.
5. **After the high court's judgment, various appeals were made to the Supreme Court, challenging the High Court's authority to change a law. In December 2012, the Supreme Court overturned the high court's decision, after finding it "legally unsustainable."**
6. A two-judge bench, comprising Justice G S Singhvi and Justice S J Mukhopadhyaya observed that the high court **had overlooked the fact that a "minuscule fraction of the country's population constitutes LGBT," and that in over 150 years less than 200 people were prosecuted for committing an offence under the section.**
7. The Supreme Court then recommended that the Parliament address the matter because only they had the power to amend the existing laws.

- on the constitution bench, led by the Chief Justice of India, concurred on the matter.
4. A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra had reserved its verdict on July 17 after hearing various stakeholders, including gay rights activists.
 5. The Centre, which had initially sought an adjournment for filing its response to the petitions, had later left to the wisdom of the court the issue of the legality of the penal provision with regard to the aspects of criminalising consensual unnatural sex between two consenting adults.
 6. The Centre had said that the other aspects of the penal provision dealing with minors and animals should be allowed to remain in the statute book.
 7. Section 377 refers to 'unnatural offences' and says whoever voluntarily has carnal intercourse against the order of nature with any man, woman or animal, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to 10 years, and shall also be liable to pay a fine.
 8. The issue of section 377 was first raised by an NGO, Naaz Foundation, which had in 2001 approached the Delhi High Court that had decriminalised sex between consenting adults of the same gender by holding the penal provision "illegal".
 9. This 2009 judgement of the high court was overturned in 2013 by the apex court which had also dismissed a review plea. It had in 2013 restored the criminality of the sexual relationship between persons of the same sex, after the Delhi High Court' had decriminalised it in 2009.
 10. The five-judge bench on July 10 had made it clear that it was not going into the curative petitions and would adjudicate on fresh writ petitions in the matter.
 11. The writ petitions were opposed by the Apostolic Alliance of Churches, Utkal Christian Association and some other NGOs and individuals including Suresh Kumar Kaushal who had also challenged the 2009 verdict of the high court in the apex court.

FIRST TRIBAL CIRCUIT PROJECT

India's first tribal circuit project connecting 13 tourism sites in Chhattisgarh under Swadesh Darshan Scheme was inaugurated by Union Ministry of Tourism.

What

1. The circuit connects Jashpur, Kunkuri, Mainpat, Kamleshpur, Maheshpur, Kurdar, Sarodadadar, Gangrel, Kondagaon, Nathiya Nawagaon, Jagdalpur, Chitrakoot, and Tirthgarh in Chhattisgarh.
2. Major components sanctioned under tribal circuit project in Chhattisgarh includes developing eco log huts, craft haats, souvenir shops, open amphitheatre, tribal interpretation centres, workshop centres, tourist amenities centres, viewpoints, nature trails, solar illuminations etc.
3. These components will improve the existing tourist facilities, enhance the overall tourist experience and help in getting more visitors which in return will increase job opportunities in the area.

Flashback

1. Development of tribes and tribal culture is one of the prime areas of focus for the Tourism Ministry.
2. It is carrying out an array of activities for development and promotion of tourism in the tribal region.
3. Under tribal circuit theme of Swadesh Darshan Scheme, Tourism Ministry has sanctioned four projects to Nagaland, Telangana and Chhattisgarh for Rs. 381.37 crore.

4. Chhattisgarh was considered for the first tribal circuit theme for acknowledging sovereignty of tribes and to promote rich and diverse primitive assets in the state.
5. Chhattisgarh is known for its exceptional scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage.
6. Tribes make up over one-third of state population who have retained their culture and traditions for centuries.

Swadesh Darshan scheme

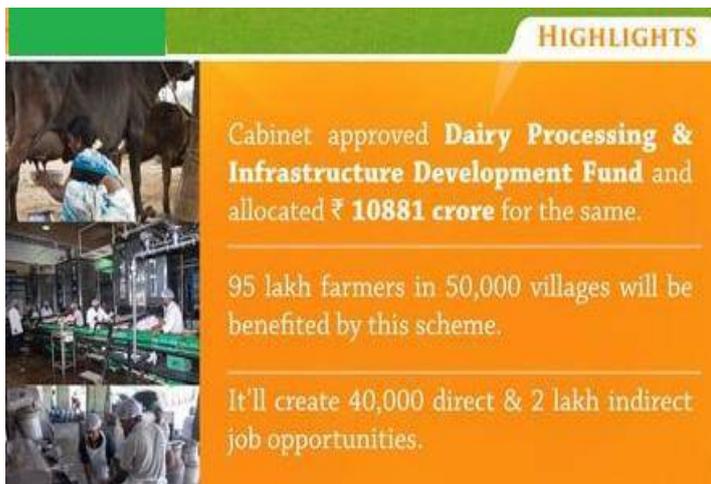
1. The scheme was launched by Union Tourism Ministry with an objective to develop theme-based tourist circuits in the country.
2. These tourist circuits will be developed on principles of high tourist value, competitiveness and sustainability in an integrated manner.
3. Under this scheme, 13 thematic circuits have been identified for development.
4. They are Buddhist Circuit, North-East India Circuit, Coastal Circuit, Himalayan Circuit, Krishna Circuit, Desert Circuit, Eco Circuit, Wildlife Circuit, Tribal Circuit, Rural Circuit, Spiritual Circuit, Ramayana Circuit and Heritage Circuit.
5. It is 100% centrally funded scheme for the project components undertaken for public funding.
6. It also has provision for leveraging voluntary funding under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives of Central Public Sector Undertakings and corporate sector.
7. The funding of projects under this scheme varies from state to state.
8. It is finalised on basis of detailed project reports prepared by Programme Management Consultant (PMC) which is national level consultant for implementing the scheme.
9. So far, Tourism Ministry has sanctioned 74 projects worth Rs. 5997.47 crore to 31 states and Union Territories under this scheme.

DIDF SCHEME LAUNCHED

Union Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare has launched Dairy Processing & Infrastructure Development Fund (DIDF) Scheme. This scheme was approved by Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) in September 2017 with aim to boost dairy sector.

What

1. It is managed by National Dairy Development Board (NDDB) and will be implemented from 2017-18 to 2028-29. Milk unions, multi-state milk cooperatives, state dairy federations, milk producer companies and NDDB subsidiaries can avail loan under this scheme after meeting eligibility criteria.
2. Under this scheme, eligible milk organisations will be provided financial



HIGHLIGHTS

Cabinet approved **Dairy Processing & Infrastructure Development Fund** and allocated **₹ 10881 crore** for the same.

95 lakh farmers in 50,000 villages will be benefited by this scheme.

It'll create 40,000 direct & 2 lakh indirect job opportunities.

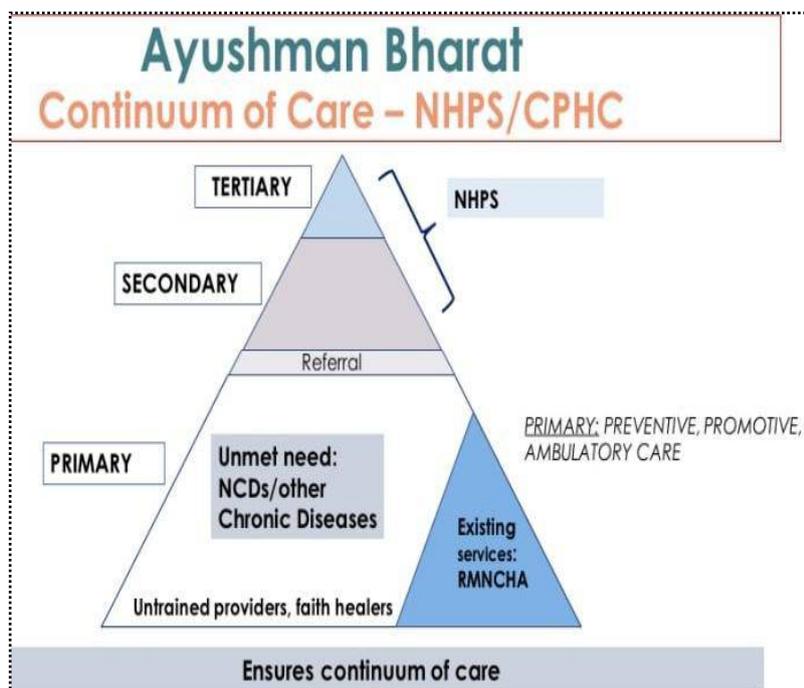
- assistance in the form of a loan at 6.5% interest for building an efficient milk procurement system and other dairy processing infrastructure.
- This loan will be reimbursed over period of 10 years. It also has provision of interest subsidy on loans.
 - The loan proceeds will be provided for putting in place efficient milk procurement system by setting up of chilling infrastructure and installation of electronic milk adulteration testing equipment.
 - It will be also used for creation, modernisation and expansion of processing infrastructure and manufacturing faculties for value-added dairy products.

AYUSHMAN BHARAT HAS ITS FIRST BABY

Born at the Kalpana Chawla government hospital in Karnal on August 17, Karishma now has a new name: Ayushman Bharat baby. Her father Amit Kumar became the first beneficiary of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) when the hospital was reimbursed Rs 9,000 for **Karishma's birth by Caesarean section**. Haryana started PMJAY pilots in 26 hospitals in the state the same day as they were announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his Independence Day speech.

What is Ayushman Bharat scheme?

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced his flagship project, Ayushman Bharat or National Health Protection Scheme on Independence Day.
- The project will be launched on September 25, on the birth anniversary of Deen Dayal Upadhyay.
- The policy was initially announced by the then finance minister Arun Jaitley in February this year during the presentation of last full budget of the NDA government.



