



An Institute for Civil Services



18th - 31st October, 2018

PIB Compilation - 1

1 Prime Minister dedicated the National Police Memorial to the Nation

(Topic: Art and culture, General Studies-I)

Context:

- ▶ Prime Minister inaugurated India's first National Police Museum in Delhi on the occasion of Police Commemoration day on October 21.

About the National Police Memorial:

- ▶ The central sculpture of the memorial is a 30 feet monolith made of a single piece of granite, weighing 238 tonnes. Its weight and colour symbolises the gravitas and solemnity of the supreme sacrifice. A 60 foot long river at the base of the sculpture reflects the continuous self-service of the policemen and women in maintaining peace and public order.
- ▶ The 'Wall of Valour' has the names of all 34,844 martyrs engraved on granite.
- ▶ It has been built on a 6.12-acre land in central Delhi's Chanakyapuri area at the northern end of Shanti Path.
- ▶ The memorial was built a few years ago. It has now been refurbished and the enhanced central structure has replaced the old rock structure.
- ▶ The project is being steered by the Intelligence Bureau (IB) in coordination with the central armed police forces (CAPFs) that function under the command of the Union Home Ministry.
- ▶ An annual award for police personnel has been announced for exemplary service during rescue operations.

The Police Commemoration Day:

- ▶ 21st October is celebrated as Police Commemoration Day. Commemoration Parades are held in all police units as a mark of respect to brave police martyrs, who sacrificed their lives in the line of duty.
- ▶ To acknowledge supreme sacrifices the names of police martyrs of states police and paramilitary forces are read out. The arms are reversed and two minutes silence is observed in the honour of the departed souls.
- ▶ The history of commemoration day can be traced back to 21st October 1959, when a patrol party of CRPF, led by Sub Inspector Karam Singh, was ambushed by the Chinese forces at Hot Springs Ladakh and 10 jawans were killed. The bravery and resultant sacrifice of jawans fighting at 16,000 ft. altitude, in extremely cold conditions and against all odds, is an epitome of the rarest of the rare courage.
- ▶ Indo-Tibetan Border Police sends a representative party of all police forces of the country, to Hot springs, Ladakh every year to pay homage to the martyrs of 1959.

2 Insolvency Law Committee submits its 2nd Report on Cross Border Insolvency

(Topic: Polity and Governance, General Studies-II)

Context:

- ▶ The Insolvency Law Committee (ILC) constituted by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to recommend amendments to Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code of India, 2016, has submitted its 2nd Report to the Government, which deals with cross border insolvency.

About the report:

- ▶ The ILC has recommended the adoption of the UNCITRAL Model Law of Cross Border Insolvency, 1997, as it provides for a comprehensive framework to deal with cross border insolvency issues.
- ▶ The Committee has also recommended a few carve outs to ensure that there is no inconsistency between the domestic insolvency framework and the proposed Cross Border Insolvency Framework.

Why India needs the UNCITRAL Model Law:

- ▶ The UNCITRAL Model Law has been adopted in as many as 44 countries and, therefore, forms part of international best practices in dealing with cross border insolvency issues.
- ▶ The advantages of the model law are :
 - Precedence is given to domestic proceedings
 - Protection of public interest
 - Confidence generation among foreign investors
 - Adequate flexibility for seamless integration with the domestic Insolvency Law
 - Robust mechanism for international cooperation.
- ▶ The necessity of having Cross Border Insolvency Framework under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code arises from the fact that many Indian companies have a global footprint and many foreign companies have presence in multiple countries including India.
- ▶ Although the proposed Framework for Cross Border Insolvency will enable us to deal with Indian companies having foreign assets and vice versa, it still does not provide for a framework for dealing with enterprise groups, which is still work in progress with UNCITRAL and other international bodies.
- ▶ The inclusion of the Cross Border Insolvency Chapter in the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code of India, 2016, will be a major step forward and will bring Indian Insolvency Law on a par with that of matured jurisdictions.

The UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration:

- ▶ It was prepared by UNCITRAL, and adopted by the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law on 21 June 1985. In 2006 the model law was amended, it now includes more detailed provisions on interim measures.
- ▶ The model law is not binding, but individual states may adopt the model law by incorporating it into their domestic law (as Australia did, in the International Arbitration Act 1974).
- ▶ There is a difference between the UNCITRAL Model Law on International Commercial Arbitration (1985) and the UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules.

- ▶ The UNCITRAL Model Law provides a pattern for law-makers in national governments which can be adopted as part of their domestic legislation on arbitration.
- ▶ The UNCITRAL Arbitration Rules, on the other hand, are selected by parties either as part of their contract, or after a dispute arises; to govern the conduct of an arbitration intended to resolve a dispute or disputes between themselves.
- ▶ The Model Law is directed at States, while the Arbitration Rules are directed at potential (or actual) parties to a dispute.

United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL):

- ▶ It was established by the United Nations General Assembly by Resolution 2205 (XXI) of 17 December 1966.
- ▶ It plays an important role in developing framework in pursuance of its mandate to further the progressive harmonization and modernization of the law of international trade by preparing and promoting the use and adoption of legislative and non-legislative instruments in a number of key areas of commercial law.

3 The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) on October 23, 2018 notified the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Mechanism for Issuing Regulations) Regulations, 2018

(Topic: Polity and governance, General Studies-II)

Context:

- ▶ For the purpose of making or amending any regulations, the IBBI would upload the draft of proposed regulations on its website along with an economic analysis of the proposed regulations.

