

TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM CURRENT AFFAIRS – JANUARY, 2018

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TNPSC BITS

- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on request of the Ministry of Shipping has exempted cruise tourists arriving with e-visa from the requirement of biometric enrolment for a period of three years)till 2020(. The purpose of the move is to promote cruise tourism in the country. E-visa facility is being implemented in five major ports viz. Mumbai, Mormugao, New Mangalore, Cochin and Chennai.
- ❖ The Nepal cabinet has endorsed a revision to the mountaineering regulations of its nation, banning solo climbers from its mountains, including Mount Everest, in a bid to reduce accidents. The cabinet also endorsed a ban on double amputee and blind climbers.
- ❖ China has started collecting an environment tax to better protect the environment and cut pollutant discharge, as the country's Environmental Protection Tax Law took effect on Jan 2018.
- ❖ Pakistan's central bank (The State Bank of Pakistan-SBP) has allowed the Chinese yuan to be used for bilateral trade and investment activities. The adoption of yuan means that Pakistan and China would be able to replace the US dollar for transactions in the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) projects.
- ❖ Income Tax (IT) Department under the Union Finance Ministry has launched an on-line chat service on its national website with a prominent icon stating 'Live Chat Online- ask your query'. In this on-line chat the taxpayers can resolve their queries and doubts relating to direct tax issues by answers from department Side.
 - The module can also be accessed through a mobile application called 'Aayakar Setu'.
- ❖ The first 'persons of Indian Origin (PIO) Parliamentarian Conference' was held at the Pravasi Bharatiya Kendra in New Delhi.
 - The conference will host people's representatives including mayors and law makers of Indian origin from across the globe.
- ❖ Israel has issued a 90-day notice to inform thousands of Africans who entered the country illegally that they have three months to leave or face indefinite imprisonment. The migrants will be given up to \$3,500 for leaving within the next 90 days. They will be given the option of going to their home country or third countries.
 - The Israeli authorities, however exempted children, victims of human trafficking and slavery and the elderly.
- ❖ Mankidia, one of the 13 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) in Odisha, were denied habitat rights inside the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) under the historic Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006.

- The State Forest Department has objected on grounds that tribals could be attacked by wild animals, especially tigers.
- ❖ A Supreme Court Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra modified its November 30, 2016 interim order and made it optional for cinema halls to play national anthem before every show.
 - The modification will be in place till the Union government takes a final decision on the recommendations of a 12-member high-profile inter-ministerial committee headed by BR Sharma .
- ❖ The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has introduced two-tier security feature viz. Virtual ID and Limited KYC to address privacy concerns. The move aims to strengthen security and privacy of Aadhaar data.
- ❖ Denmark set a new record in wind power generation, harvesting 43.4 percent of its electricity from wind resource in 2017.
- ❖ Playback singer and music composer S.P.Balasubrahmanyam received the LV Lifetime Achievement award to mark the 75th birth anniversary of music director and violin artist L. Vaidyanathan.
- ❖ India has emerged as a top borrower from the China-sponsored Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) with USD 1.5 billion worth of loans last year and USD three billion more in the pipeline. Next to India, Indonesia has emerged as the second largest borrower with about USD 600 million loans.
 - China is the largest shareholder with 26.06 per cent voting shares in the bank. India is the second largest shareholder with 7.5 per cent followed by Russia 5.93 per cent and Germany with 4.5 percent.
- ❖ Punjab has rolled out e-Raktkosh web portal in all the 45 government blood banks. The web portal provides the guidelines and streamlines the workflow of blood banks and storage centres across the nation and interconnects all blood banks with a single platform.
- ❖ The Supreme Court held that every adult has right to marry anyone and nobody including parents, khap panchayats or similar associations can question their choice of spouse. It also ruled that any kind of attack and interference on such adults opting for marriage, especially inter-caste marriage as 'absolutely illegal'.
- ❖ The Union Ministry of Minority Affairs has decided to end Haj subsidy from 2018 as a part of its policy to empower minorities with dignity and without appeasement. This decision was taken based on the recommendations of Afzal Amanullah Committee and May 2012 Supreme Court order.
- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has issued order to appoint CRPF special DG Sudeep Lakhtakia (1984: IPS) as the new chief of National Security Guard (NSG). Lakhtakia will take over from S P Singh, the current chief of the elite counter terror force, who retires on January 31.
 - The commandos of the force are based in five hubs across the country, apart from their main garrison in Gurgaon's Manesar.

- ❖ Jaipur hosted the eleventh edition of the Zee Jaipur Literature Festival at the Diggi Palace, Rajasthan.
- ❖ Finland's President Sauli Niinisto has been elected again as president of Finland for the second six-year term.
- ❖ Oxford Dictionaries has chosen 'Aadhaar' as the Hindi word of 2017. The announcement was made at a session "Oxford Dictionaries' Hindi Word of the Year" during the ongoing Jaipur Literature Festival in Jaipur.

TAMILNADU

e-governance policy – 2017

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Government launched an “e-governance policy – 2017” that would enable public, government and commercial establishments get all its government services through digital mode.
- ❖ The policy aims to provide all government services through digital mode and also through common service centres and mobile applications under the Government's Vision 2023 plan.
- ❖ The policy has a provision for the government to allocate 0.5 per cent of the total funds in a financial year for the digital initiatives and later increase it to three per cent in the next five years in a phased manner.

171st Araadhanai Music Festival begins in Tamil Nadu

- ❖ The 171st Araadhanai Music Festival (AMF) organised by the Sri Thyagabrahma Mahotsava Sabha has started in Thiruvaiyaru, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The festival is conducted to commemorate and honour the Trinities of Carnatic Music Saint Thyagaraja.
- ❖ The main function of the festival – the choral singing of Thyagaraja's five kritis.

Two TN police stations in country's top 5 list

- ❖ Two police stations in the state, have been rated among the best police stations in the country by the union ministry of home affairs.
- ❖ While the RS Puram police station (B-2) in Coimbatore bagged the number one place in the country, in the category of Smart police stations.
- ❖ K4 Anna Nagar Police Station in Chennai has been ranked the fifth-best in the whole of India.

- ❖ Tamil Nadu police officials, received the trophy from union home minister Rajnath Singh at the 'All India Conference of Director Generals/Inspector Generals of Police -2017' held at Takenpur in Gwalior, Madhya Pradesh.

Indian Coast Guard commissions patrol vessel at Karaikal

- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has commissioned Charlie-435, a state-of-the-art patrol vessel at Karaikal in the Union Territory of Puducherry.
- ❖ With the commissioning of Charlie-435, the Coast Guard station at Karaikal now has five vessels.

Charlie-435

- ❖ The patrol vessel 'Charlie-435' is equipped with modern navigation and communication system.
- ❖ The vessel will strengthen coastal security between Chennai and Kanyakumari in the Eastern Coastal region.
- ❖ It will be also of great help in rescuing fishermen who go adrift in sea due to bad weather.

Tamilnadu State Government Awards

- ❖ Tamilnadu government conferred state awards to personalities on the occasion of Tiruvalluvar Day (January 15).
- ❖ A total of nine awards were conferred on nine eminent personalities for their contribution to society and development of Tamil language.
 - ✓ Tiruvalluvar Award (2018) went to Dr. G. Periannan for his contributions to Tamil literature.
 - ✓ Thanthai Periyar Award was conferred on B. Valarmathi for her initiatives as Social Welfare Minister.
 - ✓ Dr. George K.J., who the citation said is known for his contributions for education to students belonging to scheduled tribe communities, was awarded Annal Ambedkar Award.
 - ✓ Founding member of Anna Thozhisangam A. Subramanian was awarded Perarignar Anna Award.
 - ✓ Educationalist T.R. Dhinakaran was awarded Perunthalaivar Kamarajar Award.
 - ✓ Academician Dr. S. Balasubramaian alias Bharathibalan was given Mahakavi Bharathiar Award.
 - ✓ Pavendhar Bharathidasan Award went to writer K. Jeevabharathi
 - ✓ Thamizhthendral Thiru. Vi. Ka. Award went to writer and dialogue writer V. Balakumaran.

- ✓ Professor Dr. P. Marudhanayagam, a noted academician in the Central Institute of Classical Tamil, was awarded Muthamizh Kaavalar K.A.P Viswanathan Award.

National Youth Award

- ❖ Masha Nazeem from nagercoil receives the prestigious National Youth Award for her contributions to science and technology.
- ❖ The annual award is instituted by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports.
- ❖ It is given to recognise outstanding work and achievements of youngsters and further motivate them to excel in the field on National Development and Social Service.
- ❖ Masha has invented 14 socially useful gadgets such as a flameless seal marker, which is now used by State government officials, hi-tech train toilet system, fuel dispensers, anti-sinking alarm.
- ❖ Three of her innovations are in the process of getting patented. She has also won several awards and accolades including the State Youth Award 2016.

Chennai to host Defence Expo in April

- ❖ For the first time, Tamil Nadu will host Defence Expo 2018, an international exhibition on Defence, in April, showcasing some of the latest technologies and products manufactured by both Indian and foreign companies.
- ❖ It will also give an opportunity for the State to showcase its strength as one the largest manufacturing hubs for defence production.
- ❖ DefExpo 2018 will be held between April 11 and 14 at a temporary expo centre on East Coast Road near Mahabalipuram.
- ❖ DefExpo India — Land, Naval & Internal Homeland Security Systems Exhibition is held once in two years. The last edition was held in Goa, and the one before that in Delhi.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has several defence production plants, including a tank manufacturing unit in Avadi and ordnance factories in Avadi and Tiruchi.
- ❖ Coupled with L&T Katupalli Shipyard at Ennore, which manufactures ships for the Indian Navy and the Coast Guard, the State has a robust defence production ecosystem.


Tamil Nadu government hikes bus fares

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government has announced an upward revision in bus fares, after a gap of six years for both mofussil and local bus services.

- ❖ This is the second time that the bus fares have been revised in the State since 2001. The last revision was undertaken by the AIADMK government in November 2011.
- ❖ To mobilise funds for dealing with legal compensation, the State government has also decided to create an accident compensation, prevention and toll fund.
- ❖ The move to revise the fare is due to frequent revision in diesel price, increased cost of new buses and spare parts, a ballooning wage bill, legal compensation and other expenses incurred by the government transport corporations.

Revised fares in city and town buses (₹)				
Category	Existing rates		Revised rates	
	Minimum	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Chennai MTC (Stages 1 - 28)	3	14	5	23
Other cities and towns (Stages 1 - 20)	3	12	5	19
Volvo buses (Stages 1 - 38)	15	100	25	150

Hike in minimum fares of mofussil buses (₹)		
Bus Type	Existing rates	Revised rates
Ordinary (10km)	5	6
Express (30 km)	17	24
Intermediate luxury, bypass point to point (30km)	18	27
Ultramodern (30km)	21	33
AC coaches (30km)	27	42
Volvo (30km)	33	51
Hill routes		+20% over revised rates
Ordinary (6km)	4	
Express (30 km)	20	



Udangudi Power Project

- ❖ Coal-based supercritical Udangudi thermal power project is set to come up in Thoothukudi district of southern Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ BHEL and the Tamil Nadu Electricity Board (TNEB) had signed a MoU to develop this power project in 2007.
- ❖ This project is to be funded by Rural Electrification Corporation (REC).

NATIONAL

GAIL contract for Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga

- ❖ State-run gas utility GAIL India has placed orders for another 400-km of pipeline of the ambitious Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga natural gas pipeline project that will take the fuel to eastern India.
- ❖ The orders were placed for 400-km for pipeline from Dobhi (Bihar) to Durgapur (West Bengal).



- ❖ With these awards, pipe supply orders for 2,100 km of the Jagdishpur-Haldia & Bokaro-Dhamra Natural Gas Pipeline (JHBDPL) project have been placed.
- ❖ The prestigious 2,655 km long JHBDPL project, also known as the 'Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga' project will originate at Jagdishpur in Uttar Pradesh, where main trunk pipeline from the west coast currently ends, to Haldia in West Bengal and Dhamra in Odisha.
- ❖ This pipeline will transport Natural Gas to the industrial, commercial, domestic and transport sectors in the States of Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

Exchange list of nuclear installations

- ❖ India and Pakistan exchanged through diplomatic channels simultaneously at New Delhi and Islamabad, the list of nuclear installations and facilities under a three-decade old bilateral pact.
- ❖ This is the twenty seventh consecutive exchange of such a list between the two countries.

- ❖ The two sides exchanged the list under the Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack against Nuclear Installations between India and Pakistan.
- ❖ The agreement, which was signed on December 31, 1988, and entered into force on January 27, 1991, provides that the two countries inform each other of nuclear installations and facilities to be covered under the pact on the first of January of every calendar year.
- ❖ The term 'nuclear installation or facility' includes nuclear power reactors, fuel fabrication, uranium enrichment, isotopes separation and reprocessing facilities as well as any other installations with fresh or irradiated nuclear fuel.

PMO Website – 13 Languages

- ❖ The Assamese and Manipuri language versions of Prime Minister's Official website www.pmindia.gov.in was launched.
- ❖ The website can now be accessed in Assamese and Manipuri in keeping with the requests from the citizens of the two states.
- ❖ With this, the PMINDIA website is now available in 11 regional languages namely Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Manipuri, Marathi, Odia, Punjabi, Tamil and Telugu in addition to English and Hindi.

NARI –online portal

- ❖ Ministry of Women & Child Development has launched an online portal NARI (National Repository of Information for Women) for women empowerment.
- ❖ It is an online portal developed by the Ministry of Women and Child Development which will provide information to women on issues affecting their lives.
- ❖ The portal aims to provide women citizens with easy access to information on government schemes and initiatives for women.
- ❖ The portal contains information about schemes being run by both Central as well as the States Governments. It provides links to the Ministries, Departments and autonomous bodies offering these schemes as well as easy access to online applications and grievance redressal.

e-Samvad

- ❖ e-Samvad is an online portal to provide a platform for NGOs and Civil Societies to interact with the Ministry of Women & Child Development related to Women & Child Development.
- ❖ Through e-Samvad, NGOs and civil society can provide their feedback, suggestions, put up grievances, share best practices which will help in formulation of effective policies.

Zojila Tunnel

- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs approved Zojila Tunnel project in Jammu and Kashmir that will provide year-round connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh.
- ❖ The project aims to construct a 14.15-km long two-lane bidirectional single tube tunnel with a parallel 14.2-km long egress or parallel escape tunnel. With the completion of project Zojila tunnel will be Asia's longest bi-directional pass tunnel.