- The ambitious Ayushman Bharat or National Health Protection Scheme aims to cover over 10 crore vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) and provide health cover up to Rs 5 lakh per family per year.
- The programme is being touted as the **world's largest health** protection scheme. The benefits of the scheme are portable across the country and a beneficiary covered under the scheme will be allowed to take cashless benefits from any public/private empanelled hospitals across the country.
- The scheme will aim to target over 10 crore families based on SECC (Socio-Economic Caste Census) database. To ensure that nobody from the vulnerable group is left out of the benefit cover, there will be no cap on family size and age in '**Ayushman Bharat**' scheme.
- The insurance scheme will cover pre and post-hospitalisation expenses.

8. The expenditure incurred in premium payment will be shared between Central and State Governments in a specified ratio.
9. The funding for the scheme will be shared – 60:40 for all states and UTs with their own legislature, 90:10 in Northeast states and the three Himalayan states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal and Uttarakhand and 100% Central funding for UTs without legislature. The states are also free to continue with their own health programmes.
10. So far, many states have finalised their memoranda of understanding with the Centre. Of these Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Assam, Sikkim and Chandigarh are the states that will use a trust model for the mission.
11. In a trust model, bills are reimbursed directly by the government. Gujarat and Tamil Nadu have opted for mixed mode implementation.
12. In an insurance model, the government pays a fixed premium to an insurance company, which pays the hospitals.

WOSA-2018

The World Summit on Accreditation (WOSA-2018) was held New Delhi. It was inaugurated by Union Minister for Human Resource Development (HRD) Prakash Javadekar. WOSA-2018 was organized by National Board of Accreditation (NBA) with **main focus (theme) on** “Challenges and Opportunities in Outcome Based Accreditation”.

What

1. The Summit facilitated exchange of information on various challenges being faced during transition between input-output based accreditation to outcome based accreditation.
2. It saw participation of accreditation agencies from across world on common platform to share best practices.
3. It provided opportunity for academia and industry to explore avenues for future partnerships and to create an environment for open dialogue to facilitate mobility of students and professionals world-wide to gain international experience.
4. Sub-themes of WOSA 2018: Achieving excellence through learning outcomes, role of industry in technical education, ranking and rating of higher education institutions – Do they have Role in Quality Improvement, linking government funding with quality and use of ICT in accreditation in large jurisdictions.

About NBA

1. It is an autonomous organisation under Union Ministry of Human Resource Development.
2. It is engaged in quality assurance of programs offered by professional and technical institutions in India through accreditation.
3. It has been accorded Permanent Signatory Status of Washington Accord since June, 2014.
4. NBA has adopted internationally implemented outcome based assessment and accreditation for ensuring that graduates of NBA accredited programs is globally competent and relevant.

Flashback

1. World Summit on Accreditation (WOSA) is biennial Summit organised by NBA, which provides platform to stakeholders to share their knowledge and information on accreditation.
2. So far, NBA has organised three Summits in past in 2012 (theme: Achieving Excellence through Accreditation), 2014 (International Recognition of Education Qualifications) and 2016 (Quality Assurance through Outcome Based Accreditation).

FIRST EVER REPORT ON HEALTH OF TRIBALS

The sex ratio of the tribal population in the country is higher than the national average at 990 females per 1,000 males, but the child sex ratio has declined from 972 in 2001 to 957 in 2011, the first ever report on health of tribals has revealed. At 990 per 1,000 males, the sex ratio among STs is much better than the All India average of 933. It is also an improvement from 978 in 2001.

What

1. Tribal population in states like Goa (1,046), Kerala (1,035), Arunachal Pradesh (1,032), Odisha (1,029), Meghalaya (1,013) and Chhattisgarh (1,020) show a positive sex ratio.
2. However, the child sex ratio among STs has declined from 972 in 2001 to 957 in 2011. While this is better than the All India average of 914, it represents a worrying trend and can be attributed to greater dispersion of tribal communities and consequently increased access to ultrasound technology, the report prepared by an expert committee on tribal health stated.
3. **The report titled, “Tribal health in India Bridging the Gap and a Roadmap for the Future”, revealed how manpower and infrastructure deficiencies are more acute in tribal areas.** The report listed ten health challenges for tribals, including malaria and animal bites.
4. The committee was constituted in 2013 by the UPA government to look into the health status of the tribal population, goals of tribal healthcare and finances, governance and knowledge required for the purpose. The committee submitted its report to the Union Health Ministry last month.
5. The report revealed poor access to amenities, with only 52 per cent tribal (scheduled tribes) households having access to electricity and only one-third of tribal households using clean cooking fuels as compared to non-tribal households.
6. In Jharkhand, Rajasthan and Odisha, more than 90 per cent of the tribal population defecates in the open, and 77.3 per cent of tribal households have no facilities for drainage. The limited access to technology may have come with some devastating consequences.
7. The committee, headed by Dr Abhay Bang, in its report identified ten special tribal health problems — malaria control, reducing malnutrition, reducing child mortality, ensuring safe motherhood and the health of women, providing family planning services and care for infertility, de-addiction and mental health care, sickle cell disease, animal bites, providing health literacy and health of children in ashramshalas (residential schools for tribal children).
8. Malaria in the tribal population is an acute health issue. Tribals constitute 8 per cent of the country’s **population, but account for 30 per cent of all malaria cases.**
9. The committee recommended appointing one ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) for every 50 tribal households, and opening tribal health and wellness centres — one for 3,000 people initially.
10. This committee recommends that the government should focus 70 per cent of its resources for tribal health on provision of primary care in tribal areas.

HIV AND AIDS (PREVENTION AND CONTROL) ACT 2017 NOTIFIED

Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare have issued notification for bringing Human Immunodeficiency Virus and Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (Prevention and Control) Act, 2017 in force from 10th September, 2018. The Act safeguards rights of people living with HIV and affected by HIV.

What

1. The Act addresses HIV-related discrimination, strengthen existing programme by bringing in legal accountability and establish formal mechanisms for inquiring into complaints and redressing grievances.

2. The Act seeks to prevent and control spread of HIV and AIDS, prohibits discrimination against persons with HIV and AIDS.
3. It lists various grounds on which discrimination against HIV positive persons and those living with them is prohibited.

4. These discrimination grounds include denial, termination, discontinuation or unfair treatment with regard to (i) employment (ii) educational establishments (iii) health care services (iv) Standing for public or private office, (v) residing or renting property and (vi) provision of insurance.



5. It also prohibits requirement for HIV testing as pre-requisite for obtaining employment or accessing health care or education.
6. It mentions that every HIV infected or affected person below age of 18 years has right to reside in shared household and enjoy facilities of household.
7. It also prohibits any individual from publishing information or advocating feelings of hatred against HIV positive persons and those living with them.
8. It gives right to every person in care and custody of the state to HIV prevention, testing, treatment and counseling services.
9. It mentions that person between 12 to 18 years of age having sufficient maturity in understanding and managing affairs of his HIV or AIDS affected family will be competent to act as guardian of another sibling below 18 years of age.

KAZIND 2018

Indo-Kazakhstan Joint Army Exercise 'KAZIND' will be conducted between the Indian and Kazakhstan Army from 10 to 23 Sep 2018 in Otar region, Kazakhstan. This is the third joint military exercise between the two countries which have a history of extensive cooperation in the defence arena. The second edition of the exercise was held in India last year.

What

1. The aim of the exercise is to build and promote bilateral Army to Army relations and exchange skills and experiences between Kazakhstan Army and the Indian Army. The exercise will also serve as a platform for exchange of drills and procedures.
2. The fourteen days exercise with the Kazakhstan Army will follow a graduated continuum from orientation to a full scale mock exercise; the aim being to achieve optimum integration among the two contingents through enhanced mutual **comprehension of each other's tactics, techniques and procedures.**
3. The vast experience and expertise of Indian troops in counter insurgency operations holds special importance to the Kazakhstan Army.

- The conduct of the joint exercise will set the stage for greater defence cooperation and consequently will manifest in stronger ties between the two great nations.

APSARA RECOMMISSIONS

Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC), Trombay has recommissioned **India's oldest nuclear research reactor named 'Apsara'**, which was shut down permanently in 2009 for repair. The refurbished version of this reactor has been named as **'Apsara-upgraded' (Apsara-U)** and also has double capacity compared to its earlier version. It is located within **India's nuclear weapons facility at BARC's Trombay campus** (Maharashtra).

What

- Apsara was the first nuclear research reactor in Asia.
- It had become operational in **BARC's Trombay campus** in August 1956.
- It was first nuclear research reactor indigenously developed in India.
- The design was conceptualised in 1955 by Dr Homi Bhabha, the father of Indian Nuclear programme.
- Its name Apsara was coined by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru.
- Apsara was a light water moderated (swimming pool-type) reactor with maximum power output of 1 megawatt thermal (MWt).
- It burned enriched uranium in form of aluminum alloyed curved plates.
- It was utilised for various experiments including neutron activation analysis, radiation damage studies, forensic research, neutron radiography, and shielding experiments.
- It was shut down in 2009, after more than five decades of service.

About BARC

- BARC is India's premier nuclear** research facility based in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- It is multi-disciplinary research center with extensive infrastructure for advanced research and development.
- Its R&D covers entire spectrum of nuclear science, engineering and related areas.
- BARC's core mandate is to sustain** peaceful applications of nuclear energy, primarily for power generation.

MODEL ICTAI SET UP

NITI Aayog, Intel, and Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) are collaborating to set up Model International Center for Transformative Artificial Intelligence (ICTAI) in Bengaluru, capital of Karnataka. This collaboration is part of NITI **Aayog's 'National Strategy for Artificial Intelligence'** Discussion Paper that focuses on establishing ICTAI in the country through private sector collaboration. The model centre is aimed at solving major challenges in India with special focus on application-based AI research in healthcare, agriculture and smart mobility.

What

- It will aid in Developing and deploying AI-led application-based research projects.
- It will conduct advanced research to incubate AI-led solutions in three important areas – healthcare, agriculture and smart mobility – by bringing together expertise of TIFR and Intel.