Highlights of the notification:

- ▶ The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India has notified the mechanism that needs to be followed for issuing regulations under the insolvency law.
- ▶ A set of procedures would be followed for making or amending regulations under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.
- ▶ Under the mechanism, a draft of regulations would be put out for public consultations as well as a statement of the problem that the proposed regulation seeks to address. Among others, there would be an economic analysis of the proposed regulations and a statement carrying relevant norms and practices advocated by international standard setting agencies.
- ▶ The IBBI shall allow at least twenty-one days for public to submit their comments. If the governing board (of the IBBI) decides to approve regulations in a form substantially different from the proposed regulations, it shall repeat the process under the issuing regulations.
- ▶ In case, there is an urgent need for issuing or amending regulations, then the consultation process could be done away with.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India:

- ▶ It was established on 1st October, 2016 under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (Code).

- ▶ It is a key pillar of the ecosystem responsible for implementation of the Code that consolidates and amends the laws relating to reorganization and insolvency resolution of corporate persons, partnership firms and individuals in a time bound manner.
- ▶ It is a unique regulator: regulates a profession as well as processes. It has regulatory oversight over the Insolvency Professionals, Insolvency Professional Agencies, Insolvency Professional Entities and Information Utilities.

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC):

- ▶ It seeks to consolidate the existing framework by creating a single law for insolvency and bankruptcy.
- ▶ The bankruptcy code is a one stop solution for resolving insolvencies which at present is a long process and does not offer an economically viable arrangement.
- ▶ The code will protect the interests of small investors and make the process of doing business a less cumbersome process.

4 Cabinet approves Scheme for setting up of Indian Institute of Skills at different locations across the country in PPP modes

(Topic: Skill development, General Studies-II)

Context:

- ▶ Setting up of Indian Institute of Skills (IISs) at different locations across the country in Public Private Partnership (PPP) will assist in exploring the promotion of IIS at selected locations based on demand and available infrastructure.

Benefits:

- ▶ The setting up of IISs shall augment the global competitiveness of key sectors of Indian economy by providing high quality skill training, applied research education and a direct and meaningful connection with industry.
- ▶ It will provide access to highly skilled training to the aspiring youth across the country, and enhance the scope of accountability through its linkage with industry and global competitiveness across sectors.
- ▶ By leveraging advantages of private sector enterprise and public capital in terms of government land, it would create new institutes of expertise, knowledge and competitiveness.

National Skill Development Mission :

- ▶ It was launched by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship on July 15, 2015, aims to create convergence across sectors and States in terms of skill training activities.
- ▶ Besides that it also aims to expedite decision making across sectors to achieve skilling at scale with speed and standards.

- ▶ The aim is to rapidly scale up skill development efforts in India, by creating an end-to-end, outcome-focused implementation framework, which aligns demands of the employers for a well-trained skilled workforce with aspirations of Indian citizens for sustainable livelihoods.

5 Cabinet approves appointment of Adjudicating Authority and establishment of Appellate Tribunal under Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, 1988

(Topic: Polity and governance, General Studies-II)

Salient Features:

- ▶ Appointment of an Adjudicating Authority, along with the three additional Benches and to establish the Appellate Tribunal under the Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act (PBPT Act).
- ▶ To provide the officers and employees to Adjudicating Authority, Benches of the Adjudicating Authority and Appellate Tribunal by diverting the existing posts at the same level/rank from the Income Tax Dept. /Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT).
- ▶ The Adjudicating Authority and Appellate Tribunal shall sit in the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCTD). Benches of Adjudicating Authority may sit in Kolkata, Mumbai and Chennai, and the necessary notification in this regard shall be issued after making consultation with the Chairperson of the proposed Adjudicating Authority.

Benefits:

- ▶ The approval will result in effective and better administration of cases referred to the Adjudicating Authority and speedy disposal of appeals filed against the order of the Adjudicating Authority before the Appellate Tribunal.
- ▶ Appointment of the Adjudicating Authority would provide first stage review of administrative action under the PBPT Act.
- ▶ Establishment of the proposed Appellate Tribunal would provide an appellate mechanism for the order passed by the Adjudicating Authority under the PBPT Act.

Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, 1988:

- ▶ It is an Act of the Parliament of India that prohibits certain types of financial transactions.
- ▶ The act defines a 'Benami' transaction as any transaction in which property is transferred to one person for a consideration paid by another person. Such transactions were a feature of the Indian economy, usually relating to the purchase of property (real estate), and were thought to contribute to the Indian black money problem.
- ▶ The act bans all Benami transactions and gives the government the right to recover property held Benami without paying any compensation.
- ▶ The act came into force on 5 September 1988. Although Benami transactions are now illegal, the act had limited success in curbing them. Updated versions were therefore passed in 2011 and 2016, seeking to more comprehensively enforce the prohibitions.

6 Cabinet approves National Monitoring Framework on Sustainable Development Goals

(Topic: Environment, General Studies-III)

Context:

- ▶ The constitution of a High Level Steering Committee will assist in periodic reviewing and refining the National Indicator Framework (NIF) for monitoring of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) with associated targets.
- ▶ This committee will be chaired by Chief Statistician of India and Secretary, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI).