KASHMIR TO GET A VITAL LINK
The government has approved the strategic Zojila tunnel in Jammu & Kashmir. A look at the project that will come up at an altitude of **11,578 feet**

Total project cost
₹6,809 crore

Main line 14.15 km bi-directional single tube tunnel	Parallel egress tunnel 14.2 km-long tube, excluding entry points
Civil construction cost ₹4,899.5 crore	Project deadline 7 years

Benefits of project
All-weather connectivity | Fillip to tourism sector | Rise in employment opportunities

All-weather travel
Once completed, the tunnel will provide all-weather connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh, which remain cut-off during winters due to heavy snowfall

We understand the plight of the people in Leh and Ladakh region. We are committed to undertaking the project
NITIN GADKARI, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways

Lifeline: A file photo of Army vehicles passing through the snow-covered Zojila pass, 108 km east of Srinagar. • NISSAR AHMAD

Project implementation Ministry of Road Transport and Highways will implement it through the National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited. IL&FS Transportation has emerged as the successful bidder

- ❖ The project will be implemented by Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRT&H) through National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL).

Jal Marg Vikas Project

- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs has given its approval for implementation of the Jal Marg Vikas Project (JMVP) for capacity augmentation of navigation on National Waterway-1 (NW-1).
- ❖ The project is implemented with the technical assistance and investment support of the World Bank.

States/districts covered

- ❖ States: Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal

National Waterway 1

- ❖ The National Waterway 1 (NW-1) or Ganga-Bhagirathi-Hooghly river system runs from Haldia (Sagar) to Allahabad across the Ganges, Bhagirathi and Hooghly river systems. It is 1,620 km long, making it the longest waterway in India.
- ❖ One of the major problems for a commercially viable and safe navigation on NW-1 is low depth upstream of Farakka due to low discharges from tributaries and difficult hydro morphological characteristics of river Ganga.

Namami Gange project

- ❖ National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) has approved five projects for river cleaning.
- ❖ Three projects pertain to sewage management in West Bengal , sewage management in Uttarakhand and ghat improvement works in Varanasi has been approved.
- ❖ With these approvals, all projects related to sewage management in high pollution load towns along river Ganga have been sanctioned.

Indo-Myanmar agreement on land border crossing

- ❖ The Union Cabinet approved an agreement between India and Myanmar on land border crossing which would enhance economic interaction between people of the two countries.
- ❖ It is expected to provide connectivity and enhance interaction of the people from north-eastern states of India with those of Myanmar.
- ❖ The agreement will also facilitate movement of people on the basis of valid passports and visas which will enhance economic and social interaction between the two countries.

Council for Trade Development and Promotion

- ❖ Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, Suresh Prabhu, chaired the **third meeting** of the Council for Trade Development and Promotion held in New Delhi.
- ❖ Its objective is to ensure a continuous dialogue with the governments of states and Union Territories on measures for
 - Creating an international trade enabling environment in the states
 - To create a framework for making the states active partners in boosting India's exports.

- ❖ Members of the council are trade/commerce ministers of states and Union Territories, besides 14 secretaries of the central government, including commerce, revenue, shipping, civil aviation, agriculture, food processing and economic affairs.
- ❖ The Council for Trade Development and Promotion was constituted in 2015 under the chairpersonship of the Union Minister for Commerce and Industry, in pursuance to the provisions of Foreign Trade Policy statement 2015-20.

All India Higher Education Survey

- ❖ Human Resource Development (HRD) Minister Prakash Javadekar released the All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE) for the year 2016-17 in New Delhi.
- ❖ The number of students enrolling for higher education (undergraduate, postgraduate and research-level studies within country) in India saw a marginal 0.7 per cent increase in 2016-17.
- ❖ The gross enrolment ratio (GER) in higher education had gone up 25.2 per cent in 2016-17 from 24.5 per cent in 2015-16.
- ❖ The country has set an aggressive target of achieving 30 per cent GER in higher education by 2020.
- ❖ GER is the total enrolment in higher education among the population in the age group of 18-23.
- ❖ According to the survey, the number of universities in the country rose to 864 last years as compared to 799 in 2015-16.
- ❖ Tamil Nadu had the highest GER in the country at 46.9 per cent. Bihar is at the bottom with 14.9 per cent of its youth in the age group of 18 to 23 enrolling for higher education.

GER of select states		
States	2015-16	2016-17
Tamil Nadu	44.3	46.9
Maharashtra	29.9	30.2
Uttar Pradesh	24.5	24.9
Odisha	19.6	21
Bihar	14.3	14.4
All India	24.5	25.2

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

- ❖ The annual ASEAN India Pravasi Bharatiya Divas is being celebrated at Singapore.
- ❖ The Theme of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas 2018 is “Ancient Route, New Journey: Diaspora in the Dynamic Asean-India Partnership.”
- ❖ Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated every year on January 9 to mark the contribution of overseas Indian community in the development of India.
- ❖ January 9 was chosen as the day to celebrate this occasion since it was on this day in 1915 that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest Pravasi, returned to India from South Africa, led India’s freedom struggle and changed the lives of Indians forever.
- ❖ The event coincides with the 25th anniversary of India-Asean dialogue partnership, which will be marked by a summit on Jan. 25.

Swachh Survekshan 2018

- ❖ The government has announced the launch of cleanliness survey ‘The Swachh Survekshan’ for 2018 as part of Swachh Bharat Mission.
- ❖ The Swachh Survekshan 2018 will rank 500 cities on national level which have more than 1 lakh population, while 3,541 cities with less than 1 lakh population will have State and Regional ranking.
- ❖ As per Swachh Survekshan-2016 which assessed 73 Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) Mysuru got the tag of the cleanest city of India that year.
- ❖ As per 2017 edition which assessed 434 ULBs Indore emerged as the cleanest city in the country in that survey.
- ❖ This year the survey would be conducted from January to March.

All India Whips’ Conference

- ❖ The 18th All India Whips’ Conference was held at Udaipur, Rajasthan.
- ❖ Deliberations on paperless parliament and state legislatures by rolling out e-Sansad and e-Vidhan are on the agenda of 18th All India Whips Conference.
- ❖ e-Sansad and e-Vidhan are mission mode projects under Digital India to make the functioning of Parliament and state Legislatures paperless.
- ❖ e-Vidhan would make the functioning of state legislatures paperless, transparent, productive and more accountable and economise the entire Legislative process.

Whip

- ❖ A whip is a representative of political party in legislative body who is also a member in the same and has responsible for maintaining discipline of this party members within the legislative body.
- ❖ The main duty of whip is ensuring that their members in Parliament and Legislature vote in line with the Party's official policy on important issues.
- ❖ The office of Whip is neither mentioned in the Constitution of India, nor in the Rules of the House, nor in the Parliamentary Statute. It is based on conventions of Parliamentary government.

Clean Ganga

- ❖ The Union Defence Ministry has sanctioned raising of Territorial Army (TA) battalion comprising ex-servicemen of Indian Army as part of its mission to clean the Ganga by 2020.
- ❖ This battalion will be raised in Allahabad, Uttar Pradesh as a Composite Ecological Task Force (CETF) battalion of TA for National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), the nodal agency for cleaning the Ganga.
- ❖ The battalion will work with the funding provided from the budget of the Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation.
- ❖ Territorial Army, which comes under the Defence Ministry, is considered a second line of defence after the regular Army.
- ❖ Ecological Task Force (ETF) battalions of TA have been raised to execute specific environment-related projects.

4th international Dharma-Dhamma Conference

- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind has inaugurated the 4th International Dharma-Dhamma Conference on "State and Social Order in Dharma-Dhamma Traditions" at Rajgir, Bihar.
- ❖ The Conference is being organised by Nalanda University, in collaboration with the Centre for Study of Religion and Society, Ministry of External Affairs.
- ❖ The event is being organised as part of the commemorative events to celebrate the Silver Jubilee year of ASEAN-India Dialogue Partnership.
- ❖ It aims to provide an opportunity to academics and policy makers from India and abroad to share ideas and build collaboration for a better world.

FDI policy- Amendments

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has given its approval to a number of amendments in the FDI Policy.
- ❖ These are intended to liberalise and simplify the FDI policy so as to provide ease of doing business in the country.
- ❖ In turn, it will lead to larger FDI inflows contributing to growth of investment, income and employment.
- ❖ Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is a source of non-debt finance which is the major driver for the economic development of the country.

National Trust- Fixed term

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal to fix the term of the Chairperson and Members of the Board of National Trust for three years.
- ❖ In this regard, amendment will be made to Section 4(1) and Section 5(1) of the National Trust for the Welfare of Person with Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Mental Retardation and Multiple Disabilities Act, 1999
- ❖ Section 4(1) of the National trust Act, provides that the char or a member of a board of National trust would continue in office for an indefinite period beyond the prescribed term of three years which is proposed now, until his successor shall have been duly appointed.
- ❖ The proposed amendments in these provisions of the Act seek to avoid such a situation.

National Trust

- ❖ It is a statutory body under Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment.
- ❖ It is mandated to discharge two basic duties – legal and welfare with regard to empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (PwD).
- ❖ Its fundamental purpose, is to create enabling environment, i.e. provide opportunities for Persons with Disabilities) through comprehensive support systems which will lead towards development of an inclusive society.

IAF's conquer 'Seven Summits'

- ❖ An expert team of Indian Air Force (IAF) mountaineers led by Capt R C Tripathi has returned after successfully hoisting the Indian Tricolor and the IAF flag on Mount Vinson, the highest peak of Antarctica.
- ❖ Before Mt Vinson, different teams of the Air Force had summited Mt Everest (Asia), Mt Carstenz Pyramid (Indonesia- Australasia continent), Mt Elbrus (Russia-Europe), Mt Kilimanjaro (Africa), Mt Aconcagua (Argentina-South

America), Mt McKinley/Denali (Alaska-North America) over the last two decades.

- ❖ IAF becomes first defense body to summit all major seven peaks across seven continents.



- ❖ The IAF Mission Seven Summits was launched in 2008 with an aim to hoist the National Tricolour on the highest mountains of all seven continents.

Saksham 2018

- ❖ Saksham (Sanrakshan Kshamta Mahotsav) is an annual flagship event of Petroleum Conservation Research Association (PCRA) under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas
- ❖ The month long Saksham 2018 campaign aims at raising awareness amongst the citizens, on the need for conservation and effective utilisation of petroleum products; the issues involved and the solutions.

INS Nirghat and INS Nirbhik

- ❖ Indian Navy has decommissioned INS Nirghat and INS Nirbhik warships at Naval Dockyard, Mumbai (Maharashtra), after a glorious 28 and 30 years respectively in the service of the nation.
- ❖ These ships had participated in numerous operations including Operations Parakram and Vijay during their glorious service for almost three decades.
- ❖ INS Nirbhik and INS Nirghat in their new avatars were commissioned at Poti in erstwhile USSR (now in Russia) in December 1987 and December 1989 respectively.
- ❖ These ships were inheritors of proud legacy as their original avatars were flag bearers of naval offensive action on Karachi Harbour during India-Pakistan war in 1971.

Fourth ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture & Forestry

- ❖ The 4th ASEAN-INDIA Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry was held at NASC Complex, New Delhi.
- ❖ The meeting was co-chaired by India's Minister of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare Radha Mohan Singh and Thailand's Minister of Agriculture and Cooperatives Grisada Boonrach.
- ❖ The aim of the meeting was to
 - Facilitate promotion of joint research for development of technologies for increasing production and productivity of crops, livestock and fisheries, and natural resources management
 - Enhance cooperation on exchange of expertise to promote resilience in food security to address the price volatility of food supplies in the region.
- ❖ It was announced that 5th ASEAN-India Ministerial Meeting on Agriculture and Forestry will be held in 2019 in Brunei Darussalam.

India's 1st coal-to-gas conversion plant

- ❖ Natural gas transmission and distribution company, GAIL India is going to be set up India's first coal-to-synthetic gas conversion plants in Odisha.
- ❖ This synthetic gas is expected to be cheaper than natural gas.
- ❖ GAIL has roped in other public sector undertakings like Coal India, Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilizers and Fertilizer Corp of India for the project, which will generate ammonia synthesis gas from coal.
- ❖ A new bio-fuels policy is to be placed for Cabinet approval soon that will detail things like investments, incentives, the maximum assured price etc. for the sector.

5th Bilateral Meeting - India and Malaysia

- ❖ 5th bilateral meeting on cooperation in the field of Traditional Systems of Medicine between India and Malaysia was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ It was a part of the agreement signed between India and Malaysia in 2010.
- ❖ Joint Secretary, Ministry of AYUSH presided over the meeting from the Indian side while Malaysia was represented by its Deputy Director General Health (Medical), Ministry of Health Malaysia.
- ❖ The Key issues discussed are
 - Setting up of an Ayurveda chair in University of UTAR in Malaysia
 - providing professional training in Panchakarma therapy for Malaysian experts in India.

- The evaluation of safety and efficacy of combination Ayurvedic/traditional products for clinical trials.
- Safety evaluation of Ayurvedic products based on Good Laboratory Practices (GLP).

Raisina Dialogue

- ❖ The third edition Raisina Dialogue was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu delivered the inaugural speech at the third edition of the geo-political conference.
- ❖ This was the first edition that featured a foreign head of government
- ❖ This year's theme of the Raisina Dialogue (16 to 18 January) is 'Managing Disruptive Transitions: Ideas, Institutions and Idioms'.

Raisina Dialogue

- ❖ Held annually in New Delhi, Raisina Dialogue is India's premier foreign policy conference.
- ❖ The event is jointly organised by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and top think tank Observer Research Foundation (ORF).
- ❖ The forum is designed on the lines of Shangrila Dialogue in Singapore.

Teen Murti Chowk

- ❖ A solemn ceremony at the Teen Murti Memorial in New Delhi was held to mark the formal renaming of 'Teen Murti Chowk' as 'Teen Murti Haifa Chowk'.
- ❖ The ceremony was attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu.

About Teen Murti Memorial

- ❖ The three bronze statues at Teen Murti represent the Hyderabad, Jodhpur and Mysore Lancers who were part of the 15th Imperial Service Cavalry Brigade.
- ❖ The brigade carried out the victorious assault on the fortified city of Haifa protected by a joint force of Ottomans, Germany and Austria-Hungary on September 23, 1918, during the World War I.
- ❖ The liberation of Haifa cleared a supply route for the Allies to the city through the sea.
- ❖ Forty-four Indian soldiers made the ultimate sacrifice during the liberation of the city in the World War I.
- ❖ Till date, the 61st Cavalry celebrates September 23 as its Raising Day or "Haifa Day".