3. It will experiment, discover and establish best practices in domains of ICTAI governance, fundamental research, physical infrastructure, compute and service infrastructure needs, and talent acquisition.
4. Model ICTAI will develop AI foundational frameworks, tools and assets, including curated datasets and unique AI algorithms.
5. It will also develop standards and support policy development related to IT such as data-storage, information security, privacy, and ethics for data capture and use.
6. It will also develop AI foundational technologies to promote applied research that can scale for national impact and will lead to the creation of a vibrant and self-sustaining ecosystem.
7. ICTAI will also collaborate with industry leaders, startups, and AI services and product companies to productize technologies and IP that are developed by it.
8. It will also support skilling and talent development for world-class AI talent.
9. The learning and best practices developed through this model ICTAI will be used by NITI Aayog to set up future ICTAIs across country.

MILEX-18

The first field training military exercise MILEX-18, as part of the Bay of Bengal initiative for multi-sectoral technical and economic cooperation (BIMSTEC) commenced at Foreign Training Node at Aundh in Pune, Maharashtra. All member BIMSTEC countries, except Thailand and Nepal will take active part in this exercise. Thailand and Nepal will only be sending group of observers.

What

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The theme of the exercise is counter-terrorism in semi-urban terrain. 2. Its main aim is to promote strategic alignment among member-states and to share best practices in the area of counter-terrorism. 3. The exercise will include training in operations like search-and-cordon operations, search and destroy and handling and neutralisation of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) among other things. | <p>About BIMSTEC</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is regional group of seven countries in South Asia and South East Asia lying in littoral and adjacent areas of Bay of Bengal constituting contiguous regional unity. 2. It was established on 6 June 1997 through Bangkok Declaration. It is headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh. 3. Its member countries are India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka from South Asia and Myanmar, Thailand from South East Asia. 4. They are collectively home to around 1.5 billion people which constitute around 22% of global population. 5. BIMSTEC's main objective is to promote technological and economic cooperation among south Asian and south-east Asian countries along coast of the Bay of Bengal. 6. The grouping is sector-driven cooperative organization, started in 2006 with six sector including trade, technology, energy, transport, tourism and fisheries. 7. In 2008, it was expanded to embrace eight more sectors including agriculture, public health, poverty alleviation, counter-terrorism, environment, culture, people to people contact and climate change. |
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4. Each participating member country will be represented by platoon sized contingents including around 30 soldiers (including five officers, 25 Junior Commissioned Officers (JCOs) and personnel of other ranks).
5. As part of this exercise, conclave of Army chiefs of all seven member-states is also being planned.
6. Through this exercise India is trying to achieve in cooperative defense diplomacy.
7. BIMSTEC countries had held disaster management exercise in 2017 in New Delhi, but this will be first military exercise of the grouping.

CABINET APPROVES CONTINUATION OF IDWH

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs, chaired by the Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has approved continuation of the Centrally Sponsored Umbrella Scheme of Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats (CSS-IDWH) beyond the 12th Plan period from 2017-18 to 2019-20. The Scheme consists of Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger (CSS-PT), Development of Wildlife Habitats (CSS-DWH) and Project Elephant (CSS-PE).

What

1. A total of 18 tiger range States, distributed in five landscapes of the country would be benefitted under the Project Tiger scheme.
2. Similarly, for other two schemes, the coverage is entire country in case of Development of Wildlife Habitats (DWH) and 23 elephant range States for Project Elephant.
3. It would foster wildlife conservation in general with specific inputs for tiger in Project Tiger area and elephant in Project Elephant area.
4. Besides immense environmental benefits and effective implementation of tiger conservation inputs in and around tiger reserves under Project Tiger, wildlife conservation inputs in Protected Areas & nearby areas under Development of Wildlife Habitats and Elephant conservation inputs in Project Elephant areas, the schemes would result in overall strengthening/ consolidation of tiger, elephant and wildlife conservation in the country.
5. The schemes would address the human wildlife conflict effectively. Besides, the communities opting for voluntary relocation from the Core/Critical Tiger Habitat (6900 families) would be benefitted under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Project Tiger (CSS-PT) and 800 families under Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Development of Wildlife Habitat.
6. These schemes would generate employment opportunities resulting in economic upliftment of people in and around tiger reserves/ Protected Areas besides leading to reduction in natural resource dependency with substitution by clean energy use.
7. It will generate direct employment of about 30 lakh man days annually which shall include many local tribes besides non-tribal local workforce.
8. People living in vicinity would also get indirect benefits. Local populace would get opportunities to serve as guides, driver, hospitality personnel and in other ancillary jobs.
9. These schemes would foster imparting various skills towards making people self-dependent through various eco-development projects, thereby enabling them to go for self-employment.
10. These schemes would result in resource generation through tourist visits, thereby fostering in securing tiger source areas and other areas important for wildlife conservation, besides being helpful in sustaining life support systems as well as ensuring the food, water and livelihood security.

11. The implementation of the schemes would be done through the respective States in designated Tiger Reserves, Protected Areas and Elephant Reserves.

SHEROES SUMMIT

The sixth edition of SHEROES Summit was hosted its fourth chapter of the year at the UST Global campus in Thiruvananthapuram on 8 September 2018. The summit is the annual multi-city, flagship event of SHEROES, a coming together of thought leaders, iconic artists, and members of the SHEROES community. Speakers share their journeys and experiences around building safe, vibrant communities for women, leveraging the power of technology, collaboration and ideas.

What

1. The summit was for the first time brings its core online communities – careers, love, relationships, health, bazaar, cooking and arts and crafts, to Thiruvananthapuram.
2. Home makers and artists from the community will showcase their products at the venue, and early adopters of the SHEROES app will share their growth stories. Alicia Castillo Holley, Silicon Valley angel investor and founder of the 'Women Get Funded' programme, will deliver the keynote.
3. The summit in Thiruvananthapuram follows those held in Bengaluru, Chennai and Mumbai this year. It will ultimately proceed to for Delhi, making it a five-city event. Partnering the effort are digital transformation solutions company UST Global and KLAY Prep Schools & Daycare - **India's largest network of corporate daycare centres.**
4. Manu Gopinath, Chief People Officer, UST Global, said his company recognises gender diversity as a strategic imperative that propels it forward in the quest to transform customer digital landscapes.
5. Women techies from the SHEROES community can access one-on-one mentorship sessions with experts from UST Global, which is looking to hire more women in technology in India.
6. KLAY will host crèche-in-a-box training workshops for community members looking to start up their own crèches. Other partners include Just Herbs, Kerala Startup Mission, Women's Business Incubation Programme and SHE Drives Data.

NOMADIC ELEPHANT 2018

India, Mongolia joint exercise Nomadic Elephant 2018 commenced at Mongolian Armed Forces (MAF) Five Hills Training Area in Ulaanbaatar (capital of Mongolia). Nomadic Elephant is annual bilateral military exercise started in 2006. It is designed to strengthen partnership between Indian Army and Mongolian Armed Forces.

What

1. This year it is thirteenth edition of exercise aimed at developing mutual understanding and respect between armies of both countries and facilitate in tackling the world wide phenomenon of terrorism.
2. The 12 days long joint exercise will be conducted from 10 to 21 September 2018.
3. This exercise will seek to improve tactical and technical skills in joint counter insurgency and counter terrorist operations in rural and urban scenario between both countries under United Nations mandate.
4. Indian contingent is represented by contingent of 17 PUNJAB Regiment while Mongolian contingent is represented by Unit 084 of Mongolian Armed Forces.

FIRST EVER MID-AIR REFUELLING

Indian Air Force (IAF) successfully carried out first ever mid-air refuelling of indigenously developed Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas MK-1 over Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh. With this, India joins in elite group of countries which have successfully developed air-to-air refuelling system for military aircraft.

What

1. It was first wet mid-air refuelling of LCA Tejas (LSP8) carried out by transferring **1,900 kg of fuel from IAF's** Russian-origin Ilyushin-78 (IL-78) tanker at altitude of 20,000 feet.
2. This operation had refueled all internal tanks and drop tanks of LCA Tejas.
3. Before this wet contact trial, IAF had successfully **conducted** 'dry-air refuelling contact trials' where drogue (basket) extended from tanker aircraft IL-78 by fuel hose, which was only tracked and **plugged into using LCA's Tejas' refuelling probe** without transferring fuel.
4. With this first trial of air-to-air refueling, LCA gets much closer to important battle-ready tag, called final operational clearance (FOC).

Flashback

1. IAF currently operates nine LC Tejas fighters built to Initial Operating Clearance (IOC) standard built indigenously by Hindustan Aeronautical Limited.
2. These jets are being flown by No. 45 Squadron named Flying Daggers (It is first LCA Tejas Squadron) based at Sulur Air Force Station in Tamil Nadu.
3. IAF has placed order of 123 LCA Tejas variants at cost of Rs 70, 000 crores to Hindustan Aeronautical Limited (HAL).
4. Among the 123 planes on order, 20 each are in IOC and more advanced final operational clearance (FOC) configurations, while remaining 83 are in Mk-1A configuration that comes with additional improvements

SLINEX-2018

India, Sri Lanka joint naval exercise SLINEX-2018 was held at Trincomalee, Sri Lanka from September 7 to 13, 2018. SLINEX exercise started in 2005 was previously held once in two years and now it has been converted to annual event this year onwards.

What

1. The exercise was conducted in two phases, namely Harbour and Sea Phase.
2. These exercises involved joint training, exchange of expertise, helicopter and maritime patrol aircraft operations, search and rescue, and maneuvers at sea.
3. The scope of exercise was significantly increased this year, as it saw participation of three ships, two maritime patrol aircraft and one helicopter participating from Indian side.
4. In addition, Sri Lanka Air Force personnel also participated in the exercise for first time.
5. SLINEX 2017 was held at Visakhapatnam in September 2017 wherein two ships SLNS participated from Sri Lanka Navy.

INTERNATIONAL

US, INDIA SEAL COMCASA

India and the US on 6 September 2018 held the first edition of the 2+2 dialogue in New Delhi, in which the major takeaways were the signing of the long-pending Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) and setting up of a hotline between External Affairs Minister and Defence Minister with their American counterparts. After being canceled twice in the last 14 months, Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj and Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman held the 2+2 dialogue with US Secretary of State Michael Pompeo and Defence Secretary James Mattis.