Targets:

- ▶ Measures to mainstream SDGs into on-going national policies, programmes and strategic action plans to address the developmental challenges.
- ▶ Statistical indicators of NIF will be the backbone of monitoring of SDGs at the national and state level and will scientifically measure the outcomes of the policies to achieve the targets under different SDGs.
- ▶ Based on statistical indicator, the MoSPI will bring out national reports on implementation of SDGs. The Report will facilitate assessment of progress, identify challenges and give recommendations for follow up at the national level.
- ▶ High Level Steering Committee will review the National Indicator Framework on regular basis for its improvement.
- ▶ Data source Ministries / Departments will be responsible for providing regular information to MoSPI on these indicators at required intervals and disaggregation for national and sub-national reporting of SDGs.
- ▶ Advanced IT tools will be used for close and effective monitoring.

Background:

- ▶ The eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted in Millennium Summit held in 2000, which formed the blueprint for countries to pursue their national development strategies from 2000 to 2015.
- ▶ The MDGs addressed various development issues. Targets determined under MDGs were unevenly achieved across the countries and a need was felt to start fresh discussions to assess the usefulness of the MDGs and to explore possible successor to guide development cooperation in the world beyond 2015.
- ▶ The UN General Assembly in its 70th Session considered and adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) for the next 15 years.
- ▶ The 17 SDGs came into force with effect from 1st January, 2016. Though not legally binding, the SDGs have become de facto international obligations and have potential to reorient domestic spending priorities of the countries during the next fifteen years.
- ▶ Countries would be responsible for follow-up and review at the national level, with regard to the progress made in implementing the goals and targets.

7 Water Storage level of 91 major reservoirs of the country goes down by two percent.

(Topic: Water resource, General Studies-III)

Context:

- ▶ The total storage capacity of 91 reservoirs is 161.993 Billion Cubic Metres (BCM) that is about 63% of the total estimated storage capacity of 257.812 BCM in the country.

Region wise storage status:

- ▶ **Northern region:** The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 16.31 BCM which is 91% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs
- ▶ **Eastern region:** The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 14.76 BCM which is 78% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs.
- ▶ **Western region:** The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 17.66 BCM which is 56% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs.
- ▶ **Central region:** The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 17.66 BCM which is 56% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs.
- ▶ **Southern region:** The total live storage available in these reservoirs is 34.68 BCM which is 67% of total live storage capacity of these reservoirs.

Central Water Commission:

- ▶ It is a premier technical organization of India in the field of water resources and is presently functioning as an attached office of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India.
- ▶ The Commission is entrusted with the general responsibilities of initiating, coordinating and furthering in consultation of the State Governments concerned, schemes for control, conservation and utilization of water resources throughout the country, for purpose of flood control, irrigation, navigation, drinking water supply and water power development.
- ▶ It also undertakes the investigations, construction and execution of any such schemes as required.
- ▶ Central Water Commission CWC is headed by a Chairman, with the status of Ex-Officio Secretary to the Government of India.

8 Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali campaign launched by Ministry of Environment

(Topic: Environment, General Studies-III)

Context:

- ▶ To spread the message of cracker less Diwali, Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has launched an awareness campaign titled "Harit Diwali- Swasth Diwali" on 17th August, 2017 in Delhi.

Background:

- ▶ Air pollution is a serious health issue in winters especially in the northern part of the country. The air pollution is attributed to dust, burning of crops in certain states, burning of garbage, construction and climatic conditions.
- ▶ Crackers contains combustible chemicals such as potassium chlorate, powdered aluminium, magnesium, salts of barium, copper, sodium, lithium, strontium etc. Combustion of these chemicals emits smoke along with sound. This adversely affect children, elderly, animal and birds. Apart from this large amount of waste is also generated from bursting of crackers.

Key Highlights:

- ▶ This campaign was initiated in 2017-18. It is inspired from eco-clubs wherein school children participated and took pledge to minimize bursting of crackers and also discouraged the neighbourhood and their friends from bursting of crackers.
- ▶ On the above lines, the Ministry has initiated the similar campaign, but this year the campaign has been extended pan-India. The "Harit Diwali-Swasth Diwali" campaign is now merged with "Green Good Deed" movement that has been initiated as a social mobilization for conservation and protection of environment.
- ▶ The Ministry encourages all schools and colleges to be part of this campaign.

National Green Corps (NGC):

- ▶ It is a programme of the Ministry of Environment and Forests of Government of India covering around 1,20,000 schools in India with NGC School Eco Clubs.
- ▶ Environmental activity in schools is promoted through the National Green Corps. Each NGC School Eco Club has 30 to 50 NGC Students or NGC Cadets who form the National Green Corps.
- ▶ These NGC Students participate in activities relate to biodiversity, energy, and water conservation, waste management and land use planning and resource management.
- ▶ Local issues are focused by the NGC Eco Clubs.
- ▶ Water harvesting, plantation, composting of biodegradable waste are most popular activities in the NGC School Eco Clubs. These NGC School Eco Clubs promote environmental discipline and environmental responsibility.
- ▶ These NGC Eco Clubs are provided with an annual grant of Rs2500. Every Indian States has a State Nodal Officer to implements this programme.

9

Women of India (WOI) Organic Festival held at IGNCA, New Delhi from 26th October to 4th November, 2018

(Topic: Women empowerment, Environment, General Studies-I & III)

Context:

- ▶ Union Ministry of Women and Child Development organised 5th 'Women of India Organic Festival' at Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA). First festival was organised in 2015.

About Women of India Organic Festival

- ▶ Women of India Organic Festival highlights the health and environmental advantages of organic goods, provides a platform for women engaged in this field and encourages the development of

sustainable and easily accessible sales outlets for women producers from the remotest corners of India.

