



PIB, THE HINDU Newspaper and Editorial Current Affairs

Posted at: 07/03/2019

PIB

Swachh Survekshan Awards

Why in news?

The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, presented the Swachh Survekshan Awards 2019, an initiative of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India, at a function held in New Delhi.

Hghlights:

- Indore was Wednesday adjudged India's cleanest city for the third straight year in the central government's cleanliness survey.
- While the New Delhi Municipal Council area was given the "Cleanest Small City" award, Uttarakhand's Gauchar was adjudged the "Best Ganga Town" in the central government survey.
- The second and third positions were clinched by Ambikapur in Chhattisgarh and Mysore in Karnataka.
- Ahmedabad has been named the cleanest big city with a population of more than ten lakh. Ujjain has been awarded cleanest medium city having a population between 3 lakh to 10 lakh.
- Bhopal has been named the cleanest capital.
- Raipur won the 'Fastest Moving Big City'.
- Mathura-Vrindavan won the tag of Fastest Moving Medium City.
- Chhattisgarh has bagged the top spot in the category of best performing states. Jharkhand is at the second spot while Maharashtra is at the third.

- The winners were awarded a statue of Mahatma Gandhi's memento by the President Ram Nath Kovind.

About Swachh Survekshan:

- Swachh Survekshan a massive exercise in meticulous planning and focused survey of 4,203 Urban Local Bodies across India, had a number of unique features.
- The objectives of Swachh Survekshan are to encourage citizen participation, increase city capacities for sustainable ODF and sanitation measures and to create awareness amongst all sections of society about the importance of collective action to contribute in India's journey towards a 'Swachh Bharat'.
- There has also been a shift in focus of the survey parameters - from process and outputs, to outcomes, and innovations. As compared to Swachh Survekshan 2017, higher quantum of marks were allocated to segregation of waste at source and processing of waste, and new thrust on financial sustainability and a focus on segregation and processing of waste at source.
- When the survekshans started in 2016, we had covered only 73 cities with population of over 1 million; in 2017 this was expanded to cover 434 cities.
- Swachh Survekshan has witnessed a quantum leap in coverage, with 4203 Urban Local Bodies - from municipal corporations to nagar panchayats and cantonment boards across the country - having been surveyed.
- Swachh Survekshan introduced three types of ranking, viz. national ranking for ULBs of population of 1 lakh and above, and zonal or regional rankings for the smaller ULBs.
- The scoring for each ULB for ranking was segregated into 4 main components, viz.
 - Part 1- Service Level Progress (1400 marks) which involved collection of documentary evidence provided by ULBs on the activities they undertake under SBM;
 - Part 2A - Independent validation, where part-marks were deducted from part I if on-ground verification differed from documented claim;
 - Part 2B - Direct Observation (1200 marks) where status of

cleanliness was verified through on-ground observation at sample locations;

- Part 3A - Citizen Feedback (1000 marks), where direct feedback from the citizens of each ULB was collected through face-to-face facts, outbound calling, and online survey; and e) Part 3B - Swacchta App (400 marks) where marking was based on number of downloads and complaint redressal.
-

Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India

Why in news?

The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) signed a Cooperation Agreement yesterday with the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a Member of the World Bank Group (WBG).

About Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India:

- The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India 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 for maximization of the value of assets of such persons, to promote entrepreneurship, availability of credit and balance the interests of all the stakeholders.
- 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.
- It writes and enforces rules for processes, namely, corporate insolvency resolution, corporate liquidation, individual insolvency

resolution and individual bankruptcy under the Code.

- It has recently been tasked to promote the development of, and regulate, the working and practices of, insolvency professionals, insolvency professional agencies and information utilities and other institutions, in furtherance of the purposes of the Code.
- It has also been designated as the 'Authority' under the Companies (Registered Valuers and Valuation Rules), 2017 for regulation and development of the profession of valuers in the country.

Organizational structure of IBBI

The IBBI has a **ten-member board including a Chairman**. Following is the structure of the IBBI.

- One Chairperson
- Three members from Central Government officers not below the rank of Joint Secretary or equivalent.
- One nominated member from the RBI.
- Five members nominated by the Central Government; of these, three shall be whole-time members.
- **More than half of the directors of its board shall be independent directors.** MS Sahoo was appointed as the first Chairman of IBBI.