What

1. Signing of Communications Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA) will enable India to access advanced technologies from the US.
2. COMCASA will provide a legal framework for the transfer of communication security equipment from the US to India that would facilitate **“interoperability”** between their forces — and potentially with other militaries that use US-origin systems for secured data links.
3. It will also allow the installation of high-security US communication equipment on defence platforms being sourced from the US.
4. While Pompeo termed the agreement a **“milestone”** in the relationship, Sitharaman asserted that the pact would enhance **India’s defence capability and preparedness**.
5. The signing of the COMCASA agreement could also reduce the chances of the United States imposing sanctions on India for looking to buy Russian S-400 surface-to-air missile systems.
6. In January, the Donald Trump administration had endorsed India’s quest for membership into the exclusive club but New Delhi has faced roadblocks from Beijing, which has insisted that India was not a signatory to the Non-Proliferation Treaty.
7. The two sides also announced the deployment of an Indian liaison officer at the US Naval Forces Central Command (NAVCENT), which is in charge of naval operations in Afghanistan, Pakistan and the oil-rich Gulf countries.
8. In a first, the two nations also decided to conduct a tri-services joint exercise off the eastern coast of India in 2019.

COMCASA

<p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">What</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Legal framework to allow US to transfer high-end communication security equipment to India.</p> 	<p style="color: red; font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Why</p> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">  <p style="font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Enable Indian and US forces to operate more closely, share information on secure networks</p> </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 10px;">  <p style="font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Improve performance of US-sourced platforms with compatible, secure communication systems</p> </div> <div>  <p style="font-weight: bold; margin: 0;">Establishes platform to share real-time operational information with US & its allies</p> </div>
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INTERNATIONAL WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS SUMMIT 2018

International Women Entrepreneurs Summit 2018 was held in Kathmandu, capital of Nepal from September 3 to 5, 2018. The summit was inaugurated by Vice President of Nepal Nanda Bahadur Pun. The theme of 3-day summit was “Equality begins with Economic Empowerment”. It was organised by the South Asian Women Development Forum.

What

1. The main objective of the summit was to bring together achievers, women business leaders, professionals, international service providers, resource organizations, experts, government representatives and other stakeholders.
2. **It's focus on** innovative economic transformation through discussions and collaborations.
3. It had seen participation of delegates from SAARC, ASEAN, EU, Africa, Arab countries and China.

About SAWDF

1. SAWDF is an autonomous, nonprofit organization based in Kathmandu, Nepal.
2. It was granted the status of SAARC Recognized Body by 36th Session of SAARC Council Ministers at 18th SAARC Summit held in Kathmandu in 2014.
3. It is first SAARC Recognized Body organisation **working on women entrepreneurs' issues.**
4. **It represents national women entrepreneurs' associations or organizations, institutions working towards economic issues of women entrepreneurs in SAARC Region.**
5. Its membership is based on organizations with **extensive work around women's entrepreneurship.**

6TH EAS-EMM AND 15TH INDIA-ASEAN- EMM HELD

Commerce & Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu attended the 6th East Asia Summit-Economic Ministers' **Meeting (EAS-EMM)** and 15th India-**ASEAN Economic Ministers' Meeting (AEM)** in Singapore. Singapore is currently holding the Chair of ASEAN. The 6th East-Asia Economic Ministers' Meeting was chaired by Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore, and was attended by Economic Ministers from 10 ASEAN countries and their eight dialogue partners, Australia, China, India, Japan, Republic of Korea, New Zealand, the Russian Federation and the United States of America.

What

1. The Ministers welcomed the higher global economic growth forecast for 2018 and took note of the increasing importance of trade and investment relations among the EAS economies.
2. Acknowledging the potential for disruptions in the macro-economy that could affect overall market sentiments and global growth, the EAS-EMM forum expressed the hope that the economic linkages among the EAS members will enable them to address these challenges.
3. The Ministers agreed to the importance of keeping markets open and fair as well as improving transparency and predictability of the business environment.
4. The meeting recognized the importance of ongoing work to maximize the opportunities of, and address the challenges presented by, the digital economy and the rise of regional and global value chains, as part of their efforts to promote economic growth and integration in the region.
5. The 6th EAS-EMM was followed by the 15th ASEAN Economic Ministers - India Consultation. It was co-chaired by Chan Chun Sing, Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore, and Suresh Prabhu, Minister of Commerce and Industry, India.
6. The meeting attended by Economic Ministers from 10 ASEAN countries took stock of the current level of trade and economic engagement between India and ASEAN and reaffirmed the commitment to further strengthen ASEAN-India economic relations.
7. ASEAN Ministers also appreciated the outcomes of the ASEAN-India Business and Investment Meet and Expo held on 22-23 January 2018 in New Delhi, that was

- organised soon after the 31st ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit and its role in providing a platform for both government and industry leaders to exchange views and provide ideas and solutions towards sustaining the momentum of trade and investment in the region.
8. It was also announced in the Singapore meeting that the next ASEAN-India Business Summit will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in November 2018 with the theme **“Towards Building Strategic Partnership between ASEAN and India in the Era of the 4th IR and Digital Economy”** which will be followed by the 4th India-ASEAN Dialogue Partner Expo and Summit scheduled for 21-23 February 2019, in New Delhi.
 9. The ASEAN-India Business Council (AIBC) presented their recommendations to the forum to sustain the momentum of trade and investment in the region.
 10. Issues related to promoting connectivity, collaboration on Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) development, blue economy, healthcare, and tourism as well as women and youth economic empowerment were discussed.

AGREEMENT TO COLLABORATE FOR GAGANYAAN MISSION

India and France have signed agreement to collaborate for **ISRO’s first human** space mission Gaganyaan to be launched in 2022. Both countries have also announced working group for Gaganyaan. The announcement was made at sixth edition of Bengaluru Space Expo (touted to be largest space conference in Asia and held in Bengaluru).

What

1. So far, French-Indian space cooperation was in the domain of climate monitoring, with fleet of joint satellites devoted to research and operational applications.
2. Under this agreement, ISRO and French space agency CNES will form working group to exchange expertise in fields of astronaut life support, radiation protection, space debris protection and personal hygiene systems among others.
3. CNES will be sharing its expertise acquired from France first human spaceflights of **Thomas Pesquet’s Proxima** mission in November 2016, when European Space Agency’s (ESA) astronaut Pesquet was on six-month mission at International Space Station (ISS). Pesquet had conducted 50 scientific experiments for CNES and ESA.
4. The partnership between CNES and ISRO will also allow French space agency to **learn from India’s developments in the field of crew transport.**

About Gaganyaan Mission

1. It will be **India’s first manned space** mission. Under it, India is planning to send three humans (Gaganyatris) into space by 2022 for period of five to seven days.
2. The mission was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his 72nd Independence Day speech.
3. It will make India fourth nation in the world after USA, Russia and China to launch a human spaceflight mission.
4. The crew of three astronauts will conduct experiments on microgravity in space.
5. They will be selected jointly by Indian Air Force (IAF) and ISRO after which they will undergo training for two-three years.
6. GSLV Mk-III launch vehicle, having necessary payload capability will be used to launch Gaganyaan.

GLOBAL BASELINE REPORT 2018

India has made rapid progress in increasing access to sanitation in schools, the United Nations said in a report, noting that the proportion of schools without any sanitation facility has decreased at a fast pace in the country. A new joint UN agency

study, 'Drinking Water, Sanitation and Hygiene in Schools: 2018 Global Baseline Report,' says that good hygiene facilities in schools provide the basis of a healthy learning environment and that girls are more likely to attend when they are on their period.

What

1. The annual report is produced by the **World Health Organization/UN Children's Fund Joint Monitoring Programme**, or JMP, which has been monitoring global progress on drinking water; sanitation and hygiene (WASH) since 1990.
2. It looks at the progress made towards reaching the targets of two of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs): Goal 6 (Clean water and sanitation), and Goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all).
3. WASH in schools programmes provide an entry point for the education, awareness-raising and behaviour change required to achieve the SDG6 target of ending open defecation by 2030.
4. Between 2000 and 2016, the proportion of schools in India without any sanitation facility decreased even faster than the proportion of the population practising open defecation.
5. Based on these trends, the JMP estimates that almost all schools in India had some type of sanitation facility in 2016, while 10 years earlier half the schools in India reported having no sanitation facility at all. Between 2000 and 2016, the number of school-age children in India increased from 352 million to 378 million.
6. The report said that a recent survey in India also collected information on the availability of facilities for menstrual hygiene management.
7. The proportion of schools with bins with lids for the disposal of sanitary materials varies widely across states in India, from 98 per cent in Chandigarh to 36 per cent in Chhattisgarh.
8. Mizoram is the only state where more than 50 per cent of schools have a functional incinerator for the disposal of sanitary waste.
9. It said the Government of India issued national guidelines on menstrual hygiene management in 2015 but a survey in 2016-2017 showed that only two thirds of schools in India provide menstrual hygiene education with wide variations between states.
10. The report further said that millions of children globally are going to school without basic hygiene facilities, and the goal of universal access to basic water, sanitation **and hygiene remains "a huge challenge"**.
11. Over 30 per cent of schools worldwide do not provide safe drinking water; a third of schools do not provide the most basic of toilet facilities (such as septic tank, pit latrines or composting toilets); and nearly 900 million children go to schools with no handwashing facilities with soap and water.
12. Universal access to basic water, sanitation and hygiene in schools is part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, but achieving this ambitious target presents a huge challenge.

INDIA INKED 67 APAS IN FY18

India signed as many as 67 advance pricing agreements in 2017-18, the CBDT's second APA Annual Report has revealed. This was, however, down 27.5 per cent over the APAs signed in 2016-17. The decline could largely be attributed to the complexity of cases increasing and shortage of manpower in the APA team, according to the report.