- ▶ The WOI festival has given a successful platform to empower women farmers and entrepreneurs in a festive and fruitful manner for the past four years.
- ▶ The aim is to boost organic culture and promote Women Organic Farmers and Entrepreneurs. Being the country's largest organic festival, it bears witness to the fact that women are the torchbearers of the nation's organic movement.
- ▶ With over 500 women entrepreneurs coming together from across the country with their organic products such as cereals, rice, pulses, skin-care products, fabric, jewellery, etc. And creating a revolution and making women self-reliant.
- ▶ For the first time, 'The Vegan Project' and Food Court with cooked-on-site delicacies was also available.
- ▶ India has been a part of the organic farming revolution with over 160 million hectares of cultivable land. Better quality of produce fetches enhanced prices and adds approximately 20% to the incomes of related farmers.
- ▶ Overall, the income and savings of a farmer using exclusively organic methods in agriculture increases by over 50% since there is no investment in costly chemical pesticides, fertilizers, and preservatives.

Organic farming:

- ▶ It is an alternative agricultural system which originated early in the 20th century in reaction to rapidly changing farming practices.
- ▶ Organic farming relies on fertilizers of organic origin such as compost manure, green manure, and bone meal.
- ▶ It emphasizes on techniques such as crop rotation, mixed cropping, companion planting, fostering of insect predators, and biological pest control.
- ▶ Reasons for avocation of organic farming include advantages in sustainability, openness, self-sufficiency, autonomy/independence, health, food security, and food safety.
- ▶ International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), established in 1972, is an umbrella organization which sets standards for organic farming.

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Creation of Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)

(Topic: Infrastructure, General Studies-III)

Context:

- ▶ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for creation of Special Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF).
- ▶ National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), National Cooperatives Development Corporation (NCDC) and all scheduled Banks shall be the nodal Loaning Entities.

Benefits:

- ▶ Creation of fisheries infrastructure facilities both for marine and inland fisheries sectors.
- ▶ To augment fish production to achieve its target of 15 million tonne by 2020 set under the Blue Revolution; and to achieve a sustainable growth of 8% -9% thereafter to reach the fish production to the level of about 20 MMT by 2022-23.

- ▶ Employment opportunities to over 9.40 lakh fishers, fishermen, fisher folk and other entrepreneurs in fishing and allied activities.
- ▶ To attract private investment in creation and management of fisheries infrastructure facilities.
- ▶ Adoption of new technologies.
- ▶ FIDF would provide concessional finance to State Governments / UTs and State entities, cooperatives, individuals and entrepreneurs etc., for taking up of the identified investment activities of fisheries development.

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD):

- ▶ It is an apex development financial institution in India, headquartered at Mumbai with regional offices all over India. The Bank has been entrusted with "matters concerning policy, planning and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas in India".
- ▶ NABARD is active in developing financial inclusion policy and is a member of the Alliance for Financial Inclusion.
- ▶ NABARD was established on the recommendations of B. Sivaraman Committee to implement the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development Act 1981.
- ▶ It replaced the Agricultural Credit Department (ACD) and Rural Planning and Credit Cell (RPCC) of Reserve Bank of India, and Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC).
- ▶ It is one of the premier agencies providing developmental credit in rural areas. NABARD is India's specialised bank for Agriculture and Rural Development in India.
- ▶ NABARD has been instrumental in grounding rural, social innovations and social enterprises in the rural hinterlands.
- ▶ It has in the process partnered with about 4000 partner organisations in grounding many of the interventions be it, SHG-Bank Linkage programme, and tree-based tribal communities' livelihoods initiative, watershed approach in soil and water conservation.

PIB Compilation - 2

1 India wins Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPM) Award, 2018

(Topic: Good Governance, General Studies-II)

Context:

- ▶ India's Unnayan Banka and Unified Agriculture Markets initiatives have won the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) award.
- ▶ Department of Administrative Reforms & Public Grievances (DARPG) has been elected to the Board of Commonwealth Association of Public Administration & Management (CAPAM) at the Annual General Members Meet held on 23rd October, 2018 at Georgetown, Guyana.

Details of the award winning Initiative:

- ▶ The initiative entitled "Unnayan Banka- Reinventing Education Using Technology of Banka District, State of Bihar has been awarded under the Category "Innovation Incubation".
- ▶ "Unnayan Banka" is an initiative which envisages "Quality education for all' especially for those at the bottom of the pyramid, using latest technologies.
- ▶ It's a holistic model for overall development of youths from Education to Employability.
- ▶ Another initiative entitled "Unified Agriculture Markets" of Co-operation Department of Government of Karnataka has also been selected under the Category 'Innovation in Public Service Management'. This initiative has also been awarded Gold Award for CAPAM Awards, 2018.

About CAPM:

- ▶ The Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions is an institutional member of Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) which is a non-profit association representing an international network of over 1100 senior public servants, Heads of Government, leading academicians and researchers located in over 50 different countries across the Commonwealth.
- ▶ The association is guided by international leaders who believe in the value of networking, knowledge exchange and the promotion of good governance for the betterment of citizens in the Commonwealth countries.
- ▶ International Innovations Awards (IIA) are given biannually since 1998.
- ▶ The CAPAM Awards celebrate the spirit of innovation in the public service by recognizing organizations that have made significant contributions to improve governance and services in the public sector.

International Innovation Awards (IIA):

- ▶ It is most coveted regional recognition program where it recognizes outstanding innovations, and in the process encouraging organizations to continue investing in innovations.