Powers and functions of IBBI

The IBBI has wide powers for administering the insolvency and bankruptcy regime in the country. These include – registration of insolvency agencies and professionals, levying fees from them, specifying the regulations and standards for agencies and professionals, monitoring and carrying out inspections and investigations on these entities etc.

Responsibility of IBBI

- The IBBI's primary responsibility is to create and amend laws relating to reorganization as well as insolvency resolution of corporate persons, partnership firms and individuals in a time-bound manner.

- It must create regulations for insolvency procedures, institutions and professionals. So far, the IBBI has produced three sets of regulations. These include – regulations for Insolvency Professionals, Insolvency Agencies and Model Bye-Laws and Governing Board of Insolvency Professional Agencies.
- The IBBI regulations aims to create a complete framework for the voluntary liquidation of any corporate person. The term corporate person includes any company incorporated under the Companies Act and includes limited liability partnership or any other person incorporated with limited liability but does not include any financial service provider.
- The regulations specify the procedure for public announcement, receipt and verification of claims of stakeholders, reports and registers to be maintained and submitted by the liquidator, realization of assets and distribution of proceeds to stakeholders, distribution of residual assets, and finally dissolution of corporate person.
- The IBBI will be assisted by two advisory panels for providing inputs on various issues.

Insolvency professionals

According to the IBBI stipulations, the insolvency professionals should be from advocates, chartered accountants, company secretaries and cost accountants given they meet the conditions set by IBBI. Regarding Insolvency Professional Agencies, not-for-profit companies with a turnover of at least Rs 10 crore can apply for Agency license.



Nari Shakti Puraskar

Why in news?

President of India will present the Nari Shakti Puraskar 2018, the highest civilian honour for women in India, at a special ceremony to be held in Rashtrapati Bhavan, New Delhi, on International Women's Day.

Highlights:

- To acknowledge women's achievements, the Ministry of Women and Child Development confers Nari Shakti Puraskar on women and institutions in recognition of their relentless service towards the cause of women empowerment and social welfare.
- This year, 44 awardees have been selected for these Puraskar, out of around a thousand nominations received by the Ministry.
- For the Nari Shakti Puraskar, 2018, wide publicity was done through advertisements in leading newspapers across the country for inviting nominations.
- Nominations were invited from State Governments/UTs/Central Ministries/Departments and from the previous years' awardees (2015-2017). Self-nominations were also welcomed.

About Nari Shakti Puraskar

- Nari Shakti Puraskar (formally Stree Shakti Puraskar) (Women Power Award) is the highest civilian honour for women in Republic of India.
- It is awarded by the Government of India, every year on International Women's Day. It is given under series of India's national honours conferred on individual women for their exceptional achievement.
- The coveted Award is conferred on those exceptional Women and Institutions who have been working incessantly towards the cause of Women Empowerment. The award is given in six categories, by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India.
- It recognises the spirit of courage of a woman in difficult circumstances, who has established this spirit of courage in her personal or professional life. The award also recognises the pioneering contribution of an individual in empowering women and raising women's issues.
- Instituted in 1991, the award is conferred by the President on the occasion of International Women's Day, 8 March every year at New Delhi. The award carries a cash prize of rupees one lakh (Rs. 100,000) and a certificate.
- For the year 2012, the award was posthumously bestowed on the 2012 Delhi gang rape victim Nirbhaya.

Janaushadhi Diwas

Why in news?

Union Minister of State for Chemicals & Fertilizers informed that for providing further impetus & creating awareness about use of generic medicines, it has been decided to celebrate 7th March 2019 as 'Janaushadhi Diwas' across India.

About Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana:

Background:

The branded (Generic) medicines are sold at significantly higher prices than their unbranded generic equivalents, though are identical in the therapeutic value. Given the widespread poverty across the country, making available reasonably priced quality generic medicines in the market would benefit everyone.

- Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP) is a campaign launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to the masses.
- PMBJP stores have been set up to provide generic drugs, which are available at lesser prices but are equivalent in quality and efficacy as expensive branded drugs.
- It was launched by the Department of Pharmaceuticals in November 2008 under the name Jan Aushadi Campaign. Bureau of Pharma PSUs of India (BPPI) is the implementation agency for PMBJP.