Vajra Prahar

- ❖ The Indo-US joint military exercise 'Vajra Prahar' will be held at Joint Base Lewis-McChord (JBLM) in Seattle, United States.
- ❖ 'Vajra Prahar' is a Indo-US Special Forces joint training exercise conducted alternately in India and the US.
- ❖ The aim of the exercise is to promote military relations between the two countries by enhancing interoperability and mutual exchange of tactics between Special Forces.
- ❖ The exercise will mainly focus on special operations in urban areas.

SAREX-18

- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Japan Coast Guard (JCG) undertook a joint search and rescue exercise, 'SAREX-18,' in the Bay of Bengal off the Chennai coast.
- ❖ The Coast Guards of India and Japan, during a joint exercise, simulated a hijacking of a cruise vessel and rescue of passengers on board and other rescue operations
- ❖ Observers from 17 countries, a delegation from the Coast Guard of Japan, and members of the National Maritime Search and Rescue Board witnessed the drill.
- ❖ The aim of the exercise was to augment operational level interaction and capacity building in areas of search and rescue, pollution response and maritime law enforcement.

iCREATE

- ❖ The Prime Minister of India and his Israeli counterpart Benjamin Netanyahu inaugurated the iCreate centre in Ahmedabad.
- ❖ Called as the International Centre for Entrepreneurship and Technology (iCreate), the venture has been started to promote and nurture entrepreneurs by providing them finance, mentors and technology.
- ❖ iCreate is an independent centre to promote 'Start-up India' scheme.
- ❖ iCreate provides 13-week grooming program to equip an individual with the right skill and tools required in the entrepreneurial world. At end of the program, financial assistance up to Rs 50,000 is provided by the venture for deserving ideas from the trainees.

Orange colored passports for unskilled labours

- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs announced that the passports for the Emigration Check Required (ECR) category will be issued with orange jackets.
- ❖ The passports in the Emigration Check Not Required (ECNR) category will continue to have blue jacket.
- ❖ It also announced that the last page of the passport and other travel documents issued under the Passports Act, 1967 and Passport Rules, 1980 would no longer be printed.
- ❖ Persons who don't have a minimum educational qualification of 10th standard will come under ECR category.

Passport types in India

- ❖ Regular Passport - This has a navy blue cover; it is issued to citizens for ordinary travel like vacations and business trips.
- ❖ Diplomatic Passport - This has a maroon cover; it is issued to Indian diplomats, top-ranking government officials (joint secretary and above) and diplomatic couriers.
- ❖ Official Passport - This has a white cover; it is issued to individuals representing the Indian government on official business.

National Family and Health Survey (NFHS-4) wealth index released

- ❖ A Wealth Index of India was released by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare based on the data from the fourth round of National Family and Health Survey (NFHS-4).
- ❖ According to this index, Delhi is richest state followed by Punjab and Goa.
- ❖ Jains were declared the wealthiest community in India whereas Sikhs stood second in that area.
- ❖ Bihar came out to be the poorest state in India.
- ❖ The upper castes have a much larger share of the population in top wealth quintile. Scheduled tribes are the poorest with 45.9% of their population in the lowest quintile.

Wealth Index

- ❖ As part of NFHS-4, the wealth index is prepared based on scores on ownership of consumer goods like television and bicycles, household items, basic items for necessity and household characteristics such as availability of clean drinking water.

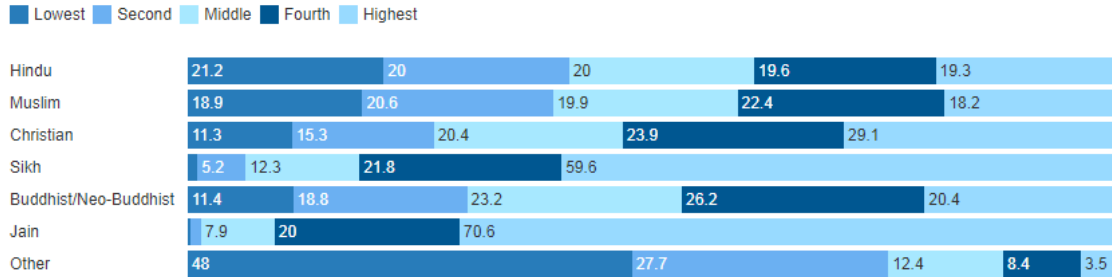
National Family Health Survey

- ❖ The National Family Health Survey (NFHS) is a large-scale, multi-round survey conducted in a representative sample of households throughout India.

- ❖ The first survey was conducted in 1992-93 and since then three rounds of the survey have been conducted.
- ❖ International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), Mumbai, was designated as the nodal agency responsible for providing coordination and technical guidance for the survey.

Wealth distribution among Hindus and Muslims is similar

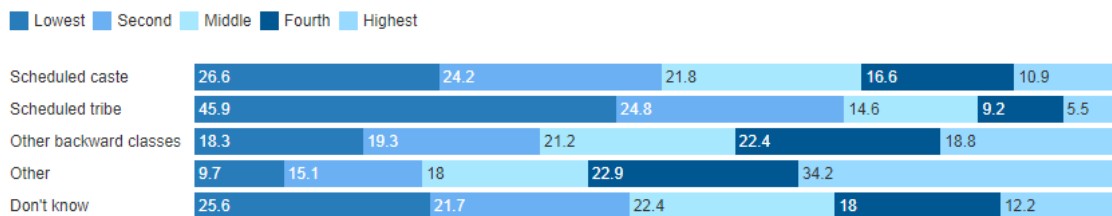
Columns show quintile-wise distribution of households by wealth



Source: National Family and Health Survey, 2015-16


Upper castes have a much larger share of population in top-wealth quintile

Columns show quintile-wise distribution of households by wealth



India successfully test-fires nuclear-capable Agni-5 ballistic missile

- ❖ India successfully tested its long range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, Agni-5, for its full range from Dr Abdul Kalam Island in Odisha.
- ❖ The nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) has a strike range of 5,000 km, which can cover almost all of China and most of Europe.
- ❖ The missile will eventually be inducted into the tri-service, Strategic Forces Command, which manages India's nuclear arsenal.
- ❖ Agni 5 is a fire and forget missile, which once fired cannot be stopped, except by an interceptor missile which only the US, Russia and Israel have.
- ❖ This was the fifth test of the missile and the third consecutive one from a canister on a road mobile launcher.
- ❖ The canister-launch version provides the capability to quickly transport the missile and launch it from anywhere.
- ❖ The Agni-5 is the most advanced missile in the Agni series, because of its navigation and guidance, warhead and engine.



FIRE POWER

The Agni-V is the most advanced version of the indigenously-built missile series

- It is an intercontinental surface-to-surface nuclear-capable ballistic missile
- Developed by DRDO

Propulsion	Length	Weight	Payload	Engine
3 stages	17.5 metres	50 tonnes	1 tonne	3 stage solid

- Agni-V was last tested on December 26, 2016
- Countries with ICBM technology: U.S., Russia, U.K., France and China

Other missiles in the series

	Agni-1	Agni-2	Agni-3	Agni-4	Agni-5
Range (km)	700	2,000	3,000	4,000	5,000+
Test date	April 19, 2012	Sept. 15, 2013	Jan. 31, 2015	Nov. 9, 2015	Jan. 18, 2018

RANGE
More than **5,000** kilometres

Cyber Warrior Police Force to tackle internet-related crimes

- ❖ The Union govt. has decided to set up a Cyber Warrior Police Force (CWPF) to tackle internet-related crimes such as cyber threats, child pornography and online stalking.
- ❖ The CWPF is likely to operate under the National Information Security Policy and Guidelines wing of the Union home ministry's Cyber and Information Security (CIS) division, which was created November 2017.
- ❖ It is proposed to be raised on the lines of the Central Armed Police Force.
- ❖ The other two wings under the CIS division are cybercrime and internal security.

India joins 3rd export control group

- ❖ India has joined the 42-member Australia Group, an elite export control regime against spread of chemical and biological weapons.
- ❖ India is first South Asian nation to become its full-time member of Australia Group. China is not a member of the Australia Group.
- ❖ India's formal induction as the 43rd member is seen as a recognition of New Delhi's record in the field of non-proliferation and a major foreign policy gain.
- ❖ With this, India is now part of three of the four key export control groups in world dealing with non-proliferation which includes 35-member MTCR and 42 member Wassenaar Arrangement.

- ❖ The inclusion will help to raise India's stature in the field of non-proliferation, though it is not signatory to Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and help in acquiring critical technologies.

Australia Group

- ❖ It is multilateral export control regime (MECR) and informal group which was established in 1985.
- ❖ It works to counter spread of materials, equipment and technologies that could contribute to development or acquisition of chemical and biological weapons (CBW) by states or terrorist groups through harmonisation of export controls.
- ❖ Now it has 43 members. China, Pakistan, Iran, North Korea are not its members.

Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA)

- ❖ The Pradhan Mantri Surakshit Matritva Abhiyan (PMSMA) has crossed one crore mark in antenatal check-ups.
- ❖ The PMSMA programme was launched in 2016 under the ministry of health and family welfare.
- ❖ It aims to ensure free comprehensive and quality antenatal check-ups to pregnant women on 9th of every month at government health centres and hospitals in both rural and urban areas for ensuring safe pregnancy.
- ❖ The programme is carried out across India with participation of private doctors.
- ❖ The scheme is applicable only for pregnant women in their pregnancy period of 3 to 6 months.
- ❖ Maharashtra has reported largest number of check-ups among non-empowered action group states.
- ❖ Rajasthan has reported largest number of check-ups among the empowered action group states.

Bharat ke Veer

- ❖ "Bharat ke Veer" is an online portal in which any person can make fiscal contributions to assist the families of martyrs of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF).
- ❖ Through this portal one can donate directly to individual Martyrs account (up to max of Rs 15 lakhs) or may donate to the Bharat Ke Veer corpus fund.
- ❖ Bharat Ke Veer corpus would be managed by a committee made up of eminent persons of repute and senior government officials, in equal number, who would decide to disburse the fund equitably to the brave hearts family on need basis.

- ❖ CAPF includes Assam rifles (AR), Border security force (BSF), National security guards(NSG), Central industrial security force (CISF), Central reserve police force (CRPF) , Indo-Tibetan border police force (ITBT), National disaster response force (NDRF),Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

Cyber Surakshit Bharat

- ❖ In order to strengthen cyber security practices and awareness among the government departments, the ministry of electronics and IT has launched the Cyber Surakshit Bharat initiative in association with the IT industry majors.
- ❖ An aim of the initiative is to spread awareness about cybercrime and building capacity for safety measures for Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) and frontline IT staff across all government departments.
- ❖ The government has launched the Cyber Surakshit Bharat, with a primary objective to keep people's data safe and protected.

National Year of Millets

- ❖ International Trade Fair on Organics and Millets was held at Bengaluru .
- ❖ The Union government has decided to declare 2018 as the 'National Year of Millets'.
- ❖ Dedicating a year for millets will not only increase awareness about its health benefits, but also result in higher demand for these drought-resistant varieties, resulting in remunerative prices for poor and marginal farmers.

Disqualification of 20 AAP MLAs

- ❖ President has accepted the Election Commission's (EC) recommendation to disqualify 20 Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) members of the Delhi legislative assembly for holding offices of profit.
- ❖ AAP, which has 66 members in the Delhi assembly, will now be reduced to 46 members.
- ❖ In September 2016, the Delhi High Court set aside their appointments as parliamentary secretaries.

Office of profit

- ❖ If an MLA or an MP holds a government office and receives benefits from it, then that office is termed as an "office of profit".
- ❖ A person will be disqualified if he holds an office of profit under the central or state government, other than an office declared not to disqualify its holder by a law passed by Parliament or state legislature.

- ❖ According to the provisions of law enshrined in Articles 102 (1) (a) and 191 (1) (a) of the constitution, no MP, MLA or MLC shall hold any position in the government that yields salaries, perquisites or other pecuniary benefits for them. Person found to hold office of profit are eligible for disqualification.
- ❖ There is no clear explanation of the terms 'Office of Profit' and list of the positions to be considered as 'Office of Profit'.
- ❖ Representation of People Act, 1957 was amended in 1959 and Parliament (Prevention of Disqualification) Act, 1959 was enacted. The Act exempted certain posts from being recorded as offices of profit.
- ❖ Parliament Secretary – The post held by the disqualified Aam Aadmi party MLAs is not defined in the exemption list.

New Chief Election Commissioner- Om Prakash Rawat

- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind has appointed Election commissioner Om Prakash Rawat as new Chief Election Commissioner.
- ❖ President also appointed former finance secretary Ashok Lavasa as Election commissioner.
- ❖ Both will have tenure of six years in office or till he or she attains the age of 65 years, whichever is earlier.
- ❖ Om Prakash Rawat will succeed Achal Kumar Joti who has retired from post. He was appointed to Election Commission in August 2015.

Rudra at Republic Day parade

- ❖ Indigenously-developed weapon system integrated helicopter Rudra will make its maiden appearance in the Republic Day parade on Rajpath
- ❖ This is the first time this aircraft is being showcased in the Republic Day Parade.
- ❖ The IAF tableau will be themed on "Indian Air Force encouraging indigenisation", while the tri-service tableau will be themed on "veterans are asset to the nation".
- ❖ The HAL Rudra, also known as ALH-WSI, is an armed version of HAL Dhruv. Rudra has 2 main versions, Mark III(weaponless) and Mark IV.
- ❖ Rudra is equipped with forwarding Looking Infrared (FLIR), anti-tank guided missiles and air-to-air missiles.

'Bharat Ke Veer' Anthem

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has launched an official anthem for "Bharat Ke Veer", an anthem, sung and composed by singer Kailash Kher.

- ❖ Bharat ke Veer is web portal and mobile application launched by Ministry of Home Affairs. The portal is supported by National Informatics Centre (NIC) and powered by State Bank of India (SBI).

Coast Guard patrol vessel-Vijaya

- ❖ The indigenously built second offshore patrol vessel (OPV) built by the Larsen and Toubro Shipyard for the Indian Coast Guard was launched at Kattupalli shipyard, Ennore.
- ❖ Its navigation and communication system are capable of operating in tropical conditions.
- ❖ It is equipped with state-of art radar, navigational and communication system, will be utilised for day and night patrol and surveillance, anti-terrorist, anti-smuggling operations and coastal security
- ❖ The first OPV named Vikarm is the country's first-ever defence craft to be built in private shipyard i.e Larsen and Toubro.

