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*HINDU NOTES*

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**NOVEMBER 01 2017**

## GENERAL STUDIES-02

### **'Ease of Doing Business' rank: India jumps 30 places**

#### News:

- India climbed 30 positions in the latest ease of doing business ranking by the World Bank, in its Doing Business 2018 report released on Tuesday.

#### Beyond News:

- The report ranks India at **100 among 190 countries**. Last year, India was ranked 130.
- India's upward jump in ranking is based on the **improvement in the distance to frontier score** — an absolute measure of progress towards the best practice.

India found a place for the first time in the top ten economies improving the most in a given year. The ranking compares economies with one another; the DTF score benchmarks economies with respect to regulatory best practice.



- The report measures aspects of regulation affecting 11 areas of the life of a business. India made eight reforms across these areas last year, the highest for the country in a single year.

India is one of the three countries last year that undertook reforms in as many as eight areas.

### **China denies plan to divert river**

#### News:

- The Hong Kong-based South China Morning Post (SCMP) had reported on Monday that Chinese engineers were testing techniques that could be used to build a 1,000 km tunnel — the worlds longest — to carry water from Tibet to Xinjiang.

#### Beyond News:

- China on Tuesday denied media report that it was planning to divert water from the Brahmaputra in Tibet to its arid Xinjiang province by constructing a 1,000 km tunnel.

- The report, if true, would have had a major impact on livelihoods in India and Bangladesh, as the Brahmaputra, known as Yarlung Tsangpo in China, passes through both these countries before emptying into the Bay of Bengal.

## UN predicts 3°C temperature rise by end of the century

### **News:**

- The latest UNEP Emissions Gap report envisages a temperature rise of at least 3°C by the end of the century.

### **Beyond News:**

- It forecasts this breaching of the safe limits of 2°C for global warming levels even assuming the current climate commitments – the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) that form the core of the Paris Agreement – were fully implemented.
- Fossil fuels and cement production still account for about 70% of greenhouses gases, according to the report.
- The alarming number and intensity of extreme weather events in 2017, such as hurricanes, droughts and floods, adds to the urgency of early action to curb climate change, the report notes.

### **Closing the emissions gap**

- The report reveals a large gap between 2030 emission levels and those consistent with least expensive pathways to the 2°C and 1.5°C goals respectively.
- The 2°C emissions gap for the full implementation of both the conditional and unconditional NDCs for 2030 is 11 to 13.5 Gigatonne CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent (GtCO<sub>2</sub> e). The gap in the case of the more ambitious 1.5°C target is 16 to 19 GtCO<sub>2</sub> e.

### **Solutions**

- A large part of the potential to close the emissions gap comes from solar and wind energy, efficient appliances, efficient passenger cars, afforestation and stopping deforestation. These six present a combined potential of up to 22 GtCO<sub>2</sub>e per annum.

Strong action on plugging other GHGs, such as hydro fluorocarbons, through the Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol, and other short-lived climate pollutants such as black carbon, could also make a real contribution.

- CO<sub>2</sub> emissions have remained stable since 2014, driven in part by renewable energy, notably in China and India. This has raised hopes that emissions have peaked, as they must by 2020 to remain on a successful climate trajectory.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### Farmers call off protest against land acquisition

#### News:

- Farmers at Nindar village, around 20 km called off their month-long unusual agitation, during which they dug pits and trenches and buried themselves waist-deep in the mud to protest against acquisition of their land for a housing project.

#### Beyond News:

- The farmers began the Zameen Samadhi Satyagraha on October 2, Mahatma Gandhi's birth anniversary, in connection with 1,350 bigha land which was acquired in several stages since 2010 for a housing project despite the land owners' refusal to accept compensation.
- The Jaipur Development Authority (JDA) gave them a written assurance for a fresh survey of the land.
- The Nindar Bachao Yuva Kisan Sangharsh Samiti activists spearheaded the protest with the **demand for a fresh survey**.
- State government has now agreed for conducting a survey of structures, tubewells and fruit-bearing trees on the farmers' land.



After Tuesday's written orders, the farmers were hopeful that the new survey would reflect the ground situation and ensure a better compensation.

### Centre clears mega project to acquire 111 helicopters for Navy

#### News:

- In a major move, the Defence Ministry on Tuesday approved procurement of 111 utility helicopters for the Indian Navy at a cost of ₹21,738 crore.

#### Beyond News:

- The long-pending proposal was cleared at a meeting of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC), chaired by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.
- They said, 16 helicopters will be procured at a fly away condition while 95 will be manufactured in India.

The acquisition of the helicopters will be made under the strategic partnership model.

The government will now start the process to identify a foreign helicopter maker and an Indian defence firm for a joint venture for the project.

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**GENERAL STUDIES-02**

### Speed up trial of politicians, says SC

#### **Tackling graft**

This is the SC's "third chapter" in its fight against criminalisation of politics

**First chapter (July 2013):** In Lily Thomas verdict, it held that legislators will incur immediate disqualification on conviction. It struck down a provision protecting their membership if they filed an appeal against their conviction within 90 days

**Second chapter (March 2014):** In Public India Foundation case, SC ruled that criminal trials, especially those dealing with corruption and heinous offences, involving elected representatives should be completed in a year, thus putting a deadline on trial process



**Third chapter (Nov. 2017):** On a petition seeking a life ban on convicted lawmakers, it said the Centre should set up a mechanism for speedy trial of lawmakers

 In the past 25 to 30 years, we have seen investigative agencies take no action against such MLAs and MPs. They tend to get back to their same positions. Is it not time to do more?  
— SUPREME COURT TO CENTRE RECENTLY

#### **News:**

- The Supreme Court asked the government to frame a central scheme for setting up special courts across the country to exclusively try criminal cases involving 'political persons.'

#### **Beyond News:**

- In a determined effort to cleanse politics of criminality and corruption, the apex court said it takes years, probably decades, to complete the trial against a politician.
- A Bench of Justices ordered the government to place the scheme before it on December 13, the next date of hearing. It said the scheme should provide details of the funds required to set up such courts.
- Giving no quarter, the apex court directed the Centre to submit a report card by December 13 on the status of the 1,581 criminal cases pending against Members of Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies at the time of the 2014 elections.

## Nirmala flags Indian Ocean issues

### News:

- Defense Minister Nirmala Sitharaman expressed concern at the increased militarization in the Indian Ocean and the extra-regional nations setting up a “near permanent presence” in the region, in an apparent reference to the expanding Chinese presence in the region.

### Beyond News:

- There is an “incremental yet steady” increase in numbers of warships operating in the region, this militarisation “increases the complexities for the countries of this region.”
- The GMC(Goa Maritime Conclave ) is intended to be held every year and aims to “bring together like-minded countries to evolve collective responses to challenges in the maritime domain.”

The Chinese Navy has maintained a steady presence of warships and submarines in the Indian Ocean under the garb of anti-piracy operations in the Gulf of Aden.

### Counter measures:

- the Indian Navy has now put in place a new concept of ‘mission based deployment’ to maintain round the clock surveillance on India’s vital areas of interest across the length and breadth of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).

## Ajay Bisaria new envoy to Pakistan

### News:

- Seasoned diplomat Ajay Bisaria, currently the Indian ambassador to Poland, has been appointed the country’s top envoy to Pakistan.

### Beyond News:

The 1987-batch IFS officer will succeed Gautam Bambawale, who was last month posted to China.

## Russia-India partnership second to none: Envoy

### News:

- Russia’s partnership with India is “second to none” and cannot be compared with its relationship with Pakistan, Russian Ambassador .

### Beyond News:

- He highlighted that there is no comparison between ties with India and Pakistan and that the purpose of the drills was counter-terror cooperation.
- Asked about China's indication that it may once again block the U.S, France and U.K.'s bid to list Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed chief and Pathankot terror attack mastermind Masood Azhar as a global terrorist

### India, Bhutan security indivisible: President

#### News:

The security of India and Bhutan is "indivisible and mutual", President said on Wednesday.

#### Beyond News:

- The first such statement on the subject since the Doklam standoff with China ended in August indicates a closer engagement between India and Bhutan after the months-long episode.
- President, thanked the King for his "**personal involvement**" in addressing the Doklam crisis, the first time a reference has been made to the King's role during the tensions between Indian and Chinese troops.

In two statements issued on June 29 and August 29, the Bhutanese Foreign Ministry had said China was in violation of its agreements, but gave no statement on the Indian Army's role there.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### India mulls national e-commerce policy

#### News:

- India is considering drafting a comprehensive national e-commerce policy to develop an ecosystem that would support exports and protect consumer interests.

#### Beyond News:

- The country is of the view that starting negotiations on World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules in e-commerce would be premature at this stage as it was still unclear how they would benefit developing nations, including their companies and consumers.
- Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) was working on a paper on e-commerce, which will soon be put in public domain for debates and comments. Inputs from the feedback could form the basis for a national e-commerce policy.
- The size of the Indian e-commerce market was just \$30 billion.

- The varied arms of the Centre were trying to address the issues pertaining to their domain to help in formulating an overarching national policy for e-commerce.

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**GENERAL STUDIES-02**

**India Slips 21 Places to 108, On Gender Gap Index**

**News:**

According to the **World Economic Forum’s Global Gender Gap index, India slipped 21 places** to a lowly 108, behind neighbours China and Bangladesh, primarily due to less participation of women in the economy and low wages.

**WEF:**

The World Economic Forum was **established in 1971 as a not-for-profit foundation** and is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland. It is independent, impartial and not tied to any special interests. The Forum strives in all its efforts to demonstrate entrepreneurship in the global public interest while upholding the highest standards of governance. Moral and intellectual integrity is at the heart of everything it does.

**Parameters under WEF consideration**

1. Health,
2. Education,
3. The workplace
4. Political representation

- **Economic participation and opportunity** – outcomes on salaries, participation levels and access to high-skilled employment.
- **Educational attainment** – outcomes on access to basic and higher level education.
- **Political empowerment** – outcomes on representation in decision-making structures.
- **Health and survival** – outcomes on life expectancy and sex ratio.

**INDIA AT 108**

	Overall rank	score
Bangladesh	47	0.719
The Maldives	106	0.669
<b>India</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>0.669</b>
Sri Lanka	109	0.669
Nepal	111	0.664
Bhutan	124	0.638
Pakistan	143	0.546




## Delhi LG cannot sit on govt. schemes: SC

### News:


The Lieutenant-Governor (L-G) of Delhi cannot stultify proposals or schemes forwarded by the Council of Ministers to him by simply sitting on it, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud orally observed on Thursday.

### Beyond news:

- The AAP government argued that the High Court declared that the LG has **“complete control of all matters regarding National Capital Territory of Delhi, and nothing will happen without the concurrence of the LG.”**
- The Kejriwal government wants the Supreme Court to lay down the law on **whether the LG can unilaterally administer the National Capital** without being bound by the “aid and advice” of the elected government.
- The focus of the current controversy is a **provision to Article 239AA (4)**, which mandates that in case of a difference of opinion between the LG and the Council of Ministers, the former has to refer the issue to the President.
- The **69th Amendment of the Constitution in 1992** gave the National Capital of Delhi special status with its own democratically elected government and legislature. Sub-section (4) of Article 239AA mandates that a Council of Ministers shall aid and advise the LG in his functions regarding laws made by the Assembly.

 The LG is entitled to take a different view and is not bound by the aid and advice of the Delhi Cabinet

JUSTICE ASHOK BHUSHAN, Supreme Court

 The purpose of Article 239AA was to provide some kind of voice to the people. We are not contesting parliamentary supremacy. But there must be an elbow room for the Legislative Assembly... Everything we do does not require the concurrence of the LG

GOPAL SUBRAMANIAM, Counsel for Delhi



## India offers to share real-time maritime data

### News:

India has made an offer to share intelligence of maritime movements in the Indian Ocean in real-time with 10 Indian Ocean littoral states.

### Beyond News:

- This comes even as India gears up to counter China’s increased presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR).
- The information to be shared includes movement of commercial traffic as well as intelligence. India already has co-operative arrangements with several countries in the region and this initiative would see that expanding further.
- For instance, white shipping agreements to share commercial shipping data have been signed with 12 countries and more are in the works.

## Won't take criminal action against holders of banned notes, Centre tells Supreme Court

### News:

- The government on Friday assured in the Supreme Court that it will not take any criminal action for possessing demonetised notes beyond December 31, 2016 against those who have approached the apex court.

### Beyond News:

- The petitioners, which include farmers from Maharashtra to the hospitalised and overseas citizens, urged the Supreme Court to direct the government to extend the deadline.
- Appearing before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, Attorney General K.K. Venugopal reassured the petitioners, but added that protection against criminal action would only extend to the demonetised money they have specifically mentioned in their petitions before the Supreme Court.

## China blocks U.N. move on Azhar

### News:

- As a veto-wielding member of the Security Council, China had blocked India's move to put a ban on the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) chief under the Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the Council.

### Beyond News:

- This is the second year in succession that it has blocked the resolution.
- The official's comment indicates that China would veto the application in the 1267 Committee of the UN Security Council that would subject him to an assets freeze and travel ban to allow it to lapse.
- The JeM, founded by Azhar, has already been in the U.N.'s list of banned terror outfits.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

## Chennai rains & flood

### News:

Raising fears of a repeat of the 2015 rain havoc, rain lashed **Chennai** and its suburbs from Thursday evening to Friday morning, affecting the life of most of the people.

### Beyond News:

India Meteorological Department (IMD) says more rain is likely later in the day. It has forecast heavy to very heavy showers in north coastal Tamil Nadu till tomorrow.

A low pressure area has formed over Sri Lanka and adjoining south west Bay of Bengal, according to the IMD. It would bring moderate rain over most places in southern Tamil Nadu and a few places in the northern coastal districts



### Disaster management:

- Air carrier Jet Airways waived off penalty charges to passengers who prefer to change flights or cancel trips due to torrential rains that has been witnessing in Chennai and neighborhood.
- Electricity has been cut in 70 localities across the city that have been identified as “low-lying areas”

### U.S. ‘terror list’ to Pak. includes LeT

#### News:

- The U.S. has shared with Pakistan a **list of 20 terrorist groups** like the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) and the Harkat-ul-Mujahideen (HuM) that Washington believes are operating from its soil to target India and Afghanistan.

### Beyond News:

- On the top on the list is the Haqqani network which the U.S. says has safe havens in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas in northwestern Pakistan and uses them to launch attacks into Afghanistan, Dawn reported.
- The list includes three types of militants groups: those that launch attacks in Afghanistan, those that attack targets inside Pakistan and those that are focussed on Kashmir, the newspaper quoted diplomatic sources as saying.

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## GENERAL STUDIES-02

### 'Article 35A is not part of the Constitution of India'

#### **News:**

- Jammu and Kashmir Advocate-General Jehangir Iqbal Ganai on Friday said Article 35A, which is being contested in the Supreme Court through a number of petitions, "is not part of the Indian Constitution".

#### **Beyond News:**

There is an argument projected that the President has no powers to amend the Constitution.

- Every Article has been made applicable to J&K through Article 370. In Article 370, the President has been given powers to amend, alter or modify any article viz-a-viz J&K, with exceptions and modifications.

Referring to the 1954 presidential order on Article 35A, which grants special rights to citizens of J&K over property and jobs, Mr. Ganai said the Article related to fundamental rights was in "desirable" and not "essential" list.



Read more detail: [ARTICLE 35A- Constitutional or Not?](#) | [CLICK HERE](#)

### Judiciary knows best: SC Collegium

#### **News:**

- Let judiciary, and not the Intelligence Bureau (IB), be the best judge of professional competence of candidates considered for judicial appointments, the Supreme Court Collegium said.

#### **Background:**

- The IB does a background check on the candidates once their names are considered for elevation by the High Court Collegium concerned.

