



CURRENT AFFAIRS - PART 2

2018- 2020 (UPTO SEPTEMBER)

Look Out Circular

- Look out circular is a circular letter used by authorities to check whether a travelling person is wanted by the police.
- Recently CBI has reportedly issued a look-out notice against ICICI Ex. MD Chanda Kochhar, her husband Deepak Kochhar and Videocon's Venugopal Dhoot in connection to the ICICI - Videocon controversy.

Banks Prompt Corrective Action

- The PCA framework was introduced in December 2002.
- The revised PCA Framework was issued on 13 April, 2017.
- 11 Banks out of total 21 Public Sector Banks were put under PCA in May 2017.
- Under PCA , banks are mandated to cut lending to corporates and focus on reducing concentration of loans to certain sectors.
- They are also restricted from opening new branches and paying dividends.
- The RBI has specified certain regulatory trigger points, as a part of prompt corrective action Framework.

Banks Prompt Corrective Action

- Three parameters are:
Capital to Risk Assets Ratio (CRAR)
- Net-Non-Performing Assets (NPA)
- Return on Assets (RoA)
- Four Public Sector Banks:
Bank of Maharashtra
Corporation Bank
Allahabad Bank
Bank of India
Have been taken out of PCA conditions in January 2019 due to improved performance.

Khashoggi

- Jamal Ahmad Khashoggi was a Saudi Arabian dissident, author, columnist for the Washington Post and a general manager and editor-in-chief of Al-Arab News Channel who was assassinated at the Saudi Arabian consulate in Istanbul on October 2 2018 by agents of the Saudi government.
- Motive for murder: Allegedly to remove a prominent dissident and critic of the Saudi leadership.

Nritya Choodamani Award

- Award was instituted in 1974. Given every year by Sri Krishna GanaSabha.
- On the inaugural day of the Sabha's annual December Art and Dance Festival and the All India Natya Kala Conference, a dance artiste of merit and popularity is honored with the birudhu "Nritya Choodamani" carrying a cash award- a gold medallion, a scroll and a shawl. It is one of the most prestigious and coveted titles in the world of classical dance.

Extradition Treaty

- Extradition is an act where one jurisdiction delivers a person accused or convicted of committing a crime in another jurisdiction, over to their law enforcement. It is cooperative law enforcement process between the two jurisdictions and depends on the arrangements made between them.
- Besides the legal aspects of the process, extradition also involves the physical transfer of custody of the person being extradited to the legal authority of the requesting jurisdiction.

India has extradition Treaty with 47 countries and Extradition Arrangement with 10 countries

- Australia 2011
- Bahrain 2005
- Bangladesh. 2013
- Belarus 2008
- UAE 2013
- Nepal
- Bhutan

Railway 'Madad' App

- Rail Madad is Complaint Registration System of Indian Railways.
- Rail Madad registers a complaint with minimum inputs and issues unique ID. It relays the complaint online to relevant officials for immediate action
- The action taken on the complaint is then relayed to the passenger through SMS.
- The App displays various helpline numbers ex. Security, Child help line etc. and provides direct calling facility for immediate assistance.
- All modes of filing complaints including offline and online modes are being integrated into a single platform.

Railway 'Madad' App

MENU ON RAILS APP

- Menu on Rails app displays menu served on all types of trains.
- For Mail/Express trains foods items are covered in 4 categories namely Beverages, Breakfast, Meals, and A-La-Carte
- The App also displays the menu to be served in Rajdhani/Shatabdi/Duronto group of trains.

Railway Vistadome Coach

- The Vistadome coach is glass roofed. These coaches are running on IR.
- Visakhapatnam and Araku Valley hill station
- Dadar and Madgaon (Goa)
- Kalka- Shimla
- These coaches have been introduced to promote Tourism. It has electronically controlled glass roof, seats that rotate 180 degrees, an observation lounge and automatic doors.
- The capacity of coach 40 seats.

Train 18

- Train 18 also known as Vande Bharat Express is an Indian semi-high speed intercity electric multiple unit. It was designed and built by Integral Coach Factory (ICF) Chennai. It was under make in India initiative. The unit cost of first rake was 100Cr. It has a driver coach at either end. The train has 16 passenger cars. Seating capacity 1,128 The train has regenerative braking system Operational speed 160kmph can go upto 180kmph
- Train 20 another high speed train is planned to replace the Rajdhani Express. It will be ready by 2020.
- The first train service will run between Delhi and Varanasi.