International Dam Safety Conference

- ❖ India hosted the first International Dam Safety Conference 2018 at Thiruvananthapuram on January 23-24.
- ❖ Central Water Commission is organizing the event in association with Kerala state government.
- ❖ Dam safety conferences is an annual event under the Dam Safety Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) project, the conferences will be conducted in DRIP states.
- ❖ The key recommendations emerging from the deliberations of the conference will be circulated to stakeholders as well as policy makers for implementation.

DHARMA App

- ❖ Dam Health and Rehabilitation Monitoring Application (DHARMA) will be launched during the international dam safety conference.
- ❖ The app will serve as a web tool to digitize all dam related data effectively.
- ❖ It will help to document authentic asset and health information pertaining to the large dams in the country, enabling appropriate actions to ensure need based rehabilitation.

DRIP

- ❖ Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) was implemented by Ministry of Water Resources with assistance from the World Bank.
- ❖ The Central Dam Safety Organisation of Central Water Commission is coordinating and supervising the Project implementation.
- ❖ The main objectives of DRIP are

- To improve the safety and performance of selected (223 dams across 7 different states) existing dams in a sustainable manner.
- To strengthen the dam safety institutional setup in participating states as well as at central level.
- ❖ The Seven DRIP States includes Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, and Uttarakhand.

Bharat Parv

- ❖ The 'Bharat Parv' is an event organized annually at Red Fort, Delhi from 26th to 31st January to commemorate Republic day.
- ❖ The prime objective of organizing the event is to generate a patriotic mood, promote the rich cultural diversity of the country.
- ❖ The Ministry of Tourism has been designated as the nodal ministry for this event.

SECURE software

- ❖ The Ministry of rural development has adopted the Software for Estimate Calculation Using Rural Rates for Employment (SECURE).
- ❖ It aims to improve quality of works through detailing of technical specifications, tasks and workflows.
- ❖ All estimates under MGNREGS will be generated with the use of SECURE (software) from the Programme's Management Information System with effect from 1st April, 2018.

Rotavac vaccine

- ❖ Bharat Biotech's diarrhea vaccine ROTAVAC gets World Health Organization (WHO) pre-qualification
- ❖ The WHO pre-qualification paves the way for health and humanitarian organizations such as UNICEF to procure it for public health vaccination programs across the world.
- ❖ Rotavirus is the most common cause of severe diarrhea and kills more than 200,000 children every year.
- ❖ ROTAVC is also included in the Universal Immunization Program And India's National Immunisation Scheme.

Delhi Declaration

- ❖ The ASEAN-India Commemorative Summit was held in New Delhi to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the establishment of sectoral dialogue between two sides.
- ❖ It issued joint statement titled Delhi Declaration after the plenary session focusing on counter-terrorism, security, military cooperation, and bilateral financial support.
- ❖ The theme of the 25th Anniversary of ASEAN-India Dialogue Relations was "Shared Values, Common Destiny".
- ❖ The Declaration supports a common approach to counter terrorism and sought a comprehensive approach to combat terrorism through close cooperation.
- ❖ The declaration also urges countries to strengthen cooperation and collaboration in combating transnational crimes, including people smuggling, trafficking in persons, illicit drug trafficking, cybercrime.
- ❖ The Delhi Declaration also reaffirmed the importance of maintaining and promoting peace, stability, maritime safety and security in accordance with UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea).

Stree Swabhiman

- ❖ Union Information Technology and Electronics Ministry has launched Stree Swabhiman Initiative to maintain Women's health and Hygiene.
- ❖ The initiative was launched in partnership with Common Service Centre's (CSCs) established under Digital India.
- ❖ It aims to create a sustainable model to provide access to affordable, reliable and modern (eco-friendly) sanitary napkins to adolescent girls and women in rural by leveraging Common Service Centres (CSCs) established under digital India.
- ❖ The initiative is driven by awareness and personalised outreach by women entrepreneurs who produce and market sanitary napkins themselves.

Objectionable Content

- ❖ The Ministry of Electronics and IT has highlighted that around 1300 social media URLs were blocked or removed from in Indian Cyberspace in last year.
- ❖ These were based on the recommendation of a government committee to deal with "objectionable content" in Indian Cyberspace.
- ❖ The Information Technology (IT) Act 2000 and Indian Penal Code provides for dealing with "objectionable content" posted online.

- ❖ Blocking is a sovereign power that is given to the government by virtue of Section 69A of the IT Act.

AEFI-report

- ❖ Union Health Ministry has released a report on deaths due to Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI).
- ❖ It is estimated that for every 1,00,000 children immunised, there would be at least 10 serious adverse events (including deaths and hospitalisation).
- ❖ India's AEFI data is compiled by District Medical Officer.
- ❖ The WHO has recommended the use of performance indicators for AEFI functionality assessment.

Human Papillomavirus (HPV)

- ❖ The National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI) has recommended the introduction of HPV vaccine in the UIP.
- ❖ NTAGI is an advisory body that recommends vaccines for India's Universal Immunization Programme (UIP).
- ❖ Human Papillomavirus (HPV) is a group of more than 150 viruses. It is usually harmless and goes away by itself.
- ❖ However, some types cause papilloma or warts in parts of the body.
- ❖ HPV spreads by skin-to-skin contact and is the most common sexually transmitted infection.
- ❖ HPV is commonly associated with cervical cancer.
- ❖ India has one of the world's highest burdens of HPV-related cancer and around 67,000 women die from this disease each year.
- ❖ HPV vaccines offered by private firms face clinical trial issues in India on concerns of side-effects.

Pulse Polio Immunization (PPI)

- ❖ As part of the National Immunisation Day observed on 28 January, PPI programme for 2018 was launched.
- ❖ More than 17 crore children of less than 5 years across the country will be given polio drops.
- ❖ The poliovirus causes paralysis, known as an acute flaccid paralysis (AFP).
- ❖ This is characterised by sudden muscle weakness, and fever in one or more limbs.

- ❖ India reported its last polio case in 2011 and is also declared polio-free by WHO in 2014.
- ❖ In India two types of vaccines administered for Polio.
 - ✓ Injectable Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV)
 - ✓ OPV (oral polio vaccine)
- ❖ The injectable Inactivated Polio Vaccine (IPV) has also been introduced recently into the Universal Immunisation Programme.
- ❖ IPV is an injectable form of polio vaccine administered alone or in combination with other vaccines including the OPV (oral polio vaccine).

Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C)

- ❖ The Union Home Ministry is planning to set up the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) in Delhi.
- ❖ It would deal with cybercrimes such as financial frauds, circulation of communal and pornographic contents.
- ❖ The centre would maintain a list of suspects and the leads generated during investigations in cybercrime cases.
- ❖ This would be shared with law enforcement agencies through a "secured internal network".
- ❖ The ministry has asked states to establish a similar mechanism in every district.
- ❖ This would fund the setting up of a cyber-forensic training laboratory-cum-training centre for police officials in each state.

Rapid Reporting System

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD) has launched beneficiary module (Phase -1) of Rapid Reporting System (RRS).
- ❖ It is a web based on line monitoring for Scheme for Adolescent Girls (SAG).
- ❖ It has been developed by Ministry of WCD in collaboration with National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- ❖ The RRS portal will facilitate monitoring of SAG and take corrective measures by ensuring faster flow of information, accurate targeting of beneficiaries and reduction of leakages.

Scheme for Adolescent Girls

- ❖ It is centrally sponsored scheme implemented using platform of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme.
- ❖ Ministry of WCD is implementing scheme in selected 508 districts across the country.

- ❖ The scheme aims at
 - providing them nutritional support, motivating out of school girls to go back to formal schooling or skill training under its non-nutrition component
 - providing nutritional support and girls are also equipped with information on health, hygiene and guidance on existing public services.

Quota for Acid attack victims

- ❖ The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) has issued notification to provide quota to people with autism, mental illnesses, intellectual disability and victims of acid attacks in Central government jobs.
- ❖ In case of direct recruitment, 4% of the total number of vacancies up from existing 3%, in groups A, B and C will be reserved for people with benchmark disabilities.
- ❖ Benchmark disability means a person with not less than 40% of a specified disability
- ❖ 1% of each posts be reserved for people with blindness and low vision; deaf and hard of hearing; locomotor disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy.
- ❖ Besides, 1% cent posts each shall be also reserved for people suffering from autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disability and mental illness.
- ❖ The move to enhance reservation quota for those with learning disability and acid attack victims comes after passage of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2016, and the notification of relevant rules in this regard.
- ❖ Under the new rules, all government organisations have been asked to appoint 'grievance redressal officers' to look into complaints.

INTERNATIONAL

Saudi Arabia, UAE introduce VAT

- ❖ Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have introduced the Value Added Tax (VAT) for the first time.
- ❖ It is a five per cent tax on most goods and services to boost revenue.
- ❖ Some outgoings were exempt from the tax or given a zero-tax rating, including medical treatment, financial services and public transport.
- ❖ The other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council - Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and Qatar have also committed to introduce VAT.

- ❖ It is notable that none of the Gulf states levy any personal income tax.

Underwater surveillance networks in Indian Ocean – China

- ❖ China has established an underwater surveillance network which will help its navy track target vessels more accurately and give it a cutting edge in the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.
- ❖ The system is based on a network of platforms, which includes buoys, surface vessels, satellites and underwater gliders that gather data from the South China Sea, and the Western Pacific and Indian oceans.
- ❖ The system collects information about the underwater environment, particularly water temperature and salinity, which the navy can then use to more accurately track target vessels as well as improve navigation and positioning
- ❖ That information is then streamed to three intelligence centres in the Paracel Islands in the South China Sea, the southern province of Guangdong, and a joint facility in South Asia, where it is processed and analysed.

Israel withdraws from UNESCO

- ❖ Israel has filed notice to withdraw from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) alongside the United States.
- ❖ Israel has been a member of UNESCO since 1949 and it has nine sites on UNESCO's World Heritage List, including the White City of Tel Aviv, the sites of human evolution at Mount Carmel.
- ❖ The membership of both Israel and the US officially ceased as of December 31, 2018.

Pakistan on Special Watch List

- ❖ The US has placed Pakistan on a 'Special Watch List' for "severe violations" of religious freedom, making it the only country to be put under the newly-formed list.
- ❖ It has also re-designated about 10 countries as 'Countries of Particular Concern' under its International Religious Freedom (IRF) Act.
- ❖ They are Myanmar, China, Eritrea, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.
- ❖ The Special Watch List is for countries that engage in or tolerate severe violations of religious freedom but may not rise to level of 'Countries of Particular Concern' list.
- ❖ It is new category created under International Religious Freedom Act of 2016.

- ❖ These designations are aimed at improving the respect for religious freedom in these countries.

"Bird language" UNESCO list

- ❖ The United Nations Cultural Agency has accepted the “bird language” of Black Sea villagers as an endangered part of world heritage in need of urgent protection.
- ❖ The unusual and very efficient whistle language used as a means of communication by villagers in the remote and mountainous northern Turkey has recently entered UNESCO list of Intangible Cultural Heritage.
- ❖ Around 10,000 people in the district of Canakci in Giresun province, still use the language today.
- ❖ This form of communication which dates to some 500 years ago, during the Ottoman Empire period.

UN Security Council - Six countries

- ❖ Six countries formally joined the ranks of the non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council.
- ❖ The six countries are Equatorial Guinea, Ivory Coast, Kuwait, Peru, Poland and the Netherlands.
- ❖ The Non-Permanent Members are selected for 2-year life time in a cyclical manner by UNGA.
- ❖ The six countries who left the UN Security Council on December 31 are Egypt, Italy, Japan, Senegal, Ukraine and Uruguay.
- ❖ The UN Security Council has 15 members, including five with permanent seats who have the power to veto resolutions - Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.
- ❖ The Non-Permanent Members don't have any Veto power.

Equal pay at workplace

- ❖ Iceland has become the first country in the world to legalise equal pay for both gender at work place.
- ❖ The legislation, which took effect on January 1 2018 provides that all companies, both private and public, need to prove that their wage practices and don't discriminate against women.
- ❖ The only difference in wages that may exist, should be on the basis of education, output, and skills.

- ❖ According to World Economic Forum's global gender equality index Including 2017's Edition, Island bagged the first place for the ninth consecutive year.

Haj pilgrimage

- ❖ Saudi Arabia has given its nod to India's plan to revive the option of ferrying Haj pilgrims via sea route to Jeddah.
- ❖ For this India and Saudi Arabia have signed the annual Haj agreement in Mecca.
- ❖ For the first time according to the new Haj policy of India, Muslim women from India above 45 years of age, will be allowed to go to Haj without 'Mehram' (male companion). i.e., they are allowed to travel for Haj in groups of four or more women.
- ❖ The practice of ferrying Haj pilgrims between Mumbai and Jeddah by waterways was stopped in 1995.
- ❖ Sending pilgrims through sea route will help cut down travel expenses significantly.

Julian Assange - Ecuador Citizenship

- ❖ Ecuador has granted citizenship to Wiki Leaks founder Julian Assange, who has been living in asylum at the nation's embassy in London for more than five years.
- ❖ The 46-year-old has been naturalised after living for five and a half years in the cramped, Latin American country's embassy in Knightsbridge, central London.

World's largest solar thermal plant

- ❖ The South Australian government has given development approval for The world's largest solar-thermal power plant.
- ❖ Construction on the 150-megawatt Aurora plant, to be built by utility-scale solar power company Solar Reserve, will begin in 2018 at an estimated cost of \$509 million
- ❖ The new development will be located near Port Augusta, the site of the last coal power station in South Australia.
- ❖ It will make use of solar thermal technology, and a molten salt tower to capture and store the sun's energy.
- ❖ The new plant will be able to power around 35 per cent of all of the households in South Australia.

- ❖ It will join the largest lithium-ion battery, built by Tesla to complement the state's power grid during the high-demand summer, as another major renewable energy project in South Australia.

Iron Fist

- ❖ American and Japanese military forces have launched joint exercise named Iron Fist. The 13th annual Iron Fist exercises kicked off in the U.S. western state of California.
- ❖ It is a realistic and challenging training to prepare both USA and Japan from anything that might happen in the Pacific so that they are ready to respond.
- ❖ This will be the last joint exercise before Japan establishes its Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade in March.

BBIN Agreement

- ❖ Bangladesh, India and Nepal have given nod to operating procedures for movement of passenger vehicles in the sub-region under Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) motor vehicles agreement.
- ❖ The Motor Vehicles Agreement (MVA) was signed for the Regulation of Passenger, Personnel and Cargo Vehicular Traffic among the four South Asian neighbours.
- ❖ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been providing technical, advisory, and financial support to the BBIN MVA initiative as part of its assistance to the south Asia sub-regional economic cooperation (SASEC) programme.
- ❖ SASEC is a projects-based economic cooperation initiative that brings together the BBIN countries, Maldives, Sri Lanka and more recently, Myanmar.