## Beyond News:

- The Collegium of Chief Justice of India, made it clear that the IB should not delve into the professional competence of persons shortlisted for the judiciary.
- The Chief Justice and his two senior-most colleagues met on November 1 to decide on the recommendations for appointments to Tripura and Jharkhand High Courts and also to consider the case of three Additional Judges in the Gauhati High Court who were to be made permanent judges.

The Supreme Court Collegium further laid down that only factually proven information supplied by the IB on candidates should be taken cognisance of by the Collegium.

## SC wants norms fixed for distance education courses

### News:

- Questioning the role of the University Grants Commission (UGC) in checking the commercialisation of education, the Supreme Court restrained deemed-to-be universities from conducting distance education in any course unless all the courses were approved by the statutory authorities.

### Background:

- A Bench found that these institutions conducted distance education, including in technical disciplines, without proper inspection or checks.

The court directed that permission for distance education courses should be given only after off-campus centres or study centres of the institutions were individually inspected and found adequate by the statutory authorities.

- The court found that the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) had been “illegally kept out” and their study centres had never been inspected.

### Beyond News:

- The Supreme Court ordered the direct suspension of degrees for students enrolled during academic sessions 2001-2005 in these institutions. It ordered the annulment of degrees of students admitted in these universities after academic sessions of 2001- 2005.

The apex court has also ordered a CBI probe.

## Specify Aadhaar link deadlines, says SC

**News:** The Supreme Court sent a clear message to the public to not panic, when it directed mobile service providers and banks to specify the last dates of linking mobile numbers and bank accounts to Aadhaar in the SMSes and e-mails they send to millions of subscribers.

## Beyond News:

- A Bench ordered that mobile service providers and banks should specify that February 6, 2018 and December 31, 2017 are the last dates for Aadhaar linking.

Rule 2(b) of the Prevention of Money Laundering (Maintenance of Records) Second Amendment Rules of 2017 requires Aadhaar for opening new bank accounts and for verification of existing bank accounts by December 31, 2017, failing which the “bank accounts will cease to be operational.”

## Pak. faces flak over terror funding

### News:

- India scored a major victory at the Financial Action Task Force that looks into terror financing that held its plenary in Buenos Aires , Even as it faced a Chinese veto on designating Masood Azhar a terrorist at the United Nations Security Council.

### Beyond News:

Pakistan has failed to penalise or curb the activities of any of the terror groups [designated by the UNSC].

- India raised the issue at the International Cooperation Review Group (ICRG) in Argentina. Other countries supported India and now Pakistan has to submit a compliance report during the next session in February 2018.
- The win for Indian negotiators was significant as it came even as China vetoed the latest bid to have Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Masood Azhar designated at the UNSC.
- Pakistan has been asked to report again in February on action taken against designated terror groups such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and its off-shoots Jamaat-ud Dawa and Falah-i-Insaniyat.
- China tried hard to defend Pakistan during the FATF proceedings, But unlike at the UN, two speaking countries are needed to block consensus, and China was isolated there.



## GENERAL STUDIES-03

## DRDO successfully tests guided bomb

### News:

- The Defense Research and Development Organization (DRDO) has successfully tested an indigenously developed light weight glide bomb.

### **Beyond News:**

Its called , Smart Anti Airfield Weapon (SAAW), which can target large enemy infrastructure, like airfields.



- The guided bomb released from an Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft and guided through precision navigation system, reached the targets at greater than 70 km range with high accuracies,
- The tests were conducted at Chandipur in Odisha.

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**GENERAL STUDIES-01**



**'2017 will be among top 3 hottest years on record'**

### **News:**

Year 2017 will be one of the three hottest years on record, with many high-impact events, including catastrophic hurricanes and floods, debilitating heat waves and drought, says a provisional statement on the State of the Climate released by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).

### **Beyond News:**

- The average global temperature from January to September 2017 was approximately 1.1°C above the pre-industrial era.
- As a result of a powerful El Niño, 2016 is likely to remain the warmest year on record, with 2017 and 2015 being second or third.
- The WMO statement, which uses 1981-2010 as the baseline, was released on Monday at the opening day of the United Nations (UN) climate change conference in Bonn.
- Extreme events due to climate change have affected the food security of millions of people, with agriculture accounting for 26% of all the damage and loss associated with medium to large scale storms, floods and drought, says the statement, citing an FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) assessment.

## Climate change talks in Bonn, other day's news in pictures

**News:** Governments will try to bolster a 2015 pact to combat climate change at annual talks in Germany from Monday strained by President Donald Trump's plan to pull out and instead promote the U.S. coal and oil industries.

### **Beyond News:**

- Fiji's Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama, who will preside over the Nov. 6-17 talks of almost 200 nations in Bonn, says he wants more urgent action to cut greenhouse gases as part of the 195-nation Paris Agreement.
- Delegates will work on a detailed "rule book" to help guide the 2015 Paris climate accord, which set a goal of ending the fossil fuel era this century by shifting to renewable energies such as wind and solar power.
- But Mr. Trump doubts that human activities are the main cause of climate change - a finding endorsed most recently by U.S. scientists in a report on Friday - and said in June that he will quit the Paris pact.

## GENERAL STUDIES-02

### China objects to Nirmala Sitharaman's visit to Arunachal Pradesh

#### **News:**

- China on Monday objected to Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's first visit to Arunachal Pradesh, saying her tour of the "disputed area" is not conducive to the peace and tranquillity of the region.

#### **Beyond News:**

- Ms. Sitharaman visited forward Army posts in remote Anjaw district of Arunachal Pradesh bordering China to take stock of the defence preparedness.
- China claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of south Tibet and routinely objects to top Indian officials' visit to the area.
- The Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China stretches to 3,488 km. Both sides have held 19 rounds of talks by the Special Representatives to resolve the dispute.
- Last month, Ms. Sitharaman visited Nathu La area on the India-China border in Sikkim and greeted the People's Liberation Army soldiers across the border





## Reduce crop wastage, urges Kovind

**News:** President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday called for a time-bound plan to reduce, if not eliminate, crop wastage in India.

### **Beyond News:**

- President was speaking at the concluding function of the World Food India (WFI) 2017.
- President said that close to 16% of India's guava crop is wasted, as are 10% of our mango and apple crops, the deliberations at this conference will take closer to preventing such regrettable wastage.
- Delegates from over 60 countries, including CEOs of 60 global companies, attended the WFI event, which, according to Food Processing Industries Minister Harsimrat Kaur, saw 50 MoUs worth \$11.4 billion being signed.
- Mr. Kovind called the event "the Kumbh Mela of Indian food," as it "helped showcase the vast and near limitless opportunities in the food industry and in food processing in India."

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### 'Surging data volume in India to spur insights'

#### **News:**

- As chief technology officer of Teradata, Stephen Brobst's role is to ensure the data and analytics company develops cutting-edge technologies.

#### **Beyond News:**

- This includes helping the Dayton, Ohio-based company find new customers and deploy products and services across the world faster and at a large scale.
- Indeed, the government and the Central Bank are on a mission to rapidly formalise and financialise the Indian economy, according to a report by global financial services firm Morgan Stanley.
- It said India had 'introduced a universal biometric identification system [Aadhaar], initiated measures to boost financial inclusion [Jan Dhan], moved to a new fully online value-added goods and services tax system and implemented real-time payment systems [Unified Payments Interface and Bharat QR].
- Coupled with rising smartphone penetration, likely doubling from 300 million to almost 700 million by 2020, these changes were driving India's digitisation, said the report.
- It said the combination of digital payments and GST would create significant big-data opportunity.

### 'Note ban: firms put, drew ₹17,000 cr.'

- More than ₹17,000 crore was deposited and withdrawn post-demonetisation, by 35,000 companies, the government said on Sunday.

- 2.24 lakh companies had been struck-off till date from the Registrar of Companies for remaining inactive for a period of two years or more.
- The Corporate Affairs Ministry said in a statement that to address the criminal angle, the Director, Additional Director or Assistant Director of the Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) had been authorized to arrest any person believed to be guilty of any fraud punishable under the Act.

### Trial run of 24x7 power to farm sector in Telangana from tonight

**News:** The Telangana government has decided to supply 24x7 free power to agriculture sector across the State on an experimental basis from Monday night, for about five-six days to study the impact on the transmission and distribution systems and also to assess the demand since the farming operations for the ‘Yasangi or Rabi’ season have already commenced.

#### **Why it’s important:**

- Although there are some States along with **Telangana that are giving free power to farm sector**, nowhere in the country it is being supplied 24x7, and the State’s effort is a record in itself.

#### **Beyond News:**

- Round-the-clock power supply to the agriculture sector is being given in the three erstwhile districts of Karimnagar, Medak and Nalgonda, which have now become Medak, Sangareddy, Siddipet, Karimnagar, Rajanna-Sircilla, Jagityal, Peddapalli, Nalgonda, Suryapet and Yadadri-Bhongir districts, also on experimental basis from June this year as part of the government plans to give 24x7 supply to farm sector across the State from March-April next.
- Working in tune with Chief Minister’s decision, the power utilities have been working on strengthening the transmission and distribution network by spending about ₹12,000 crore since the last year.
- Follow-up action would be taken based on the feedback after supplying 24x7 power on experimental basis.

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**GENERAL STUDIES-02**

### Kambala: SC refuses to stay Ordinance

**News:** Kambala, the traditional buffalo slush track race, is set to begin in the coastal belt in Karnataka from November 11, with the Supreme Court refusing to pass an interim stay on the Ordinance allowing kambala.



## Beyond News:

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- The ordinance is valid till January 20, 2018.
- The apex court has **agreed to examine the Constitutional validity of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (Karnataka Amendment) Ordinance 2017** on November 13.

## Highlights

- Kambala is an ancient folklore and cultural game of coastal Karnataka since centuries.
- The farmers don't use the Kambala bulls for agricultural purposes and special feed and proper training is given to the bulls throughout the year.

## 10 things you should know about the buffalo race

1. It is an annual buffalo race going on for early 8 centuries. The tradition is followed in the area of Dakshin Kannada and Udupi districts of coastal Karnataka.
2. Kambala is a contest where two pairs of buffaloes tied ploughs are made to race on slush-filled tracks with a jockey guiding them while they run.
3. The buffaloes are made to run at a speed that they time close to 12 to 13 seconds while covering a distance of 140 to 160 metres.
4. The farmers use a whip to nudge the buffalo ahead and try and make them a medal winner.
5. The kambala season generally starts in November and lasts till March of the following year.
6. The winning pair of buffaloes were awarded coconuts as part of this centuries-old tradition but these days the race is for a gold medal or a trophy. Kambala races are nowadays conducted day and night under floodlights.
7. Animal rights activists have opposed the sport saying that tying the noses of the buffaloes with a rope and using a whip amounts to cruelty.
8. Supreme Court in 2014 had banned kambala and jallikattu based on a petition filed by various animal rights organisations.
9. Kamabala supporters have been protesting since the ordinance on jallikattu was moved by the Tamil Nadu government lifting the ban.
10. Massive protests and processions are being taken around with buffaloes to put pressure on the Karnataka government to move a similar ordinance.

## China dismisses Indo-Pacific quad plan as 'speculation'

**News:** China dismissed the proposed Indo-Pacific security arrangement among the United States, Japan, India and Australia to contain China's rise as "media speculation" and timed its remarks a day ahead of U.S. President Donald Trump's arrival in Beijing.

## Beyond News:

- The Indo-Pacific – an area in the Pacific and the Indian Ocean on either side of the Malacca straits – was a "dynamic region" with the biggest potential in the world.
- Mr. Abe first unveiled his "Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy" in 2016.
- According to Nikkei Asian Review, the Japanese premier's approach involving the U.S, India and Australia as the other partners, "is partly intended to keep in check China's growing presence in

the region under its “One Belt, One Road” initiative, aimed at extending its reach beyond its borders”.

## ‘India, Russia stand united against terror’

### News:

- Russia’s relation with India is “privileged and strategic” and Moscow shares New Delhi’s counter-terrorism concerns, said the newly appointed envoy of Russia to India.

### Beyond News:

- They also supported the China’s One Belt One Road (OBOR) initiative which ties Pakistan and China through the CPEC corridor that India opposes as the corridor passes through the disputed Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

## ‘LG cannot differ with govt. on trivial issues’

### News:

- The Supreme Court on Thursday reminded the Delhi government that there were limitations to its powers under the Constitution, but added that in matters where the Lieutenant Governor (L-G) had differences with it, he could not sit on files.

### Beyond News:

SPECIAL STATUS	 <p><b>COMMON AGENDA:</b> Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal holds up manifestos of the Congress and the BJP. Both parties had also promised full statehood for Delhi. — FILE PHOTO</p>	Political fillips for statehood over the years:
<p>Is Delhi a quasi State or a Union Territory with perks?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Delhi was like any other Union Territory (UT) till 1991, when the 69th Constitutional Amendment changed its name and status to the National Capital Territory of Delhi</li> <li>Delhi remains a UT in the First Schedule of the Constitution, but is not governed by Article 239 that applies to other UTs</li> <li>The 1991 amendment gave Delhi special powers under Article 239 (AA) of the Constitution. Unlike other UTs, Delhi got an elected legislative assembly</li> <li>Article 239 (AA) gives Delhi’s assembly jurisdiction over all subjects in the State list apart from law and order, land and public order</li> <li>Conflict arises as some experts say Delhi is almost a State, citing Article 239 (AA), while others say it is a UT with perks</li> <li>Another point of conflict is the role of the Lieutenant-Governor, who is appointed by the Centre and reports to the MHA. But, as per Article 239 (AA) and the GNCT of Delhi Act, the L-G must act on aid and advice of Delhi’s Council of Ministers</li> </ul>	<p><b>AN OLD ISSUE</b></p> <p><b>Delhi govt’s arguments in favour of statehood:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li> Control over DDA is required for land and housing issues for efficient and effective land usage and allocation for people and welfare programs</li> <li> Control over the police is required to fix accountability for Delhi’s law and order as “currently it is unresponsive or accountable to the people of Delhi”</li> <li>Control over the MCDs as “synchronisation in utilisation of resources is extremely poor” and the MCDs are “extremely corrupt and fiscally imprudent”</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Veteran BJP leader Kalka Dass pitches for a full statehood in 1988</li> <li>BJP Leader Alok Kumar requests bi-partisan support in Delhi Assembly to make the city a State</li> <li>Former Delhi CM Madan Lal Khurana expounds the need for a Delhi State on August 26, 1994</li> <li>Under Delhi CM Sahib Singh Verma, a draft statehood bill is prepared in 1998</li> <li>Former PM Atal Behari Vajpayee and BJP Manifesto in 1999 Lok Sabha Elections promise full statehood for Delhi</li> <li>On November 21, 2006, Kiren Rijiju expresses deep concern over Delhi not receiving full statehood</li> <li>In the 2013 National executive meeting in Goa, BJP supports full statehood in Delhi</li> <li>In 2013 Vidhan Sabha Election, Delhi manifesto of BJP clearly commits that it will continue the struggle for full statehood</li> <li>On November 21, 2013, then Delhi CM Sheila Dikshit says: “I reiterate my demand to grant full statehood to Delhi”</li> <li>On January 23, 2015, Congress manifesto for Delhi reads: “Delhi will become a full State, it is essential for effective governance without any shackles in Delhi”</li> </ol>

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### Probe ordered into Paradise Papers

#### News:

The government reconstituted a Multi-Agency Group led by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) chairman on Monday to investigate cases relating to the 'Paradise Papers' data disclosure.

#### Beyond News:

- The **Paradise Papers** include about seven million loan agreements, financial statements, emails, trust deeds and other paperwork over nearly 50 years from Appleby, a prominent offshore law firm with offices in Bermuda and also from Asiacity, a Singapore-based family-owned trust company.
- The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ), late on Sunday night released data on offshore entities involving people and companies from 180 countries.

India ranks 19<sup>th</sup>, in terms of the number of names featured in the papers.