Vision

To bring down the healthcare budget of every citizen of India through providing Quality generic Medicines at Affordable Prices.

Mission

- Create awareness among the public regarding generic medicines.
- Create demand for generic medicines through medical practitioners.
- Create awareness through education and awareness program that high price need not be synonymous with high quality.
- Provide all the commonly used generic medicines covering all the therapeutic groups.
- Provide all the related health care products too under the scheme.

Objective

Making quality medicines available at affordable prices for all, particularly the poor and disadvantaged, through exclusive outlets "Jan Aushadhi Medical Store", so as to reduce out of pocket expenses in healthcare.

THE HINDU

Binapani Dev

Why in news?

Binapani Devi, popularly referred to as 'Boroma', passed away at a city hospital late on Tuesday evening. She was 100. Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted immediately after her death describing her as an "icon of our times". Chief Minister of West Bengal also expressed condolences.

Influential community:

- **Matuas** are a religious sect of **Bangladeshi Dalits who predominantly belong to the Namasudra caste**, a Scheduled Caste group with a presence in at least six parliamentary seats.
- In December 2018, the State government bestowed on her its highest honour — **Bangabibhushan**.
- Matuas are capable of influencing more than one Lok Sabha seat in

the State.

- The influence of Binapani Devi and the Matua Mahasangha can be gauged by the fact that Prime Minister before addressing a rally at Thakurnagar met 'Boroma' on February 2, 2019.
-

Joint working group on Ayushman Bharat

Why in news?

A joint working group (JWG) comprising senior officials from IRDAI and National Health Authority (NHA) has been formed to recommend measures to help improve the implementation of the Centre's Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) or the health insurance scheme for the poor.

About the JWG:

- The 11-member group, with NHA Deputy CEO Dinesh Arora as the chair and IRDAI Executive Director Suresh Mathur as the co-chair, would **submit a report** on various aspects pertaining to network hospitals' management; data standardisation and exchange; fraud abuse and control; and common IT infrastructure for health insurance claims management.

Terms of reference:

- Spelling out the terms of reference and timelines the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) said under **network hospitals' management**, the group had 12 months to submit its report on a national repository of empanelled hospitals under insurance/government schemes. with defined standards for quality and package rates and codes.
- The JWG would **define hospital infrastructure and facility audits** to understand capacity of hospitals as well as specialist's availability and chalk out a roadmap for one common list of accredited verified

hospitals for the entire industry, including ROHINI, NHRR, NIN and PMJAY databases.

- It would undertake a comparative study of packages and their rates and mapping to uniform codes; and define standards and indicators for safe and quality healthcare.
- In three months, the group will submit a report on data standardisation and exchange from a perspective of creating standard data formats across health insurance payers for analysis and policy making; developing standardised data tables to capture and report data, identifying data elements common with IRDAI and PMJAY; and setting up a framework for capturing and exchanging data.
- Under the fraud and abuse control component, the JWG would make recommendations in six months to help detect and deter frauds through a common repository and capacity-building.

Ayushman Bharat:

- The Government has announced two major initiatives in health sector, as part of Ayushman Bharat programme.
- The Union Minister for Finance while presenting the General Budget 2018-19 in Parliament said that this was aimed at making path breaking interventions to address health holistically, in primary, secondary and tertiary care systems, covering both prevention and health promotion.

The initiatives are as follows:

- **Health and Wellness Centre:** The National Health Policy, 2017 has envisioned Health and Wellness Centres as the foundation of India's health system. Under this **1.5 lakh centres** will bring health care system closer to the homes of people. These centres will provide **comprehensive health care, including for non-communicable diseases and maternal and child health services**. These centres will also provide **free essential drugs and diagnostic services**. The Budget has allocated Rs.1200 crore for this flagship programme. Contribution of private sector through CSR and philanthropic institutions in adopting these centres is also envisaged.
- **National Health Protection Scheme:** The second flagship programme under Ayushman Bharat is National Health Protection

Scheme, which will cover **over 10 crore poor and vulnerable families** (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) **providing coverage upto 5 lakh rupees per family per year for secondary and tertiary care hospitalization**. This will be the world's largest government funded health care programme. Adequate funds will be provided for smooth implementation of this programme.