Xian smog tower

- ❖ China has built the world's largest air purifier in a bid to fight the country's smog problem.



- ❖ The 100m (328ft) tower in the city of Xian in central China's Shaanxi province can filter 353 million cubic feet (10 million cubic metres) of air per day.
- ❖ The Xian tower uses several greenhouses located near its base to suck in the polluted air and heat it using solar power. The hot air is then sent through the tower, where it passes through multiple air cleaning filters before exiting.

New missile frigate

- ❖ The People's Liberation Army Navy commissioned a new missile frigate, named 'Rizhao', in a naval port in China's Dalian located in the Liaoning Province.
- ❖ It is China's indigenous missile frigate named after Rizhao city in Shandong Province of China.
- ❖ Rizhao is equipped with advanced weapon systems.
- ❖ It has the capability to attack enemy ships and submarines alone or along with other naval forces.
- ❖ Frigates are naval vessels intermediate between corvettes and destroyers.

World's 1st rescue mission with unmanned aircraft

- ❖ Drones have been used by Australian lifeguard services to save A couple of swimmers from the raging waves in New South Wales.
- ❖ The drone used for the rescue, known as a Little Ripper unmanned aerial vehicle, is also part of a shark-spotting program being rolled out across Australian beaches for the upcoming summer. It uses an algorithm to automatically recognize sharks.
- ❖ This incident is the first-ever life-saving operation on water using drones (unmanned aircraft) in the world.

Maitre-2

- ❖ In an initiative to give a boost to the trans-border relationship between India and Bangladesh, the second bus service from Agartala to Kolkata via Dhaka was launched.
- ❖ The bus service has been named Maitre-2.
- ❖ Through Chicken Neck Corridor the distance between Kolkata and Agartala is about 1,650 km if one skirts Bangladesh. But the distance falls to 515 km if the buses go through Dhaka.
- ❖ The first Maitre bus service was launched in the year 2015.

Yoga classes in Davos

- ❖ Indian Prime Minister's delegation to the World Economic Forum at Davos offered yoga classes at a locale on the Swiss Alps.
- ❖ Narendra Modi is the first Indian Prime Minister to attend the Davos summit in two decades after H.D. Deve Gowda in 1997.
- ❖ India showcased its soft power, including yoga, cuisine and culture.

Public register -Money laundering

- ❖ Britain's Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy announced the world's first public register
- ❖ The world's first public register will require overseas companies that own or buy property in the UK to provide details of their ultimate owners
- ❖ The register is a move by the government to crack down on criminals who launder money through the British property market.
- ❖ This will help reduce opportunities for criminals, who try to use shell companies to buy properties in England.

Global Centre for Cyber security

- ❖ The World Economic Forum has launched a new Global Centre for Cybersecurity to safeguard the world from hackers and growing data breaches.
- ❖ The centre will be based in Geneva, Switzerland, and will function as an autonomous organization under World Economic Forum.
- ❖ The aim of the centre is to establish the first global platform for governments, businesses, experts and law enforcement agencies to collaborate on cybersecurity challenges.

World Economic Forum (WEF)

- ❖ WEF is Swiss non-profit foundation, based in Geneva. It is recognized as international institution for public-private cooperation.
- ❖ WEF is best known for its annual winter meeting for five days in Davos, mountain town in eastern Alps region of Switzerland.

Global Talent Competitiveness Index

- ❖ The fifth edition of the Global Talent Competitiveness Index has been released by INSEAD in partnership with The Adecco Group and Tata Communications.
- ❖ In this index India has moved 11 Positions up and reaches 81st position, but remains a laggard among the BRICS nations. India was at the 92nd position last year.
- ❖ Among the five BRICS countries China is at 43rd.
- ❖ Switzerland has topped the list. It is followed by Singapore and the US.

About Index

- ❖ Launched for the first time in 2013, the Global Talent Competitiveness Index (GTCI) is an annual benchmarking report that measures the ability of countries to compete for talent.
- ❖ The index that measures how countries grow, attract and retain talent.

VINBAX

- ❖ The first ever India-Vietnam Bilateral Army Exercise (VINBAX-2018) was conducted at Jabalpur in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The joint exercise has been especially designed to train officers of Vietnam who involved in United Nations Peace Keeping Operations.
- ❖ The joint exercise, mutual interaction and sharing of experiences amongst both the armies shall further strengthen cultural and historical ties between the nations.

ECONOMY

7.75% savings bonds scheme

- ❖ The Union Finance Ministry has launched 7.75% Savings (Taxable) Bonds, 2018 scheme to help citizens invest in a taxable bond, without any monetary ceiling.

- ❖ The Bonds will have maturity of 7 years carrying interest at 7.75% per annum payable half- yearly. The Bonds will be issued in DEMAT form (Bond Ledger Account) only.
- ❖ The Bonds are open to investment by individuals (including Joint Holdings) and Hindu Undivided Families. NRIs are not eligible for making investments in these Bonds.
- ❖ Interest on the Bonds will be taxable under the Income-tax (IT) Act, 1961 as applicable according to the relevant tax status of the bond holder.
- ❖ But the Bonds will be exempted from Wealth-tax under the Wealth Tax Act, 1957.
- ❖ They are also not eligible as collateral for loans from banking institutions, non-banking financial companies or financial institutions.
- ❖ The Bonds are not transferable and also are not tradeable in secondary market.

Prompt corrective action - Allahabad Bank

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India has initiated 'prompt corrective action' (PCA) against Allahabad Bank over its high bad loans.
- ❖ High net non-performing assets (NPA), insufficient CET1 Capital and a negative return on assets (ROA) for two years in a row have prompted the action.
- ❖ The objective of the PCA framework is to facilitate the banks to take corrective measures including those prescribed by the RBI, in a timely manner, in order to restore the banks' financial health.

Electoral bonds for political funding

- ❖ The Union Govt. unveiled the contours of the 'Electoral Bonds' scheme.
- ❖ Electoral bonds are announced in last year General Budget with the aim to curb the Money laundering, irregularities and bringing more transparency in the process of Political Funding Process.
- ❖ Electoral bonds will be issued by a notified bank for specified denominations, which is interest free and which is an intermediate financial instrument between donor and Receptor (Political Party).
- ❖ Only Up to Rs. 2000 donor can make the funding in cash. Beyond the denomination it should be in the form of Bond.
- ❖ As per this, now a citizen of India or a body incorporated in India will be eligible to purchase the bond from specified branches of the State Bank of India.
- ❖ The bonds can be purchased for any value in multiples of ₹1,000; ₹10,000; ₹1 lakh; ₹10 lakh; and ₹1 crore.

- ❖ Those who want to donate to a political party, can buy these bonds by making payments digitally, or through cheque or cash.
- ❖ Then they are free to gift the bond to any registered political party.
- ❖ The bonds will likely be bearer bonds and the identity of the donor will not be known to the receiver.
- ❖ The party can convert these bonds back into money via their bank accounts within 15 days.
- ❖ The bank account used must be the one notified to the Election Commission.
- ❖ Electoral bonds are essentially like bearer cheques, the issuing bank will remain the custodian of the donor's funds until the political party redeems the bond.
- ❖ To benefit from the electoral bonds scheme, the political parties
 - Must have been registered with the Election Commission and
 - Should have secured not less than 1 per cent of the votes polled in the most recent General Election to the Lok Sabha or a State legislative assembly.
- ❖ Electoral bonds under the scheme will be available for purchase for a period of ten days each in the months of January, April, July and October. An additional period of 30 days would be specified by the Centre in the year of general elections.

Logistics Performance Index chart

- ❖ According to the report by the Commerce Ministry - LEADS (Logistics Ease Across Different States) Gujarat has topped the first-of-its-kind logistics index chart.
- ❖ The second place is occupied by Punjab.
- ❖ Among the Union Territories, Daman & Diu occupied the top slot.
- ❖ As regards the hilly states, Tripura occupied the top slot.
- ❖ The Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) index is a composite indicator to assess international trade logistics across states and Union territories.
- ❖ It is an indicator of the efficiency of logistical services necessary for promoting exports in particular and economic growth in general.
- ❖ The report by the Commerce Ministry -Logistics Ease Across Different States (LEADS) index was prepared with the help of consultancy firm Deloitte.

IRFC's green bonds

- ❖ BSE's India International Exchange (India INX) has listed Indian Railway Finance Corporation's (IRFC) green bonds on its debt listing platform—the global securities market
- ❖ IRFC green bonds have become the first debt security to be listed on an exchange at International Financial Services Centre (IFSC).
- ❖ India INX's Global Securities Market (GSM) segment, India's first debt listing platform, allows raising funds in any currency of choice by both foreign and Indian issuers from investors across the globe.

India's first-ever FDI in fertilizer sector

- ❖ Norwegian fertiliser giant Yara International has announced the completion of its acquisition of Tata Chemicals Ltd's urea plant at Babrala in Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ It marks first foreign direct investment (FDI) in India's highly regulated urea sector.
- ❖ India is world's second largest fertiliser market after China.

Mauritius - Largest source of FDI

- ❖ Mauritius was the largest source of foreign investment in India, followed by the US and the UK, according to Census on Foreign Liabilities and Assets of Indian Direct Investment Companies 2016-17 released by the Reserve Bank.
- ❖ Singapore and Japan were the next two sources of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI).
- ❖ The manufacturing sector accounted for nearly half of the total FDI at market prices.
- ❖ Information and communication services and financial and insurance activities were the other major sectors that attracted FDI.

National Data Portals

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Finance and Corporate Affairs launched the National CSR Data Portal & Corporate Data Portal.
- ❖ The two portals would promote corporate transparency and accountability to the public at large.
- ❖ They would also facilitate a social audit of CSR projects and bring together CSR contributors, implementers and beneficiaries and align CSR activities with national development goals.

Richest 1% own 58% of total wealth in India: Oxfam

- ❖ According to the report titled 'Reward Work, Not Wealth' The richest 1 per cent in India cornered 73 per cent of the wealth generated in the country in 2017.
- ❖ Wealth of India's richest 1% increased by over Rs.20.9 lakh crore during 2017, an amount equivalent to total budget of the central govt. in 2017-18.
- ❖ Besides, 67 crore Indians comprising the population's poorest half saw their wealth rise by just 1 per cent which shows the worrying picture of rising income inequality.
- ❖ In 2017 India saw 17 new Billionaires. By this total number of Billionaires in India has been increased to 101.
- ❖ Globally, 82% of the wealth generated in 2017 worldwide went to the 1%, while 3.7 billion people that account for the poorest half of population saw no increase in their wealth.
- ❖ The survey was released by the international rights group Oxfam.
- ❖ The data sources for the Oxfam report include
 - Forbes' Billionaire List 2017,
 - World Bank data, and
 - last year's edition of Credit Suisse's Global Wealth Data book.

WEF's Inclusive Development Index 2018

- ❖ India has been ranked 62 out of 74 emerging economies in the Inclusive Development Index 2018 released by the World Economic Forum.
- ❖ It is much lower than China's 26th position and Pakistan's 47th, Bangladesh (34) and Nepal (22).
- ❖ In 2017, India was ranked at 60th place among 79 developing economies.
- ❖ Norway again remained world's most inclusive advanced economy, while Lithuania again topped list of emerging economies.
- ❖ Despite its low overall score, India is among the ten emerging economies with 'advancing' trend. Only two advanced economies have shown 'advancing' trend.
- ❖ Among the G7 economies, Germany (12) ranks highest in the Inclusive Development Index.
- ❖ Among the BRICS economies, Russia was ranked at 19th, followed by China (26), Brazil (37), India (62) and South Africa (69).

Inclusive Development Index

- ❖ Inclusive Development Index is released by the World Economic Forum annually.

- ❖ This Inclusive Development Index has been developed as a new metric of national economic performance as an alternative to GDP.
- ❖ The index takes into account the living standards, environmental sustainability and protection of future generations from further indebtedness.
- ❖ Inclusive Development Index (IDI) measures progress of 103 economies on three individual pillars – growth and development; inclusion; and inter-generational equity.

Atal Pension Yojana- Coverage extension

- ❖ The Finance Ministry has decided to allow small finance banks and payment banks to offer the Atal Pension Yojana (APY), which is expected to significantly increase the coverage of the scheme.
- ❖ This is also expected to strengthen the existing channels of APY distribution.

APY

- ❖ It is a monthly pension scheme became operational from June 1, 2015.
- ❖ It is available to all the citizens of India in the age group of 18-40 years.
- ❖ Under the scheme, a subscriber would receive a minimum guaranteed pension of Rs 1,000 to Rs 5,000 per month, depending upon his contribution, from the age of 60 years.
- ❖ The same pension would be paid to the spouse of the subscriber and on the demise of both the subscriber and the spouse, the accumulated pension wealth is returned to the nominee.

Economic Survey, 2017-2018

- ❖ Economic Survey of India (2017-2018) was tabled in the Parliament by Finance Minister Arun Jaitley.
- ❖ According to the survey, the economy is expected to grow at a four-year low of 6.5% in the current fiscal as against 7.1% in the last fiscal.
- ❖ The slow growth rate is mainly due to the poor performance of agriculture and manufacturing sector.

About

- ❖ Economic Survey is a reviews of developments in the Indian economy over the previous 12 months (2016 April -2017 March).
- ❖ It also summarizes the performance on major development programs, and highlights the policy initiatives of the government and the prospects of the economy in the short to medium term.
- ❖ The Department of Economic Affairs under Finance Ministry of India presents the Economic Survey in the parliament every year, just before the Union Budget.

- ❖ The document is presented to both houses of Parliament during the Budget Session.
- ❖ It is prepared under the guidance of the Chief Economic Adviser, Finance Ministry.
- ❖ The Chief Economic Adviser (CEA) is the economic advisor to the Government of India. The CEA is the ex-officio cadre controlling authority of the Indian Economic Service. The CEA is under the direct charge of the Minister of Finance.