COPE India 2018

- Cope India are a series of International Airforce exercises between the Indian Airforce and the United States Air Force conducted on and over Indian soil.
The first such exercises were done in 2004 at the air force station in Gwalior.
- Second in 2005 then in 2006 and 2009.
- 2018- Kalaikunda Air force base.
- 33 fighters have taken part
- 12 F15 of the US Air-Force
- The two air forces are performing air defence, air combat and attack drills as part of the exercises.
- The exercises were for two weeks Dec 3 to 14

Kandan Dalit

- A Dalit, Kandan took on caste oppression in the village, and spearheaded a movement to draw water from Vanjinagaram's public well, among other issues. In 1987, Kandan was hacked to death.
- In honour of Kandan's work and sacrifice while seeking equality and basic civil rights, a memorial stone with his face painted on it was raised by the Dalits of the village. Such stories of Dalit struggle and sacrifice- largely unheard in mainstream media and literature- are now being documented by a group of sculptors, supported by director Pa. Ranjith's Neelam Panpaatu Maiyam.

Navy Choke Points

- In military strategy, a choke point is a geographical feature on land such as a valley, defile or a bridge or at sea such as a strait, which an armed force is forced to pass, sometimes on a substantially narrower front and therefore greatly decreasing in combat power, to reach its objective.

NIPAH Virus

- Nipah virus infection is a viral infection caused by Nipah virus. Symptoms from infection vary from none to fever, cough, headache, shortness of breath and confusion. This may worsen into coma over a day or two. Complications can include inflammation of the brain and seizures.
- The Nipah virus is a type of RNA virus in the genus Henipavirus.
- It can spread between people and from other animals to people.
- Spread typically requires direct contact with an infected source.
- The virus normally circulates among specific types of fruit bats.

NIPAH Virus

- There is no vaccine.
- In India outbreak was reported in Kerala.
- The disease was first identified in 1998 during an outbreak in Malaysia. The virus was isolated in 1999. It was named after a village in Malaysia Sungai Nipah.
Pigs also get infected.
- The risk of exposure is high for hospital workers and caretakers of those infected with the virus.
In India the disease has been linked to consumption of raw date palm (Toddy) and contact with bats.

Asia Bibi

- The Asia Bibi blasphemy case involves Pakistani Christian woman Aasiya Noreen commonly known as Asia Bibi. She was convicted of blasphemy by a Pakistan court and was sentenced to death.
- In June 2009, Noreen was accused of blasphemy after an argument with co-workers while harvesting berries.
- On 31 st October, Supreme Court of Pakistan acquitted Noreen citing material insufficient and not conclusively proved.
- But now she is barred from leaving the country.

Green Crackers

- Firecrackers are responsible for air pollution. So to minimize the pollution the concept of green crackers emerged.
- Fire crackers contains gunpowder.
- Green crackers are less harmful as they do not contain harmful chemicals.
- Conventional fire crackers contain aluminium, barium potassium nitrate
- Fire crackers contains chemicals and substances like cadmium, lead, chromium, aluminium, magnesium, nitrates, carbon monoxide, copper, potassium, sodium, zinc oxide, manganese dioxide.

Emblems and Names (Prevention of Improper use) Act, 1950

- Emblems and Names (Prevention of improper use) Act 1950 prohibits the use of National Symbols for commercial use in India.
- No individual or private organization is permitted to use the emblem for official correspondence.

National Honour Act, 1971

- The Prevention of Insults to National Honour Act, 1971 is an act of the Parliament of India which prohibits the desecration of or insult to the country's national symbols, including the National Flag, the Constitution, the National Anthem and map of India including contempt of Indian Constitution.
- National Anthem:
As provided in Section 3 of the Act, whoever intentionally prevents the singing of the Jana Gana Mana or causes disturbances to any assembly engaged in such singing shall be punished with imprisonment for a term , which may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both.

The Flag Code of India, 2002

- A flag protocol defines the proper placement, handling, use and disposal of flags.
- When flags of many nations are flown the flag of the hosting country should be placed on the right with the rest following in alphabetic order in the language of the host country.
- Sometimes in ceremonial fly-past a flag is flown from a weighted rope dangling from beneath a helicopter.
- Insult to the national flag, are punishable by law with imprisonment up to three years, or a fine, or both.
- The flag must never touch the ground or water, or be used as a drapery in any form.
- Disposal of damaged flags is also covered by the flag code. Damaged or soiled flags may not be cast aside or disrespectfully destroyed. They have to be destroyed as a whole in private, preferably by burning or by any other method consistent with the dignity of the flag.

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Blue Book of Security

- Blue Book is a classified document and it lays down comprehensive security plan for VVIPs during their movements, including for the President
- And the Prime Minister.
- The Special Protection Group is an armed force of the Union for providing proximate security to the Prime Minister of India and former PM's of India and members of their immediate families.

Blue Book of Security

- Depending on the threat perception, the category is divided into four tiers Z⁺, Z, Y, X.

Z⁺ security cover of 55 personnel including 10⁺ NSG Commando

Z security cover of 22 personnel including 5 NSG Commando

Y security cover of 11 personnel including 1-2 Commando

X security cover of 2 personnel no Commando

Repurpose Used Cooking Oil (RUCO)

- It is an initiative that will enable collection and conversion of food cooking oil to biodiesel. It is launched by Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI).
- FSSAI has estimated that India has the potential to recover 220 crore litres of used cooking oil for the production of biodiesel by 2022.