- The disclosure comes 18 months after a **similar 'Panama Papers' disclosure**, which named several prominent Indian politicians, actors, and businessmen as having offshore undisclosed bank accounts.

### Andaman's new taste is sweet-and-sour

#### News:

Botanists in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands discovered Edible wild banana species, the second such on the island in two years.

#### Beyond News:

- Species of wild banana named **Musa paramjitiana**, in honour of Paramjit Singh, who happens to be the director of the Botanical Survey of India (BSI).
- The plant grows to a **height of nine metres** and bears an edible, sweet-and-sour tasting fruit that is boat-shaped and has numerous bulb-shaped seeds.
- Its conservation status has been declared as **'Critically Endangered'** as it has so far been spotted in only two locations on the islands, each with 6 to 18 plants in a clump.

### Rain brings back winged visitors

**News:** Migratory birds from thousands of miles away began arriving at the Nelapattu bird sanctuary in Sullurupeta area in Nellore district in Andhra Pradesh during the past couple of weeks.

### **Beyond News:**

- It is felt that the recent copious rain would fill up the local pond as well as the nearby Pulicat lake, providing enough water and food for the winged visitors for this season.
- Grey Pelicans were seen settling down on the barringtonia trees in the sprawling Nelapattu pond. They are said to have arrived from Central and South East Asian countries like Kazakhstan.
- A number of other migratory birds like night herons and open billed storks have also arrived at the sanctuary.

**NOVEMBER 09 2017**

### **GENERAL STUDIES-02**

#### **India urged to join Belt and Road Initiative**

**News :** China counseled India to shed its objections to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and take advantage of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which had already drawn wide international support.

#### **Beyond News**

- Hua was responding to a question on remarks by the Russian ambassador to India backing a dialogue between New Delhi and Beijing on the BRI.
- India was among a handful of countries that had skipped attendance in Beijing of the Belt and Road Forum in May, objecting to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), which passed through Kashmir.
- Referring specifically to CPEC, Ms. Hua, in a veiled reference to India, said the project did not target “third countries” or prejudice China’s position on territorial disputes.

#### **India sends fuel shipment to Sri Lanka**

**News** Following Sri Lanka’s request for emergency shipment of fuel, Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured President Maithripala Sirisena of “all possible assistance.”

#### **Beyond News**

- The two leaders spoke over telephone and a 21,000 kilolitre-shipment left Paradip Refinery in Odisha on Wednesday, according to a press statement issued by the Indian High Commission in Colombo.
- Lanka IOC, the Indian Oil Corporation subsidiary in Sri Lanka, has made 3,500 kilolitres from its stock available to the state-owned Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC), with which it controls retail distribution of fuel in Sri Lanka.
- On Friday, a sudden fuel shortage gripped the country after CPC rejected a recent 35,000 metric tonne-shipment procured by LIOC, on grounds of contamination. Reports of the shortage sparked panic-buying across the island, intensifying the problem over the last few days.

## Pak. to help Indian pilgrims

### News

- Pakistan will provide “all possible” support to pilgrims from India during the coming celebration of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak which falls in 2019.



### Beyond News

- During a meeting with a delegation said Pakistan was committed to ensuring smooth pilgrimage for citizens from India.
- The High Commissioner told the delegation that the Government of Pakistan was fully cognisant of the importance of Baba Guru Nanak’s 550th birth anniversary in 2019 and would extend all possible facilitation on that auspicious occasion.
- The Pakistani declaration came days after Islamabad allowed 2,600 Indian pilgrims to visit Nankana Sahib to celebrate the annual festivities around the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak in Talwandi Sahib, Pakistan, during November 2-11, 2017.

## British Royals arrive in India

### News

- Britain’s Prince Charles arrived on a two-day visit, during which he will hold talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and invite him for the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) to be held next year in the U.K.

### Beyond News

- The visit is a part of their 10-day tour of four nations — Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei and India.
- Ahead of the visit, the External Affairs Ministry had said it was **aimed at strengthening bilateral relations between India and U.K.**
- Climate change, sustainable development goals, economic cooperation and the upcoming CHOGM, which will take place in April 2018 in the U.K. are among the issues to be discussed during the meeting between the Prince and Mr. Modi.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

## The ‘white’ brothers of Nilgiris

### News

The rare, pale-skinned ‘white’ tiger was spotted for the first time in the Nilgiris earlier this year by a wildlife photographer.

## Beyond News

- Neither of these animals are 100% white. They are pale, with coats much lighter than the usual orangey yellow.
- It now turns out that this animal is not the only one of its kind. It has a family, and its brother is also 'white', though its mother and sister have normal yellow coats.
- It is believed by wildlife experts that the tigers' coats are pale due to reduced levels of the pigment melanin in a phenomenon called 'leucism'.

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**GENERAL STUDIES-02**

## Odd-even rule back in Delhi from Monday

### News

- The **odd-even vehicle rationing scheme** will be enforced in the capital for a five-day period, beginning Monday, as part of a graded response plan to tackle pollution in Delhi.



### Beyond News

- Women drivers, two-wheelers and vehicles carrying children in school uniform, in addition to VVIPs, would be exempted from its provisions.
- The policy mandates that private vehicles ply on **the basis of the last number of their license plates** — odd numbered cars on odd dates and even-numbered ones on even dates — and has been enforced in Delhi twice earlier: from January 1 to 15 and April 15 to 30.
- Motorists will have to pay **2,000 if they violate provisions** of the scheme, which will be enforced by teams of the Delhi police, the transport department and SDMs. Around 5,000 civil defence volunteers will be deployed to manage the vehicles in addition to around 400 ex-servicemen.



## Constitution Bench to hear plea on bid to sway SC judge

### **The case so far**

▪ The FIR alleges that B.P. Yadav, a manager of Prasad Education Trust (PET), contacted Justice Quddusi through Sudhir Giri of Venkateshwara Medical College, Meerut, to influence the judiciary to lift MCI's restriction on Prasad Institute of Medical Sciences from admitting students for the next few years



▪ The college management challenges the MCI restrictions in the SC

**August 24:** PET withdraws the SC petition. Moves Allahabad HC. CBI alleges the withdrawal was done on the advice of Justice Quddusi

**August 25:** Allahabad HC rules that PIMS should be allowed to undertake counselling till further orders

▪ MCI moves SC against the HC order

**August 31:** CJI Dipak Misra-led SC Bench admits a writ petition by PET

**September 18:** The CJI Bench rules there shall be no renewal for academic session 2017-18, asked MCI to inspect PIMS for permission

### News

- A Constitution Bench of the “first five judges of the Supreme Court in the order of seniority” will hear on November 13 a petition seeking an independent investigation by a special team, supervised by a former Chief Justice of India (CJI), into a corruption case involving a former Orissa High Court judge.

### Beyond News

- The judge allegedly conspired with a “hawala dealer” to influence the outcome of a case pending in the Supreme Court in favour of a debarred private medical college.

## Supreme Court refuses to stay release of film ‘Padmavati’

### News

- The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a plea seeking a stay on the release of Bollywood movie ‘Padmavati’, saying the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC) considers all aspects before granting certificate to any film.

## Beyond News

- A Bench said there were enough guidelines to be followed by the censor board to grant certification to a film before its release.
- The plea, filed by Siddharajsinh M Chudasama and 11 others, also sought the setting up of a committee of eminent historians to check the veracity of the script to prevent any inaccuracy in the portrayal of Rani Padmavati.
- The petitioners sought a stay on the release of the film till such time the alleged historical inaccuracies in the film are corrected by the producer and the director.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### FEMA norms eased to spur investment from overseas

#### News

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has simplified the Foreign Exchange Management (Transfer or Issue of Security by a Person Resident outside India) Regulations, by putting all the 93 amendments under one notification, a move that will significantly make it easier for foreign investors to invest in the country.

#### Beyond News

- The Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), introduced in 1999, was amended 93 times.
- Another significant change is the introduction of a late submission fee that could allow an investor to regularise any contravention due to non-reporting, by paying the fee.
- In addition, any transfer of investment from non-resident Indians to any non-residents has been brought under the automatic route, subject to reporting.

### Many areas may go without storm water drain projects

#### News

- The **Chennai** Corporation may leave some neighborhoods out of the project to **develop stormwater drains**, giving priority to a few areas.

#### Beyond News

- The civic body is **unable to implement the project as funding agencies** such as JICA (Japan International Cooperation Agency) have refused to be involved, claiming that they have focussed on other major projects such as Chennai Metrorail.



- Officials claimed that funding by JICA of ₹10,000 crore for Metrorail and ₹3,200 crore for Intelligent Transport System in the city have caused a delay in funding for stormwater drains.

The Corporation requires ₹1,800 crore for developing stormwater drains in Tiruvottiyur, Manali and Madhavaram.

## GST Council to tighten norms for Composition Scheme

### News

- The twenty-third meeting of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council in Guwahati on Friday is set to tighten the noose on players who have started splitting their business operations into smaller entities to avoid higher tax liabilities.

### Beyond News

- The Council is also set to cut tax rates on a large number of product lines.
- The Council is expected to further liberalise the Composition Scheme for small businesses and traders to pay a flat and low tax on their turnover.
- The annual turnover eligibility threshold is likely to be raised to Rs. 1.5 crore from the Rs. 1 crore limit, imposed at the Council's October meeting.

Tax rates are also likely to be rationalised from 5% for restaurants and 2% for manufacturers, to 1% of turnover.

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**GENERAL STUDIES-02**

## Govt. offers free bus rides during odd-even scheme

### News:

- The Aam Aadmi Party government announced free bus rides aboard its Delhi Transport Corporation fleet from November 13 to 17, the proposed dates of odd-even car rationing scheme.

### Background:

- This is to commuters in all DTC and cluster buses between November 13 and November 17, in a bid to promote the use of public transport.



### **Beyond News:**

- According to sources, the free rides are expected to cause a loss of around Rs. 9.5 crore to the cash-strapped public transporter.
- As per the latest data from June this year, the DTC, which has a fleet of nearly 4,000 buses, carries about 2.8 million passengers daily and earns around Rs. 1.88 crore per day.

### **NGT's Stand:**

- A Bench headed by NGT chairperson asked the Delhi government to submit reports or studies on the basis of which it planned to enforce the scheme from November 13 to November 17.
- The NGT also asked the government to provide reasons for exempting two-wheeler from the scheme.
- The Tribunal has also asked for a detailed report on the emissions caused by cars in the National Capital Region (NCR) and what the other pollutant factors are.
- It permitted the operation of industries which are providing essential services and goods like food items and medical facilities.

## **Centre approves creation of National Testing Agency**

### **News:**

- The Union Cabinet on Friday approved the creation of a National Testing Agency (NTA) to conduct entrance examinations for higher educational institutions.

### **Beyond News:**

- Its creation will relieve the **Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)** – which conducts exams like the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test – and the All India Council for Technical Education of the burden of conducting entrance tests.
- The Union Cabinet chaired by Prime Minister has approved the creation of a National Testing Agency (NTA) **as a Society registered under the Indian Society Registration Act, 1860**, and as an autonomous and self-sustained premier testing organization to conduct entrance examinations for higher educational institutions.
- The NTA will begin by conducting exams managed by the CBSE and gradually conduct other examinations too.

The Centre will give an initial grant of Rs. 25-crore to the NTA to start its operations in the first year.

## **India, Canada may 'trade off' wish lists**

### **News:**

- India and Canada will next week discuss ways to take forward talks on the proposed bilateral trade and investment pacts.

### Beyond News:

- In the talks related to the proposed Canada-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA), officially known as the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, both sides are expected to exchange their respective services trade wish list, indicating the areas where they would like to gain from the trade pact.

One main area of interest for India is ensuring easier movement of Indian skilled workers to Canada for short-term work.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### Gene therapy helps treat boy's life-threatening skin disease — a first {Not much important}

#### News:

In a first, scientists have successfully treated a child suffering from extensive skin damage due to a **genetic disease using transplants derived from genetically modified cells.**

#### Background:

The boy suffered from *Epidermolysis bullosa*, a genetic skin disease that had destroyed about 80 per cent of the outermost layer of his skin.

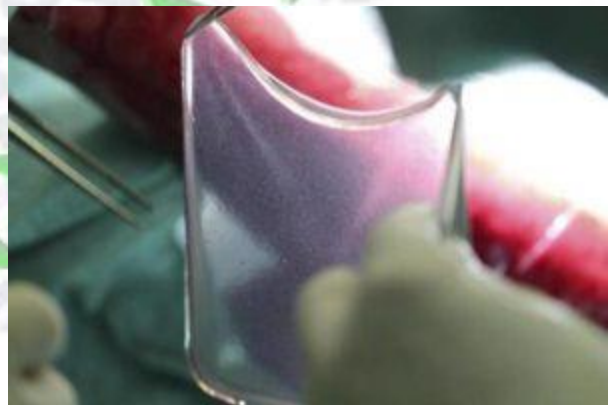
*Epidermolysis bullosa* is the scientific name of a congenital skin disease that is currently considered to be incurable.

Its underlying mechanism is a defect in protein-forming genes that are essential for skin regeneration. Even minor stress can result in blisters, wounds, and skin loss with scar formation.

The disease significantly reduces the patients' quality of life; often it is also life-threatening.

#### Beyond News:

- The transplants were applied to the boy's arms and legs, entire back, flanks, and partially to the stomach, neck and face as well.
- The **integration of the intact gene through retro viral gene transfer into the genome of the epidermal stem cells** had been successful and was proven to be stable.



## GST slashed on 178 items ahead of Gujarat elections

### News:

- The Goods and Services Tax Council on Friday sharply reduced to just 50 the number of items in the highest tax rate of 28%.

### Beyond News:

- The Council decided to reduce the tax rate on 178 of current 228 items from 28% to 18%, with effect from November 15.
- Items with tax rates reduced to nil from 5% include guar meal, sweet potatoes, and dried or frozen fish.

### Course correction

GST rate on mass consumption items cut to 18% bracket

- Only 50 items, mostly demerit, sin and luxury goods (consumption of which is discouraged) will figure in the 28% bracket

- Chewing gum, chocolates, preparation for facial make-up, shaving and after-shave items,

shampoo, deodorants, washing powder, granite and marble to be charged 18% GST

- Paints and cement have been retained in the 28% tax bracket along with washing machines and air-conditioners

- All restaurants, both air-conditioned and non-AC, to be charged 5% GST



**NOVEMBER 12 & 13 2017**

**GENERAL STUDIES-01**

## Delhi's pollution levels rise again

### News:

- Pollution levels in the national capital rose again on Sunday after a slight dip on Saturday, with visibility falling to below 100 meters at several places in the morning.

### Beyond News:

- Figures released by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) show the average of 15 monitoring stations over the past 24 hours had a score of 460 on the Air Quality Index (AQI), which falls in the 'severe' category.
- The same figure yesterday was 403. The CPCB's AQI scores for Noida, Ghaziabad and Gurgaon were at 492, 498 and 460 respectively, which is also in the 'severe' zone.

**Add On Notes:** The PM2.5 and PM10 reading of SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather



Forecasting and Research) was also in the severe category.

- ➔ The Meteorological Department has forecast winds from the north and north-west, which are expected to blow away the fog and rain forecast for November 14 and November 15, and provide temporary relief from the smog.

## GENERAL STUDIES-02

### Navigation rights figure in first Quadrilateral talks

#### News:

- Beginning a new diplomatic initiative, India on Sunday participated in the first formal official-level discussions conducted here under the recently mooted regional coalition known as the 'Quad', the quadrilateral formation that includes Japan, India, the United States and Australia.

#### Beyond News:

- The quadrilateral talks were held even as our Prime Minister interacted with Prime Minister of **Japan and U.S.** President, who participated in the 31st ASEAN and the 12th East Asia summits.
- Indicating the simmering regional tension with China and Beijing's assertiveness over the South China Sea issue, a statement from the Australian Foreign Ministry informed that freedom of navigation figured at the 'Quad.'
- Official sources emphasised that the quadrilateral was not aimed at any other country, and said India was also involved in other similar groupings in the region to deal with security and political issues.