Third largest producer of crude steel- India

- ❖ According to the report published by World Steel Association (WSA), India has overtaken US to become the world's third largest steel producer in 2017.
- ❖ India's crude steel production grew by 6.2 % to 101.4 million tonnes (MT) in 2017 compared to 95.5 MT 2016.
- ❖ China remained the world leader by producing 831.7 MT in 2017, up 5.7 % from 786.9 MT in 2016
- ❖ Japan, the second largest global steel producer, witnessed a negative growth as steel output declined by 0.1%

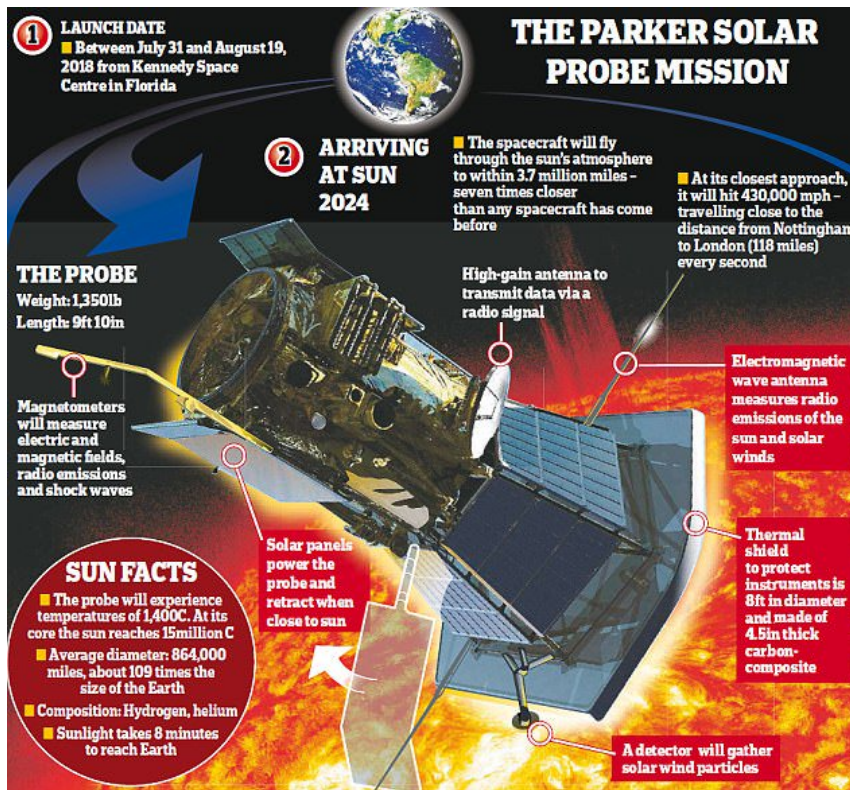
World Steel Association (WSA)

- ❖ WSA is a non-profit organisation and is one of the largest industry associations in world.
- ❖ It was founded in July 1967 and is headquartered in Brussels, Belgium.
- ❖ Its members represent approximately 85% of the world's steel production.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Parker Solar probe

- ❖ NASA's Parker Solar Probe is scheduled for launch in 2018 to explore the Sun's outer atmosphere.
- ❖ The probe will use Venus' gravity during seven flybys over nearly seven years to gradually bring its orbit closer to the Sun.



- ❖ The Parker Solar Probe will perform its scientific investigations in a hazardous region of intense heat and solar radiation.
- ❖ The primary science goals for the mission are to trace how energy and heat move through the solar corona and to explore what accelerates the solar wind as well as solar energetic particles.

NASA-inspired 'speed breeding' technique boosts wheat production

- ❖ Australian scientists have developed the world's first 'speed breeding' technique that can boost the production of the crop by up to three times.
- ❖ The scientists have used the technique to develop the new 'DS Faraday' wheat variety.
- ❖ The technique is inspired by the NASA's experiments to grow wheat in space.
- ❖ It has largely been used for research but now is being adopted by industry.

Typbar TCV


- ❖ Typbar TCV or the typhoid conjugate vaccine against typhoid fever, has received pre-qualification from the World Health Organisation (WHO).
- ❖ Typbar TCV is developed by Bharat Biotech Company, Hyderabad.
- ❖ This enables the procurement and supplies of this vaccine to UNICEF, Pan-American Health Organisation (PAHO) and GAVI (Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization) supported countries.

- ❖ Typhbar TCV is the first typhoid vaccine, clinically proven to be administered to children from six months of age to adults and confers long term protection against typhoid fever
- ❖ Typhoid fever is caused by the bacterium Salmonella Typhi.

Pratyush – India’s fastest supercomputer

- ❖ India unveiled Pratyush, meaning the sun, the High Performance Computing (HPC) facility has been established at the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), Pune
- ❖ It has the array of computers which can deliver a peak power of 6.8 petaflops.
- ❖ Petaflops is a Unit of computers Computing Speed.
- ❖ Pratyush is the fourth fastest supercomputer in the world dedicated for weather and climate research, and follows machines in Japan, USA and the United Kingdom.
- ❖ With the new system, it would be possible to map regions in India at a resolution of 3 km and the globe at 12 km.
- ❖ It will also move an Indian supercomputer from the 300s to the 30s in the Top 500 list, a respected international tracker of the world’s fastest supercomputers.
- ❖ The machines will be installed at two government institutes:
 1. 4.0 petaflops HPC facility at IITM, Pune
 2. 2.8 petaflops facility at the National Centre for Medium Range Weather Forecast, Noida.

Rank	Site	Rpeak (TFlop/s)	Power (kW)
1	National Supercomputing Center in Wuxi, China	1,25,435.9	15,371
2	National Super Computer Centre in Guangzhou, China	54,902.4	17,808
3	Swiss National Supercomputing Centre, Switzerland	25,326.3	2,272
4	Japan Agency for Marine Earth Science and Technology, Japan	28,192	1,350
5	DOE/SC/Oak Ridge National Laboratory, United States	27,112.5	8,209



Rpeak values are based on clock rate of CPU

Source: Top500.org

SFOORTI

- ❖ Ministry of Railway launches SFOORTI (Smart Freight Operation Optimisation & Real Time Information) application.
- ❖ In a major digital initiative to help plan the traffic flows and optimize freight operations, SFOORTI app will provide features for monitoring and managing freight business using Geographic Information System (GIS) Views and Dashboard.
- ❖ Both passenger and freight trains can be tracked over Zones/Divisions/Sections can be viewed through this application.

100th satellite of ISRO

- ❖ The 42nd Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV), PSLV-C40, was launched successfully by ISRO from Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) in Sriharikota.
- ❖ It placed 31 satellites across two orbits.
- ❖ The primary payload of PSLV-C40 was the country's fourth satellite in the remote sensing Cartosat-2 series. It is the 100th satellite of India and ISRO's first satellite launch in 2018.
- ❖ Out of 30 other co-passenger smaller satellites 28 are from other countries. It carried satellites from US, UK, France, Finland, Korea, and Canada.
- ❖ Imagery from Cartosat-2 will be used to develop various land and geographical information system application.

India's first battery-powered interactive payment card

- ❖ IndusInd Bank and Dynamics Inc. has announced plans to introduce the first battery-powered, interactive payment cards to the Indian market in 2018.
- ❖ The new IndusInd Bank card from Dynamics has multiple buttons that let the consumers use a single card to pay in multiple ways.

World's first fully-private satellite launch

- ❖ Rocker Lab, a U.S. space startup, successfully launched three small satellites into orbit from its own private launch pad in New Zealand.
- ❖ Rocker Lab has become the first ever private company to successfully send satellites into orbit without the help of a government agency.
- ❖ Electron rocket, which carries only a small payload of about 150 kilograms, successfully deployed an earth imaging and two other satellites for weather and ship tracking.

NASA's Kilopower Project

- ❖ NASA has invented a small nuclear reactor Kilopower.
- ❖ It can generate a reliable power supply by using Uranium-235 reactor core.
- ❖ This power system could provide up to 10 kilowatts of electrical power enough to run two average households continuously for at least 10 years.
- ❖ This reactor will be used for electronic propulsion systems and for providing safe and plentiful energy for future robotic and human missions for Mars and beyond.

Cloned Monkeys

- ❖ Chinese scientists for first time have successfully cloned two identical long-tailed macaques (monkeys), named Zhong Zhong and Hua Hua.
- ❖ Scientists used the same technique for cloning that produced Dolly sheep which is the first cloned organism of the world.
- ❖ This development makes them world's first primates to be cloned from non-embryonic cell.
- ❖ It is significant because monkeys have in the past proved resistant to the cloning technique.
- ❖ They were cloned using process called somatic cell nuclear transfer (SCNT), which involves transferring the nucleus of cell, which includes its DNA, into egg whose nucleus is removed.

Super Blood Blue Moon

- ❖ The world is going to witness "Super Blood Blue Moon" event on Jan 31st in parts of western North America, Asia, the Middle East, Russia and Australia.
- ❖ "Super Blood Blue Moon" is a rare cosmic event that combines an extra big Super moon, a Blue moon and a total lunar eclipse.

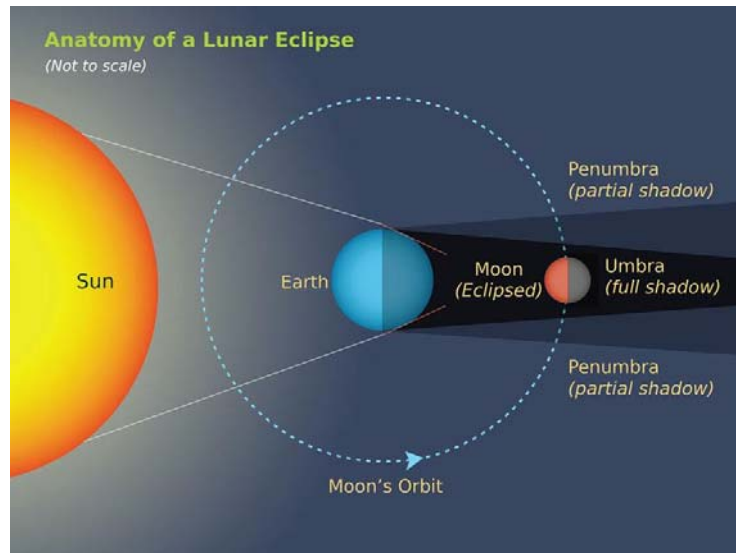
Super Moon

- ❖ Super moon – It occur when the full moon coincides with the Moon's closest orbit point (perigee) to Earth.
- ❖ During a supermoon, the moon appears 14% larger and 30% brighter.
- ❖ The farthest distance between the moon and the Earth is termed 'apogee', while the perigee is the nearest point.

Lunar Eclipse and Blood Moon

- ❖ It occurs when the Sun, the Earth and the Moon are so aligned that the full moon passes through the shadow of Earth.
- ❖ The moon gliding into Earth's shadow will gradually turn in to orange or red.

- ❖ This is because the sunlight passing through the Earth's atmosphere break down and red part gets scattered by the atmosphere and falls on the Moon's surface.
- ❖ For this reason, a totally eclipsed moon is called a "Blood Moon".



Blue Moon

- ❖ It refers to the second full moon (or second lunar eclipse) in a month.
- ❖ The Moon does not turn blue but historically the second full Moon of an English calendar month is termed as a Blue Moon.
- ❖ Typically, it happens every two years and eight months.

SARAS PT1N

- ❖ SARAS PT1N, the new upgraded version of indigenous transport aircraft SARAS developed by National Aeronautics Laboratory (NAL) successfully made its maiden flight in Bengaluru, Karnataka.
- ❖ SARAS PT1N is a 14-seater passenger aircraft designed and developed by CSIR-NAL, a frontline aerospace research laboratory.
- ❖ The aircraft programme is named after Indian crane Saras. It was first conceptualised in the 1990s to establish short-haul civil aviation market.

ENVIRONMENT

Two new Ginger species

- ❖ Scientists have discovered two new species of Ginger in easternmost districts, Ukhrul in Manipur and Tuensang in Nagaland.
- ❖ They were found in easternmost districts bordering Myanmar.
- ❖ Both the plants are from the family of Zingiberaceae, to which the commonly found Ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) belongs.
- ❖ The species discovered in Nagaland, is an epiphytic plant and grows on tall trees.
- ❖ The species from Manipur was found growing in rock crevices, boulders and humus rich soil in the Shirui Hills.

Night frog species in Western Ghats

- ❖ Scientists have discovered new species of frog named Mewa Singh's night frog (*Nyctibatrachus mewasinghi*) in Kozhikode's Malabar Wildlife Sanctuary. This genus is endemic to Western Ghats.
- ❖ The frog has been named after wildlife scientist Mewa Singh, in honour of his contributions to behavioural ecology and primate studies.
- ❖ The new frogs found only in a small stream running along the Peruvannamuzhi dam from Peruvannamuzhi in the Malabar Wildlife Sanctuary.
- ❖ Frogs in the genus *Nyctibatrachus*, commonly known as night frogs, are found only in the Western Ghats mountain range.
- ❖ The addition of the Mewa Singh's night frog to this group brings the total number of night frogs to 36.

New species of blind fish discovered inside Meghalaya cave

- ❖ Scientists have discovered a new species of blind fish has been discovered inside a cave in East Jaintia Hills district of Meghalaya.
- ❖ The new species of blind fish named as *Schistura larketensis* got its name from Larket village, where the cave has been found to encourage local people to take up biodiversity conservation.
- ❖ The species has apparently
 - lost its sight living in the perpetual darkness inside the cave.
 - lost its pigments too while adapting to its habitat in the dark waters.

Four new balsam species

- ❖ Researchers from the University of Calicut in Kerala have reported the discovery of four new species of balsam from various locations in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ India is home to more than 230 balsam species.
- ❖ Impatiens Haridasanii which is among the four species, was named after Haridasan, former scientist, State Forest Research Institute, Arunachal Pradesh, for his contribution to the taxonomy of the north-eastern States.

New moth species - Arunachal Pradesh

- ❖ Elcysma ziroensis, a new species of moth, has been discovered at Talle wildlife sanctuary in Ziro, Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The discovery of the Zygaenid moth was published in the Journal of Threatened Taxa, an international journal on conservation and taxonomy
- ❖ Its common name has been given as Apatani Glory, based on the community living in Ziro valley.

Roadkill App

- ❖ Wildlife Conservation Trust (WCT) a wildlife NGO has developed a mobile app called Road Kills.
- ❖ This app will help citizens to report wildlife deaths by uploading geo-tagged photographs to a public forum.
- ❖ The information generated from the application can help identify crucial sections of roads or railway lines where animal deaths are high to pinpoint regions that require urgent mitigation measures.
- ❖ The data can also help determine what species are more at risk on specific road or rail stretches.

Environmental Performance Index 2018

- ❖ The Environmental Performance Index (EPI) report ranks 180 countries on 24 performance indicators across 10 categories covering environmental health and ecosystem vitality.
- ❖ EPI is a biennial report released by Yale and Columbia Universities along with the World Economic Forum (WEF).
- ❖ India is at 177th place out of 180 nations, where as china at 120th position.
- ❖ India's rank is attributed to poor performance in the environment health.