- ▶ Organized by Enterprise Asia, The International Innovation Awards (IIA) is set to be the largest innovation program in the region by spearheading the 5th Industrial Revolution.
- ▶ Each awardee is also eligible to apply for the InnoMark Certificate. This international certification of innovation excellence recognizes innovative products, designs, and organizations on a proprietary 8-dimension system: The InnoMark Dimensions™

2

The web portal of the Scheme for Promotion of Academic and Research Collaboration (SPARC) launched in New Delhi

(Topic: Education, General Studies-II)

Context:

- ▶ The SPARC scheme aims at improving the research ecosystem of India's higher educational institutions by facilitating academic and research collaborations between Indian Institutions and the best institutions in the world.

Salient Features:

- ▶ It aims to collaborate between Indian Institutions [overall top-100 or category-wise top-100 in NIRF (including such Private Institutions which are recognized under 12(B) of UGC Act)] and the best institutions in the world (top-500 overall and top-200 subject-wise institutions listed in QS World University Ranking) from 28 selected nations to jointly solve problems of national and international relevance.
- ▶ As per the criteria mentioned above, 254 top Indian Institutes and 478 top ranked global Institutes have been already identified.
- ▶ A set of 5 Thrust Areas (Fundamental Research, Emergent Areas of Impact, Convergence, Action-Oriented Research and Innovation-Driven) and sub-theme areas in each thrust area has been identified for collaboration under SPARC based on emergent relevance and importance for the nation.
- ▶ Each Thrust Area will have a Section Chair. The role of Section Chair of each Thrust Area is to review shortlist and recommend the potential joint-proposals submitted under SPARC scheme.
- ▶ A set of Nodal Institutions (NI), from India, for each participating foreign country has been identified. The role of a NI is to help, handhold and coordinate with willing Participating Indian (PI) Institutions to forge alliance with the Institutions of concerned participating foreign country, for academic and research collaboration.
- ▶ SPARC proposes to enable productive academic cooperation by supporting the following critical components that can catalyze impact making research:
 - Visits and long-term stay of top international faculty/researchers in Indian institutions to pursue teaching and research.
 - Visits by Indian students for training and experimentation in premier laboratories worldwide.
 - Joint development of niche courses, world-class books and monographs, translatable patents, demonstrable technologies or action oriented research outcomes and products.
 - Publication, Dissemination and Visibility through a high profile annual international conference in India.
- ▶ This Scheme is expected to have a major impact in providing the best international expertise to address major national problems, exposes Indian academicians to the best collaborators abroad, enable international faculty to stay in India for a longer duration, provide Indian students an opportunity to

work in the world class laboratories, to develop strong bilateral relationships in research, and improve the international ranking of Indian Institutes.

University Grants Commission of India (UGC India):

- ▶ It is a statutory body set up by the Indian Union government in accordance to the UGC Act 1956 under Ministry of Human Resource Development, and is charged with coordination, determination and maintenance of standards of higher education.
- ▶ It provides recognition to universities in India, and disbursements of funds to such recognised universities and colleges. Its headquarters is in New Delhi, and has six regional centres in Pune, Bhopal, Kolkata, Hyderabad, Guwahati and Bangalore.
- ▶ UGC is modelled after University Grants Committee of UK which was an advisory committee of the British government and advised on the distribution of grant funding amongst the British universities. The committee was in existence from 1919 until 1989.

3 India and Bangladesh Sign Agreements for Enhancing Inland and Coastal Waterways Connectivity

(Topic: India and its neighbourhood- relations, General Studies-II)

Context:

- ▶ India and Bangladesh have signed several milestone agreements for enhancing inland and coastal waterways connectivity between the two countries for trade and cruise movements.

About the agreement:

- ▶ The two countries have signed an agreement to use Chattogram and Mongla Ports in Bangladesh for movement of goods to and from India. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has also been signed for movement of passenger and cruise services.
- ▶ In addition to this, an addendum to 'Protocol on Inland Water Transit and Trade' (PIWTT) between India and Bangladesh has been signed for inclusion of Dhubri in India and Pangaon in Bangladesh as new Ports of Call. These agreements will facilitate easier movement of goods and passengers between the two countries, giving an impetus to trade and tourism.
- ▶ The two sides agreed to consider inclusion of Rupnarayan River (National Waterway-86) from Geonkhali to Kolaghat in the protocol route and to declare Kolaghat in West Bengal as new Port of Call. Chilmari was agreed to be as a port of call in Bangladesh. The new arrangement will facilitate movement of flyash, cement, construction materials etc from India to Bangladesh through IWT on Rupnarayan river.
- ▶ Further, both sides agreed to declare Badarpur on river Barak (NW 16) as an Extended Port of Call of Karimganj in Assam and Ghorasal of Ashuganj in Bangladesh on reciprocal basis.
- ▶ It is also decided that a Project Management Consultant for supervision and monitoring of dredging of Ashuganj-Zakiganj and Sirajganj-Daikhowa stretches of Indo-Bangladesh Protocol Route in Bangladesh will be engaged with 80 % financial contribution from India and rest by Bangladesh. A Joint Monitoring Committee has also been constituted for overall monitoring of the dredging works.
- ▶ To bring about significant reduction in logistics cost and faster delivery of Bangladesh export cargo, Indian side raised the point regarding permitting 'Third country' EXIM Trade under Coastal Shipping Agreement and PIWTT by allowing transshipment through ports on the East Coast of India. Bangladesh agreed to hold stakeholder consultations and revert on the matter.