### SC issues notice to Centre, 3 States on plea to curb pollution in Delhi-NCR

**News:** The Supreme Court on Monday sought response from the Union government and the governments of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab on a plea seeking to curb rising pollution in **Delhi** and the National Capital Region (NCR).

#### Beyond News:

- The plea has claimed that rise in dust particles on roads and stubble burning in Haryana and Punjab have led to an alarming rise in pollution levels in the NCR and adjoining areas.
- The plea sought directions to the Centre and these States to take steps to curb road dust and stubble burning. It also sought effective implementation of the odd-even car rationing scheme.



## South China Sea, Rohingya on ASEAN map

### News:

- The maritime dispute over the South China Sea, exodus of the Rohingya citizens of Myanmar into Bangladesh and India, North Korean nuclear posturing and Islamic State-linked terrorism are likely to be the key talking points at the 31st ASEAN summit .

### Beyond News:

- - The South China Sea has been at the centre of discussions on multilateral problems at the ASEAN-China level, which has been further complicated by China's land reclamation projects aimed at building air surveillance and domination projects in the region.
  - ASEAN has been battling with the task of framing a Code of Conduct (CoC) for the common maritime future, which officials of the Philippines say is likely to get the green light during the ASEAN summit.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

## GST: changes in the returns filing process

### News:

- The Goods and Services Tax Council took a slew of decisions during its 23rd meeting in Guwahati on Friday to benefit consumers and businesses alike.

### Process till now:

Up to November 15, when the decisions take effect, the GST system requires businesses to submit at least three forms to file their returns. The GSTR-1 dealt with the invoice-wise details of supply, GSTR-2 dealt with the receipts of goods, and GSTR-3 was an overall summary derived from the two previous forms.

### What is the change?

- In order to ease the compliance burden on businesses, companies would be allowed to only file the GSTR-1 form, up to March 31, 2018.
- The Council has set up a committee to look into how to make the GSTR-2 form easier, following which it will be brought back into the system.

The Council also decided to extend the usage of the summary GSTR-3B form, meant to make life easier for those unfamiliar with the filing process, till March 31 from the earlier December 31 deadline.



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## GENERAL STUDIES-02

### For India, peace is not a word; it is in our veins: Modi



#### News

- Highlighting India's role in the Indo-Pacific region, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke of Lord Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi's tradition of peace, a day after Indian officials joined the quadrilateral grouping that includes Australia, Japan and the United States.

#### Beyond News

- In a meeting with the non-resident Indian community, PM said that India has sacrificed lives for the peace of the world even as he informed U.S. President Donald Trump that India will play a role for the welfare of humanity.
- Modi indicated India's growing ambition to emerge as a global peacekeeping and peace-enforcing power reminding that India recognizes the need for peace in the global order.

### 'Indian firms in U.K. must be ready for Brexit effect'

#### News:

- Indian businesses based in the U.K. and looking to do business in Europe must be prepared for **additional tariffs, customs duties** and product specification due to the repercussions of Brexit, according to a Belgian minister.

#### Beyond News:

- The India-EU Free Trade Agreement finally being signed since the high-level negotiators are now meeting to hammer out the details.
- Another sensitive issue was that **of investment and arbitration**. India-EU could model itself on the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) between Canada and Europe.
- India could benefit from a technological transfer that would enable it to fully exploit its inland waterways without having to go through the expense and effort of dredging the rivers.

### As Delhi withdraws review plea, NGT asks it to give "one scientific reason" to exempt two-wheelers from odd-even scheme



### News:

- The Delhi government on Tuesday withdrew the review petition that it had filed before the National Green Tribunal (NGT) with respect to exempting two-wheelers and women drivers from the odd-even car rationing scheme.

### Beyond News:

- The NGT asked the government to provide “one scientific reason” as to why two-wheelers should be exempted from the scheme considering that both the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) had submitted that two-wheelers contribute a major portion of the vehicular pollution.

Dismissing the petition, the NGT has given the ‘liberty to file a fresh application’ to the Aam Aadmi Party government.

- The Supreme Court on Monday sought the response of the Centre and the governments of Punjab, Delhi and Haryana on measures taken to counter the smog and pollution choking the national capital and surrounding areas.
- The apex court’s green signal to the NGT came on a day the tribunal pulled up the Uttar Pradesh government for not complying with its order to ban construction in the National Capital Region despite PM10 level being over 900. The tribunal described the State’s attitude as making a “mockery of the system.”

## NAS to spot learning gaps in Ernakulam schools

### News:

- The National Achievement Survey (NAS) will identify learning gaps and quality interventions required in government and aided schools in Ernakulam district in Kerala.

### Beyond News:

- NAS, aims at **assessing the health of education system** by weighing individual student performance.
- Initiated by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), the assessment was done for classes III and V in languages, mathematics, and environmental science, and in languages, mathematics, science, and social science for Class VIII.

### Tracking education

- NAS aims at assessing the health of education system by weighing individual student performance
- Assessment done for classes III and V in languages, mathematics, science, and social science
- NAS findings will be used as inputs for policy, planning, and designing pedagogical interventions

#### For a bigger cause

• Students of 173 govt and aided schools participated in the survey

• 526 teachers and 277 field investigators engaged in the exercise



- The **findings will be used as inputs for policy, planning, and designing** pedagogical interventions to improve students' learning outcomes.
- Experts will design and implement district-level pedagogical interventions to bridge identified learning gaps.

### Philippines President Duterte accepts Modi's invite

#### News:

- The Ministry of External Affairs on Monday said President Rodrigo Duterte of the Philippines has accepted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invitation to visit India for the 2018 ASEAN-India commemorative summit, along with other leaders of the ASEAN.

#### Beyond News:

- The two sides sealed four agreements and agreed to cooperate on counter-terrorism. Both countries have been victims of terrorism for long.
- The commemorative summit is likely to be a mega event that will mark India's intensification of the 'Act East policy' aimed at the Indo-Pacific region.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### 24x7 power supply to farms from New Year

#### News

- The Telangana Government has advanced the **implementation of round-the-clock power supply** to agriculture sector and will launch it on January 1 instead of March-April next as planned earlier.

#### Beyond News

- Stating that round-the-clock supply to farm sector would require another Rs. 617 crore in addition to Rs. 4,777 crore allocated for the current year, 5,394 crore would be allocated in the next budget for the purpose. Government, however, reiterated its appeal to the farming community to remove auto-starters not only to save wastage of energy but also to make best use of precious groundwater.
- There were 23.6 lakh agriculture pump-sets in the State with an investment of about Rs. 35,000 crore by the farming community.

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## GENERAL STUDIES-01

### Indians add more years to their lives

#### News

- A first-of-its kind report on the 'India State-Level Disease Burden,' released , has revealed severe inequalities in the disease burden in different States, suggesting the need for more specific health planning.

#### Beyond News:

- The report was prepared under **the Disease Burden Initiative**, a joint project between the Indian Council of Medical Research, Public Health Foundation of India, and Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME), in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

#### Important Findings:

- Life expectancy at birth improved significantly during 1990 to 2016 — from 59.7 years and 58.3 years for females and males respectively in 1990 to **3 years for females and 66.9 years for males** in 2016.
- But in a measure of the continuing inequalities in public health, life expectancy for females in Uttar Pradesh was 66.8 years — below the national average and 12 years less than **in Kerala, where it was 78.7 years**.
- The study found that the per person burden from many of the leading infectious and non-**communicable diseases varies 5-10 times** between different States and malnutrition continues to be the single largest risk for health loss in India, which is higher among females and is particularly severe in the empowered action group States and Assam.

#### The health divide

India's life expectancy improved from **59** in 1990 to **68.5** years in 2016. Kerala topped the charts in both the years

- Kerala's life expectancy in 1990: **71**
- Kerala's life expectancy in 2016: **76.4**

Source: Lancet

65.1

70.8

Life expectancy in 2016

76.4



## GENERAL STUDIES-02

### Creamy layer case referred to Statute Bench

#### News:

- Reopening the debate on the application of "creamy layer" for reservations for the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes in government jobs, the Supreme Court referred the question to a Constitution Bench.

- A Bench said clarity is required on the “**application of creamy layer in situations of completing claims within the same races, communities, groups or parts thereof of SC/ST communities notified by the President under Articles 341 and 342**”.

### **Beyond News**

- This question on the application of creamy layer principle in SC/ST quotas comes **11 years after a five-judge Constitution Bench** in the Nagaraj judgment of 2006 had decided that creamy layer should be excluded from the reservations for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in government jobs.
- The two-judge Bench’s order is based on a batch of petitions for clarity on **Article 16 (4)**, which deals with the State’s powers for providing for appointments or posts for “any backward class of citizens”; on **Article 16 (4A)**, which arms the State with power to make provisions for quota in promotion with consequential seniority to SC/ST communities; and finally **Article 16 (4B)** on unfilled reservation vacancies.

### **India, Russia chopper deal on right track**

#### **News**

- India and Russia are in the final stages of concluding **the deal to build Kamov-226T utility helicopters in India.**

### **Beyond News**

- A Russian team is in India for technical discussions on the JV with Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. (HAL).
- India and Russia have concluded **an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA)** for 200 helicopters estimated to cost over \$1 billion.
- As per the deal, 60 helicopters will be imported from Russia and at least another 140 built in India by the HAL with technology transfer.
- After the RFQ is issued to the JV, the final commercial deal should be concluded very quickly as there are fixed timelines on the process, the source added.

The Kamov-226T helicopters are meant **to replace the ageing and obsolete Cheetah and Chetak fleets** of the Indian armed forces. The number is expected to go beyond 200 given the large requirement from the services.

### **Post-Doklam, India asserts itself in China’s backyard**

#### **News:**

Displaying convergence of interests with the new quadrilateral grouping with **U.S., Japan and Australia, India** reached out to China’s backyard, addressing an array of issues ranging from the tension in the Korean peninsula to freedom of navigation and sought a crackdown on chemical weapons during the ASEAN and the East Asia summits.

## Beyond News:

A high-level Indian official told that New Delhi has emerged as a more dependable partner for South-East Asia following the Doklam faceoff with China, and indicated that the South-East Asian countries expect New Delhi to be assertive with Beijing.

## Ties with India going strong: U.S.

### News

- A senior White House official has said that India-U.S. relationship is going to get stronger and better under the Trump administration in a wide range of areas, including regional security issues, trade and economy, and terrorism.

### Beyond News

- India is a **natural ally of the United States**, because of the shared commitment to democracy and to counter-terrorism, and because the region is so vital to the U.S. security.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

## Wholesale inflation accelerates to 3.59%

### News

- Inflation at the wholesale level **accelerated to 3.59%** in October, a six-month high, on the back of quickening food price inflation and firming oil prices, according to official data released by the Ministry of Commerce.

### Beyond News

- The Wholesale Price Index had, in comparison, registered a growth of 2.6% in September.

This is due to adverse weather conditions and the situation should ease out in the coming months.

- Within the Index, the primary articles segment saw inflation quickening to 3.33% in October from 0.15% in September.
- This was mostly driven by food and fuel prices. The food articles segment saw inflation at 4.3% in October, climbing from 2.04% in the previous month. The fuel segment saw a much slower contraction in



prices in October, of 2.1%, compared with a contraction of 11.55% in September.

- **The food index** — which is a composite of the food segment within primary articles, and the manufactured food category — saw inflation accelerating to 3.23% in October from 2.99% in September.

The minerals segment also saw inflation quickening sharply to 14.8% compared with a contraction of 7.08% in September.

**NOVEMBER 16 2017**

**GENERAL STUDIES-01**

### **NASA tool predicts which cities will flood due to melting ice**

#### **News**

- NASA has developed a new forecasting tool that can predict which cities will be affected as different portions of ice sheets melt due to **global warming**.

#### **Importance of NASA tool**

- The tool looks at **the Earth's spin and gravitational effects** to predict how water will be "redistributed" globally.
- The tool provided a way for governments to work out **which ice sheets they should be most worried about**.
- It suggests that in **London sea-level rise** could be significantly affected by changes in the north-western part of the Greenland ice sheet.



For New York, the area of concern is the ice sheet's entire northern and eastern portions, researchers said.

#### **Beyond News**

- Three key processes influenced "**the sea-level fingerprint**," the pattern of sea-level change around the world, according to the study published in the journal Science Advances.

These include gravity, "push-pull influence" of ice, and the rotation of the planet itself.

## GENERAL STUDIES-02

### France wants to work with India in Indo-Pacific

#### News:

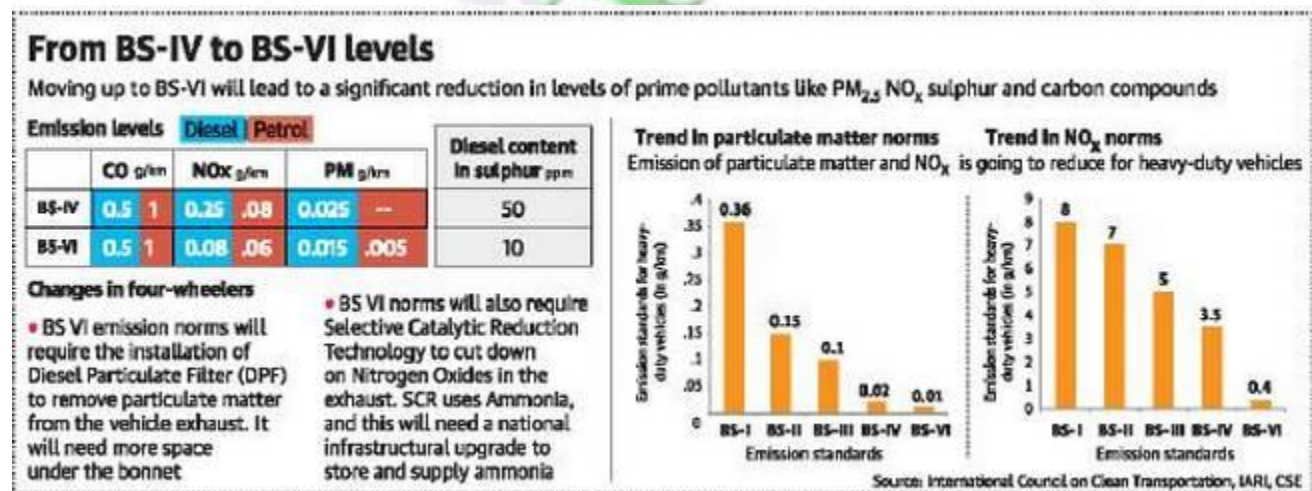
- Officials said that, France will like to deepen cooperation with India in **the Indo-Pacific bilaterally** and not as a part of a multilateral arrangement like the recently convened “quadrilateral” between India, U.S., Japan and Australia.

#### Beyond News:

- This new cooperation would be discussed as part of the strategic partnership along with cooperation in **counter-terrorism, defence hardware, nuclear energy, and space cooperation** during the upcoming visit of Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian to India.
- France and India have a **“special and specific”** interest in the Indian Ocean, and would prefer to conduct their exchanges across the Indo-Pacific bilaterally.
- In addition, France is India’s oldest strategic partner, and has conducted India’s first international ‘Varuna’ joint naval exercises since 1983.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### BS-VI fuel in Delhi from 2018



#### News

- In a bid to **deal with the critical pollution situation** in the national capital, the Ministry of Petroleum has brought forward the date for the rollout of **BS-VI fuel** for Delhi to April 1, 2018 instead of the original deadline of April 1, 2020.



## Beyond News

- The decision to advance the launch, prompted by the serious pollution levels in Delhi and adjoining areas, was taken in consultation with the Public Oil Marketing Companies.
- OMCs have also been asked to examine the possibility of BS-VI auto fuel introduction in the whole of the National Capital Region (NCR) area with effect from April 1, 2019.