STATE

Arunachal Pradesh - ODF status

- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh has become the second state in the Northeast (after Sikkim) to achieve open defecation free (ODF) status.
- ❖ The project, undertaken under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin), was carried through after the state government provided an additional incentive of RS.8000 per toilet.
- ❖ The state government also launched Swachh Arunachal Mission on October 2 this year at Tawang which envisaged the Swachh Protocol (Cleanliness Protocol) aimed at ensuring sustainability of assets created under SBM (Gramin).

Nagaland – Disturbed Area

- ❖ The entire Nagaland has been declared as “disturbed area” for six more months, till June- end, under the AFSPA, which empowers security forces to conduct operations anywhere and arrest anyone without any prior notice.
- ❖ The decision to continue the declaration of Nagaland as “disturbed area” has been taken as killings, loot and extortion have been going in various parts of the state which necessitated the of the security forces operating there.
- ❖ The AFSPA has been in force in Nagaland for several decades. It has not been withdrawn even after a framework agreement was signed on August 3, 2015 by Naga insurgent group NSCN-IM general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah and the government’s interlocutor R N Ravi in presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

AFSPA

- ❖ AFSPA, enacted in 1958, gives powers to the army and state and central police forces to shoot to kill, search houses and destroy any property that is “likely” to be used by insurgents in areas declared as “disturbed” by the home ministry.

What are ‘disturbed’ areas

- ❖ The state or central government considers those areas as ‘disturbed’ “by reason of differences or disputes between members of different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities.

How is a region declared ‘disturbed’?

- ❖ Section (3) of the Afspa empowers the governor of the state or Union territory to issue an official notification in The Gazette of India, following which the Centre has the authority to send in armed forces for civilian aid. Once declared

‘disturbed’, the region has to maintain status quo for a minimum of three months, according to The Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976.”

The first draft of National Register of Citizens

- ❖ The first draft of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) for Assam has listed 19 million people out of the 32.9 million applicants as legal Indian citizens.
- ❖ Assam is the only State that had prepared an NRC in 1951.
- ❖ It has also now become the first State to get the first draft of its own updated NRC.
- ❖ The Register is meant to establish the credentials of a bona fide citizen as distinguished from a foreigner.
- ❖ This is to detect Bangladeshi migrants who may have illegally entered Assam after the midnight of March 24, 1971.
- ❖ This cut-off date was originally agreed to in the 1985 Assam Accord.
- ❖ Updating of NRC 1951 is one of the commitment of Assam as per Assam Accord.
- ❖ A six-year agitation demanding identification and deportation of illegal immigrants was launched by the All Assam Students’ Union in 1979.
- ❖ It culminated with the signing of the Assam Accord on August 15, 1985, in the presence of the then prime minister Rajiv Gandhi.

New AIIMS at Bilaspur

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has given its approval for establishment of new AIIMS in Bilaspur (Himachal Pradesh) under the Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY).
- ❖ The new AIIMS will be completed in a period of 48 months.
- ❖ In addition to 20 Speciality/Super-Speciality Departments, it will also have an AYUSH department with 30 beds for providing treatment facilities in traditional system of medicine.

Pradhan Mantri Swasthya Suraksha Yojana (PMSSY)

- ❖ Its objectives are correcting regional imbalances in the availability of affordable/reliable tertiary healthcare services and augment facilities for quality medical education in the country.
- ❖ PMSSY was announced in 2003 and It establishes AIIMS in various regions of India apart from different government colleges.
- ❖ It is funded from different centrally sponsored schemes relating to creating infrastructure on health.

Startup Culture

- ❖ HDFC Bank and state government of Rajasthan have partnered with each other for the promotion and nurturing startups in the state.
- ❖ Under the MoU, bank will provide end to end solutions related to current accounts, credit cards and other solutions to start-up setting under its SmartUp programme.
- ❖ HDFC has been working across the country to create a helping ecosystem for startups and it also announced to launch of dedicated Smart Up Zones in all major branches of the bank.

Official emblem of West Bengal

- ❖ West Bengal Government has unveiled the official emblem of the state government, which was recently approved by the centre.
- ❖ The emblem highlights the 'Biswa Bangla' theme, and also has the features of national emblem, the Ashoka Pillar.
- ❖ The emblem was designed by Ms. Banerjee, was vetted by a State government committee headed by eminent artist Jogen Chowdhury and then sent to the Centre for approval in May.
- ❖ Biswa Bangla is an MSME enterprise established by the Government of West Bengal to promote handicrafts of the West Bengal.



Karnataka International Travel Expo

- ❖ The Karnataka government has announced that (KITE) will be held from 28th February 2018.

- ❖ It will be the largest B2B event in the country. For the first time ever India will have such a big event for the tourism and travel sector.
- ❖ The event aims to project Karnataka globally as a Prime tourist's choice by emphasising on the state's wildlife, historic monuments, UNESCO world heritage sites etc.

Flamingo festival – Andhra Pradesh

- ❖ The three-day annual Flamingo Festival was held at Pulicat lake and Nelapattu Bird Sanctuary.
- ❖ Flamingo Festival is being organised for the past 12 years.
- ❖ Nearly 80 varieties of birds like flamingos, which arrive from as far off as Siberia and the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat, were present in the lake.

2022 National Games – Meghalaya

- ❖ The Meghalaya government, the Indian Olympic Association and the Meghalaya State Olympic Association signed the host city contract to hold the 39th National Games in the state in 2022.
- ❖ The mega sports event will coincide with the 50th year of Meghalaya's statehood.

Medaram Jatara - National Festival

- ❖ The union government is likely to declare Medaram's Sammakka-Sarakka/Saralamma Jatara a national festival this year.
- ❖ Sammakka-Sarakka Jatara held by forest dwelling Koya tribe of Telangana and surrounding States, is the biggest Tribal festival in Asia which is attended by one crore people on an average.
- ❖ Once declared a national festival, Jatara can be considered for 'intangible cultural heritage of humanity' tag of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.
- ❖ The event is held bi-annually to honour the twin goddesses Sammakka and her daughter Sarakka.
- ❖ Medaram is a remote place in the Etur nagaram Wildlife Sanctuary, a part of Dandakaranya, the largest surviving forest belt in the Deccan.

High Risk Pregnancy portal- Haryana

- ❖ Haryana has become the first state in the country to launch High Risk Pregnancy (HRP) Portal.

- ❖ It has been launched as a part of the High Risk Pregnancy Policy of Haryana.
- ❖ This initiative will help in increasing pace of decline in Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR), Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Still Birth Incidence.
- ❖ This portal helps in
 - Early identification of high-risk pregnant cases up to the grass-roots level
 - Ensures their timely referral to the hospitals for further treatment and delivery by specialists.

Water ATMs

- ❖ The state government has launched a water ATM project to provide bacteria-free drinking water in schools.
- ❖ The government is setting up water ATMs in the city and suburbs and these machines are made in Germany.
- ❖ Arsenic contamination was most alarming in 90 blocks of seven districts but now it has been contained by 61 per cent.
- ❖ This novel pilot project has been made possible with the help of the Japan International Cooperation Agency, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank.

End of manual scavenging at Kerala

- ❖ A robot called Bandicoot has been developed by a group of young engineers who run a startup named Genrobotics.
- ❖ The Kerala Water Authority (KWA) and Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) have signed a memorandum of understanding for transfer of technology and products, which include the use of robots for cleaning up manholes.
- ❖ The robot has WiFi and Bluetooth modules and can be remotely operated. It is powered by pressurised air.
- ❖ The robot will bring an end to the abominable and legally banned practice of manual scavenging.

'Happy Nari' Pad Vending Machine

- ❖ Bhopal station has become the first railway station in the country to install sanitary napkin vending machine.
- ❖ The sanitary napkin dispensing machine is named 'Happy Nari', which means 'Happy Woman'.
- ❖ A local NGO Arushi helped in the project.

Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav

- ❖ The Ministry of Culture organized the 7th edition of the Rashtriya Sanskriti Mahotsav under the Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat matrix in Karnataka.
- ❖ The Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat programme was launched to promote engagement amongst the people of different states/UTs so as to enhance mutual understanding and bonding between people of diverse cultures, thereby securing stronger unity and integrity of India.
- ❖ The State paired with Karnataka is Uttarakhand.
- ❖ The Mahotsav covered a profusion of art forms, music, dance, theatre, literature and the visual arts.

Public Cloud Policy – Maharashtra

- ❖ Maharashtra has unveiled a public cloud policy, virtually mandating its departments to shift their data storage onto the cloud.
- ❖ It intends to make the data available for free to the general public.
- ❖ Under the framework, government will make it mandatory for the data to be stored within the country.
- ❖ The broad idea is to use public cloud in cases wherever the Right to Information Act is applicable, and then go in for enhanced security features for private and sensitive data, which will also be stored on the cloud.

1% reservation for orphans - Maharashtra

- ❖ The Maharashtra state government announced a 1% reservation in the open category for orphans in the state.
- ❖ Maharashtra is the first state to bring such a policy.
- ❖ The reservation is termed parallel reservation. Parallel reservation means, of the total jobs available under the general category, 1% will be reserved only for orphans.
- ❖ The move will help orphans who are unable to establish their castes.

Rajasthan's first oil refinery – Barmer

- ❖ The Prime Minister flagged off work commencement of HPCL Rajasthan Refinery (HRRL) at Pachpadra in Barmer, Rajasthan.
- ❖ It is first oil refinery to be set up in Rajasthan.
- ❖ The project, a Joint Venture of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd and Rajasthan government

- ❖ Barmer refinery is the first integrated refinery complex, which will be coming along with the petrochemical right from the inception. Normally the petrochemicals get added later on.

Mukhyamantri Kalakar Sahayata Yojana

- ❖ Odisha Government has launched Mukhyamantri Kalakar Sahayata Yojana (MMKSY) to provide financial assistance to the literature and cultural artists of state.

India's first automatic coastal warning for disasters

- ❖ India's first automatic Early Warning Dissemination System (EWDS) will be commissioned by March 2018 in Odisha.
- ❖ The Early Warning Dissemination System is a first-of-its-kind automatic public address system in the country.
- ❖ The EWDS will be commissioned in Balasore, Bhadrak, Cuttack, Jagatsinghpur, Kendrapara and Puri districts and would be directly controlled from the Special Relief Commissioner's office.
- ❖ The project will be implemented under the National Cyclone Risk Mitigation Project (NCRMP) with assistance from world bank.

Uttarakhand - wild animals

- ❖ The Uttarakhand government granted certification to the Wildlife Institute of India (WII) as part of its sterilization project to address man-animal conflict.
- ❖ For the first time in the country, ultrasound will be performed on wild animals to detect pregnancy before administering reproduction control method on them.
- ❖ At present, the machine will be used to detect pregnancy in wild boars, monkeys and elephants.
- ❖ The initiative is part of WII's 3-year project under the Union environment ministry, in collaboration with National Institute of Immunology, New Delhi.
- ❖ If the animal is found pregnant, sterilization will not be performed and the animal is released in the wild undisturbed.

Puducherry's 1st POPSK -Karaikal

- ❖ Minister for External Affairs Sushma Swaraj inaugurated the first Post Office Passport Seva Kendra (POPSK) of Puducherry at Karaikal.

- ❖ The Ministry of External Affairs has collaborated with the Department of Posts to set up these post-office passport seva kendra in head post-offices across the country in order to provide passport related services on a larger scale.
- ❖ The POPSK at Karaikal is the 60th POPSK to have become functional since the launch of the scheme in January 2017.
- ❖ It is the first POPSK to become operational in the UT of Puducherry.

Odisha e-Hospital Management system

- ❖ The state government has launched Odisha e-Hospital Management Information System (OeHMIS) to provide efficient and hassle-free health services to the public.
- ❖ Patients can be registered online and can view and download their individual electronic health records at their doorstep through web portal or mobile app.
- ❖ The project was launched by the state government with the technical support of Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), Noida.

24X7 forest helpline number- Maharashtra

- ❖ Maharashtra government has launched 24X7 forest helpline number “1926” to anonymously file complaints of illegal activities of others like tree felling, poaching.
- ❖ This helpline number can be used to lodge complaints or get information about a variety of issues related to forests and wildlife.
- ❖ This is the first of its kind in the country to address the general and emergency queries of the citizens regarding forest department.

Sister State Agreement

- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh Government and the Canton of Zurich (Switzerland) signed a letter of intent, to promote mutual prosperity and development.
- ❖ This will bring the State of Andhra Pradesh and Canton of Zurich closer and ensure that a framework is created, which supports the exchange between both the parties.
- ❖ The agreement will further strengthen economic and scientific relations between the two governments in the areas such as Information and Communication Technology, Environmental Technology, Life Sciences and Urban and Regional Development.
- ❖ Zurich is very strong in technology and innovation.

Floating market – Kolkata

- ❖ India's first floating market is now open in Kolkata's Patuli area in West Bengal. The market houses over 200 shops.
- ❖ The market functions solely on boats at the lake in Patuli, where shopkeepers sell fruits, vegetables, fish among other produce.
- ❖ No plastic will be allowed to be dumped inside the area.

Kachra Mahotsav

- ❖ The Raipur Municipal Corporation in Chhattisgarh has organised the first garbage festival in nation.
- ❖ The aim of festival is to increase awareness, use the waste generated in the city creatively and to showcase multiple techniques for reusing things that are labelled as garbage.

Four Nagaland districts -ODF

- ❖ In Nagaland, four districts namely Mokokchung, Zunheboto, Kiphire and Longleng have achieved the status of Open Defecation Free under Swachh Bharat Mission (Gramin).
- ❖ Among the many villages in the state, Ungma Village of Mokokchung District, mostly inhabited by Ao Naga tribe, is one such village that has adapted to a cleaner and healthy life.
- ❖ The nodal department for this initiative is Public Health Engineering Department (PHED).

Arunachal Pradesh - World War II Memorial Museum

- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu inaugurated the World War II Memorial Museum in the state's Changlang district bordering Myanmar.
- ❖ It is built by the Union Culture Ministry in memory of those who laid down their lives in World War II and is located adjacent to the historic Stilwell Road
- ❖ It showcases remnants of the war, personal belongings of the soldiers and traditional items from indigenous Tangsa community.

Asia's largest drip irrigation project

- ❖ With the help of technology from Israel firm, Ramthal Marola project has been implemented in Karnataka.
- ❖ It is the Asia's largest drip irrigation project.

- ❖ As a part of this drip irrigation scheme, every farmer will receive water through a cylinder installed in their respective farmlands.
- ❖ It also enables them to mix fertilisers and pesticides in the cylinder.
- ❖ The technology used in this project will also purify the wastage that flows in the backwaters of River Krishna.