Trans Regional Maritime Network (T-RMN)

- The network facilitates information exchange on the movement of commercial traffic on the high sea.
- The information is available primarily through the Automatic Identification system (AIS) fitted on merchant ships with more than 300 registered tonnage as mandated by the International Maritime Organization.
- The AIS information comprises name, MMSI number, position, course, speed last port visited, destination and so on. This information can be picked up through various AIS sensors including coastal AIS chains and satellite based receivers. The project is steered by Italy.

White Shipping Agreement (WSA)

- It is an information network protocol that allows the navies of the two countries to exchange information about ships in their oceanic territories.
- Ships would be classified into white (Commercial ships) Grey (Military Vessels) and black illegal vessels.

Dip in Stubble-Burning Cases

- Paddy is grown in about 30 lakh hectares in Punjab. After its harvesting, about 20 million tonnes of straw is left on the field.
- It is estimated that 15 million tonnes of straw is burnt on the open fields to clear the land for next crop. This year the cases of stubble burning has come down
- In Haryana Paddy had been sown on 13 lakh hectares in Haryana.

External Commercial Borrowings (ECB)

- ECB refers to commercial loans in the form of bank loans, buyers' credit, suppliers' credit, securitised instruments availed non-resident lenders with minimum average maturity of 3 years.
- ECB loans are in foreign currency to Indian borrowers.
- For infrastructure and greenfield projects funding up to 50% through ECB is allowed.

The Rich are Getting Richer

- The rich are getting richer. The wealth of the world's billionaires increased by \$900 billions in 2018. Between 2017-2018 a new billionaire was created every two days. At the same time, the number of people living in extreme poverty continued to fall-from 1.9 billion in 1990 to 736 million in 2015.
- But the pace of poverty reduction has halved since 2013. This is as per report of Oxfam for 2018.
- 26 richest people own the same wealth as the 3.8 billion people who make up the poorest half of humanity.
- World Bank says that global extreme poverty declined on average by 1% point per year between 1990 and 2015, but only 0.6 % points per year between 2013 and 2015, and by even less between 2015 and 2018.

India's Look East Policy

- India's Look East policy is an effort to cultivate relations with nations of Southeast Asia.
- It is aimed at growth of regional power and countering influence of China
- It was initiated in 1991 by the then PM Narsimha Rao still being followed. PM Modi is taking the policy on fast track as taking it as Act East Policy
- Aim is to cultivate extensive economic and strategic relations with the nations of Southeast Asia
- 11 States. Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Timor Leste, Vietnam

Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development (AIBD)

- The AIBD is a regional inter-governmental organization servicing countries of the United Nations Economic And Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN-ESCAP) in the field of Electronic Media Development.
- It is under the auspices of UNESCO.
- It was established in 1977.

HQ: Malaysia

The secretariat is located in Kuala Lumpur.

The AIBD is mandated to achieve a vibrant and cohesive electronic media environment in the Asia-Pacific region through policy and resource development.

AIBD

- Full membership of the AIBD is confined to sovereign states and they are invited to designate the broadcasting authority of the country to be beneficiary.
- The AIBD currently has 26 Full Members (countries) represented by 34 organizations. India was elected as President of Asia-Pacific Institute for Broadcasting Development for a period of two years. India got elected against Iran.
- Director General of All India Radio F. Sheheryar was also re-elected as chair of executive board of AIBD
- The Institute seeks to fulfill the mandate by mobilizing the intellectual and technological resources available within the national broadcasting organizations of its member countries as well as regional and international bodies through a well-established infrastructure and networking mechanism which includes government agencies, non-government organizations, institutions of higher learning, private sector and individual professionals.

National Policy on Biofuels

- Energy is a critical input for socio-economic development
- The energy strategy of a country aims at efficiency and security and to provide access which being environment friendly and achievement of an optimum mix of primary resources for energy generation.
- Crude oil consumption was 156 million tonnes in 2007-08
- The domestic crude oil is able to meet only about 23% of the demand, while the rest is met from imported crude.
- The crude oil prices are fluctuating from \$60 to \$140 a barrel

Bio Fuel

- Biofuels are derived from renewable bio-mass resources and, therefore, provide a strategic advantage to promote sustainable development and to supplement conventional energy sources in meeting the rapidly increasing requirements for transportation fuels associated with high economic growth, as well as in meeting the energy needs of India's vast rural population.
- Biofuels can increasingly satisfy these energy needs in an environmentally benign and cost-effective manner while reducing dependence on import of fossil fuels and thereby providing a higher degree of National Energy Security.