## LIMITATIONS:

- The step, though welcome, did not cover a large enough area. With the National Capital Region facing a smog crisis due to a combination of crop burning in Punjab and Haryana and high background pollution in Delhi last week, the need for region-wide action was once again highlighted.

## Install rainwater harvesting system in two months, NGT tells Delhi schools, colleges

### News:

- The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Thursday directed all private and government schools and colleges in **Delhi** to install rainwater harvesting systems on the premises at their own costs. The institutions have been directed to install the systems within two months.

### Beyond News:

- A bench, headed by NGT chairperson, said that Any institution which does not comply, has to pay an **environmental compensation of Rs. 5 lakh**.
- The Tribunal said the committee was required to carry out inspections of these institutions and issue a fitness certificate to make the rainwater harvesting systems operational.

## Centre gives effect to GST rate changes

### News

- The Centre notified the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council's latest decisions, giving



effect to the revised tax rates on goods from November 15.

### Beyond News

- The government said all product prices must reflect the change.
- A consumer shall be charged the revised reduced rates of 18% on these items with effect from the 15th November, 2017. On 178 items the GST rate has been brought down from 28% to 18%.
- Accordingly, there would be a corresponding reduction in price/MRP on these goods. Consumers may take note of these reductions while making purchases.
- At its meeting last week, the GST Council had pared the number of items in the highest tax slab of 28% to 50. It had also cut the rate on restaurants except for those in hotels having a room tariff of Rs. 7,500 or more to 5% and removed their eligibility to claim input tax credits.

**NOVEMBER 17 2017**

**GENERAL STUDIES-02**

### Restrictions eased as pollution dips in Delhi

#### News:

- Delhi breathed relatively easy as air quality remained outside the 'severe plus' category for a third consecutive day, prompting authorities to withdraw strict emission-control measures enacted last week.



#### Beyond News:

- The air quality index (AQI) in Delhi was in the 'very poor category' at 363.
- The **ban on the entry of trucks** carrying non-essential goods into Delhi as well as the enhancement of parking charges by four times were reversed by Lieutenant-Governor .
- These were among the provisions of the Graded Response Action Plan that the Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority ordered.
- The municipal corporations of Delhi, which are responsible for collecting, parking fees, had **hiked charges by up to four times**.
- The **Uttar Pradesh government has banned garbage burning** in urban areas in a bid to reduce the pollution.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### UN must list Azhar a global terrorist: France

#### News:

- Emphasising the need to designate Pakistani terror mastermind Masood Azhar as a global terrorist under the 1267 counter-terror committee of the UN Security Council, France sought international consensus on countering cross-border terrorism.

#### Beyond News:

- Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said France and India are successfully cooperating in areas like counter-terrorism and defence and highlighted France's territorial interests in the Indian Ocean region.
- Le Drian's comment on terrorism came two days after France marked the first anniversary of the November 13, 2016 terror strike in Paris which left 130 dead and dozens wounded.



### Centre doubles down on GST's gains for consumers

**News:** A day after the Centre notified the latest set of cuts in the rate of tax to be levied on a wide range of goods as part of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), the Union Cabinet approved the creation of the National Anti-profiteering Authority to ensure that **businesses pass on the benefits of GST to consumers.**

#### Beyond News:

- The decision to set up the enforcement body marks the government's resolve to ensure that the latest tax rate reductions approved by the GST Council on more than 200 items are implemented immediately by businesses.
- Crucially, the authority has been granted wide-ranging powers, including **to cancel the registration** of offending firms in extreme cases.

### Chennai Customs department website hacked

**News:** The official website of the **Chennai** Customs was allegedly hacked on November 17 and slogans demanding a "free Kashmir" and comments against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Indian Army were posted on it.



## Beyond News

- A group of hackers, which identified itself as “Team Pak Cyber Skullz”, targeted the website .
- A few years ago, the Chennai Customs website was hacked by another group of hackers.

This highlights the lack of cyber security even in official websites.

**NOVEMBER 18 2017**

## GENERAL STUDIES-02

### Centre defends Rafale deal, cites dire IAF needs

#### News

- In the face of continued allegations about the purchase of 36 Rafale fighter jets from France, Defence Minister defended the decision saying it was taken as an emergency measure to meet the urgent requirement of the Indian Air Force (IAF).

#### Beyond News

- Then Prime Minister understood the loss of time and took the government-to-government route for 36 aircraft, and given the limited numbers, transfer of technology made no sense.
- The government had decided to procure 126 fighter jets in 2000, but even by 2014, the deal could not be concluded.

### Moscow declaration: WHO seeks co-ordinated action on TB, end of HIV co-infection deaths by 2020

**News :** Health ministers, NGOs, and private sector representatives from 120 countries adopted the **Moscow Declaration** , committing themselves to eliminating additional deaths from HIV co-infection by 2020 and achieving synergy in coordinated action against TB and non-communicable diseases.

#### Beyond News:

- India is among the signatories to the declaration that WHO director-general Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus described in his address as a “milestone in the history of TB”.
- The Moscow declaration emphasised the need for fixing multisectoral responsibility towards ending TB by 2035, the global target.



## India, France to boost ties in counter-terror, trade

### News

- Gravely concerned over growing terrorism, India and France decided to strengthen counter-terror cooperation, and asked the international community to oppose countries which are financing, sheltering and providing safe havens to terrorists.



### Beyond News

- As part of the 2008 nuclear cooperation agreement between India and France, Paris is to help build atomic power reactors for New Delhi.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

## Ganga of Manas National Park is first rhino to be grandmother tracked in the wild

### News

- This is **the first time a rhino** belonging to the wild in India has been officially recorded as having become a grandmother.

### Beyond News

- Way back in 2004 when a devastating flood had ravaged Kaziranga National Park, Ganga – then a two-month old rhino calf – was almost washed away, had it not been for volunteers of the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation (CWRC) who rescued her and shifted her to safety and brought her up.
- Thirteen years later, **Ganga** – the name given at CWRC – is a proud grandmother, the first grandmother rhino tracked in a wild habitat.

The **rhino population in Manas** was totally wiped out in the early 1990s with Unesco putting a “in-danger” prefix to its World Heritage Site tag in 1992.

With the government launching an ambitious programme under Indian Rhino Vision 2020 (IRV) to raise the total rhino population across Assam to 3000, a number of rhinos were shifted to Manas from 2006 onwards.



## 'PSLV built by domestic industry by 2020'

**News:** The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is preparing to hand over the entire gamut of launch vehicle manufacture to domestic industry by 2020.



### Beyond News

- Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) Director said that ,until now, public and private industries have only supplied devices, components and sub-systems for ISRO's launch vehicles, including the PSLV and the GSLV.
- This effort is to give a push to industry for production of end-to-end systems. By 2020, we hope to have the first completely industry-built PSLV.

The theme of the seminar was 'Aerospace Manufacturing in India-Vision 2030.'

- ISRO already has a partnership with private industry to produce satellites.
- The IRNSS-1H communication satellite aboard the ill-fated PSLV C-39 was the first to be produced by a consortium of six companies.

ISRO had a partnership with about 500 domestic industries for the supply of various components and devices. "About 80% of the cost of launch vehicles and 40% of satellites are handled by these industries".

## Economy gets Moody's thumbs up

### A shot in the arm

Moody's changing India's rating to Baa2 from Baa3 is the first such upgrade in more than 13 years

#### The Baa2 club

**India's rating now:** Baa2 with a stable outlook

**India's rating earlier:** Baa3 with a positive outlook

#### Other Baa2 countries:

Bulgaria, Colombia, Italy (negative

outlook), Oman, Panama, Philippines, Spain, Uruguay

- Moody's says India's long-term growth potential stronger than other Baa-rated countries

- Forecast 2017-18: GDP growth at 6.7%, set to

quicken to 7.5% in the next financial year

- Economic growth to be bolstered by the recent government measures to support SMEs and exporters with GST compliance

#### The scorecard

Rating	Description
Aaa	Prime investment-grade
Aa1, Aa2, Aa3	High grade
A1, A2, A3	Upper medium
Baa1, Baa2 (India's rating), Baa3	Lower medium

**Moody's** The decision to upgrade the ratings is underpinned by Moody's expectation that continued progress on economic and institutional reforms will, over time, enhance India's high growth potential

**We welcome it and believe that it is a belated recognition of all the positive steps taken in India in the last few years**

**ARUN JAITLEY, Finance Minister**



## News:

- Global credit rating agency Moody's Investors Services raised India's sovereign rating for the first time in 13 years early, citing the country's high growth potential in the years to come.

## Finding:

- The decision to upgrade the ratings is underpinned by Moody's expectation that continued progress on economic and institutional reforms will, over time, enhance India's high growth potential and its large and stable financing base for government debt, and will likely contribute to a gradual decline in the general government debt burden over the medium term

## Beyond News:

- Upgrading the Indian government's rating as a local and foreign currency issuer from **Baa3 with a positive outlook to Baa2** with a stable outlook.
- Obligations rated Baa2 are subject to moderate credit risk.

They are considered medium grade and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics. Baa3, by contrast, was the lowest investment grade rating.

- Acknowledging that some steps such as the **GST and demonetisation** have 'undermined' growth in the near term as reflected by the slower GDP growth of 5.7% in the first quarter of 2017-18, Moody's said it expects real GDP growth in India to moderate to 6.7% in this fiscal year.

**NOVEMBER 19 & 20 2017**

**GENERAL STUDIES-01**

## Diversity keeps us united: Kovind

### News

- Addressing the Arunachal Pradesh Assembly on Sunday, President Ramnath Kovind said the people of India had different food habits, clothing styles, religious beliefs and traditions, and this diversity was the country's strength.

### Beyond News

- Mr. Kovind said Arunachal Pradesh — where **different tribes coexisted** and also conserved their own traditions — expressed India's unity in diversity beautifully.



- He said the border State presented a unique opportunity for trade with neighbouring countries, and hoped that it would help extend business relations with ASEAN nations as per the Act East policy.
- This was Mr. Kovind's first visit to the State — **which China claims is part of Tibet** — after becoming President.
- He commended the Centre for its "effective steps" to step up development in the State, making specific mention of a **Shatabdi train** being extended to Itanagar and the construction of the Trans-Arunachal highway.

He said that the State had **immense potential for organic farming, horticulture and tourism.**

## GENERAL STUDIES-02

### China offers to mediate dialogue between Bangladesh, Myanmar

#### News

- China has expressed its willingness to facilitate a dialogue between Bangladesh and Myanmar to solve the Rohingya refugee crisis.

#### Beyond News

- China does not want the Rohingya issue to overshadow or slow down the progress of the Bangladesh-China-India-Myanmar economic corridor initiative.

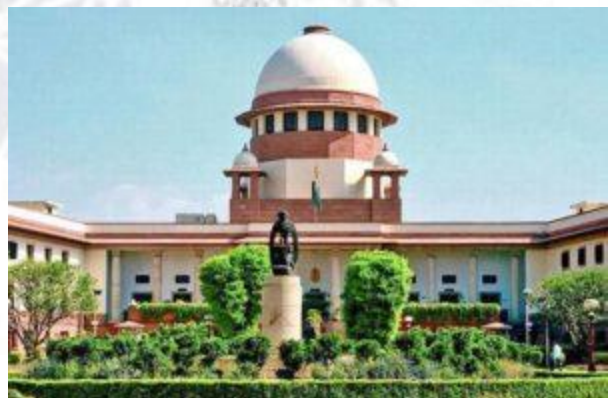
Mr. Wang's visit came days after **the UN revived a resolution on Myanmar** that was dropped last year due to the country's progress on human rights.

- The UN General Assembly's Third Committee, which focuses on human rights, called on Myanmar to end operations that have "**led to the systematic violation and abuse of human rights**" of Rohingya Muslims.
- A total of 135 countries voted in favour of the resolution and 10, including China, against it, while there were 26 abstentions.

### Making caste slur on SC/STs over phone an offence, says SC

#### News

- The **Supreme Court** has ruled that **using casteist remarks over phone** in a public place against the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe category amounts to criminal offence, **warranting a jail of a maximum five years.**





## Beyond News

- The apex court refused to stay criminal proceedings and quash an FIR against a person, who allegedly used derogatory casteist remarks over phone to a woman from the the SC/ST category.
- Also said that **section 3(1)(s) of SC/ST Act** relates to a person, who abuses any member of a SC or ST by caste name in any place “within public view”.

## Many CBSE schools add another subject to accommodate Kannada

### News

Many private schools under the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) are finding themselves in fix over how to “accommodate” Kannada as a language in the curriculum. In October, months after the 2017–18 academic year started, the State government made it mandatory for all schools to teach Kannada.

### What the rules state

- The rules for the Kannada Language Learning Act, 2015 were finalised on October 21, 2017
- Schools will have to teach Kannada from this academic year
- Teaching Kannada should be implemented in a phased manner. By the 2026–27 academic year, Kannada should be taught in all classes — 1 to 10
- Students who come from other States and enrol in schools in Karnataka between classes two and eight will have to study class one syllabus of Kannada. They will later have to gradually study the next year’s texts as they move from one class to the other



## GENERAL STUDIES-03

## New J&K surrender policy to target local militants

### News

- With a fresh surrender policy being framed by the government, the Army and the J&K Police, in a joint appeal , asked **all local militants to give up arms** and assured them “full cooperation” to join the mainstream.

## Beyond News

- Over 130 local militants are still active in the Valley.

- J&K DGP S.P. Vaid said that, they are after foreign terrorists. They want to give the local boys a chance to surrender.
- The return of Majid Khan (who had joined the Lashkar-e-Taiba) will start a new phase and he hope, mothers of other militants will follow suit [in making an appeal].
- They said local militants could use the helpline if they want to come back. A police official said the government had taken inputs from all security agencies to frame the fresh policy.

## India Inc: who's growing, who's slowing

### Studying their sales growth patterns threw up these findings.

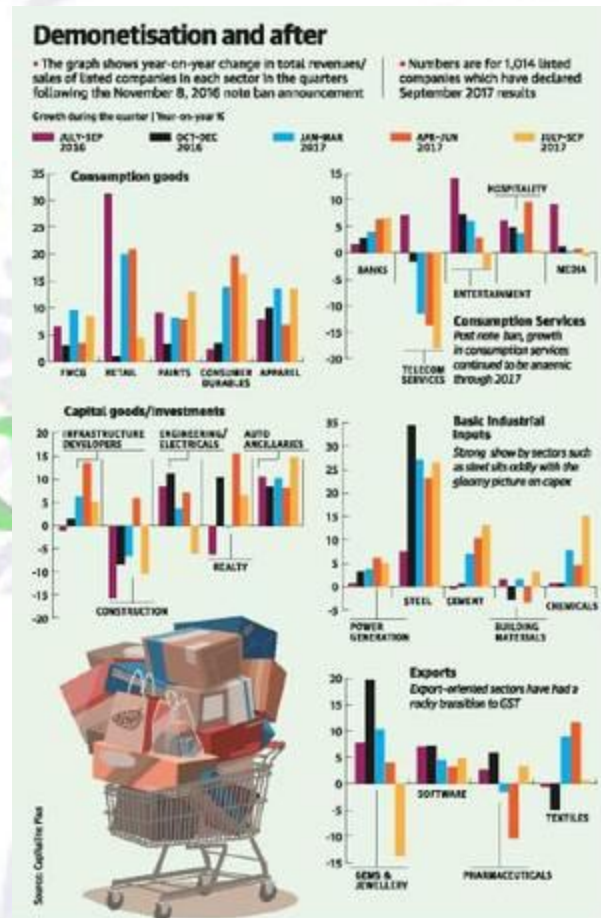
- Aggregate sales growth for **Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)** companies slumped from 6.5% in July-September 2016 to 2.9% in the demonetisation quarter.
- **Automobile sales** shifted into first gear from 13.2% growth in July-September 2016 to 4.2% in the October-December quarter. Sales for retailers fell off a precipice from a 31% growth to a measly 1%. Consumer durable sales, already sluggish before demonetisation grew at just 3.5% in the note ban quarter.
- **Telecom services** went from 7.1% growth in July-September 2016 to a 1.7% contraction in October-December 2016. Entertainment (multiplexes, cable TV providers) saw a halving of growth from 14% to 7% and media firms' (newspapers, broadcasters, television channels) slowed sharply from 9.2% to 1.2%.