What

1. In 2017-18, of the 67 APAs signed, as many as 58 were unilateral and 9 were bilateral. Including the 67 APAs signed in 2017-18, the total number of APAs signed

- by India till date in six years (FY12-13 to FY 17-18) stood at 219 (199 unilateral and 20 bilateral).
2. An APA is an agreement between a taxpayer and the tax authority concerning the **transfer pricing method and the rate applicable to the taxpayers'** inter-company transactions, and normally covers multiple years.
 3. The report also indicates that average time to conclude 58 unilateral APAs in 2017-18 was 38.62 months (which is more than the combined average time taken in previous 4 years).
 4. However, in what is seen as credible achievement, more than 70 per cent of the unilateral APAs entered into have been concluded within 3 years of the filing of applications and more than 25 per cent have been entered into within 2 years.
 5. The CBDT report also reveals that the filing of bilateral APA applications has more than doubled in 2017-18 (as compared to 2016-17). Almost 75 percent of the total bilateral APA applications are with only 3 countries — the US, the UK and Japan.
 6. **Interestingly, the report highlighted that** "it is conservatively estimated that the 219 signed APAs have resulted in additional income of about 10,000 crore.
 7. This translates to a tax payment of about 3,000 crore without getting into any litigation or there being any dispute.

UN COURT HEARS CASE OVER STRATEGIC INDIAN OCEAN ISLANDS

Judges at the United Nations' highest court are listening to arguments in a case focused on the legality of British sovereignty over the Chagos Islands in the Indian Ocean, including Diego Garcia, where the US has a major military base.

What

1. Mauritius argues that the Chagos archipelago has been part of its territory since at least the 18th century and was unlawfully taken by the UK in 1965, three years before the island nation gained independence from Britain.
2. Britain insists it has sovereignty over the archipelago, which it calls the British Indian Ocean Territory.
3. The UK sealed a deal with the US in 1966 to use the territory for defense purposes.
4. Washington maintains a forward operating location there for aircraft and ships that contribute to regional and global security.

Flashback

1. The Chagos Islands are a group of seven atolls comprising more than 60 individual tropical islands in the Indian Ocean about 500 kilometres (310 mi) south of the Maldives archipelago.
2. This chain of islands is the southernmost archipelago of the Chagos-Laccadive Ridge, a long submarine mountain range in the Indian Ocean.
3. Officially part of the British Indian Ocean Territory, the Chagos were home to the Chagossians, a Bourbonnais Creole-speaking people, for more than a century and a half until the United Kingdom evicted them between 1967 and 1973 to allow the United States to build a military base on Diego Garcia, the largest of the Chagos Islands.
4. Since 1971, only the atoll of Diego Garcia is inhabited, and only by military and civilian contracted personnel.
5. The sovereignty of the Chagos Archipelago is disputed between the UK and Mauritius. The United Kingdom excised the archipelago from Mauritian territory three years ahead of Mauritius' independence.

INDIA, FRANCE TO COLLABORATE ON HUMAN SPACE MISSION

Stepping up space cooperation, India and France on 6 September 2018 inked an agreement to collaborate on Gaganyaan, ISRO's first human space mission. The two countries have formed a working group for the project. The ambit of the cooperation includes giving ISRO access to space hospital facilities in France and combining expertise of the two space agencies in fields of space medicine, astronaut health monitoring, life support, radiation protection, space debris protection and personal hygiene systems.

What

1. The MoU was signed to define the conditions in which we are going to work together.
2. India plans to send three humans to space before 2022. The Indian Space Research Organisation's mission is significant as it would make India one of the four countries in the world after Russia, US and China to launch a manned space flight.
3. The first step under the MoU is to exchange specialists to work on (space) medicine.
4. Engineering teams have already begun discussions and it is envisioned that infrastructure such as CADMOS centre for development of microgravity applications and space operations or the MEDES space clinic will be used for training of future Indian astronauts, as well as exchange of specialist personnel. ISRO plans to conduct experiments on microgravity through its astronauts.
5. The seeds of the MoU were sown when India and France released a joint vision on space cooperation during French President Emmanuel Macron's visit to Delhi this March.
6. Under the vision statement, it was agreed that ISRO and CNES would jointly develop capabilities and critical technologies addressing radiation shielding solutions, personal hygiene and waste management system and design of man-in-loop simulators for human space flight as well as bioastronautics.
7. French-Indian space cooperation spans in areas of climate monitoring, with a fleet of joint satellites devoted to research and operational applications, innovation, through a joint technical group tasked with inventing launch vehicles of the future. The two space agencies also plan to work on Mars, Venus and asteroids.
8. The joint Oceansat3-Argos mission scheduled to launch next year, the French-Indian Trishna thermal infrared imaging satellite are being readied, and a study to develop a joint constellation of satellites for maritime domain awareness is also underway.
9. France is one of the three countries—the other two being the US and Russia—who share robust cooperation in the three strategic areas of defence, nuclear and space.

INDIA, CZECH REPUBLIC SIGN FIVE AGREEMENTS

India and Czech Republic have signed five agreements on defence, scientific and industrial research, laser technology, agriculture and diplomatic visa waiver. These agreements were signed after delegation-level talks between Indian President Ram Nath Kovind and Czech Republic counterpart Milos Zeman in Prague, capital of Czech Republic. President Kovind visited Czech Republic on final leg of his state visit to three European nations – Cyprus, Bulgaria and Czech Republic.

The agreements are

1. Cooperation between **India's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** and Czech Academy of Sciences.
2. Work plan to support Indo-Czech projects in diverse areas of science and technology. Department of Science and Technology will be taking lead from Indian side for this.

3. Visa waiver agreement for diplomatic passport holders.
4. Cooperation in laser technology between Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and ELI Beamlines.
5. Cooperation between Haryana Agricultural University and Czech University of Life Sciences

ECONOMY

INTERNAL OMBUDSMAN SCHEME 2018

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on 3 September 2018 asked all scheduled commercial banks with more than 10 branches to appoint an internal ombudsman (IO). The apex bank has, however, excluded regional rural banks (RRBs) from appointing IOs. The internal ombudsman scheme was introduced by the RBI to strengthen the internal grievance of banks and to ensure that the complaints of the customers are redressed.

What

1. In order to further enhance the independence of the IO and also to strengthen the monitoring system over functioning of the IO mechanism, the central bank said it has **reviewed the arrangement in the form of 'Internal Ombudsman Scheme, 2018'**.
2. The IO shall examine customer complaints which are in the nature of deficiency in service on the part of the bank, that are partly or wholly rejected by the bank.
3. The scheme covers, appointment/tenure, roles and responsibilities, procedural guidelines and oversight mechanism for the IO.
4. The central bank further said as the banks shall internally escalate all complaints, which are not fully redressed to their respective IOs before conveying the final decision to the complainant, the customers need not approach the IO directly.
5. The implementation of IO Scheme, 2018 will be **monitored by the bank's internal audit mechanism** apart from regulatory oversight by the apex bank.
6. In May 2015, the RBI had advised all public sector and select private and foreign banks to appoint IO as an independent authority to review complaints that were partially or wholly rejected by the respective banks.

DRAFT RULES OF DRUGS BY E-PHARMACY

The Union Health Ministry has come out with draft rules on sale of drugs by e-pharmacies with an aim to regulate online sale of medicines across India and provide patients accessibility to genuine drugs from authentic online portals. The draft rules on "sale of drugs by e-pharmacy" states no person will distribute or sell, stock, exhibit or offer for sale of drugs through e-pharmacy portal unless registered.

What

1. Any person who intends to conduct business of e-pharmacy shall apply for the grant of registration to the Central Licensing Authority in Form 18AA through the online portal of the Central Government, the draft notification said.
2. The draft notification says the application of registration of e-pharmacy will have to be accompanied by a sum of Rs 50,000 while asserting that an e-pharmacy registration holder will have to comply with provisions of Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000).
3. The details of patient shall be kept confidential and shall not be disclosed to any person other than the central government or the state government concerned, as the case may be.

4. The supply of any drug shall be made against cash or credit memo generated through the e-pharmacy portal and such memos shall be maintained by the e-pharmacy registration holder as record, the draft notification said.
5. Elaborating on the main highlights of the draft, the Drugs Controller General of India Eswara Reddy said rules have been proposed to ensure accessibility and availability of drugs to the people across India.
6. After the rules are finalised, people will be able to get genuine drugs through these online pharmacies. These pharmacies will be purchasing directly from the drug manufacturer so they will also be able to give 20-30 per cent discounts, thus benefiting the patients.
7. Under the rules it has been proposed that those who want to do online pharmacy will have to register with the Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO), the country's apex drug regulator and central licensing authority.
8. No e-pharmacy shall advertise any drug on radio or television or internet or print or any other media for any purpose, the draft said, adding that there are provisions of suspension and cancellation of registration of the e-portal if the latter contravenes any provision of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

CUT TARIFFS UNDER RCEP

The government on 5 September 2018 said it wants a 20-year window to reduce import duty on several products under the proposed Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement to create the **world's largest trade bloc**, as part of a plan to shield domestic industry from an onslaught of cheap imports from China. India had conveyed its position during the recent meeting of trade ministers, while maintaining that the negotiations will not conclude this year, as was suggested by countries such as Singapore that are keen to rush in with the agreement.

What

1. The RCEP negotiations will not end in 2018. It has been agreed at the level of leaders... it will continue in 2019 as well and we will have opportunity to work on all issues. India has reiterated its insistence on linking the goods negotiations with services, which will ensure that in return for a reduction in import duties, there will be easier access for Indian nurses, software professionals and auditors.

Flashback

1. Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) is a proposed free trade agreement (FTA) between the ten member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) and the six Asia-Pacific states with which ASEAN has existing free trade agreements (Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand). It is reported that a broad agreement is likely to be reached in November 2018.
2. RCEP negotiations were formally launched in November 2012 at the ASEAN Summit in Cambodia.
3. The free trade agreement is scheduled and expected to be signed in November 2018 during the ASEAN Summit and Related Summit in Singapore, after the first RCEP summit was held on 14 November 2017 in Manila, Philippines.
4. RCEP is viewed as an alternative to the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a proposed trade agreement which includes several Asian and American nations but excludes China and India.