Bio Fuel

- The Goal of the Policy is to ensure that a minimum level of biofuels become readily available in the market to meet the demand at any given time. An indicative target of 20% blending of biofuels, both for bio-diesel and bio-ethanol is set.
- Ethanol is mainly being produced in the country at present from molasses, which is a by-product of the sugar industry. 5% blending of ethanol with gasoline has already been taken up by the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) in 20 States and 4 Union Territories.
- In order to augment availability of ethanol the sugar industry has been permitted to produce ethanol directly from sugarcane juice. The sugar and distillery industry will be further encouraged to augment production of ethanol to meet the blending requirements prescribed from time to time.

E-Aksharayan

- Govt Launches e-Aksharyan Software to Turn Scanned Documents into Editable Text.
- Launched by Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY)
e-Aksharyan is a desktop software for converting any scanned or printed Indian Language documents into fully editable text
e- Aksharayan is available in seven Indian Languages.

E-Government Development Index (EGDI)

- E-Government Development Index is biannually presented by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs. (UN DESA)
The EDGI aims to analyze the capacity and willingness of a nation to utilize e-governance as a vital tool for development.

The EGDI is a composite indicator that consists of three indexes that are equally weighted.

- Online Service Index: The OSI evaluates different government websites by their accessibility and quality of online services. India has promising OSI score of 0.9514

E-Government Development Index (EGDI)

- Telecommunication Index: The TII is measured per 100 persons of the national population with indicators like the number of internet users, personal computers, mobile subscribers etc. India has a notably poor performance in TII with a meager score of 0.20091
- Human Capital Index: Considering the factors of adult literacy rate and enrolment ratio in schools, UNESCO prepares the Human Capital Index. India fared at quite a low 103rd rank among 122 economies in 2017.
- For the first time, India earns a place among the top 100 countries in the EGDI in 2018. India is at 96th position with a score of 0.5669.
- India was at 107th rank in 2016.

Post matric Scholarship for Other Backward Classes Students

- Launched and promoted by Ministry of Minority Affairs
- It provides post-matric scholarship to meritorious students from minority communities. The objective of the scheme is to award scholarships to meritorious students belonging to economically weaker sections of minority community so as to provide them better opportunities for higher education, increase their rate of attainment in higher education and enhance their employability.

Post matric Scholarship for Other Backward Classes Students

- ELIGIBILITY
 - Scholarship will be awarded to the students who have secured not less than 50% marks or equivalent grade in the previous final examination and the annual income of whose parents/guardian from all sources does not exceed Rs.2.00 lakh.
- DISTRIBUTION
 - Muslim, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain and Zoroastrians (Parsis) have been notified as minority communities under Section 2 (c) of the National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992.
- EARMARKING FOR GIRL STUDENTS
 - 30% of scholarship will be earmarked for girl students. In case sufficient number of eligible girl students are not available, then the balance earmarked scholarships may be awarded to eligible boy students.

GI

- Tag Line and Logo launched for the Geographical Indications
- TAG LINE: Invaluable Treasures of Incredible India



GI

- The GI logo provides an identity to a product and a tagline captures the spirit of India. It describes the bounty, labour and creativity of India's artisans and the unique nature of products from different parts of the country.
- The GI will give the rightful share of intellectual property to the artisan and the place of origin of the product. It's an area of strength and optimism for India, whereby GI tag has given protection to a large number of hand-made and manufactured products, especially in the informal sector.
- GI products can benefit the rural economy in remote areas, by supplementing the incomes of artisans, farmers, weavers and craftsmen. India's rural artisans possess unique skills and knowledge of traditional practices and methods, passed down from generation to generation, which need to be protected and promoted.
- The GI logo will act as a certifying mark that can be used to identify all registered GIs irrespective of the categories. The tagline अतुल्य भारत की अमूल्य निधि (Invaluable Treasures of Incredible India) represents the spirit of Geographical Indications of India and will be helpful in effective branding and promotion of GIs.
- This will also help in engaging more people on the subject of GIs and making them aware about the benefits of a GI tag.

Kebnekaise Mountain

- Kebnekaise is the highest mountain in Sweden. Elevation: 2099 m
- Kebnekaise is a part of the Scandinavian Mountains. Kebnekaise lies in Swedish Lapland, about 150 kilometers north of the Arctic Circle.
Due to the shrinkage of the glacier surrounding the southern peak, it is possible the northern peak will assume the title of the highest point in Sweden.
- The difference in the altitude between the southern and northern peaks is only 12 inches.

Women's Wall

- Around 30 lakh women formed a human chain across the National Highway from Kasargod to Thiruvanthapuram, in Kerala, around 620 km long, extending their support to the state government's resolve to implement the Supreme Court's verdict allowing women of all age access to Sabrimala and to protect the secular and progressive values of Kerala.