GST apart, sector-specific issues have also played villain to some export-oriented sectors.

- For **software services**, the backlash against offshoring and changing business models have posed a challenge. For pharmaceutical exporters, pricing pressure on generics in the U.S. market and regulatory crackdowns have hit growth.

### Findings

- Overall, numbers from India Inc. suggest that, while the economy isn't back to firing on all cylinders, the accelerating sectors outnumber the slowing ones.
- Extrapolating sector-wise numbers to the economy as a whole should come with caveats. In India, only the largest and most established firms tend to list themselves in the public markets.



Therefore, these numbers essentially capture the trends for the best and brightest of Indian businesses.

**NOVEMBER 21 2017**

**GENERAL STUDIES-02**



### ‘Leakage of Aadhaar data dangerous for country’

#### News:

- Unique Identification Authority of India, in response to a report based on a RTI reply stating that 210 government websites had made Aadhaar data public, said that Aadhaar data was completely safe and secure.

#### Beyond News:

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee criticised the Centre for the alleged leakage of data of some Aadhaar beneficiaries on more than 200 Central and State government websites and described it as “dangerous” for the individual, society and the country.

### China condemns Kovind’s trip

#### News:

- China on Monday strongly objected to President Ram Nath Kovind’s visit to Arunachal Pradesh, saying India should refrain from “complicating” the border dispute when bilateral relations are at a “crucial moment”.

#### Beyond News:

- Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang told that Chinese government never acknowledged the so-called Arunachal Pradesh and our position on the border issue is consistent and clear.
- Arunachal Pradesh, which China claims as Southern Tibet.



- India has dismissed Beijing's objections, maintaining that Arunachal Pradesh is an integral part of the country and Indian leaders are as much free to visit the State as they are to any other part of the country.

### Supreme Court gives the nod for audio, video recording of court proceedings



#### News:

- Judges have no need for privacy inside the courtrooms they preside, Supreme Court judge Justice A.K. Goel said while giving the thumbs up to audio and video recording of court proceedings.

#### Beyond News:

- Signalling a paradigm shift, a Supreme Court Bench, mooted the possibilities of having audio and video recordings of proceedings in the constitutional courts — the Supreme Court and High Courts.

The Bench had asked **why the judiciary in India should be considered any different from the judges of other countries** who do not consider recording of proceedings as a violation of privacy of court proceedings.

- Supreme Court directed that at least “two districts in every State/Union Territory [with the exception of small States/Union Territories where it may be considered to be difficult to do so by the concerned High Courts) CCTV cameras [without audio recording] may be installed inside the courts and at such important locations of the court complexes as may be considered appropriate.”

### India thanks U.N members for Judge Dalveer Bhandari's re-election to ICJ

**News:** Judge Dalveer Bhandari received all 15 votes in the UN Security Council and 183 out of the 193 votes in the UN General Assembly. The extraordinary support from the UN membership is reflective of the respect for strong constitutional integrity of the Indian polity and independence of the judiciary in India.

#### Beyond News:



- India said the election process reflects respect for its constitutional integrity and independent judiciary.
- The Government of India also expressed appreciation for the United Kingdom that chose to withdraw its candidate at the last moment.

The UN Security Council and the General Assembly voted overwhelmingly in support of India.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### ISRO opens doors to private sector

#### News:

- In an attempt to increase the number of satellite launches and build the capacity of the private sector, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) issued a tender on Monday to the private industry for Assembly, Integration and Testing (AIT) of 30-35 satellites.

#### Beyond News:

- ISRO currently launches 3-4 launches per year but the demand is for 16-18 satellites.
- In the next step, the idea is to let the private industry build their own facilities after gaining enough expertise. The private sector already supplies majority of the sub-systems in satellite manufacturing.

### The big fish that inspired a beach cleaning drive

#### News:

The image of plastic all twisted up in the belly of a dead shark that washed ashore has become a catalyst for a massive beach cleaning movement in the fishing villages of north Chennai.

#### Beyond News:

- They have mobilised around 300 youngsters to clean up the shores and fishing hamlets every weekend. So far, they have removed two tonnes of plastics and thermocol, 5000 bottles and one tonne of old plastic-wired fishing nets.
- Indian Fishermen Association's M.D. Dayalan, who is helping the youngsters, says that most fishermen are not aware that the plastic in fish nets can be recycled.

### 'Indian renewable energy firms among lowest rated'

#### News:



- Indian renewable energy companies are among the most poorly rated investment grade companies in the Asia-Pacific region, according to a report by ratings agency Fitch.

### **Findings of Fitch's 2018 Outlook on Asia-Pacific Utilities.**

1. Most of the issuers are owned by their respective sovereigns due to the strategic importance of energy supply.
2. These entities also have strong standalone profiles given solid and stable cash flow generation.
3. At the bottom end are the Indian renewable issuers with ratings that reflect lower plant utilisation, limited operating history, volume risk, weaker counterparties, and weak but improving financial profiles.

The agency expects renewable energy to make up a larger portion of India's electricity generation, bolstered by untapped generation potential, strong policy support and lower tariffs.

- Tariffs for both wind and solar electricity hit a new low of under Rs. 3.0/kWh in mid-2017, making the two the cheapest source of electricity in the country.
- Renewable energy made up 58% — its biggest share yet — of the 25 GW of generation capacity added in India in FY17.

Small renewable players would remain protected from price risks due to long-term power purchase agreements, but production volumes would vary on the basis of climatic patterns.

Fitch said that India's overall demand for petroleum products would grow at about 5% over the medium term, driven by strong GDP growth over the next two financial years and continued growth in auto sales.

***NOVEMBER 22 2017***

## GENERAL STUDIES-02

### India pulls off a diplomatic coup, wins prized ICJ seat

#### **Pride of place**

India has managed to get its own man in The Ha

- Five of the 15 judges of ICJ are elected every three years
- This year, there were six candidates for five places
- The winning candidates require a majority in both the General Assembly and the U.N. Security Council, in simultaneous voting through secret ballot
- While four candidates were elected smoothly, Dalveer Bhandari and Christopher Greenwood were stuck in a deadlock. Bhandari won in the UN General Assembly, while Greenwood won in the Security Council in the multiple rounds of voting.
- U.K. wanted to withdraw and move to a different mechanism

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



#### **Why its important?**

- **This is the first time in over seven decades of the United Nations, that the U.K. will not be represented in the ICJ;** and this is the first time that one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council lost out to an ordinary member in a race.

This is also the first time that one sitting member of the ICJ lost out to another sitting member.

#### **Beyond News**

- The **K. chose to withdraw** after it became clear that it would not win the contest in the General Assembly (GA) and it did not have adequate support in the Security Council (UNSC) for its attempts to derail the voting process itself.

### WTO: India resolute on food security

#### **News**

- At the upcoming meeting of the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) highest decision-making body, **India will not agree to severe restrictions on its right to give price subsidies to farmers through the Minimum Support Price (MSP)** to procure grains from them for food security purposes, according to highly-placed official sources.

### Beyond News:

- The WTO's Ministerial Conference is slated to take place **at Buenos Aires in Argentina** next month.
- Currently, an interim mechanism called the 'Peace Clause' is in place, per which WTO members had agreed not to challenge developing nations at the WTO Dispute Settlement Mechanism if they breached the cap of the product-specific domestic support (which is 10% of the value of production).

### Peace clause

- The 'Peace Clause' is available to developing nations, including India, till a permanent solution is found to public stockholding for food security purposes.
- Official sources said India would fight to ensure that at least the 'Peace Clause' is made the permanent solution, and will not accept any 'terribly stringent or onerous' conditions.



### Difficult to invoke

According to Abhijit Das, head and professor, Centre for WTO Studies, Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, the prospects of an agreement on a permanent solution are not that bright due to **three roadblocks**.

1. the U.S. has not been engaging actively on the matter till recently, and if the U.S. does not give its nod, it will be difficult to arrive at a decision.
2. the European Union has tried to link the permanent solution with outcomes including stringent disciplines on domestic support given by developing nations.
3. Lastly, most WTO members are of the opinion that there should be a commitment on prohibition of exports from public stockholding saying such exports would be trade-distorting.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### India calls for stronger treaties to protect space assets

#### News



- Stressing international cooperation in space as in all domains of global commons, Foreign Secretary S. Jaishankar called for strengthening global treaties to protect space-based assets and prevent militarisation of outer space.

### **Beyond News**

- India had more than **200 international cooperation agreements** with more than 40 countries and international organisations, and called the maiden moon mission, Chandrayaan-I, a “successful example of international cooperation with international payloads”.
- In May, ISRO launched the communications satellite **GSAT-9**, also called SAARC satellite, meant to provide connectivity and disaster support to countries in South Asia.

The satellite cost around Rs. 235 crore and had a life span of 12 years.

### **Hafiz Saeed to be released on Friday midnight**

#### **News**

- The Judicial Review Board of the Lahore High Court ordered the release of Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD) chief Hafiz Saeed from house arrest.

### **Beyond News**

- It overruled the government's request that his release may trigger international sanctions against Pakistan.
- Saeed will be freed in the midnight of November 24 after the expiry of the house arrest order. He had been under house arrest since January last.
- Saeed, **a declared terrorist by the U.N.**, the U.S. and India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai attacks, was produced before the review board that comprised Justices Yawar Ali, Abus Sami Khan and Aalia Neelum.

### **Drones to be used for spraying pesticides**

## News

- The State government is ready to bear the entire expenditure for using drones to spray pesticides to prevent the spread of plant diseases.

## Beyond News


- This would be done under the **Farmers' One Stop Shop (FOSS)** to be attached to the Rythu Seva Kendrams functioning in all the Assembly constituencies.
- Drones would be used extensively in **digital soil mapping** using the know-how provided by the **Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF)**. The BMGF has already used the technology in South Africa.

## In a first, BrahMos missile fired successfully from Sukhoi aircraft

**News:** In a milestone, a **BrahMos supersonic cruise missile** was on Wednesday fired successfully for the first time from a Sukhoi-30MKI fighter jet of the Indian Air Force.

## Beyond News

- The missile was **gravity dropped from the Su-30MKI** from its fuselage, and the two-stage missile's engine fired up and was propelled towards the intended target in the Bay of Bengal.
- Brahmos ALCM, which **weighs 2.5 tonnes**, is the heaviest weapon to be deployed on India's Su-30 fighter aircraft.
- It has a range of 290 km.
- Brahmos, the world class weapon with multi-platform, multi-mission role is now **capable of being launched from**



**Aerial help**

**Spraying of pesticides:** Arresting pests by utilising pest forecast systems and drones will reduce the harmful effects and wastage.

**Digital soil mapping:** Due to soil-test based fertilizer recommendations fertilizer consumption reduced substantially saving ₹150 crore subsidy for Govt and ₹250 crore for farmers.

**In combination with A.I.:** Using drones to increase the effectiveness of the entire agriculture value chain through data-driven insights.



**land, sea and air**, completing the tactical cruise missile triad for India.

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The land and sea variants of Brahmos are already operational with the Army and the Navy. Recently, the range variants were upgraded from 290 km to 450 km after India joined the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR).

BrahMos is a **joint venture between India and Russia** and named after the Brahmaputra and Moscowa rivers.

**NOVEMBER 23 2017**

**GENERAL STUDIES-02**

### **Bankruptcy code to be amended**

#### **News**

- The Union Cabinet approved a proposal to promulgate an Ordinance to **amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)**.

#### **Beyond News**

- The move is **to strengthen the IBC** by explicitly preventing certain persons including wilful defaulters, disqualified directors, those who have indulged in fraudulent transactions as well as promoters **whose account is classified as non-performing assets (NPA)** beyond a prescribed duration from regaining control of the defaulting company through the backdoor in the garb of a resolution applicant.

The IBC provides for an effective and robust legal framework for “time-bound insolvency resolution to release assets locked up in NPA and promote maximisation of value of assets, failing which, under-utilised resources of unviable business are released through liquidation.”

- These amendments have been proposed because in the initial phase of the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP) under the IBC, a number of cases are likely to have long pending default requiring deep haircut for the creditors.

### **ICJ: India made up in last mile**

#### **News:**

- Win for India’s nominee to the International Court of Justice (ICJ), Justice Dalveer Bhandari, was unprecedented in many ways, but not the first time that India nearly missed the post due to delays in nominating him.

#### **Beyond News:**

- In 2011, India failed to put up a candidate for the Asian group vacancy that had come up with the retirement of the Japanese justice, and rectified the miss only in 2012, when a by-election came up, and Justice Bhandari was named.
- This time around, Justice Bhandari's nomination was **announced only in June**, while his main rival in the 'Asian' grouping Nawaf Salam had **nearly two years for his campaign**.



There were more difficulties. While there is no formal stipulation on the subject, the ICJ's composition of 15 judges follows a geographical break-up: three each for Asia and Africa; two each for Latin America and Eastern Europe; and five for Western Europe and other States.

What surprised even the Indian officials, however, was the low vote count the U.K. received in every round from the General Assembly.

### India, Russia join hands against terrorism

#### News

- A senior Home Ministry official said that, home Minister Rajnath Singh is expected to visit Russia November 27 onwards, during which a pact on cooperation in tackling all forms of terrorism will be signed

#### Beyond News:

- The proposed pact, which will replace the agreement of October 1993, is a step towards consolidating the benefits accrued in the field of security and seeks to jointly fight the new and evolving risks and threats.
- The agreement would reinforce the relationship through exchange and sharing of information, expertise, best practices and would help in curbing terrorism and enhancing security in the region.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### In a first, air-launched BrahMos missile test-fired

#### News

- In a first, India successfully test-fired the air-launched version of the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile from an IAF Su-30MKI aircraft.

## Beyond News

- BrahMos, which is **multi-platform, multi-mission missile**, is now capable of being launched from land, sea and air and completes the tactical cruise missile triad.
- The air-launched BrahMos missile is a **5 ton supersonic air-to-surface cruise missile** with ranges of more than 400 km. The IAF is the first Air Force in the world to have successfully fired an air-launched 2.8 Mach surface attack missile of this category.
- The missile was **gravity-dropped from the Su-30MKI** from its fuselage, and the two stage engine fired up and propelled towards the intended target, a ship, in the Bay of Bengal.

## India expresses outrage at Hafiz Saeed's release

### News

- India is outraged over the **imminent release** of Mumbai terror attacks mastermind Hafiz Saeed from house arrest, calling it an attempt by Pakistan to mainstream proscribed terrorists and a reflection of its continuing support to non-state actors.

## Beyond News

- The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Saeed's release confirmed once again the lack of seriousness by the Pakistan government in bringing to justice perpetrators of terrorism, including individuals and entities designated by the U.N.
- A **top American counter-terrorism expert** has urged the Trump administration to "rescind" the major non-NATO ally status given to **Pakistan** after a court in Lahore ordered to free Mumbai terror attack mastermind and banned JuD chief Hafiz Saeed from detention.
- The banned Jamaat-ud-Dawah (JuD) head, carrying a bounty of \$10 million announced by the U.S. for his role in terror activities, has been under detention since January this year.
- A Pakistani judicial body on November 23 ordered the release of Saeed from house arrest, seen as a setback to India's efforts to bring to justice the perpetrators of the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

## Cabinet approves new finance panel

### News

- The Cabinet set the ball rolling for the constitution of the Fifteenth Finance Commission, which will decide the devolution formula for revenue-sharing between the Centre and States from the year 2020 till 2025.