2. Apart from India and China, RCEP will include Japan, South Korea and the Asean countries along with Australia and New Zealand.
3. India wants to have a separate dialogue with China, Australia and New Zealand, with which it does not have free trade agreements.
4. The idea is to remove import duty on as many products as possible with a lower **coverage for goods imported from the three countries**. "Significant flexibility is there for members. Now, we need to work upon them.
5. Similarly, the government claimed to have scored a victory of sorts in pushing its case for easier movement of professionals under the services agreement that will be part of RCEP.
6. **At last week's meeting in Singapore, negotiators have agreed on the broad contours of a package including goods, services, investments, rules of origin and intellectual property rights, where talks are proposed to be speeded up with a view to conclude the dialogue by the year-end.**

RELIANCE INFRA WINS ARBITRATION AGAINST NHAI

Reliance Infrastructure has won an Rs 200-crore arbitration award against the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). A three-member Arbitration Tribunal in its unanimous award on August 31, 2018, had asked NHAI to pay Rs 150 crore by November 29, 2018, to Reliance Infrastructure. NHAI will have to pay interest at the rate of 12 per cent per annum on the amount if they do not pay Rs 150 crore by the deadline.

What

1. Reliance Infrastructure has also been awarded compensation at the rate of 13.5 per cent of the actual revenue for the loss of revenue suffered due to change in location of toll plaza, the filing added.
2. Reliance Infrastructure said this is payable from March 2017 till the end of concession period on January 14, 2038. Net present value of this future cash-flow is estimated at over Rs 50 crore.
3. Reliance Infrastructure said the need for arbitration arose due to a prolonged delay in providing land by the NHAI to TD Toll Road Pvt Ltd (TD Toll Road), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Reliance Infrastructure, resulting in cost over-run during construction and change in the location of toll plaza.
4. The contention of TD Toll Road that the project was delayed resulting in cost over-run during construction and location of toll plaza resulting in loss of revenue was upheld by the Tribunal.
5. TD Toll Road has designed, built and is operating the 87-km-long 4-lane National Highway (NH45) road connecting Tiruchi and Dindigul in Tamil Nadu.

ONLY 16% NIRBHAYA FUND UTILISED

Only 16% of the fund meant for implementing schemes for security and safety of women under the Nirbhaya Fund has been utilized by the states and the Centre. Ministry of women and child development is the nodal ministry for appraising and recommending schemes and proposals by ministries, departments, and state governments.

What

1. The Empowered Committee (EC) of officers apprise and monitor the fund under the scheme. According to the information provided by the ministry, the committee has appraised 26 projects worth Rs 6,312 cr since 2015-16 and has released just Rs 979 cr that is 16% of the appraised funds.
2. Nine projects have remained non-starter while only one project -- creation of central victim compensation is on the track.

3. The ministry of home affairs has proposed 12 projects of which 6 have remained on paper without any utilization of funds. Ministry of road transport and highways has proposed five projects of which 3 are a non-starter.
4. The projects which are non-starters include the creation of investigative units for crime against women, organized crime investigative agency and installation of CCTV cameras in 6655 buses to strengthen the safety of women in public transport buses.
5. The central government had set up a dedicated fund – Nirbhaya Fund, after December 2012 gangrape of a girl in Delhi for safety and protecting dignity of women.
6. Nirbhaya Fund was set up with a non-lapsable corpus of Rs. 1000 cr during 2013-14. Further, an amount of Rs. 1000 cr. was provided in 2014-15.
7. For the financial years 2016-2017 and 2017-18, an amount of Rs. 550 cr (each financial year) was provided. In 2018-19 budget Rs.500 cr have been provided for transfer to the Nirbhaya Fund.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

NEW METHOD TO FORECAST GEOSTORMS DEVELOPED

Scientists say they have developed a **new method for analysing the Earth's** magnetic field data that could provide better short-term forecasting of geomagnetic storms. The **Earth's magnetic field extends from pole to pole and is strongly affected by solar wind from the Sun**, according to the research published in the journal Chaos. This **"wind" is a stream of charged particles** constantly ejected from the Sun's surface.

What

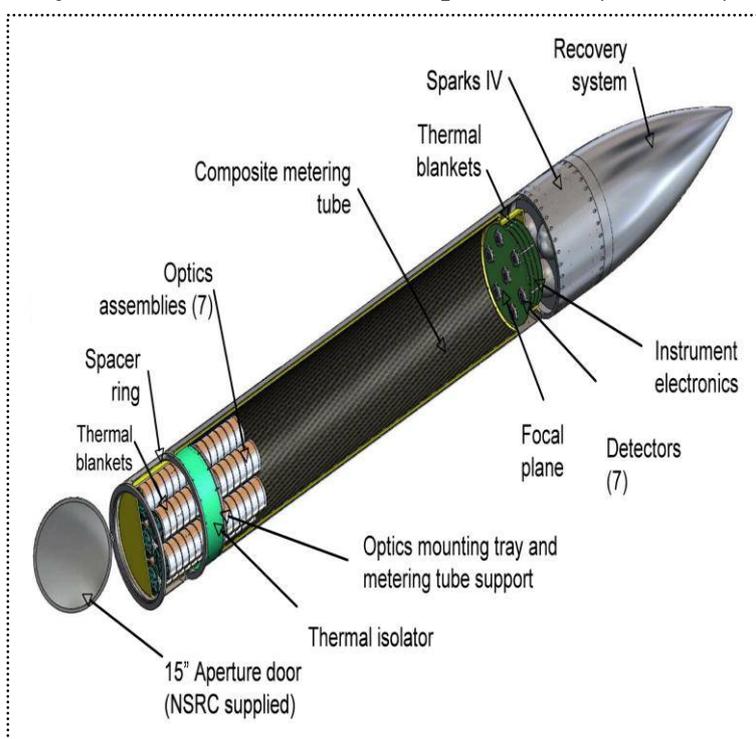
1. Occasional sudden flashes of brightness known as solar flares release even more particles into the wind, said researchers at Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany.
2. Sometimes, the flares are followed by coronal mass ejections that send plasma into space. The resulting flux of charged particles travels millions of miles from the Sun to the Earth.
3. The storms are serious and interfere with a number of important technologies, including GPS signalling and satellite communications. They can also cause damage to surface electrical grids. Solar activity appears random, making it difficult for us to predict these storms.
4. The researchers at Potsdam Institute developed the method that relies on a technique developed for systems in a state far from equilibrium.
5. **Earth's magnetic field fits this paradigm** because the field is driven far away from equilibrium by the solar wind. Systems that are far from equilibrium often undergo abrupt changes, such as the sudden transition from a quiescent state to a storm.
6. The researchers used hourly values of the Disturbance storm-time, or Dst, index. **Dst values give the average deviation of the horizontal component of the Earth's** magnetic field from its normal value.
7. This deviation occurs when a large burst of charged particles arrives from the Sun and weakens the field generated by the Earth.
8. The Dst values form a single stream of numbers known as a time series, researchers said. The time series data can then be recast into a 2D or 3D image by plotting one data point against another at a fixed amount of time into the future for forecasting.

FOXSI MISSION

NASA's Focusing Optics X-ray Solar Imager, or FOXSI, a sounding rocket mission, is soon set to stare directly at the Sun and search for nanoflares – miniature explosions invisible to the naked eye – using its X-ray vision, the US space agency said. The FOXSI mission will take its third flight from the White Sands Missile Range in White Sands, New Mexico, no earlier than September 7.

What

1. Derived from the nautical term “to sound”, meaning to measure, FOXSI rockets make brief 15-minute journeys above the Earth’s atmosphere for a peek at space before falling back to the ground.
2. FOXSI will travel 190 miles up, above the shield of Earth’s atmosphere, to view the Sun.
3. FOXSI is the first instrument built specially to image high-energy X-rays from the Sun by directly focusing them.
4. Other instruments have done this for other astronomical objects but FOXSI is so far the only instrument to optimise especially for the Sun.
5. Nanoflares – small but intense eruptions – are born when magnetic field lines in the Sun’s atmosphere tangle up and stretch until they break like a rubber band.
6. The energy they release accelerates particles to near light speed and according to some scientists, heats the solar atmosphere to its searing million-degree Fahrenheit temperature.
7. All of this happens in colours of light so extreme that the human eye cannot see them, the scientists explained. To focus the X-rays, the FOXSI team used extremely hard, smooth surfaces tilted to a small angle (less than half a degree) that would gently corral incoming X-ray light to a point of focus.
8. The third mission also includes a new telescope designed for imaging lower-energy, so-called soft X-rays as well.
9. The first FOXSI flight was in 2012, during which it successfully viewed a small solar flare in progress, and its second in 2014, when it detected the best evidence at the time of X-ray emission from nanoflares.



NATIONAL MISSION ON GOVERNMENT EMARKET PLACE

Union Ministry of Commerce & Industry has launched National Mission on Government eMarketplace (GeM) for increasing awareness and accelerating use of GeM by major central Ministries, State Governments and their agencies. GeM provides online, end to end solution for procurement of commonly used goods and services for all Central Government Departments and State Governments.

What

1. The mission aims to promote inclusiveness, transparency and efficiency in public procurement and achieve cashless, contactless and paperless transaction.
2. This will help to increase overall efficiency and lead to cost saving on government expenditure in procurement.
3. It will cover all central government departments, states and public sector undertakings in mission mode.
4. It will create awareness about GeM, train buyers and sellers get them registered in GeM and increase procurement through GeM.
5. It will also promote inclusiveness by empowering various categories of sellers and service providers such as MSMEs, start-ups, domestic manufacturers, women entrepreneurs, and Self-Help Groups.
6. It will also highlight value addition via transparency and efficiency in public procurement, including corruption-free governance in sync with Central Government's objective of 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance'.