Survey on Retail Payment Habits of Individuals (SRPHI)

- It is a survey launched by the RBI. The survey will capture payment habits of individuals in six cities, including four metropolitan towns.
- The survey will cover a sample of 6000 individuals from various socioeconomic backgrounds across six cities- Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Bangaluru, and Guwahati. The survey seeks qualitative responses from individuals on their payment habits.
- The findings may provide some idea about awareness and usage habits of digital payment products.

Cineros Vulture

- It is a migratory bird. It is classified as Near Threatened under the IUCN Red List. Cineros vulture (*Aegypius monachus*) draws its name from “monachus” which means hood in Latin. It is also known as black vulture, monk vulture, or Eurasian black vulture.
- During winter months, the vulture migrates from the mountainous regions of Europe and Asia to warmer places, including India.
- This bird was sighted recently in Hazaribagh in Jharkhand.

Great Indian Bustard

- Great Indian Bustard, (*Ardeotis nigriceps*) large bird of bustard family. It is one of the heaviest flying birds in the world.
- The great Indian bustard inhabits dry grasslands and scrublands on the Indian subcontinent. Its largest populations are found in Rajasthan.
- Great Indian Bustard Sanctuary was established in 1979. It is known as the Jawaharlal Nehru Bustard Sanctuary of Maharashtra. It is in Solapur.
- The land is drought-prone and semi-arid.
- Once common on the dry plains of the Indian subcontinent, as few as 150 individuals were estimated to survive in 2018.
- The bird is critically endangered by hunting and loss of habitat. It is protected under Wildlife Protection Act 1972 of India.
- The Great Indian Bustard is a large ground bird with a height of about one metre. The birds are often found associated in the same habitat as blackbuck.

E-Passport in India

- E-Passport will be issued soon in India. The personal particulars of the applicants would be digitally signed and stored in the chip.
- Access of information is protected in a way that the chip cannot be read without physical possession of the passport.
- The e-passport will have thicker front and back covers. The back cover will have a small silicon chip smaller than a postage stamp.
- It will take a few seconds to be read. Vital extra seconds will be saved at the immigration counters.

E-Passport in India

- The software has been developed by IIT-Kanpur and National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- The memory space of the chip is 64 kilobytes. Information upto 30 visits and international movement can be stored.
- It is expected to store the photograph of the holder and eventually fingerprints too.
- It will be issued to diplomats and officials first. In second round it will be issued to general public.

The Green-AG Project

- It seeks to integrate biodiversity, climate change and sustainable land management objectives and practices into Indian agriculture. The project would be implemented in collaboration with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).
- The project will be implemented in high conservation-value landscapes of five states.
 1. Madhya Pradesh: Chambal Landscape
 2. Mizoram: Dampa Landscape
 3. Odisha: Simlipal Landscape
 4. Rajasthan: Desert National Park Landscape
 5. Uttarakhand: Corbett-Rajaji Landscape
- The Government has launched the “Green- Ag: Transforming Indian Agriculture for global environmental benefits and conservation of critical biodiversity and forest landscapes in association with Global Environment Facility (GEF).

Panj Tirath

- Panj Tirath, which got its name from the five pools of water present there, also contains a temple and a lawn with date palm trees.
- It is believed that Pandu, a mythical king in Mahabharata, belonged to this area and Hindus used to come to these pools for bathing during the month of Karteek and worship for two days under the trees.
- The site was damaged during the reign of Afghan Durrani dynasty in 1747, however it was restored by local Hindus during the period of Sikh rule in 1834 and worship started again
The provincial Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government in northwest Pakistan has declared the Hindu religious site of Panj Tirath in Peshawar as national heritage.

Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojna

- Maharashtra state government has launched Atal Solar Krishi Pump Yojana.
- Under the scheme, the government of Maharashtra has decided to give two LED bulbs, a DC fan and a mobile charging socket as freebies to farmers.
- The scheme provides a subsidy of up to 95% on solar pump sets. The State plans to install one lakh solar pumps.
- The scheme would be beneficial to farmers who reside in remote areas.

REVERSAL OF NORTH AND SOUTH POLES

- Scientists in recent years have predicted that Earth's magnetic field could be gearing up to flip- a shift in which the magnetic south pole would become magnetic north, and vice versa.
- Such an event could have catastrophic effects, wreaking havoc on the electric grid and leaving life at the surface exposed to higher amounts of solar radiation.
- Electric grid collapse from severe solar storms is a major risk. As the magnetic field continues to weaken, scientists are highlighting the importance of off-the-grid energy systems using renewable energy sources to protect the Earth against a blackout.
- Very highly charged particles can have a deleterious effect on the satellites and astronauts. The Earth's climate could also change. A recent Danish study has found that the earth's magnetic field.
- The Earth's magnetic North Pole is 'skittering' away from Canada, towards Siberia.