- ▶ Both sides have also agreed for development of Jogighopa as a hub/trans-shipment terminal for movement of cargo to Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland and Bhutan and notifying Munsiganj River terminal by Bangladesh Customs for routing third party Exim cargo through Kolkata Port.

Inland Waterways in India:

- ▶ Inland Waterways Authority of India (IWAI) is statutory authority in charge of the waterways in India. Its headquarters is located in Noida, UP. It does the function of building the necessary infrastructure in these waterways, surveying the economic feasibility of new projects and also administration.
- ▶ On 31st August 2018, IWAI made 13 standardised state-of-art designs public for the transportation of cargo and passengers keeping in mind Ganges complex river morphology, hydraulics, acute bends, currents etc.
- ▶ National Waterway 1- the first implementation will be between Varanasi-Haldia stretch in assistance and investment from World Bank.
- ▶ India has an extensive network of inland waterways in the form of rivers, canals, backwaters and creeks. The total navigable length is 14,500 km, out of which about 5200 km of the river and 4000 km of canals can be used by mechanised crafts.
- ▶ Freight transportation by waterways is highly under-utilised in India compared to other large countries and geographic areas like the United States, China and the European Union.
- ▶ The total cargo moved (in tonne kilometres) by the inland waterway was just 0.1% of the total inland traffic in India, compared to the 21% figure for United States. Cargo transportation in an organised manner is confined to a few waterways in Goa, West Bengal, Assam, and Kerala.

4 22nd National level meeting held between India and Myanmar

(Topic: India and its neighbourhood- relations, General Studies-II)

Context:

- ▶ Both sides agree to deepen cooperation on border security and to curb insurgency.

About the meeting:

- ▶ During the meeting both sides agreed on the followings:
 - To take action against insurgent groups operating within their territories.
 - Providing security cooperation along with international border and facilitating movement of people and trade across the international border.
 - Preventing smuggling of wildlife and narcotic drugs.
 - To strengthen cooperation on international border management including construction of subsidiary pillars for better demarcation of border.

India-Myanmar relation:

- ▶ Myanmar occupies a pivotal position in India's strategic calculus as New Delhi establishes a connection with Southeast Asia through its "Act East" policy.
- ▶ India had long historical relationship with Myanmar. Since antiquity, cultural exchanges included Buddhism and the Burmese script, which was based on the Indian Grantha script.

- ▶ Bilateral relations between Burma and the India have improved considerably since 1993, overcoming tensions related to drug trafficking, the suppression of democracy and the rule of the military junta in Burma.

Economic relations:

- ▶ India is the largest market for Burmese exports, buying about more than US\$ 220 million worth of goods; India’s exports to Burma stood at US\$75.36 million.
- ▶ India is Burma’s 4th largest trading partner after Thailand, China and Singapore, and second largest export market after Thailand, absorbing 25 percent of its total exports. India is also the seventh most important source of Burma’s imports.

India-Myanmar-Thailand Friendship Highway:

- ▶ India and Myanmar have agreed to a 4-lane, 3200 km triangular highway connecting India, Myanmar and Thailand. The route runs from India’s north eastern states into Myanmar, where over 1,600 km of roads were built or improved.
- ▶ The route begins from Guwahati in India and connects to Mandalay in Myanmar, route continues to Yangon in Myanmar and then to Mae Sot in Thailand, which then continues to Bangkok.

Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Route:

- ▶ The Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project will connect the seaport of Kolkata with Sittwe seaport in Myanmar by sea; it will then link Sittwe seaport to Lashio in Myanmar via Kaladan river boat route and then from Lashio to Mizoram in India by road transport.

Strategic cooperations:

- ▶ India’s move to have close relations with Burma is motivated by a desire to counter China’s growing influence.
- ▶ Concerns and tensions increased in India over China’s extensive military involvement in developing ports, naval and intelligence facilities and industries, specifically the upgrading of a naval base in Sittwe, a major seaport located close to Kolkata.
- ▶ India and Myanmar are leading members of BIMSTEC and the Mekong-Ganga Cooperation, along with Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Thailand, helping India develop its influence and ties amongst Southeast Asian nations.
- ▶ In 2013, India provided a loan of about US\$ 500 million to Myanmar for its development.

The Golden Triangle :

- ▶ It is the area where the borders of Thailand, Laos, and Myanmar meet at the confluence of the Ruak and Mekong Rivers. The name “Golden Triangle”—coined by the CIA—is commonly used more broadly to refer to an area of approximately 950,000 square kilometres (367,000 sq mi) that overlaps the mountains of three adjacent countries.
- ▶ Along with Afghanistan in the Golden Crescent, it has been one of the most extensive opium-producing areas of Asia, and of the world, since the 1950s. Most of the world’s heroin came from the Golden Triangle until the early 21st century when Afghanistan became the world’s largest producer.
- ▶ Myanmar is the world’s second largest producer of illicit opium after Afghanistan.

5 India-Japan Vision Statement

(Topic: International relation, General Studies-II)

Context:

- ▶ Prime Minister of India visited Japan on October 28-29, 2018 for the India-Japan Annual Summit.