- These two health sector initiatives under Ayushman Bharat Programme will build a New India 2022 and ensure enhanced productivity, well-being and avert wage loss and impoverishment. These Schemes will also generate lakhs of jobs, particularly for women.
 - In order to further enhance accessibility of quality medical education and health care, 24 new Government Medical Colleges and Hospitals will be set up, by up-grading existing district hospitals in the country.
 - This would ensure that there is **at least 1 Medical College for every 3 Parliamentary Constituencies and at least 1 Government Medical College in each State of the country**.
-

Poorest of poor and uneducated women left behind in ICDS

Why in news?

Anganwadi services have a poor reach among key beneficiaries the poorest of the poor and uneducated mothers according to a paper published in a WHO bulletin recently.

About ICDS:

- The government's Integrated Child Development Scheme (ICDS) provides a **package of six services at anganwadi or child-care centres** to young children and pregnant women and lactating mothers.
- These services include supplementary nutrition, referral services, immunisation, health check-up, pre-school non-formal education and

health and nutrition education.

Findings of the report:

- The study analyses the findings of the National Family Health Survey 2005-2006 and 2015-2016 to compare the coverage of ICDS over a 10-year period.
- During this time, the average respondents benefiting from these services increased from 9.6% to 37.9% for supplementary food, 3.2% to 21% for health and nutrition education, 4.5% to 28% for health check-ups and 10.4% to 24.2% for child-specific services over a period of 10 years.
- At the same time, the poorest of the poor or quintile 1, who were the largest beneficiaries in 2006, got left behind quintile 2 and quintile 3 by 2016 for all four indicators such as supplementary food, counselling on nutrition, health check-ups and early childhood services, shows the study.
- For example, supply of food supplements in 2006 was the highest for the poorest quintile (11.7%). However, by 2016, they accounted for 34.8% of the respondents, behind quintile 2 (41.7%), 3 (45.5%) and 4 (39.7%).
- The study also said that mothers without any schooling were the lowest beneficiaries as compared to those with primary and secondary schooling in 2006, and they continued to be so in 2016.

About ICDS:

- The Integrated Child Development Service (ICDS) Scheme providing for supplementary nutrition, immunization and pre-school education to the children is a popular flagship programme of the government.
- It is one of the world's largest programs providing for an integrated package of services for the holistic development of the child.
- ICDS is a centrally sponsored scheme implemented by state governments and union territories.
- Children in the age group of 0-6 years, Pregnant women and Lactating mothers are the beneficiaries of the scheme.
- All components of ICDS except Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) are financed through a 60:40 ratio (central: state). The Supplementary Nutrition Programme (SNP) component was funded through a 50:50 ratio. The North East states have a 90:10 ratio.

- Under SNP, beneficiaries are given hot meals along with take-home rations. For children, the quantum of rations and meals received depends on their malnutrition levels.

Objectives:

- To improve the nutritional and health status of children in the age-group 0-6 years;
 - To lay the foundation for proper psychological, physical and social development of the child;
 - To reduce the incidence of mortality, morbidity, malnutrition and school dropout;
 - To achieve effective co-ordination of policy and implementation amongst the various departments to promote child development; and
 - To enhance the capability of the mother to look after the normal health and nutritional needs of the child through proper nutrition and health education.
-

Model Code of Conduct

What is the model code of conduct?

- The model code refers to a **set of norms laid down by the Election Commission of India**, with the consensus of political parties.
- **It is not statutory.**
- It spells out the dos and don'ts for elections.
- Political parties, candidates and polling agents are expected to observe the norms, on matters ranging from the content of election manifestos, speeches and processions, to general conduct, so that free and fair elections take place.

When was it introduced?

- The EC traces its introduction to the **1960 Assembly elections in Kerala**.
- During simultaneous polls to the Lok Sabha and Assemblies in several States in 1962, the EC circulated the code to all recognised parties, which followed it "by and large".

- In October 1979, the EC came up with a **comprehensive code** that saw further changes after consultations with parties.

When is the code enforced?

- The code comes into force on the **announcement of the poll schedule and remains operational till the process is concluded**, as provided in the notification.
- It is also applicable to a “caretaker” government on premature dissolution of a State Assembly, as was the case in Telangana.