About GeM

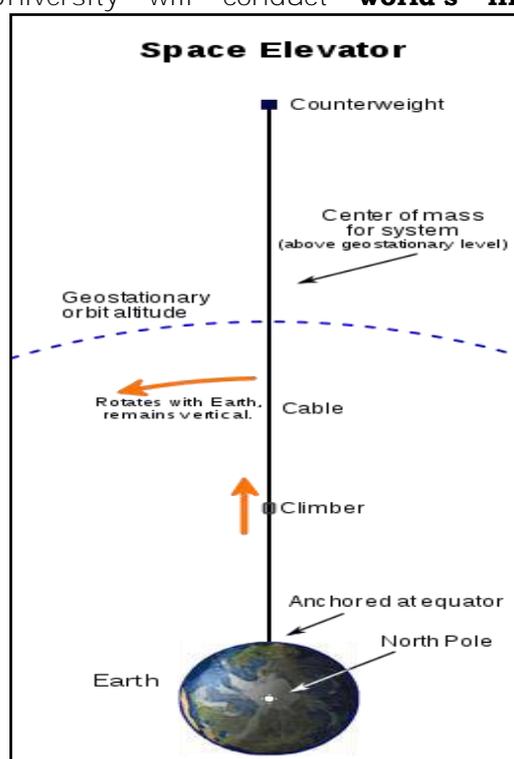
1. It is an online marketplace to facilitate procurement of goods and services by various Ministries and agencies of the Government.
2. The platform offers online, end to end solution for procurement of commonly used goods and services for all central government departments and state governments, public sector units and affiliated bodies.
3. It was launched in August 2018 and so far it has crossed Rs 10,800 crore in terms of value and 6.96 lakh in terms of volume of transactions.
4. The GeM platform has more than 1.35 lakh sellers, offering 4.43 lakh products and around 26,500 organisations as buyers.

WORLD'S FIRST TEST OF SPACE ELEVATOR

Japanese researchers from Shizuoka University will conduct **world's first** experiment to test small prototype of space elevator in space by using two mini satellites. The test equipment will be launched by **Japan's** space agency on board of H-2B rocket from southern island of Tanegashima.

What

1. In this experiment, two ultra-small cubic satellites developed by Shizuoka University Faculty of Engineering will be used for demonstration of space elevator technology.
2. Each satellite measures 10 centimeters each side. Roughly 10-meter-long steel cable will be employed to connect twin satellites.
3. The pair of satellites will be released from International Space Station (ISS) and container acting like elevator car will be moved on cable connecting satellites using motor.
4. The movement of motorised elevator box will be monitored with cameras in the



satellites.

About Space elevator

1. It is proposed type of planet-to-space transportation system.
2. Its components mainly are cable (also called tether) anchored to surface of planet and extending into space.
3. It will permit vehicles to travel along cable from planetary surface, such as Earth's, directly into space or orbit, without use of large rockets.
4. The idea of space elevator was first proposed in 1895 by Russian scientist Konstantin Tsiolkovsky after he saw Eiffel Tower in Paris and later it was revisited nearly century later in novel by Arthur C. Clarke.
5. The one end of cable of space elevator will be attached near to surface and the other end in space beyond geostationary orbit (35,786 km altitude).
6. Once cable (tether) is deployed at fixed position, climbers can repeatedly climb it to venture into space by mechanical means, releasing their cargo to orbit.
7. Climbers also can descend ether to return cargo to surface from orbit.

SOLAR ERUPTIONS MAY NOT BE SLINKY SHAPED

Solar eruptions may not have slinky-like shapes as commonly believed, according to a study that may help protect satellites in space as well as the electrical grid on Earth in the future. Revisiting older data, researchers from the University of New Hampshire in the US found new information about the shape of coronal mass ejections (CMEs) – large-scale eruptions of plasma and magnetic field from the Sun.

What

1. Since the late 1970s, coronal mass ejections have been assumed to resemble a large slinky – one of those spring toy – with both ends anchored at the Sun, even when they reach Earth about one to three days after they erupt.
2. But our research suggests their shapes are possibly different. Knowing the shape and size of CMEs is important because it can help better forecast when and how they will impact Earth.
3. CMEs are one of the main sources for creating beautiful and intense auroras like the Northern and Southern Lights.
4. However, they can also damage satellites, disrupt radio communications and wreak havoc on the electrical transmission system causing massive and long-lasting power outages.
5. Right now, only single point measurements exist for CMEs making it hard for scientists to judge their shapes, researchers said. These measurements have been helpful to space forecasters, allowing them a 30 to 60 minute warning before impact.
6. The goal is to lengthen that notice time to hours – ideally 24 hours – to make more informed decisions on whether to power down satellites or the grid.

AI-BASED SYSTEM HELP PREDICT EARTHQUAKE

Scientists from Google and Harvard has teamed up to create an AI-based model that can improve detection of aftershocks associated with an earthquake. The study group have recently published a paper, and relied on data from recent 118 earthquakes across the globe to feed the neural network for the AI-model system. Google says such AI-assisted models could help provide more effective emergency services, and create evacuation plans for places that are most vulnerable to aftershocks after a major earthquake.

What

1. An earthquake occurs in a series of shocks, **wherein the ‘main shock’, i.e., the shock with the highest magnitude, is followed by a series of ‘aftershocks’, which can deepen the impact of the initial hit.**
2. Machine learning experts have developed this model to understand the possibility of an aftershock occurring in the vicinity of the affected zones. One such example evaluated for the study was the 1992 Landers earthquake from California that registered a magnitude of 7.3 on the Richter scale.
3. The neural network-based model sampled the region affected from the main shock, and the zones affected by the aftershocks for greater impact.
4. As per the model, scientists have been able to find multiple reasons for the possible occurrence of aftershocks, and the zones that could potentially be affected.
5. The research indicates that various physical parameters need to be analysed to understand the likelihood of an earthquake impacting a certain location.
6. Many coastal locations prone to earthquakes are also prone to tsunamis in the aftermath of the main shock.
7. While researchers admit that the system is still not perfect, researchers are hoping it will help them understand earthquakes and aftershocks associated with them better.

FIRST GROUND BASE AT NORTH POLE

Two years after China opened a ground station at the North Pole, the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) has drawn up plans to set up what will be its first overseas ground station in the region, primarily to augment the Indian Remote Sensing (IRS) operations that are crucial not just for civilian needs like disaster management but also for the armed forces.

What

1. Isro has a full-fledged IRS programme with a constellation of earth observation satellites, with the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), Hyderabad responsible for data acquisition and processing, data dissemination, aerial remote sensing and decision support for disaster management.
2. So far as the station at North Pole goes, Isro is serious about it. But the plan will take some time to materialise as it involves huge logistical challenges, international approvals and co-operation.
3. The scientist added that any hardware installation is a complex task, and given the **region’s extreme conditions**—considered more difficult to deal with than the South Pole—the challenges will be more. Work going for the setting up of data reception station at Antarctica in 2013.
4. Elaborating the need for this, another scientist explained that with the advancements in high-resolution satellite programs of IRS, the complexity and role of ground stations have increased manifold.
5. High-resolution satellites need frequent visibilities with larger processing power, data storage capacity onboard, data downlink of stored image to ground stations for meeting the global and Indian user requirements.
6. Presently, the global **requirements are met through NRSC’s IMGEOs at Shadnagar, which was commissioned in 2011 and AGEOS in Antarctica, which was commissioned in 2013 and partly through SVALBARD ground station (not Isro’s).**
7. However, Isro wants to achieve a 14-orbit coverage, to realise which the ground station at North Pole is important. Because this will provide an opportunity to download the complete data within the same orbit and enable the usage of on-board resources in every orbit and to transfer the raw data in near real-time to Shadnagar.

8. The two specific projects these antennas will aid are Cartosat-3—which will have dual uses like its predecessor Cartosat-2 series, **which provided data for India's 2016 Surgical Strikes on Pakistan**—and the proposed Nasa-Isro Synthetic Aperture Radar (Nisar) mission, expected to launch in 2022.
9. The \$1.5 billion project, Nisar is a first of its kind endeavour that will be able to operate in two frequencies, both in bands lower than KU-Band or AA-Band.

NUCLEAR SECURITY INDEX

India has improved its ranking by one spot from 2016 and now stands 19th in **the 'Theft Ranking' for countries** with weapons usable nuclear materials, according to the Nuclear Security Index released on 5 September 2018. The index was released by the US-based Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), which is co-chaired by Sam Nunn and Ernest Moni. The biennial NTI index finds that despite these growing risks, progress to secure, **minimise and eliminate the world's deadliest materials as well as to ensure the security of nuclear facilities** has accelerated since 2016.

What

1. According to the report, **India's nuclear security conditions** could be improved by strengthening on-site physical protection, control and accounting, insider threat prevention, security during transport and cybersecurity by hosting an international security review and by establishing an independent regulatory agency.
2. **India's nuclear security conditions** are adversely affected by the continued increase of weapons-usable nuclear materials, the large number of sites where those materials are located, corruption challenges, and the judgment that groups interested in and capable of illicitly acquiring nuclear materials are present in the country, the report said.
3. Neighboring Pakistan ranks 20th in the Theft Ranking for countries with weapons usable nuclear materials.
4. Since 2016, Pakistan improved its nuclear security conditions by defining nuclear security responsibilities and by enhancing insider threat prevention.
5. Pakistan could improve by enhancing personnel vetting; by strengthening control and accounting, cybersecurity, and security during transport; and by hosting an international security review.
6. **Pakistan's nuclear security conditions are adversely affected by continued increases of weapons-usable nuclear materials**, by political stability and corruption challenges, and by the judgment that groups interested in and capable of illicitly acquiring nuclear materials are present.
7. For advancing the global nuclear security agenda, the report recommends building an effective global nuclear security system, defending against the growing risk of cyberattack, and improving state stewardship of nuclear materials and facilities.
8. As of now, 22 countries have weapons-usable nuclear materials, compared with 32 when the first NTI Index was released in 2012, the report said.
9. In the past two years, Argentina and Poland have joined the list of countries that have removed or disposed of all highly enriched uranium within their territories.
10. Australia, which was at the top in 2012, 2014, and 2016 among the 22 countries with weapons-usable nuclear materials, this time shares the top spot with Switzerland.
11. Japan improved its score more than any other country since 2012 by decreasing its quantities of nuclear materials and improving insider threat-prevention measures, as well as physical and cybersecurity regulations.
12. China, Belgium, and Germany made notable improvements to their scores by taking important steps in areas such as insider threat prevention, cybersecurity and physical security during transport and at facilities, the report said.
13. Finland, New Zealand, and Sweden tied for the top ranking among countries with less than one kilogram of or no weapons-usable nuclear materials.