Vision statement:

- ▶ The two Prime Ministers elucidated in the series of SAMVAD dialogues, the universal values of freedom, humanism, democracy, tolerance and non-violence, which have been shared between India and Japan throughout a long history of academic, spiritual and scholarly exchanges, not only constitute the basis for the India-Japan bilateral relationship but also underscore the principles for the two countries to work together for the benefit of the Indo-Pacific region and the world at large.
- ▶ The two leaders shared their view that in order to achieve this shared vision, India and Japan must endeavour to work together for a rules-based and inclusive world order that fosters trust and confidence by enhancing communication and connectivity to ensure rule of law, unimpeded trade and flow of people, technology and ideas for shared prosperity.
- ▶ The two leaders' vision for the Indo-Pacific is based on a rules-based order that respects sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations, ensures freedom of navigation and overflight as well as unimpeded lawful commerce, and seeks peaceful resolution of disputes with full respect for legal and diplomatic processes in accordance with the universally recognised principles of international law, including those reflected in the UNCLOS, without resorting to threat or use of force.

Partnership for Prosperity:

- ▶ The two Prime Ministers welcomed the discussions for establishing the "Platform for Japan-India Business Cooperation in Asia-Africa Region" to further enhance the exchanges between Japanese and Indian businesses toward developing industrial corridors and industrial network in the region.
- ▶ The two Prime Ministers welcomed the progress made for the development of India's North Eastern Region through the India-Japan Act East Forum by identifying and implementing projects for enhancing connectivity, sustainable forest and ecological management, disaster risk reduction and people-to-people exchanges.
- ▶ They also highlighted the importance of development of smart islands in India.
- ▶ They welcomed the continued cooperation on Metro Projects which support smarter development of Indian cities.
- ▶ India further appreciated Japan's role in promoting connectivity through quality infrastructure projects such as the Western Dedicated Freight Corridor and the Delhi-Mumbai Industrial Corridor.
- ▶ India welcomed Japan's strong support for key transformational initiatives such as "Make in India", "Skill India" and "Clean India Mission", through sharing of resources and advanced technologies, and active mobilisation of Japanese public and private sector investments.
- ▶ The two leaders shared the intention to further augment cooperation in skill development by expanding the scope and number of Japan-India Institutes for Manufacturing (JIMs) as well as the Japanese Endowed Courses (JEC) in various Indian states.

Partnership for Peace:

- ▶ They reaffirmed their desire to further deepen bilateral security and defence cooperation and institute Foreign and Defence Ministerial Dialogue (2+2).
- ▶ The two leaders welcomed the joint exercise between each of the three services and the commencement of negotiations on the Acquisition and Cross-Servicing Agreement (ACSA), which will enhance the strategic depth of bilateral security and defence cooperation.

- ▶ India and Japan seek expeditious and meaningful reforms of the United Nations, in particular the comprehensive reform of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC), to make it more legitimate, effective and representative, taking into account the contemporary realities of the 21st century.

Partnership for Global Action:

- ▶ The two Prime Ministers underlined the importance of their growing collaboration for achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They committed themselves to strengthening environmental partnership in areas such as pollution control, sustainable biodiversity management, chemical and waste management, climate change and waste water management, utilizing the cooperation framework between their relevant authorities.
- ▶ Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation on sustainable and clean forms of energy, including nuclear and renewables; explore possibilities for collaboration in hydrogen-based energy, while also continuing their efforts for cooperation in use of clean coal technology, petroleum and natural gas projects and LNG supply chain and welcomed "Japan-India Energy Transition Cooperation Plan".
- ▶ The two leaders reviewed with satisfaction the progress of cooperation in disaster risk reduction, bilaterally through the organization of workshops as well as multilaterally in different fora. They acknowledged the importance of effective implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, in areas such as early warning mechanism, water resource management, use of space-based technology and disaster resilient infrastructure.
- ▶ The two leaders underlined the crucial role of the rules-based multilateral trading system and shared the urgent necessity to reform the WTO leading to the reinforced functioning of the WTO and to free, fair, and open trade, for achieving sustainable growth and development.

Act East Policy:

- ▶ India's Act East Policy focusses on the extended neighbourhood in the Asia-Pacific region. The policy which was originally conceived as an economic initiative, has gained political, strategic and cultural dimensions including establishment of institutional mechanisms for dialogue and cooperation.
- ▶ India has upgraded its relations to strategic partnership with Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Japan, Republic of Korea (ROK), Australia, Singapore and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and forged close ties with all countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
- ▶ The Objective of "Act East Policy" is to promote economic cooperation, cultural ties and develop strategic relationship with countries in the Asia-Pacific region through continuous engagement at bilateral, regional and multilateral levels thereby providing enhanced connectivity to the States of North Eastern Region including Arunachal Pradesh with other countries in our neighbourhood.
- ▶ The North East of India has been a priority in our Act East Policy (AEP). AEP provides an interface between North East India including the state of Arunachal Pradesh and the ASEAN region.
- ▶ Some of the major projects include Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, the India-Myanmar-Thailand Trilateral Highway Project, Rhi-Tiddim Road Project, Border Haats, etc.

6

INS Tarangini returns after Voyage across the World

(Topic: Science and Technology, General Studies-III)

Context:

- ▶ The sail training ship of Indian Navy, INS Tarangini based at Kochi, returned after a seven month long sailing across the world to a grand reception at naval base, Kochi on 30 Oct 18.