How is it enforced?

- The EC ensures that ruling parties at the Centre and in States adhere to the code, as part of its mandate to conduct **free and fair elections under Article 324 of the Constitution**.
- In case of electoral offences, malpractices and corrupt practices like inducements to voters, bribery, intimidation or any undue influence, the EC takes action against violators.
- Anyone can report the violations to the EC or approach the court.
- The EC has devised several mechanisms to take note of the offences, which include **joint task forces of enforcement agencies and flying squads**.
- The latest is the introduction of **the cVIGIL mobile app** through which audio-visual evidence of malpractices can be reported.

What are the key malpractices?

- Any activity aggravating existing differences or creating mutual hatred or causing tension between different castes and communities, religious or linguistic, is a **corrupt practice** under the Representation of the People Act.
- Making an appeal to caste or communal feelings to secure votes and using places of worship for campaigning are offences under the Act.
- **Bribery to voters** is both a corrupt practice and an electoral offence under the Act and Section 171B of the Indian Penal Code.
- **Intimidation of voters** is also an electoral offence, while impersonating them is punishable under the IPC.
- Serving or **distributing liquor** on election day and during the 48 hours preceding it is an electoral offence.
- Holding public meetings during the 48-hour period ending with the

hour fixed for the closing of the poll is also an offence.

What restrictions does the code impose?

- According to the EC, the code states that the party in power whether at the Centre or in the States should ensure that it **does not use its official position for campaigning**.
 - Ministers and other government authorities cannot announce financial grants in any form.
 - **No project or scheme which may have the effect of influencing the voter** in favour of the party in power can be announced, and Ministers cannot use official machinery for campaign purposes.
-

Child Malnutrition in India

Why in news?

Despite the National Family Health Survey-4 (NFHS-4) showing an encouraging improvement in child nutrition, India continues to fare poorly in world rankings on child nutrition.

Findings of the NFHS Report:

- With one of the highest rates of child malnutrition in the world, India has won notoriety as one of the nutritional basket cases of the world over the past few years.
- Although India has witnessed significant progress in its battle against child malnutrition over the past decade, the progress has been quite uneven, and child malnutrition rates still remain high in many parts of the country, data from the latest round of **the National Family Health Survey (NFHS) shows**.
- The survey of over 6 lakh households conducted in 2015-16 shows that over the past decade, the proportion of underweight children fell nearly 7 percentage points to 36%, while the proportion of stunted children (those with low height-for-age, a measure of chronic undernourishment) declined nearly 10 percentage points to 38%.

- Despite the progress, these rates are still higher than those of many poorer countries in sub-Saharan Africa. And in some of the worst affected districts such as Purulia in West Bengal and Nandurbar in Maharashtra, every second child is undernourished.
- Such high level of child malnutrition imposes a huge economic cost. **Malnutrition accounted for losses worth at least 8% of global gross domestic product (GDP)** in the 20th century because of "direct productivity losses, losses via poorer cognition, and losses via reduced schooling", according to medical journal The Lancet, which published a special issue on the topic in 2013.
- The losses are higher for high-burden countries such as India.
- As in the case of adult undernutrition rates, districts with the highest levels of undernutrition seem to be clustered largely in the central parts of the country.
- The bottom quartile of districts ranked according to child malnutrition rates includes not just districts from the most deprived tribal belts of central and eastern India but also some of the more urbanized districts of the country such as Udaipur in Rajasthan, Aurangabad in Maharashtra, Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, Patna in Bihar, and Ranchi in Jharkhand. However, overall urban child malnutrition rates are lower than that of rural India.
- Districts with relatively low levels of child undernutrition are clustered largely in the extreme north, the extreme south, and in the north-eastern parts of the country, as the district maps show.
- Some of the best-performing districts in the country with the lowest proportions of underweight children such as Mokokchung in Nagaland and Aizawl in Mizoram lie in North-east India.

Reasons for High Malnutrition:

- Apart from poverty, there seems to be three key differences between districts with high and low levels of child malnutrition: **the status of women, the kind of diets fed to children, and access to toilets.**
- One of the primary reasons for children being undernourished in the country is that often their **mothers are undernourished**. One in five women are underweight in India.
- Women who are themselves undernourished or have a pregnancy at an early age, are at a greater risk of delivering low birth-weight babies, who are nutritionally disadvantaged right at birth.