Section 126 of the Representation of the Peoples Act 1951

No person shall—

- convene, hold, attend, join or address any public meeting or procession in connection with an election; or
- display to the public any election matter by means of cinematograph, television or other similar apparatus; or
- propagate any election matter to the public by holding, or by arranging the holding of, any musical concert or any theatrical performance or any other entertainment or amusement with a view to attracting the members of the public thereto, in any polling area during the period of forty-eight hours ending with the hour fixed for the conclusion of the poll for any election in that polling area.
- It does not include social and new media under its ambit

Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza (SIDCOP)

- The Sino-Indian Digital Collaboration Plaza has been launched by the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) in association with Municipal Governments of Guiyang and Dalian.
- The initiative aims to bring Indian IT companies and Chinese enterprises closer to each other on a single AI enabled platform. This platform will be managed by a joint venture comprising of one Indian and Chinese company.
- It offers a boundary-less marketplace for Chinese enterprises in order to assist them in operational optimization and adopting industry best practices in business solutions by connecting with Indian enterprises.

Future of Consumption in Fast-Growth Consumer Market

- World Economic Forum has released the above report. As per the report, domestic private consumption, that accounts for a major portion of India's gross domestic product (GDP) is expected to develop into a \$6 trillion growth opportunity that would make India the world's third largest economy by 2030.

Henley Passport Index

- The Henley Passport Index (HPI) is a global ranking of countries according to the travel freedom for their citizens. It started in 2006 as Henley & Partners Visa Restrictions Index (HVRI) and was modified and renamed in January 2018.
- Japan retained its top spot as the world's most travel-friendly passport due to the document's access to 190 countries
- Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal ranked further low at 104, 102 and 94 respectively
- South Korea edged up the ranking from October's Index to join Singapore, offering access to 189 jurisdictions
- China jumped almost 20 places in just two years, from 85th in 2017 to 69th this year

India has jumped two positions from 81st in 2018 to 79th this year.

Democracy Index 2018

- Democracy Index provides a snapshot of the state of world democracy for 165 independent states and two territories.

The Democracy Index is based on five categories:

- Electoral process and pluralism
- Civil liberties
- The functioning of government
- Political Participation
- Political Culture

Based on their scores on 60 indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime:

Democracy Index 2018

- - full democracy
 - - flawed democracy
 - - hybrid regime
 - - authoritarian regime
-
- India is ranked at 41 a notch above last year.
 - It is still classified as 'flawed democracy' according to the index. India achieved a score of 7.23 on the index to maintain its position- the same it did last year.
 - This is the lowest ever score attributed to India in the index ever since its publication.

National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT)

- NCLAT was constituted under Section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013 for hearing appeals against the orders of National Company Law Tribunals (NCLT), with effect from 1st June 2016.
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against orders passed by NCLTs under section 61 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016, with effect from 1st December, 2016.
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal for hearing appeals against the orders passed by Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India under Section 202 and Section 211 of IBC.
- NCLAT is also the Appellate Tribunal to hear and dispose of appeals against any direction issued or decision made or order passed by the Competition Commission of India (CCI)- as per the amendment brought to section 410 of the Companies Act, 2013 by Section 172 of the Finance Act, 2017, with effect from 26th May 2017.

Mudra Loans

- The Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana or PMMY is a flagship scheme of the Government to extend affordable credit to micro and small enterprises.

It is for non-farming and non-corporate micro and small enterprises.

There are 3 products under the Loan Scheme:

1. Shishu -

Shishu under the MUDRA loan scheme provides up to Rs. 50,000 to those entrepreneurs who are either in their initial stages of business or looking to start one.

Loans to be utilized for purchase of the Machinery.

Borrowers has to provide information:

- Machinery quotation and other items to be purchased
- Details of the machinery to be purchased
- Details of machinery supplier

Mudra Loans

2. *Kishor*

Kishor under the MUDRA loan yuojna offers up to Rs. 5 Lakh to those businesspersons who are looking for additional funds to expand their operations.

3. *Tarun*

Under Tarun scheme the loan upto Rs. 10 lakh is sanctioned.

- There is no subsidy in the scheme.
- Loans offers to small businesses in unorganized sector
- Interest rate around 10+ %

Independent Director

- As per sub section 4 of Section 149 of the Companies Act 2013, every listed public company is mandatory to have at least one third of the total number of directors as independent directors. Unlisted public companies must appoint at least two independent directors.
- Independent directors act as a guide to the company. Their roles broadly include improving corporate credibility and governance standards functioning as a watch dog, and playing a vital role in risk management. Independent directors play an active role in various committees set up by company to ensure good governance.
- Independent directors are not allowed to hold shares of the company.

Number of Directors

- A company can have a maximum of 15 Directors. It can be increased further by passing a special resolution.
Minimum number of Directors:
Private Limited Company: 2
Limited Company: 3
- A company is called private limited when all its shares are in private hands. The minimum number of shareholders should be two and the maximum 50.