Lokayan 18:

- ▶ The Voyage named "Lokayan 18" was flagged off on 10 Apr 2018 from Kochi in INS Tarangini.
- ▶ During the voyage, the ship has proudly 'shown the flag' and highlighted the diverse culture of India across 15 ports in 13 countries.
- ▶ The ship sailed across the Arabian Sea, Red Sea, Suez Canal, Mediterranean Sea, Strait of Gibraltar, North Atlantic Ocean, Bay of Biscay, English Channel and North Sea, right up to Norway before commencing her homeward passage back to Kochi.
- ▶ The ship also participated in the culminating event of the '**Three Festival Tall Ships Regatta**' at Bordeaux, France.
- ▶ Over the years, INS Tarangini has been extensively deployed for long voyages away from her base port of Kochi, which includes one circumnavigation of the globe (2003-04) and three previous 'Lokayans' (2005, 2007 and 2015).

About INS Tarangini:

- ▶ INS Tarangini is a **three masted 'square rigged'** barque which carries a total of 20 sails.
- ▶ She is the first Sail Training Ship in Indian Navy and was commissioned on 11 Nov 1997.
- ▶ In her 21 years of glorious service, she has sailed over 2, 20,000 nautical miles to date across the world's oceans.
- ▶ She is the first of two Sail Training Ships in the First Training Squadron, the other being INS Sudarshini.
- ▶ The primary role of these Sail Training Ships is to develop character and professionalism, as well as inculcate the qualities of initiative, courage, resilience and spirit amongst the Sea Trainees.
- ▶ The ship also imparts practical training to them, primarily on navigation, sailing and seamanship.

How name of ships and submarines are selected:

- ▶ Names of ships and submarines are selected by the Internal Nomenclature committee. It is headed by the Assistant Chief of the Naval Staff. It has representatives from defence ministry, department of archaeology in the HRD ministry, among others. The recommendations should be approved by the Navy chief.
- ▶ A cruiser or destroyer is named after a state capital, a large city, a great king or warrior from Indian history. For example, INS Delhi, INS Mysore, INS Ranjit
- ▶ Frigates are named after a mountain range, a river or a weapon, but it should be ensured that names of ships that are part of the same class should begin with the same alphabet For example: INS Sahaydri, INS Shivalik and INS Satpura
- ▶ The corvettes are named after personal arms, such as INS Khukri, INS Kirpan, INS Khanjar
- ▶ Multipurpose patrol vessels are named after an island, such as INS Car Nicobar, INS Kalpeni
- ▶ Submarines are either named after a predatory fish or are given an abstract name that is associated with the ocean. The same convention is followed both for nuclear and conventional submarines

Various Navy vessels:

- ▶ **Frigate:** It is a large ship that performs the role of a warship as it has both anti-submarine and anti-aircraft features. In a fleet, it performs the role of a flagship
- ▶ **Destroyer:** They are much larger than frigates. They possess advanced defence and attack capabilities.

7

India Improves Rank by 23 Positions in Ease of Doing Business

(Topic: Indian Economy, General Studies-III)

Context:

- ▶ The World Bank released its latest Doing Business Report (DBR, 2019). India has recorded a jump of 23 positions against its rank of 100 in 2017 to be placed now at 77th rank among 190 countries.

Indicator wise rank improvement:

- ▶ The Doing Business assessment provides objective measures of business regulations and their enforcement across 190 economies on ten parameters affecting a business through its life cycle.
- ▶ The DBR ranks countries on the basis of Distance to Frontier (DTF), a score that shows the gap of an economy to the global best practice. This year, India's DTF score improved to 67.23 from 60.76 in the previous year.
- ▶ India has improved its rank in 6 out of 10 indicators and has moved closer to international best practices (Distance to Frontier score) on 7 out of the 10 indicators.
- ▶ Most dramatic improvements have been registered in the indicators related to 'Construction Permits' and 'Trading across Borders'. In grant of construction permits, India's rank improved from 181 in 2017 to 52 in 2018, an improvement of 129 ranks in a single year. In 'Trading across Borders', India's rank improved by 66 positions moving from 146 in 2017 to 80 in 2018. The changes in six indicators where India improved its rank are as follows:

S. No.	Indicator	2017	2018	Change
1	Construction Permits	181	52	+129
2	Trading Across Borders	146	80	+66
3	Starting a Business	156	137	+19
4	Getting Credit	29	22	+7
5	Getting Electricity	29	24	+5
6	Enforcing Contracts	164	163	+1
Overall rank	100	77	+23	

The important features of India's performance this year are:

- ▶ The World Bank has recognized India as one of the top improvers for the year.
- ▶ This is the second consecutive year for which India has been recognized as one of the top improvers.
- ▶ India is the first BRICS and South Asian country to be recognized as top improvers in consecutive years.
- ▶ India has recorded the highest improvement in two years by any large country since 2011 in the Doing business assessment by improving its rank by 53 positions.
- ▶ As a result of continued performance, India is now placed at first position among South Asian countries as against 6th in 2014.

Ease Of Doing Business Index:

- ▶ **Definition:** Ease of doing business is an index published by the World Bank. It is an aggregate figure that includes different parameters which define the ease of doing business in a country.
- ▶ **Description:** It is computed by aggregating the distance to frontier scores of different economies. The distance to frontier score uses the 'regulatory best practices' for doing business as the parameter and benchmark economies according to that parameter.
- ▶ For each of the indicators that form a part of the statistic 'Ease of doing business,' a distance to frontier score is computed and all the scores are aggregated. The aggregated score becomes the Ease of doing business index.
- ▶ Indicators for which distance to frontier is computed includes construction permits, registration, getting credit, tax payment mechanism etc. Countries are ranked as per the index.