## Beyond News

- The Fourteenth Finance Commission, whose recommendations were accepted by the government and are effective till March 31, 2020, had mooted a ten percentage points jump in States' share of the central pool of taxes from 32% earlier to 42%.

## 1,020 farmers committed suicide since Maharashtra loan waiver announcement

### News

- In the five months since the State government announced the ₹34,000-crore farm loan waiver scheme, it is yet to be implemented 1,020 farmers have committed suicide as per official records.

### Beyond News:

- The scheme, which faced its first hurdle in lack of funds, is now mired in scam allegations.
- Figures provided by the government showed that 2,414 farmers committed suicides from January 1 to October 31.
- Following several days of agitation in June by farmers, who stopped sending fresh produce to city markets, the BJP-led State government announced the loan waiver scheme, but hasn't been able to put together an accurate list of eligible beneficiaries with banks till date.

**NOVEMBER 24 2017**

**GENERAL STUDIES-02**

## President signs bankruptcy ordinance

**News:** President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday gave his assent to the ordinance approved by the Union Cabinet to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) to strengthen the regime.

### Beyond News

- The ordinance aims at putting in **place safeguards by prohibiting wilful defaulters, those associated with non-performing assets (NPAs)**, and the habitually non-compliant, from regaining control of the defaulting company or stressed assets through the back door in the garb of being a 'resolution applicant'.
- The amendments also provide for fine ranging from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 2 crore for those violating these norms.

According to the statement, a **new section** has been introduced in the IBC that makes **certain persons ineligible** be to a 'resolution applicant'.



## India to help Mauritius on digital locker

### News

- The Government of India will assist Mauritius to develop and set up digital locker services.

### Beyond News

- Ajay Kumar, Additional Secretary, Ministry of electronics and IT said that With Mauritius showing keen interest in India's DigiLocker service, we will be helping them to set up the service.
- The government will offer technical support and advisory services to Mauritius. The decision was taken during a bilateral meeting during the conference.

Besides, in similar separate meetings with Iran and Denmark, decided to collaborate on issues related to IT.

## U.S. calls for arrest of Hafiz Saeed

### News

- Expressing "deep concern" over the release of Mumbai terror attacksmastermind Hafiz Saeed, Washington on November 24 said the JuD leader should be "arrested and charged for his crimes".

### Beyond News

- In a statement, the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad said that, The United States is deeply concerned that Lashkar-e-Tayyiba (LeT) leader Hafiz Seed has been released from house arrest in Pakistan.
- LeT is a designated Foreign Terrorist Organization responsible for the death of hundreds of innocent civilians in terrorist attacks, including a number of American citizens."

The statement also pointed out that Saeed carried a \$10 million on his head.

## More seats for Sikkim Assembly

### News


- The Home Ministry has proposed an increase in the number of seats in the Sikkim Assembly from 32 to 40.

### Why this News Important

### Wider representation

The number of seats in Sikkim assembly is set to increase from 32 to 40. A look at the present and the proposed composition of Sikkim Assembly.

Bhutia-Lepchas	12	12
Limboo-Tamang	0	5
Sangha	1	1
Scheduled Castes	2	2
Other communities	17	20



PRESENT SEATS      PROPOSED SEATS

- The expansion will be the first since the State merged with India in 1975.
- The seats are being increased to accommodate people **from the Limboo and Tamang** communities, notified as the Scheduled Tribes in Sikkim in January 2003.
- As per the **Delimitation Act, 2002**, the number of seats in an Assembly of any State can only be readjusted on the basis of the first census conducted after 2026.

### Beyond News

- Of the eight seats proposed to be increased, five will be reserved for Limboo and Tamangs. Now, Sikkim has 12 seats reserved for Bhutias and Lepchas, two for the Scheduled Castes, one seat for the Sanghas and 17 general seats.
- As per constitutional provisions, the total number of seats for STs should be in proportion to the population.

A senior government official said a proposal has been sent to the Ministry of Law and Justice to amend the **Representation of the People Act (RPA)** for the purpose.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### Unite to fight dark forces in digital space: PM

#### News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday called for **sharing of information and coordination among nations** to ensure that “digital space does not become a playground for the dark forces of terrorism and radicalisation”.

#### Beyond News

- At the Global Conference on Cyber Space (GCCS), attended by delegates from 131 countries, Mr. Modi pitched for creating “cyberwarriors” to keep the digital space safe.
- One of the major focus areas should be the training of well-equipped and capable professionals to counter cyberthreats.

Mr. Modi launched the Unified Mobile Application for New-age Governance (UMANG) mobile app.

### Right to access Internet non-negotiable: India

#### News

- Union Minister for Electronics and IT Ravi Shankar Prasad said that the right to access the Internet is non-negotiable and no single entity can have a monopoly over this.

#### Beyond News



- Prasad's comments follow the U.S. proposal to roll back earlier rules related to open internet, clearing the way for service providers to charge users differently based on content or restrict access to some content.
- The Minister said that the right of access is not negotiable

**NOVEMBER 25 2017**

## **GENERAL STUDIES-02**

### **India, Sri Lanka to expedite projects**

#### **News**

- Expediting decisions on **joint projects** and **“solving the problems that have emerged”** was at the top of the agenda as Sri Lankan Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe met Prime Minister Narendra Modi, External Affairs Minister and President during his two-day visit to Delhi.

#### **Beyond News**

- Among the projects discussed in particular were the plans for India to develop the **Trincomalee harbour**, including the Oil Tank farms project, as well as the Indian bid to **lease and manage the Mattala airport in Hambantota**.
- The emphasis on speeding up joint ventures comes after months where there is no movement on many of the pending decisions on joint ventures.

The Trinco Oil Farm project, that involves the Indian Oil Corporation taking over more than 70 storage tanks would have been sealed in April, when Mr. Wickremesinghe previously visited, but a flash strike by oil company employees put off any announcement.

### **Lucknow to get first woman Mayor in 100 years**

#### **Why it's important?**

- Uttar Pradesh has already given India its first woman Governor and Chief Minister but Lucknow is set to make history by electing its first woman Mayor in 100 years.

#### **Beyond News**

- A woman has never before been elected as head of the municipal body after the Uttar Pradesh Municipalities Act came into existence. This time, however, the Lucknow mayoral seat has been reserved for women, hence all parties have fielded women candidates.

## ADD ON :

- *FIRST FEMALE GOVERNOR: Sarojini Naidu*
- *First Female CM: Sucheta Kriplani*

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### What is particulate matter and how does it affect you?

- One important factor in air pollution, particulate matter (PM).
- Particulate matter or particle pollution is the general term for a mixture of solid particles and liquid droplets found in the air.
- There are a wide range of minute particles in the air that can be seen only using an electron microscope.
- It includes sulphates, nitrates, black carbon, particle-bound water, metals (cadmium, copper, nickel, zinc) and hydrocarbons. In addition, biological components such as allergens (pollen, dust mites) and microbial compounds (fungi) are also PM.

### The major man-made sources

- Emission from power stations, factories, industries, incinerators, diesel generators and automobiles
- Dust from construction sites and unpaved roads
- Burning of garbage

### When inhaled, PM can cause a wide range of respiratory disorders.

- Continuous exposure to PM can cause asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and any type of bronchitis.
- PM can penetrate deep inside the lungs and damage it.
- Any bacteria or virus can now attack the lungs and this could even lead to serious life threatening infections
- PM can also cause chest tightening, watery eyes, sneezing, and running nose. According to WHO almost 3.7 million premature deaths annually are attributed to outdoor air pollution.

### Solutions

- According to the WHO Global Urban Ambient Air Pollution Database, more than 80% of people living in urban areas are exposed to air quality levels that **exceed the WHO limits**.
- There **are no protective masks** than can filter these PM. As individuals, we should stop burning our garbage, use public transportation and take medications for allergies as the PM can worsen existing allergies.

We need to raise our voice to sensitise the issue. All of us have seen vehicles which emit massive clouds of smoke. The State Pollution Control board should understand the seriousness and start inspecting vehicles.

## Death on the rails: India's track record

**News** Data compiled by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MOSPI) reveals that from 2003 to 2015, 3,486 people were killed in railway accidents, with 2015 alone, accounting for 710 deaths.

### Beyond News

Despite establishing itself as the country's prime mode of transport, the Indian Railways has to contend with a dubious safety record

- The Indian Railways (IR) is the biggest mover of people and goods in the country with a network spanning over one lakh kilometres and ferrying 22 million passengers every day, making it inevitable for the economic and social wellbeing of this country.
- But it has to contend with a dubious safety record which has not been helped by a recent spate of major accidents.
- A total of 710 people were killed, and 1,000 injured in rail accidents in 2015, according to MOSPI data.
- The number of casualties has been on the rise after reaching an inflexion point in 2010, where the numbers were relatively lower.
- Deaths due to derailments for 2016-17 is the highest it has been in a decade.

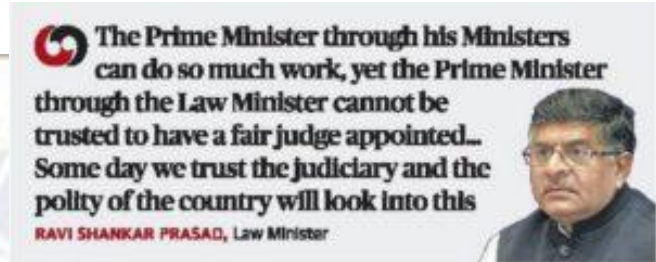
**NOVEMBER 26 & 27 2017**

## GENERAL STUDIES-02

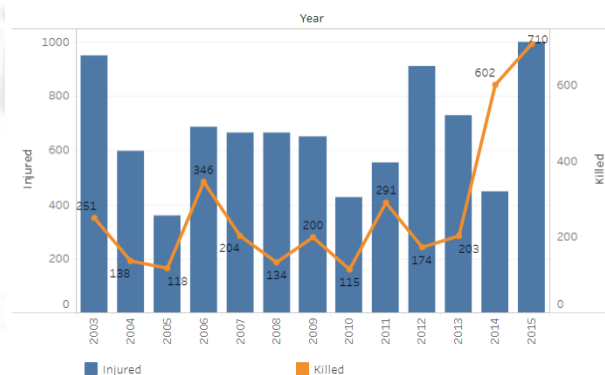
### Why don't you trust PM, Law Minister asks judiciary

#### NEWS

- In sharp criticism of the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC)



Casualties in rail accidents (2003-2015)



judgment which revived the Supreme Court collegium.

### Beyond News

- **Article 124A** of the Constitution, the Law Minister was an ex officio member of the NJAC and the Prime Minister was part of the three-member panel which nominated the two eminent persons to the NJAC.
- It was meant to give the political class an equal say in judicial appointments to the Supreme Court and the High Courts.

Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra responded to Mr. Prasad by pointedly saying that the judiciary reposed as much trust in a popularly elected PM as the public does.

### Rajnath leaves for Russia, to sign 2 pacts

#### News

- Singh left for Russia , will sign an agreement on cooperation with the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Interior of the Russian Federation, to combat terrorism and organised crime.

### Beyond News

- India and Russia will sign two key pacts for **cooperation in tackling all forms of terrorism, and smuggling of narcotics**, during a three-day visit by Home Minister Rajnath Singh to Moscow.
- The pact will reinforce the bilateral relationship between the two nations through the **exchange and sharing of information, expertise, and help in curbing terrorism and enhancing security** in the region.

The proposed pact, which will **replace the agreement of October 1993**, is a step towards consolidating the benefits accrued in the field of security and seeks to jointly fight new and evolving risks and threats.

### ‘Make China comply with WTO norms’

#### News

- China must comply with World Trade Organisation’s [WTO] norms, the Swadeshi Jagaran Manch [SJM], the economic wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh [RSS], demanded at a recent meeting with a team designated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

### Beyond News

- An SJM memorandum to the Prime Minister said that, **India is “suffering due to heavy imports” from China** which is enabled by Beijing’s non-compliance with WTO norms
- The memorandum to the team led by Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman was handed over by an SJM delegation, led by Arun Ojha, national convenor of SJM.

China “has not complied” with WTO norms, argued Dhanpat Ram Agarwal, national co-convener of SJM and a member of the SJM team.

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### Bill on quota in private sector in RS

#### News

- A private member’s resolution on job reservations for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and the Other Backward Classes in the private sector is listed for discussion in the winter session of Parliament.

#### Beyond News

- The resolution, tabled in the last Parliament session by CPI Rajya Sabha member D. Raja, could not come up for discussion.

Mr. Raja said that, private sector are getting a concession from the government on water, electricity and land. But they do not follow any recruitment policy on reservation

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### Humanity must unite to fight terrorism, says Modi

#### News

Prime Minister Narendra Modi recalled the deadly terror attack on Mumbai exactly nine years back, leading to loss of lives of security personnel and common citizens, as the country paid tributes to those who sacrificed their lives during the 26/11 attacks in Mumbai.

#### Beyond News

He recalled how many people did not take India’s repeated assertion seriously till some years back that terrorism was a serious threat.

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs Kiren Rijju said that, India had adopted a “**zero-tolerance policy**” towards terrorism and lamented that neighbour Pakistan was not doing enough to control the growth of terror on its soil.

The government has made it clear on various international platforms that Pakistan is a breeding ground for terrorism.

***NOVEMBER 28 2017***

## GENERAL STUDIES-02

### India eases bilateral transfer pricing norms

#### News

- In a move that could further improve India's ease of doing business rankings, the Income Tax Department issued a clarification saying that it would allow **mutual agreement procedures (MAPs) and advance pricing agreements (APAs)** with all countries.

#### Beyond News

- Abandoning a stance that disallowed such agreements with major trade partners like France, Germany, Italy, Singapore and South Korea.
- It has now agreed to entertain such APAs and MAPs, regardless of whether that clause was in the agreement or not.

*APAs are meant to settle potential disputes in advance, while MAPs lay out the procedure to settle a dispute once it has happened.*

- The Central Board of Direct Taxes has decided to accept "transfer Pricing MAP and bilateral APA applications regardless of the presence or otherwise of **Paragraph 2 of Article 9** (or its relevant equivalent Article) in the DTAs [double taxation avoidance agreements].

### Modi, Ivanka inaugurate Global Entrepreneurship Summit

#### News

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with United States President Donald Trump's Adviser Ivanka Trump, inaugurated the Global Entrepreneurship Summit (GES-2017) in Hyderabad .

#### Why This News Important?

- The eighth edition of the GES, which is coming for the **first time to South Asia**, will serve as a forum to celebrate and nurture entrepreneurship and provide opportunities to network.

#### Beyond News

- The summit is a gathering of hundreds of budding, ambitious and well-known entrepreneurs as well as investors and supporters of the eco-system.

## Firms should resist investing in PoK: Seoul

**News:** The South Korean government will warn companies planning to invest in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

### **Beyond News**

- South Korea's Vice Minister for Foreign Affairs, Cho Hyun, said that they have sent out a clear message that these companies must resist investing in the PoK. He was in Delhi at the time and told government to be careful.
- South Korea's Daelim had showed interest in the Chakohti Hattian hydropower project in Muzaffarabad. It is now reconsidering its decision.
- Organisations like **Asian Development Bank and Korea Exim Bank** have in the past refused to finance projects in territory claimed by India.

## Can't force govt. to frame a law: SC

**News:** The Supreme Court said that, it respected the government's "political compulsions" and would not compel it to ratify the UN Convention against Torture, or command it to frame a standalone anti-torture legislation.

### **Beyond News**

- A Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra, refrained from passing any positive order on a public interest litigation petition filed by the former Union Law Minister Ashwini Kumar for a standalone anti-torture law.
- At the weekend, the judiciary faced a barrage of criticism for its "judicial activism."

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

## Now, bacteria can power batteries

**News:** Scientists from the Imperial College London have printed electronic circuits using cyanobacteria — microbes that can turn light into energy.