MISCELLANEOUS

INDIA RETAINS WHO REGIONAL DIRECTOR POSITION

India on 5 September 2018 retained the top WHO position in South-East Asia Region with Dr Poonam Khetrupal Singh unanimously re-elected as Regional Director for another five-year term beginning February 2019. The elections were held at the ongoing Regional Committee meeting of WHO South-East Asia.

What

- The leadership provided by Dr. Singh to the South East Asia Regional Office has seen the Region emerge as the top performer in the organization globally in programmatic and financial implementation.
- Further, her commitment to the public health agenda in the Member States is reflected in the significant achievements in all the flagship priority programmes of the Region.
- Dr Singh is the first woman to have been elected to the position of Regional Director for WHO South-East Asia Region after an illustrious career in the Indian civil service, World Bank and WHO.
- With her contributions to regional as well as global initiatives and outstanding work in placing health central to the agenda of sustainable development in the Region, she will continue leading the Region to greater heights and further strengthen cooperation amongst South East Asia Region Member States.

WHO South-East Asia Countries

- Bangladesh
- Bhutan
- Democratic People's Republic of Korea**
- India
- Indonesia
- Maldives
- Myanmar
- Nepal
- Sri Lanka
- Thailand
- Timor-Leste

RASHTRIYA POSHAN MAAH

The Minister of Women and Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi has urged the Ministers of partner Ministries and all the Members of Parliament to extend full support to the ongoing Rashtriya Poshan Maah with outreach activities. The Government is celebrating the month of September, 2018 as the National Nutrition Month under the Poshan Abhiyan.

What

- Poshan Abhiyan is a visionary programme to address the nutritional challenges of the country which **was launched by the Hon'ble Prime Minister in March, 2018.**
- The programme seeks to bring convergence amongst various ministries to work in a coordinated manner so that malnutrition can be quickly and progressively reduced.
- The key features of this programme are mobilization of communities across the country and get their participation in addressing various aspects of the nutritional challenges.
- A number of Ministries of Central Government are collaborating in the Poshan Abhiyan.
- The primary aim is to enable awareness on the importance of nutrition and how individual families can easily access government services to supplement nutrition for their children and pregnant/lactating mothers.

6. POSHAN Abhiyaan seeks to synergise efforts of key stakeholders by leveraging technology and intends to take Nutrition Awareness to the level of Jan Andolan or **People's Movement**. **This People's Movement intends to reach 11 crore beneficiaries** during the Rashtriya Poshan Maah itself.
7. National Nutrition Month has eight Key Themes, namely, Antenatal Care, Optimal Breastfeeding, Complementary Feeding, Anemia, Growth Monitoring, Education; diet and right age of marriage for girls, Hygiene and Sanitation and Food fortification.
8. This programme through use of technology, a targeted approach and convergence strives to build a Healthy nation.
9. To ensure a holistic approach, all 36 States/UTs and 718 districts will be covered in a phased manner by the year 2020.

F-16 FIGHTER JET WILL PRODUCE IN INDIA

The wings of Lockheed Martin's F-16 fighter jets will be produced in India, the American security and aerospace giant announced on 4 September 2018, in a major boost to the **'Make in India' initiative**. Maryland-based Lockheed Martin has entered into an agreement with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) for the production of the wings. Lockheed officials insisted that the planned F-16 wing production to India is not contingent on India selecting the F-16 for the Indian Air Force.

What

1. Lockheed has offered to move its entire F-16 manufacturing base to India. India is yet to make a decision on it.
2. Producing F-16 wings in India **will strengthen Lockheed Martin's strategic partnership with Tata Advanced Systems Limited and support the 'Make in India' initiative** of the government.
3. Building F-16 wings in India is a natural next step that builds on our successful partnerships with Tata on the C-130J [Super Hercules airlifter] and S-92 [helicopter], said Vivek Lall, vice president of Strategy and Business Development for Lockheed Martin Aeronautics.
4. This is a strategic business decision that reflects the value of our partnerships with India and the confidence we have in Tata to perform advanced defence manufacturing work and deliver world-class products.
5. **Lockheed Martin's broader proposed F-16 partnership with India — to produce F-16s exclusively in India for its Air Force and export customers — stands firm**, the company said.
6. Lockheed recently submitted a comprehensive, fully compliant 600-plus page Request for Information (RFI) response to the Indian Air Force.
7. Last year, Lockheed Martin and TASL announced their intent to join hands to produce the F-16 Block 70 in India if the aircraft is selected by the Indian Air Force.
8. The F-16 Block 70 features advanced avionics, a proven Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar, a modernised cockpit, advanced weapons, conformal fuel tanks, an automatic ground collision avoidance system, an advanced engine and an industry-leading extended structural service life of 12,000 hours.
9. To date, 4,604 F-16s have been procured by 28 customers around the world. Approximately 3,000 operational F-16s are flying today with 25 leading air forces, including the US Air Force.

INDIANS AMONG WORLD'S LAZIEST: WHO

One in four people don't get enough exercise, according to a report from the World Health Organization. In the survey of 168 nations, Uganda came in first as the most energetic, with Kuwait in last place. The US ranked 143rd, the UK 123rd, Singapore

dropped in at 126th, while Australia came in at 97th. In Kuwait, American Samoa, Saudi Arabia and Iraq, more than half of the population doesn't get enough exercise, according to the WHO. In Uganda, by contrast, just 5.5 per cent are not sufficiently active. Elsewhere around the world; India ranked 117th, Philippines 141st and Brazil 164th.

What

1. The WHO defines enough exercise as at least 75 minutes of vigorous activity or 150 minutes of moderately intense activity per week, or any combination of the two.
2. In most countries, women tend to be less active than men. People in poorer nations are more than twice as active as their counterparts in high-income nations.
3. **The report's authors point to sedentary occupations and a higher dependence on automobiles for the slide in activity.**
4. Global exercise levels did not improve significantly between 2001 and 2016 and the WHO is not on track to meet its 2025 target of reducing physical inactivity by 10 percent. A significant increase in national action is urgently needed in most countries.

NATIONAL HINDI DIVAS

National Hindi Divas is observed every year on 14 September in Hindi speaking regions of India and other countries with Hindi speaking population. Observance of this day aims to propagate Hindi language and its cultural heritage and values. It also seeks to promote Hindi as matra bhasha (mother tongue) of India and show its importance as a language in country and world at large.

What

1. Hindi Divas is celebrated to mark adaptation of Hindi language as the official language of India by the Constituent Assembly of India on 14 September 1949.
2. The decision of using Hindi as official language was ratified by Constitution of India which came into effect on 26 January 1950.
3. Under the Article 343 of Indian Constitution, Hindi written in Devanagri script was adopted as the official language.

CHAIRMAN OF ETHICS COMMITTEE OF LOK SABHA

Senior BJP leader L K Advani was renominated as Chairman of Ethics Committee of Lok Sabha. He was renominated by Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan. L K Advani represents Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency from Gujarat.

What

1. Ethics Committee of Lok Sabha formulates Code of Conduct for members and suggests amendments to it from time to time.
2. It also oversees moral and ethical conduct of Members.
3. It examines complaints related to any unethical conduct by members of Lower House of Parliament.
4. It can also initiate suo motu investigation into matters related to unethical conduct of a member and make recommendations, as it may deem fit.

WORLD HINDU CONGRESS 2018

The World Hindu Congress (WHC-2018) was held Chicago, United States. It was organized to commemorate 125 years of **Swami Vivekananda's historic Chicago address** on September 11, 1893. The theme of WHC-2018 was "Sumantrite Suvikrante" — **thinks collectively, achieve valiantly**". It was second edition of World Hindu Congress and was attended by Vice President Venkaiah Naidu.

What

1. WHC is global platform for Hindus to connect, share ideas, inspire one another, and impact the common good.
2. It offers Hindus opportunity to introspect towards improvement and tap into collective resources to seek tangible solutions to most pressing issues of our age.
3. The inaugural WHC was held in November 2014 in New Delhi with theme '**Sangachchhadhwam Samvadadhvam**' which means 'Step together, express together'. **Since then, it is held once every four years.**

INDIA BLUE WINS 2017-18 DULEEP TROPHY

India Blue has won 2017-18 Duleep Trophy by defeating defending champion India Red by an innings and 187 runs in the final match played at NPR College ground in Dindigul, Tamilnadu. Himachal Pradesh batsman Nikhil Gangta was named man of match for his superb knock of 130.

About Duleep Trophy

1. It is a domestic first-class cricket tournament played between teams representing geographical zones of India.
2. This tournament was instituted in 1961-62 by BCCI.
3. It is named after Kumar Shri Duleepsinhji of Nawanagar.
4. It is previously contested by three teams, namely India Red, India Blue and India Green.
5. Since 2016-17, the tournament is played by teams chosen by selectors from Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), apex governing body of cricket.
6. It now also played in day/night format with pink ball.

13TH PRESIDENT OF PAKISTAN

Dr Arif ur Rehman Alvi (69) was elected as 13th President of Pakistan. He is close ally of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan and one of founding members of ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. He will take oath of office of President on September 9, 2018.

What

1. Dr Alvi had defeated Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) candidate Aitzaz Ahsan and Pakistan Muslim League-N nominee Maulana Fazl ur Rehman in three-way contest to become President.
2. He was born in Karachi in 1947 where his father settled after partition.
3. His father Dr Habib ur Rehman Elahi Alvi was dentist to Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru before partition.
4. He had inherited profession of dentist from his father. His father was also connected with Jinnah family.
5. Dr Alvi will be third Pakistani president to have India connection prior to partition.
6. **His predecessors Mamnoon Hussain's family came from Agra and Pervez Musharraf's parents had migrated to Pakistan from New Delhi.**