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News Analysis (19 Dec, 2018)

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Global Gender Gap Report-2018

Recently the Global Gender Gap Report has been published by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

- India has been ranked **108th out of 149 countries** in the Global Gender Gap Index 2018, the same as 2017.
- The report benchmarks countries on their progress towards gender parity on a scale from 0 (disparity) to 1 (parity) across four key pillars- economic participation and opportunity (42%), educational attainment (4.4%), health and survival (4.6%), and political empowerment (77%).
- In addition, this year's edition studies skills gender gaps related to **Artificial Intelligence (AI)**.

Key Findings

- **Global Scenario**
 - Despite the global gender gap narrowing slightly in 2018, proportionately **fewer women than men are participating in the labour force** or in political life.
 - **Iceland remains the world's most gender-equal country**. At the current rate of change, the global gender gap will take 108 years to close.
 - Across the four subindexes, on average, the **largest gender disparity is on Political Empowerment**.
 - Overall, the economic gender gap narrowed in 2018. However gender gap in access to health and education, and political empowerment has widened.
 - Women are under-represented in growing areas of employment that require STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) skills and knowledge.
 - Analysis conducted in collaboration with LinkedIn points to a glaring gender gap that is developing among AI professionals, where women represent only 22% of the AI workforce.

- **Indian Scenario**

- India has recorded improvement in wage equality for similar work.
- India has **closed its tertiary education enrolment gap for the first time** and has managed to keep its primary and secondary gaps closed for the third year.
- However, India continues to rank the third-lowest on health and survival, remaining the world's least-improved country on this subindex over the past decade.
- India has the second-largest artificial intelligence (AI) workforce but one of the largest AI gender gaps.

Way Forward

- The report highlights the message to policy-makers that countries that want to remain competitive and inclusive will **need to make gender equality a critical part of their nation's human capital development**.
 - Policy-makers along with all the stakeholders should fast-forward the process to eliminate gender gap and should take stronger actions in the years to come.
 - **Industries must proactively hardwire gender parity in the future of work** through effective training, reskilling and upskilling interventions and tangible job transition pathways, which will be key to narrowing these emerging gender gaps and reversing the current trends.
 - Given the depth of the talent gender gap in AI, there is a clear **need for proactive measures to prevent a deepening of the gender gap in other industries where AI skills** are in increasing demand.
 - The economies need to be able to **harness all their available talent in order to succeed in the fourth industrial revolution**.
 - Proactive measures that support gender parity and social inclusion and address historical imbalances are essential for the health of the global economy as well as for the good of society as a whole.
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Maldives President's Visit to India

The President of the Republic of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih visited India on a state visit from 16-18 December 2018.

This is the first foreign visit by President of Maldives after assuming office in November 2018.

Outcome of the visit

- The two countries signed the following Agreements/MoUs/Joint Declaration of Intent during the visit:
 - Agreement on the facilitation of **visa arrangements**.
 - Memorandum of understanding on **cultural cooperation**, improve the ecosystem for **agribusiness**.
 - Cooperation in the field of **communications technology** and **electronics**.
 - Countries agreed to work together in the following areas, health, mutual legal assistance, investment promotion, human resource development, and tourism
- India announced **financial assistance of US\$ 1.4 billion** in the form of budgetary support, currency swap and concessional lines of credit to fulfill the socio-economic development programmes of the Maldives.
- The Maldives reaffirmed its "**India-First Policy**", and commitment to working together closely with India.
- Both countries agreed on the importance of maintaining **peace and security in the Indian Ocean Region**.
- The two countries reaffirmed their commitment and support for increased cooperation in **combating terrorism**.

India-Maldives Relation

- India and the Maldives share **deep historical, cultural, and economic ties**.
- India was among the first to **recognize the Maldives after its independence in 1965** and to establish diplomatic relations with the country. India established its embassy at Malé in 1972.
- India's bilateral and financial assistance to the Maldives has been reciprocated through an "India first" policy by the Maldives.

Importance of the Maldives for India

- The Maldives is an important aspect of **India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy**.
- **Strategically located in the Indian Ocean**, Maldives archipelago comprising 1200 coral Islands lies next to key shipping lanes which ensure uninterrupted energy supplies to countries like China, Japan, and India. More than 97% of India's international trade by volume and 75% by value passes through the region.
- As the pre-eminent South Asian power and a **'net security provider'** in the Indian Ocean region, **India needs to cooperate with the Maldives in the security and defense sectors**.
- India is also a preferred destination for Maldivians for education, medical treatment, recreation, and business.
- **Maldives is also a member of SAARC**. It is important for India to have the Maldives on board to maintain its leadership in the region.

- Since **China's naval expansion into the Indian Ocean** - Maldives significance has steadily grown and now it's at the heart of international geopolitics.
 - There is significant **Indian diaspora in the Maldives**. Innumerable Indians work across the hospitality, education, and health-care sectors of the Maldives economy.
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Important Facts for Prelims (19th December 2018)

Farout

- Scientists have recently discovered the most distant object ever observed in our Solar System.
- The object is located at 120 astronomical units (AU) from the Sun (1 AU = distance between the Earth and the Sun).
- This object is nicknamed as "Farout" and provisionally titled 2018 VG18.
- Farout is also the first known Solar System object that has been detected at a distance that is more than 100 times farther than Earth is from the Sun.
- Farout was discovered as part of a search for extremely distant Solar System objects, including the suspected Planet X, which is sometimes also called Planet 9.

Bogibeel Road-Rail Bridge

- Bogibeel is India's longest road-rail bridge connecting Dibrugarh in Assam to Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh.
 - The bridge is 4.94 km long and 32 meters above the water level of the Brahmaputra.
 - It has been fashioned on a bridge that links Sweden and Denmark.
 - The bridge will be a major boost to improve logistical issues for the armed forces along the border in Arunachal Pradesh as India shares a nearly 4,000 km border with China.
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