A Public Company vs Private Company

ITEM	PUBLIC COMPANY	PRIVATE COMPANY
Minimum Paid up Capital	5 Lakh	1 Lakh
Minimum number of members required to start the company	7	2
Maximum number of members or share holders	No Limit	50
Directors minimum numbers	3	2
Quorum	5	2
Managing Director	As per Law	There is no restriction on appointment of MD

Election Commission of India's Model Code of Conduct

- It is a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for conduct of political parties and candidates during elections mainly with respect to speeches, polling day, polling booths, portfolios, election manifestos, processions and general conduct.
- These set of norms has been evolved with the consensus of political parties.
Code of Conduct comes into force immediately on announcement of the election schedule by the commission for the need of ensuring free and fair elections.

Election Commission of India's Model Code of Conduct

- Much of the code is designed to avert communal clashes and corrupt practices.
for ex. Politicians should not make hate speeches, putting one community against another or make promises about new projects that may sway a voter.

Main Points:

- Government bodies are not to participate in any recruitment process during the electoral process
- Should not be disturbing opponent by holding road shows or demonstrations in front of their houses.
- Rallies should not hinder the road traffic

Election Commission of India's Model Code of Conduct

- No distribution of liquor to voters
- No new welfare programmes by ruling party leaders
- Public spaces like meeting grounds, helipads, govt guest houses and bungalows should be equally shared
- On polling day all party candidates should cooperate with the poll-duty officials at the voting booths for an orderly voting process.
- Candidates should not display their election symbol near and around the poll booths on the polling day.
- No one should enter the booths without a valid pass from the Election Commission.

Election Commission of India's Model Code of Conduct

- The ruling party should not use its seat of power for the campaign purposes.
- The ruling party ministers should not make any ad-hoc appointment of officials, which may influence the voters in favour of the party in power.
- Before using loud speakers during their poll campaigning, candidates and political parties must obtain permission or license from the local authorities. The candidates should inform local police for conducting election rallies to enable the police authorities to make required security arrangements.

Retro Tax

- A retroactive tax is one that is passed at one time, but payable back to a time before tax was passed.
- In Budget amendments are proposed
- These amendments can be of two kinds based on the specified date of its application; a) Prospective amendment and b) Retrospective amendment. While prospective amendments are comparatively easy to handle and accepted atleast based on its nature of application, retrospective amendments create lot of confusion and complexity and are not easily acceptable.

Retro Tax

- Cairn Energy has sought \$ 5.6 billion in compensation from the Indian government for raising a retrospective tax demand of Rs. 29,047 crore on 10-year old internal reorganisation of its India unit, Cairn India.
- It sought \$1.05 billion in compensation for the loss of value its 9.8 per cent shareholding in its erstwhile subsidiary Cairn India suffered following Income Tax Department raising the tax demand in January 2014 and attaching the shares.
- The British firm sold majority stake in Cairn India to Vedanta Resources in 2011 but still holds 9.8 per cent stake in the company, which was attached by Income Tax Department.

Retro Tax

- Over a dozen companies face retrospective tax demands for transactions they completed in the past, following a controversial retro-active tax provision introduced in 2012.
- The tax department had in January 2014 used a two-year-old retrospective tax law to raise a ₹ 10,247-crore demand on alleged capital gains made by Cairn Energy on a decade-old internal reorganisation of its India business. This was followed by attaching the company's residual 9.8% shares in its erstwhile subsidiary, Cairn India.

Pesticides in Vegetables

- Common vegetables tomato, brinjal and cauliflower available in the market are found to contain the residues of pesticides used during their cropping. National Institute of Plant Health Management did the tests.
- Organo-phosphorous pesticides can damage nerves. Pesticide poisoning can cause nerve weakness, muscle wasting and diarrhoea. Consumption of vegetables laced with pesticide residue, even within permissible levels, may damage the kidneys and brain.

Pesticides in Vegetables

- Commonly used pesticides:
- ALACHLOR: Causes skin and eye problems, may affect even liver kidneys and spleen
- MALATHION: Causes eye irritation, muscle cramps
- PYRACLOSTROBIN: Harms digestive and respiratory systems
- NOVALURON: Damages eyes and skin
- Commonly used pesticides:
- CARBENDAZIM: Affects production of sperms, causes male infertility
- METALAXYL: Causes diarrhoea, eye and skin infections
- CAPTAFOL: Affects skin and eyes
- INDOXACARB: May cause cancer
- THIOPHANATE METHYL: Causes infertility

GSAT-7A

- GSAT-7 was launched in 2013 for Indian Navy monitors 2000 nautical miles of Indian Ocean Regions and sends real time inputs to warships, submarines, and aircrafts.
- Now ISRO launched GSAT-7A
- Weight: 2250kg
- Payload: Ku-band transponders
- Mission life: 8 years
- Cost : 500-800 Crore