- Also, women without education or without much voice in their families often fail to ensure adequate diets for their children even when there is adequate food in the household.
- Districts with a high proportion of women who are illiterate and who have married early tend to have high ratios of undernourished children, the latest data shows.
- Districts where the proportion of children receiving an age-appropriate diet is low also tend to have high ratios of undernourished children.
- The link between **sanitation and undernutrition** is even stronger. Districts with low levels of access to toilets have much higher rates of child undernourishment compared to districts with relatively high levels of access to toilets.
- In a densely populated country such as ours, **the lack of sanitation contributes to the spread of infectious diseases**. Children fall prey more easily to such diseases, and tend to lose their ability to absorb nutrients, leading to undernutrition.

What needs to be done?

- The focus must be on the **pregnant, breastfeeding mother and the child**, especially in the first two years of the child's life, which is the crucial phase for physical, mental and cognitive development. Given the size of the problem (38% of children under five years of age are stunted, according to UNICEF) and budgetary constraints, a targeted approach is needed.
- With the wealth of district-level data made available by NFHS-4, the focus districts can easily be identified.
- They are concentrated in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. These States, and others such as Karnataka, Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Gujarat, should formulate policies to tackle high incidence of stunting in these districts and provide funds for the same.
- Even within these districts, pockets where child malnutrition is high should be identified, going down to the tehsil or taluka levels and further down to clusters of Anganwadis located in areas such as urban slums and those with high concentrations of disadvantaged populations.
- Policy initiatives can be guided by accurate real-time data at the sub-

district level.

- We need more public programmes with a direct or indirect impact on nutrition in the selected areas.
- These should cover important nutrition-specific areas such as **maternal nutrition**, especially in the nine months of pregnancy and the six months of breastfeeding.
- They should also promote early and exclusive breastfeeding, proper feeding of the infant, and provide food security through a robust public distribution system.
- There should be support for healthcare for mothers, from the antenatal care visit in the first trimester of pregnancy until after delivery and for children in their first few years of life.
- Messages should be spread on **hygiene and sanitation**, particularly the need to do away with open defecation practices.
- Similarly, **education for girls should be advocated**, as should the importance of enabling the financial independence of women through skilling and employment opportunities along with their inclusion in the formal financial network.

Way ahead:

Programmes will have an impact only when there are sound public service delivery mechanisms, especially in the nutrition, health and education sectors. Building a cadre of dedicated professionals in the government needs a high degree of political will and administrative commitment, centred around developing skills and knowledge and building motivation to stay the course.

ISRO, French space agency agreement on maritime security

Why in news?

National space agency ISRO and its French counterpart **CNES** sealed an agreement to set up a joint maritime surveillance system in the country in May.

About the Agreement:

- The two nations will explore putting up a **constellation of low-Earth orbiting satellites** that will identify and track movement of ships globally and in particular those moving in the Indian Ocean region where **France has its Reunion Islands**.
 - Before that, they will initially share data from their present space systems and develop new algorithms to analyse them, according to the Paris based National Centre for Space Studies.
 - The agreement comes a year after the broad collaboration plan the two governments initiated during French President Emmanuel Macron's visit in March last 2018.
 - The CNES-ISRO agreement intends to supply an **operational system for detecting, identifying and tracking ships in the Indian Ocean**.
 - It provides for a maritime surveillance centre to be set up in India in May this year; sharing of capacity to process existing satellite data and joint development of associated algorithms.
 - For the next phase of the programme, studies for an orbital infrastructure to be operated jointly by the two countries are ongoing. CNES is working with its industry partners and with ISRO to devise the most appropriate technical solution.
 - The two agencies have put up two climate and ocean weather monitoring satellites **Megha-Tropiques (of 2011) and SARAL-Altika (2013)** that are considered a model.
 - This fleet will be augmented with the launch of **Oceansat-3-Argos mission in 2020** and a future joint infrared Earth-observation satellite under.
-

Indian museum of natural history

Why in news?

It will house the country's geological wealth in one location.