### **Beyond News**

- Using a simple inkjet printer, they printed a carbon nanotube electrode surface and also the bio-ink of cyanobacteria on top of it.
- **Unlike conventional solar cells** that operate only when exposed to light, cyanobacteria can generate an electric current both in the dark and in light.

- **Biophotovoltaic cells** contain cyanobacteria or algae that converts light into energy. Currently one of the biggest challenges facing biophotovoltaic cells is producing them on a large scale.

Researchers showed that nine connected cells can power a digital clock or generate flashes of light from an LED.

The researchers also showed that the cells can generate a continuous power output over the course of a 100-hour period consisting of light and dark cycles.

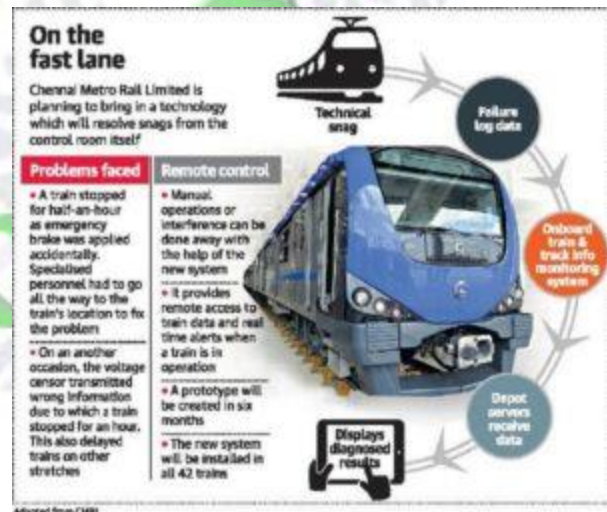
## Metro Rail to get hi-tech help to resolve snags on track

### News

- In a move that could save passengers from being stranded in trains for hours due to snags that develop en route, Chennai Metro Rail plans to introduce a new technology that will allow them to control trains remotely and fix the problem within minutes.

### Beyond News

- According to officials of the Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL), they plan to bring in an **asset management system** for their trains to sort out snags from the control room itself.
- The system will collect and transmit train parameters and data, and provide alerts in real time even when the train is in operation; it will transmit it to depot maintenance server.



## Mizoram provides shelter to 1,300 Myanmar tribals fleeing clashes

### News:

- The **Mizoram** government has given shelter and relief to around 1,300 tribals from neighbouring Myanmar's restive Arakan State.

### Beyond News:

- Those who crossed over to Mizoram were mostly **Buddhists and Christians** and they speak the same tribal language as the locals.
- The local villagers initially volunteered to provide food to the Arakanese people and arranged shelter for them.





- Mizoram has a 510 km border with Myanmar and 318 km with Bangladesh, guarded by the **Assam Rifles and the Border Security Force**, respectively.

In the past 12 weeks, over 622,000 Rohingya refugees have fled to southeastern Bangladesh to escape a military crackdown in Rakhine state.

**NOVEMBER 29 2017**

**GENERAL STUDIES-02**

### **Chabahar port ready, next stage for India**

#### **News**

- Iranian President Hassan Rouhani will inaugurate the first phase of the Chabahar port development project, with senior Afghan and Indian Ministers travelling for the event.

#### **Beyond News**

- Iran's parliament recently ratified **the trilateral trade agreement** signed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, President Rouhani and Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani in May 2016.
- The inauguration of the port will effectively pave the way for India to carry forward the next phase of construction and development of two berths for its use, particularly for trade with Afghanistan.
- India has already completed **the Zaranj-Delaram highway** in Afghanistan, which would facilitate the trade to Kabul and eventually beyond to Central Asia.

At present, India is using the port's existing commercial route to transport more than 1.1 million tonnes of wheat to Afghanistan, of which the first consignment of 15,000 tonnes from the Kandla port came to Zaranj, via Chabahar, on November 11.

### **India loses billions to air pollution: UN**

#### **News**

- India had the highest share of welfare costs (or a loss of income from labour), of about \$220 billion (about Rs. 1.4 trillion), in South and South-East Asia — of a combined total of \$380 billion from mortality due to air pollution, according to a report by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

#### **Beyond News**

- The global mortality costs from outdoor air pollution are projected to rise to about \$25 trillion by 2060 in the absence of more stringent measures.

- At regional and national scale, China's welfare costs from mortality were the highest at nearly \$1 trillion followed by the Organization for Economic Corporation and Development (OECD) countries with a combined total of \$730 billion, the report added quoting a 2016 projection by the OECD.
- To curb pollution in various forms, the UNEP called for strong high-level political commitment and engagement of the local government, civil society and other stakeholders.

### Solutions

- To achieve high level political commitment in key economic sectors, there is a need to go beyond the environmental ministries and include other relevant ministries such as finance, agriculture, industry, urban, transport, energy and health.
- There is also a need to engage the local government, civil society organizations, business leaders, industries, trade unions and citizens at large.
- Reporting on the progress that comes from acting on pollution – whether through voluntary measures or formal laws – is a crucial step in this transition.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

### State takes up project to link farmers with consumers through corporates

#### News

- **Karnataka** has now embarked on an **initiative to link farmers with consumers** by involving corporate firms on public-private partnership basis.

#### Beyond News

- This was unveiled in Bengaluru to insulate farmers from the problem of volatile markets that have increased the risk of them not earning profits despite reaping bumper harvests.
- Under the project titled Public-Private Partnership for Integrated **Agriculture** Development (PPP-IAD), around 50 farmers' groups will be launched this year.

#### Important Steps of the Project

- The project envisages the formation of farmer's producers' organizations (FPOs), which will be assisted in integrated farming by a few chosen corporates.
- These firms, along with the Agriculture Department, will not only provide all the technological and scientific interventions to farmers but will also ensure availability of quality seeds and other agricultural inputs.
- The agreement to buy produce at farm gates at a pre-determined price, irrespective of any fluctuation in market rates, is expected to reduce the risks for farmers. The project promoters are hoping that the farmers' procurement price levels will increase by 20-25% through this initiative.

## India ranks 7th in target of web applications attack: Akamai report

### News

- India is the seventh in the list of the top 10 countries that are the target of web applications attack globally, according to an Akamai State of the **Internet** Q3 2017 Security Report.

### Beyond News

- The United States of America tops the list, followed by Brazil. Asian neighbour China occupies the ninth position.
- The report also places India seventh in the list of the top source countries for web applications attacks.
- Data sourced from The World Bank showed that India has 10,350 secured servers, which, when put against a user base of 462 million internet users, is a clear indication of the need for better infrastructure to be able to support the data surge.
- Indian Computer Emergency Response Team has handled around 50,000 cyber security incidents from April to October this year.
- This "is a clear indication of the significant need for companies to scale up investments to ensure application and infrastructure security in the immediate future."

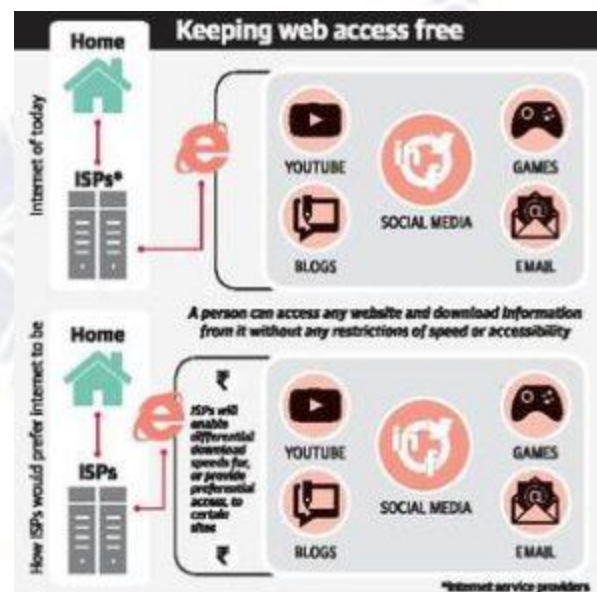
## Telecom regulator backs Net neutrality

### News

- The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) came out in strong support of Net neutrality in a series of recommendations following a long process of consultations.

### Beyond News

- TRAI said that, the licensing terms should be amplified to provide explicit restrictions on any sort of discrimination in Internet access based on the content being accessed, the protocols being used or the user equipment being deployed.
- In a clear message to service providers, one of the recommendations reads, the service providers should be restricted from entering into any arrangement, agreement or contract, by whatever name called, with any person, natural or legal, that has the effect of discriminatory treatment based on content, sender or receiver, protocols or user equipment.



***NOVEMBER 30 2017***

## GENERAL STUDIES-01

### Indus civilisation flourished without a flowing river: study

#### News

- Contrary to current belief, it was the departure of a large river — not its arrival — that triggered the growth of Indus urban centres that developed in what is now northwest India and Pakistan some 5,300 years ago, says a new study.

#### Beyond News

- The researchers said the time gap between the river shifting course and the Indus civilisation settlements appearing rules out the existence of a Himalayan-fed river that nourished Indus civilisation urban settlements along the river channel.
- They used a method called **optically stimulated luminescence dating** to determine when the river last flowed.

#### Historical notes:

- The Indus civilisation developed at about the same time as urban civilisations developed in Mesopotamia and Egypt.
- Archaeological evidence shows that many of the settlements in the Indus civilisation developed along the banks of a river called the Ghaggar-Hakra.



#### Important findings:

- But the new study, has now provided evidence that a major Himalayan river did not flow at the same time as the development of Indus civilisation urban settlements.
- The study, published in the journal **Nature Communications**, showed that today's Sutlej River used to flow along the trace of the Ghaggar-Hakra river but rapidly changed course upstream 8,000 years ago.

This meant that 3,000 years later, when the Indus people settled the area, there was only an abandoned large river valley occupied by seasonal monsoon river flow instead of a large Himalayan river.

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## Cyclone Ockhi claims four lives in Kanniyakumari

### News

- Named **Ockhi**, the cyclone is likely to intensify into a cyclonic storm causing heavy rainfall in the southern parts of Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

### Beyond News

- The deep depression over the Comorin area has intensified into a cyclone and is likely to move towards Lakshadweep Islands, according to the Met Department.
- Cyclone 'Ockhi' has claimed four lives as gusty winds, coupled with heavy downpour, uprooted 550 trees and 950 electric poles.

## GENERAL STUDIES-02

## Singapore offers India logistical base

### News

- India and Singapore agreed on greater cooperation and activity in the **Strait of Malacca and the Andaman Sea** even as the two countries concluded a wide ranging naval agreement for maritime cooperation including logistical support.

### Beyond News

- Singapore had accepted India's proposal to institutionalise naval engagements in the shared maritime space, including setting up maritime exercises with like-minded countries and other ASEAN partners.
- The two countries also agreed to explore joints projects in research and development.

The two countries concluded a bilateral agreement for naval cooperation, which includes maritime security, joint exercises and temporary deployments from the naval facilities of each other and mutual logistical support.

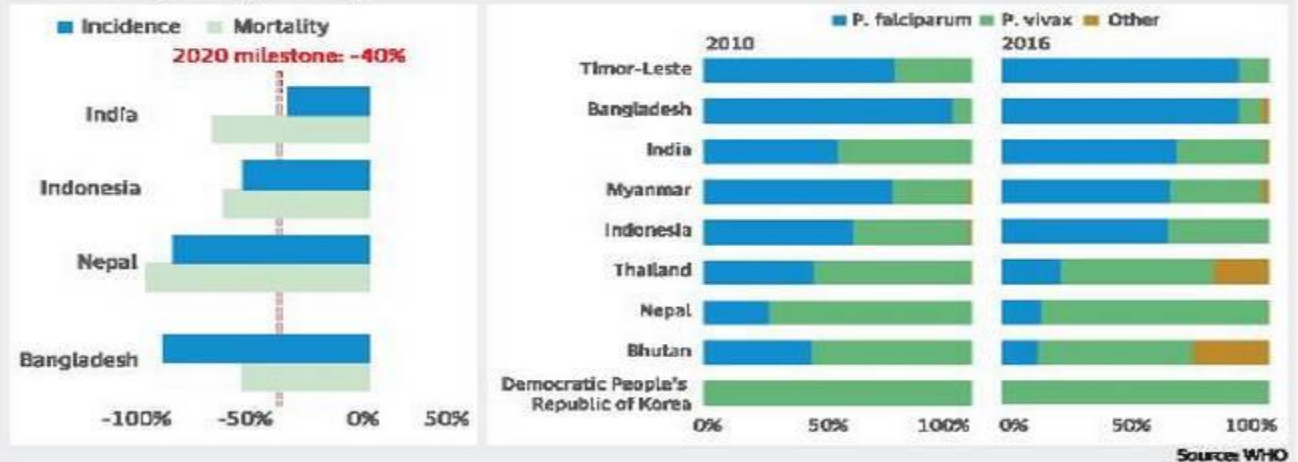
## India unlikely to cut malaria burden by half in 2020: WHO

### Alarm bells

In Asia, India and Indonesia accounted for 60% and 30% of malaria deaths in 2016: WHO

Change in reported malaria incidence and mortality rates, (2010-16)

Proportion of Plasmodium species, 2010-16



### Beyond News

- India accounted for 6% of global malaria cases and 7% of deaths caused by it in 2016, according to a report released by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

### Beyond News

- WHO figures also suggest that India is unlikely to reduce its case burden beyond 40% by 2020.
- There were an estimated 4,45,000 deaths from malaria globally in 2016, compared with 4,46,000 estimated deaths in 2015. About 80% of the deaths were accounted for by 15 countries, namely India and 14 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- 51% of Plasmodium vivax cases — the milder cousin of the falciparum — were traced in India.

Bhutan, Nepal, Thailand, Bangladesh, Myanmar and Indonesia, are among the countries poised to reduce malaria incidence by over 40% by 2020.

In 2016, an estimated Rs. 13,000 crore was invested in malaria control and elimination efforts globally by governments of malaria endemic countries and their international partners.

## U.S. now within range of N. Korea's nuclear weapons

### News

- North Korea said it successfully tested a new intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in a "breakthrough" that puts the U.S. mainland within the range of its nuclear weapons whose warheads could withstand re-entry to the Earth's atmosphere.

## Beyond News

- The missile test came a week after U.S. President Donald Trump put North Korea back on a U.S. list of countries it says support terrorism, allowing it to impose more sanctions.
- North Korea, which also conducted its largest nuclear test in September, has tested dozens of ballistic missiles under its leader, Kim Jong Un, in defiance of international sanctions.
- The latest was the highest and longest any North Korean missile had flown, landing in the sea near Japan.

North Korea said that, the new missile reached an altitude of about 4,475 km — more than 10 times the height of the International Space Station — and flew 950 km during its 53-minute flight.

## GENERAL STUDIES-03

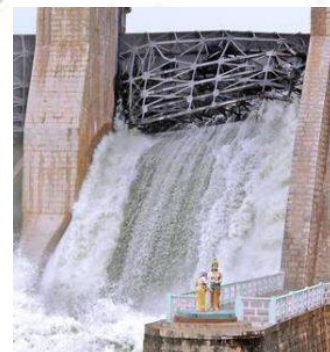
### Shutter breach at KRP dam triggers flood alert

#### News

- A shutter at KRP dam breached triggering a flood alert in five districts along Thenpennai river.

#### KRP dam

- The Krishnagiri Dam is a dam that spans the Thenpennai River by the village of Dhuduganahalli, located in Krishnagiri district, Tamil Nadu, India.
- The Krishnagiri Dam is also known as Krishnagiri Reservoir Project Dam.



#### Beyond News

- The water level in the reservoir prior to the breach was 51 feet as against the capacity of 52 feet.
- A low flood alert was already in place ever since the water level crossed 50 feet in August.
- The Krishnagiri Reservoir was filling up to its capacity after eight years and has seen a consistent water level of 51 feet for the last three months.

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