- The GSAT-7A launch comes at a time when India is in the process of acquiring American Predator -B or Sea Guardian drones, which are high altitude and long-endurance satellite controlled UAVs that can fire at enemy targets from afar
- To help fighter jets communicate, Gsat-7 relies on sound converted into signal, which the jet then transmits to the satellite
- Satellite receives and amplifies signal from jet and changes the frequency
- Satellite then transmits the signal to the receiver antenna in another aircraft where signals are converted into sound
- The same can be picked up by antennas on ground

GSAT-7A

- The Satellite interlinks ground based radars , airbase and airborne early warning and control (AWACS) aircraft, detecting aircraft, vessels, etc in long range.
- Enables real time air-to-air communication between planes in air and with the ground
- It will helps drones conduct surveillance by capturing videos and images of a location and transmit them to ground stations
- It will help in controlled unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones, improve their range and endurance to strike at enemy targets from long distance.

GSAT-7A

- Ku-BAND ADVANTAGE:
- Signals can be captured with smaller antenna
- Provides wide beam coverage compared to other bands
- Less vulnerable to rain and other atmospheric disturbances

- INDIA HAS 13 SATELLITES WITH MILITARY APPLICATIONS

Meet on Desertification

- UNITED NATIONAL CONVENTION TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION (UNCCD)
- INDIA will host the next global conference on desertification, land degradation and drought
- The last Conference of Parties, hosted by China, was held in October 2017 in Ordos, Inner Mongolia.
- UNCCD have 197 members
- This will be the 14th session of the Conference of the Parties (CoP14)
- India is one of the countries affected by desertification, and is facing new challenges, among which are recurrent droughts and dust and sand storms.

Meet on Desertification

- India was one of the first countries to commit to the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals target of achieving land degradation neutrality (LDN) which aims to halt the degradation of land through concrete actions.
- Achieving land degradation neutrality can help vulnerable populations to improve their livelihoods, and communities all over the world can strengthen their resilience, especially to natural disasters linked to climate change.

15 Meter Draft at JNPT

- Currently ships with a capacity to carry 6000 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) can dock at JNPT. At 15 meters the port will be able to handle new generation size container vessels of 12500 TEUs capacity with wider beam and requiring deeper drafts.
- Cost : 1966 crore
- The increased depth will bring economic benefits such as saving vessel time and saving on account of transshipment.
- Also larger ships are more economical to operate as their cost of operation is lesser by as much as 40%.

Quota Bill

- 103rd Constitution Amendment gives 10% reservation in government jobs and educational institutions to the economically backward in the unreserved category
- This provision of 10% economic reservation law is being challenged for its constitutional validity.
- In 1992, a nine-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court in the famous Indra Sawhney case had ruled that “a backward class can not be determined only and exclusively with reference to economic criterion”
- Issue is the 50% quota limit was part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution and new amendment tinkered with it.
- Argument is that the 50% ceiling was “engrafted as a part of the Basic Structure of the Constitution’s equality code” by the court.
- Supreme Court is likely to refer the issue to Constitutional Bench.

Solar Power Plants in Leh & Ladakh

- There is an ambitious plan to build 23-GW solar power projects in Ladakh
- Two solar power projects will be built in phase I- a 2.5-GW project in the Zangla region of Kargil and a 5-GW project in the Pang region of Leh.
- SOLAR ENERGY CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED a PSU has invited tenders.
- The Jawaharlal Nehru National Solar Mission was launched on 11th January 2010. The mission had set the target of deploying 20,000 MW of grid connected solar power by 2022 at reduced cost of solar power generation. Action Plan: 1. long term policy, 2. large scale deployment goals, 3. Aggressive R&D, 4. domestic production of critical raw materials, components and products. New Target: 1 Lakh MW by 2021-22.

Blockchain Technology

- Blockchain Technology is being adopted by enterprises across all key industries in India.
- The Banking Financial services and insurance sectors are adopting it fast
- Other industries like health care, retail and logistics are also coming up to use the technology.
- In blockchain technology the data is kept in 100s of computers bit by bit. In the system the data can not be stolen as it is not there at one place. The system is open and under a watch all the time.
- The technology is bringing efficiency and speed to various businesses.

Blast pens near LoC

- The IAF got the first batch of Su-30s from Russia in 1996 and since then 240 out of 272 have been inducted.
- Blast pens are the hardened shelters need to be constructed for Su-30s near the LoC. For want of blast pens these fighters are parked away from LoC.
- Recently when Pakistan fighters attempted to cross LoC were to be intercepted by MiG-21 Bison jets as they were the closest to LoC. Mirage-2000s and Su-30MKIs were reached the location later. India lost an MiG-21
- The blast pens protect the aircraft from strikes by enemy jets or missiles. In the 1965 war with Pakistan, the IAF lost several aircraft in the open.

- Thank You