Background:

- From dinosaur fossils to pre-human skulls, India is home to a vast treasury of geological and palaeontological specimens that contain a wealth of scientific information about the planet and its history.
- But these rare specimens are scattered in different labs all over the country.
- So, to better conserve this **prehistoric heritage**, the government is planning to house them in one place an 'Earth Museum'.

About the Museum:

- This museum will be modelled on the American Museum of Natural History, or the Smithsonian museum in the U.S.
 - The museum, which will be set up as a public-private partnership, would be located somewhere in Delhi, Noida or Gurugram.
 - Such a repository was necessary to make people aware of India's palaeontological and geological wealth.
 - Another concern was that several collections of fossils and important geological specimens weren't properly organised, and they survived only due to the efforts of individual researchers who maintained them within their labs.
 - A single site, accessible to the public as well as researchers wanting to investigate rare and important finds, was necessary.
 - In a meeting of the Prime Minister's Science, Technology and Innovation Advisory Council (PM-STIAC) last November, where the need for such a museum was endorsed.
 - A meeting of experts from the U.S., the U.K, and South Korea is scheduled to be held in Delhi in early April.
-

Plastic waste import

Why in news?

The government has plugged a loophole that allowed the import of plastic

waste into India for processing.

New Rules:

- Solid plastic waste has been prohibited from import into the country including in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and by Export Oriented Units (EOU).
- The change in law was part of the **Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Amendment Rules, 2019.**

Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Amendment Rules, 2019:

- Solid plastic waste has been prohibited from import into the country including in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) and by Export Oriented Units (EOU).
- Exporters of silk waste have now been given exemption from requiring permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Electrical and electronic assemblies and components manufactured in and exported from India, if found defective can now be imported back into the country, within a year of export, without obtaining permission from the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- Industries which do not require consent under Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1974 and Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act 1981, are now exempted from requiring authorization also under the Hazardous and Other Wastes (Management & Transboundary Movement) Rules, 2016, provided that hazardous and other wastes generated by such industries are handed over to the authorized actual users, waste collectors or disposal facilities.

Import of PET Bottles:

- Earlier in spite of having a significant plastic pollution load of its own, and a ban on plastic waste imports, imported PET bottles from abroad for processing in Special Economic Zones (SEZ).

- The influx of PET bottles has quadrupled from 2017 to 2018, the Delhi-based environmentalist organisation, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Smriti Manch (PDUSM) had pointed out in January.
- Indian firms are importing plastic scraps from China, Italy, Japan and Malawi for recycling and the imports of PET bottle scrap & flakes has increased from 12,000 tonnes in FY 16-17 to 48,000 tonnes in FY 17-18 growing @ 290%. India has already imported 25,000 MT in the first 3 months of FY 18-19," a note by the organisation revealed.

Plastic Waste in India:

- India consumes about **13 million tonnes of plastic and recycles only about 4 million tonnes.**
 - To incentivise domestic plastic recycling units, the government had banned the import of plastic waste, particularly PET bottles, in 2015.
 - In 2016, an amendment allowed such imports as long as they were carried out by agencies situated in SEZs.
 - While the Ministry couldn't vouch for whether such plastic imports had quadrupled, it was true that the imports had "substantially increased" and action was being contemplated.
 - The **lack of an efficient waste collection and segregation system** is the root cause for much of the plastic not making its way to recycling centres.
-

IPS officer dismissed over extramarital relationship

Why in news?

An IPS officer has been dismissed from service by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs over an alleged extramarital relationship.

Unethical Conduct:

- Pankaj Kumar Chaudhary, currently serving as the Commandant of

Police Training School, Jhalawar was found guilty of grave misconduct.

- The action against the 2009-batch IPS officer of Rajasthan cadre was taken for establishing relations with another woman with whom he had a child.

Violation of AIS Rules:

- The order said the official violated Rule 3 (1) of the All India Services (Conduct) Rules, 1968.
- The rule provides that every member of the service shall at all times maintain **absolute integrity and devotion to duty and shall do nothing which is unbecoming of a member of the service.**

Probe initiated:

- An inquiry was initiated against the officer in April 2016 on the basis of a complaint from his wife.
 - The then government forwarded the case to the Ministry of Home Affairs with a recommendation to impose a suitable major penalty on him.
 - The Ministry sought comments from the Union Public Services Commission which advised his dismissal from the service.
-
-