Assembly poll boycott – Nagaland

- ❖ Eleven political parties in Nagaland have unanimously decided not to issue party tickets or file nominations for the February, 2018 assembly elections.
- ❖ The move is to demand for early solution to the seven-decade-old Naga insurgency issue before the polls.
- ❖ The decision was taken at a meeting convened by the core committee of Nagaland Tribal Hoho and Civil Organisations (CCNTCHOC) with the leaders of various political parties.
- ❖ The separatist National Socialist Council of Nagalim-Issac Muivah, which had signed the Framework Agreement to end Naga insurgency in August 2015 with the central government, had claimed that the decision to hold elections was bound to undermine the progress in the ongoing parleys.
- ❖ The NSCN (I-M) has been demanding integration of Naga-inhabited areas in Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ As per the rules a scheduled election can be stopped only through constitutional amendment and “only in extraordinary circumstances”.

Zero Budget Natural Farming project

- ❖ Himachal Pradesh Government has launched Zero Budget Natural Farming project to promote organic farming.
- ❖ As the name implies, Zero Budget Natural Farming is a method of farming where the cost of growing and harvesting plants is zero.
- ❖ The project aims to increase agriculture produce and the income of farmers by the year 2022.
- ❖ It is a farming practice that believes in natural growth of crops without adding any fertilizers and pesticides or any other foreign elements. It is different from organic farming.
- ❖ Farmers use earthworms, cow dung, urine, plants, human excreta and such biological fertilizers for crop protection.
- ❖ It reduces farmers’ investment. It also protects the soil from degradation and is climate change resilient.

Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Vikas Yojana

- ❖ Punjab Government has launched Mahatma Gandhi Sarbat Vikas Yojna (MGSVY) for the welfare of the distressed sections of the society across the state.
- ❖ It will be on the line of Antyodaya principles (i.e., rise of the last person) and will be implemented to benefit 18 marginalized sections living in rural areas of state.
- ❖ Its objective is to help distressed sections of the society by helping them socially, economically or psychologically.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

New foreign secretary

- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has approved the appointment of Vijay Keshav Gokhale, to the post of foreign secretary.
- ❖ Gokhale, a 1981-batch officer of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS), had played a key role in India-China negotiations last year to resolve the 73-day standoff between Indian Army and Chinese People's Liberation Army at Doklam Plateau.
- ❖ Doklam Plateau is a tri-junction between Sino-India and Bhutanese border near Sikkim.

Deputy NSA - Rajinder Khanna

- ❖ Rajinder Khanna, former chief of Research and Analysis Wing (India's external intelligence agency), was appointed as new deputy national security advisor.
- ❖ Rajinder Khanna joined R&AW in 1978 and was the first chief of the agency to be directly recruited into the Research and Analysis Service cadre.
- ❖ As deputy NSA, Khanna will lead India's security-related dialogue with a host of countries across Eurasia, Gulf and Southeast Asia.
- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet, headed by PM Modi, has approved Khanna's appointment as deputy NSA.

Best central bank governor in Asia Pacific - Ravi Menon

- ❖ An Indian-origin banker in Singapore has been named as the best central bank governor in Asia-Pacific for 2018.
- ❖ Ravi Menon, managing director of Singapore's central bank Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), was recognised by the leading UK-based magazine 'The Banker' for his contribution in the makeover of Singapore's financial system.
- ❖ The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), the country's central bank.

Special Recognition Award 2018

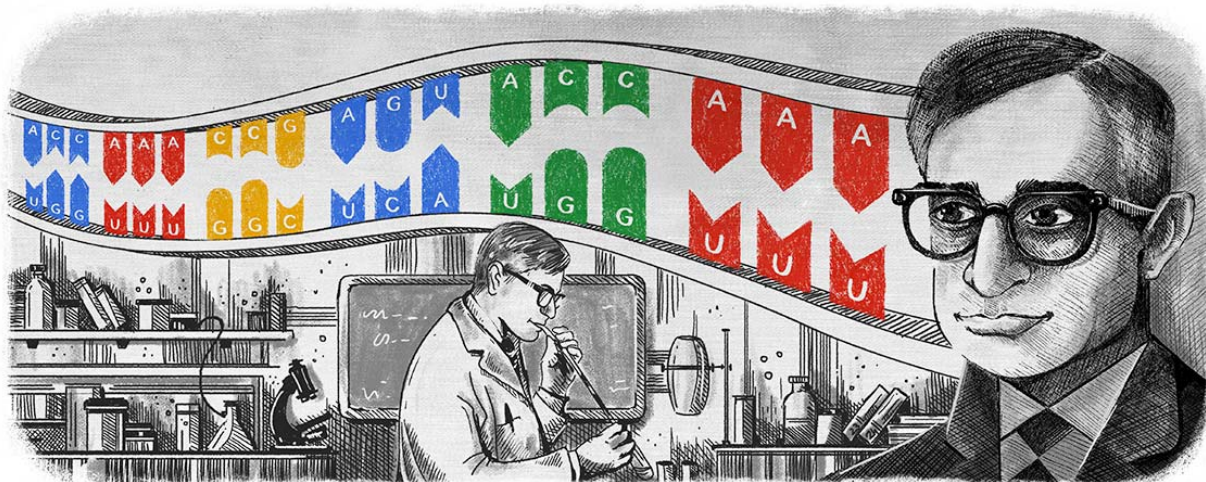
- ❖ Central Water Commission has received Central Board of Irrigation and Power (CBIP) Special Recognition Award 2018 for Excellence in Health & Safety of Large Dams.
- ❖ The award has been given in recognition of the contribution made by the Central Water Commission (CWC) for promoting the health and safety of large dams in India through the World Bank Aided Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP).
- ❖ The Ministry of Water Resources, with assistance from the World Bank, is implementing the DAM REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT (DRIP), which would be a six-year project.
- ❖ The Central Dam Safety Organisation of Central Water Commission, assisted by a Consulting firm, is coordinating and supervising the Project implementation.

Cannes Film Festival jury, 2018

- ❖ Australian movie star Cate Blanchett will head the jury at 2018 Cannes Film Festival on the French Riviera.
- ❖ Blanchett, received international acclaim for her role as Elizabeth I of England in Shekhar Kapur's 1998 film 'Elizabeth' and has won three Golden Globe awards.

Google Doodle - Har Gobind Khorana

- ❖ Google celebrated the 96th birth anniversary of Indian-American Nobel Prize-winning biochemist Har Gobind Khorana, with a doodle.



- ❖ Har Gobind Khorana was born on 9 January, 1922 in Rajpur, British India (today Kabirwala in Pakistan).
- ❖ Dr.Khorana was known for his extensive research on DNA and also for constructing the first synthetic gene.
- ❖ Dr.Khorana's work on this field was centred around building different RNA chains with the help of enzymes. Using these enzymes, he was able to produce proteins.
- ❖ Dr.Khorana and two other scientists - Robert W. Holley and Marshall W. Nirenberg - were awarded The Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine in 1968 for "their interpretation of the genetic code and its function in protein synthesis".
- ❖ In the early 1970s, Dr.Khorana constructed the world's first artificial gene.
- ❖ Dr.Khorana was elected as Foreign Member of the Royal Society in 1978.
- ❖ He was also awarded the Padma Vibhushan.

Himalayan Hydro Expo 2018

- ❖ The Himalayan Hydro Expo 2018 was held at Kathmandu, the capital Nepal.
- ❖ The basic objective of Expo is to unleash massive hydro power potential of Nepal and bring all stakeholders under one roof.

Man of Moon

- ❖ U.S. astronaut John Young, who walked on the moon in 1972 has died at age 87.
- ❖ John Young was only astronaut to go into space as part of the Gemini, Apollo and space shuttle programs of USA.
- ❖ Young became the first person to rocket away from Earth six times.

- ❖ Young orbited the moon in Apollo 10, and made a lunar landing with Apollo 16 space missions.

A.R.Rahman - Brand ambassador of Sikkim

- ❖ Sikkim government has announced the legendary music composer A R Rahman as its tourism's brand ambassador of state.
- ❖ Sikkim is known as First Organic State of India.
- ❖ The announcement for the new brand ambassador was made at the inauguration ceremony of Red Panda Winter Festival at Paljor Stadium in Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim.
- ❖ His appointment as the brand ambassador would give a huge fillip to the tourism of the state – one of the prime contributors to the economy of the hill state.
- ❖ The winter carnival too is aimed at boosting tourism in the state.

75th Annual Golden Globe Awards

- ❖ The 75th Annual Golden Globe Awards were held at Beverly Hills, California.
- ❖ The Golden Globe Awards are the annual awards that honour the best in Motion Pictures and American Television for the previous year by Hollywood Foreign Press Association since January 1944.
- ❖ Among the many winners Indian-origin (Tamil Nadu) actor Aziz Ansari has won the Best Actor for Comedy at the Golden Globes 2018 for his role in Netflix's "Master of None"
- ❖ He is the first Asian actor to win a Golden Globe for best actor in a TV comedy category.
- ❖ Among other firsts, "This Is Us" star, Brown created history as he became the first African-American to win a Golden Globe in the Best Actor in a TV Series.

K. Sivan appointed - Space Secretary

- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed rocket scientist K. Sivan as next Secretary of the Department of Space and Chairman of Space Commission and Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO).
- ❖ He will succeed A.S. Kiran Kumar as the ninth head of the country's Space establishment and will have term of three years.
- ❖ Mr. Sivan is currently Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Trivandrum and had mastered the development of cryogenic engines for India.
- ❖ It was Mr Sivan's expertise that gave ISRO the ability to send 104 satellites in a single mission, setting a world record in February 2017.

- ❖ He also had played key role in developing indigenous Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) MK II and was part of team that ideated on Swadeshi space shuttle (a reusable launch vehicle).

Matunga station -Limca Book of Records

- ❖ The Matunga suburban station on the Central Railway (CR) has entered into the Limca Book of Records 2018 for having an all-woman staff.
- ❖ The achievement comes six months after Matunga became the first railway station in the country to be run by an all- woman staff.
- ❖ The station is being manned exclusively by women staffers since July 2017, a first on the Indian Railways.
- ❖ Earlier, the Indian Railways' Mumbai region set new records in women's empowerment with
 - Surekha Bhosale-Yadav becoming the first woman train driver on CR in 1988.
 - The world's first 'Ladies Special' suburban train introduced on Western Railway in 1992.

First woman lawyer -SC judge

- ❖ The Supreme Court collegium led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra has unanimously recommended name of senior advocate Indu Malhotra for appointment as a judge of the Supreme Court.
- ❖ Indu Malhotra would become the first woman lawyer to be directly appointed as a judge of the highest court.
- ❖ Overall she will be seventh woman judge in SC, since it was established 67 years ago. In 1989, Justice M. Fathima Beevi became first woman judge in Supreme Court.
- ❖ At present, Justice R. Banumathi is lone woman judge in SC which currently has a strength of 25 judges.
- ❖ In the 67-year history of the Supreme Court, there have been only two occasions when it has had two sitting women judges together.

Chef de Mission for 23rd Winter Olympics

- ❖ Harjinder Singh was appointed as the Chef De Mission of Indian Contingent participating in the 23rd Winter Olympic Games to be held in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

- ❖ Singh's appointment was confirmed by the Indian Olympic Association (IOA). Currently, Singh holds the post of General Secretary in the Ice Hockey Association of India.
- ❖ This will be the second time for South Korea to host the Olympic Games. Seoul hosted the Summer Games in 1988.
- ❖ Pyeongchang will be the third Asian city to host the Winter Games; the first two was Sapporo, Japan (1972) and Nagano, Japan (1998).
- ❖ The 2014 Winter Olympic was held in Sochi, Russia and at the expense of USD 51 billion, which made it the most expensive Olympics in history.

Global Forum for Food and Agriculture

- ❖ The 10th edition of Global Forum for Food & Agriculture was held in Berlin, Germany.
- ❖ The theme of this year's event is "Shaping the future of livestock – sustainability, responsibly, efficiently".

About GFFA

- ❖ The Global Forum for Food and Agriculture (GFFA) is an international conference that focuses on central questions concerning the future of the global agri-food industry.
- ❖ The forum gives representatives from the worlds of politics, business, science and civil society an opportunity to share ideas and enhance understanding on a selected topic of current agricultural policy.

Preet Kaur Gill - Shadow Minister

- ❖ Preet Kaur Gill, Britain's first woman Sikh Member of Parliament (MP) has been elevated to the Shadow Cabinet by the Opposition Labour party leader Jeremy Corbyn.
- ❖ The Shadow Cabinet is the team of senior parliamentarians chosen by the Leader of the Opposition to mirror the Cabinet in Government.
- ❖ Each member is appointed to lead on a specific policy area for their party and to question and challenge their counterpart in the Cabinet.
- ❖ Preet Kaur Gill was promoted to the post of shadow minister for international development.

Sangeet Natak Akademi awards

- ❖ The President of India conferred the Sangeet Natak Akademi Fellowships and Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards for 2016 to an eminent group of musicians, dancers, and theatre artists at a ceremony to be held at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

- ❖ Noted theatre personality Ram Gopal Bajaj, dancer and historian Sunil Kothari, Carnatic music exponent R Vedavalli and famous Sitar player Arvind Parikh were conferred Sangeet Natak Akademi's fellowships (Akademi Ratna)
- ❖ The President presented Sangeet Natak Akademi Awards (Akademi Puraskar) to 43 eminent artists in five categories for the year 2016.

About

- ❖ The Sangeet Natak Akademi established by the Government of India in 1953, is India's National Academy of Music, Dance and Drama. It is responsible for the promotion and preservation of the performing arts of the country, and works to achieve these goals by means of specially designed programmes in various fields.

Kerala Tourism's Nishagandhi Award 2018

- ❖ The legendary dancing couple of India- Dhananjayan and Shanta Dhananjayan have been selected for the prestigious Nishagandhi Puraskaram 2018 by Kerala govt.
- ❖ The award is instituted by state Tourism department to honour eminent personalities in the field of music and dance.
- ❖ Doyens of Bharatanatyam, the Dhananjayans will be the sixth recipient of the award.

Anandiben Patel Appointed Madhya Pradesh Governor

- ❖ The president of India has appointed Former Gujarat chief minister Anandiben Patel as the governor of Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ She replaces Om Prakash Kohli, who has additional charge of the office of MP Governor along with the office of Gujarat Governor.
- ❖ She has become the second BJP leader from the state to be appointed as Governor after Vajubhai Vala, currently Karnataka Governor.
- ❖ Patel was first woman chief minister of Gujarat and she will be the first woman governor from Gujarat.
- ❖ She was elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1994. In 1998, she became education minister of Gujarat. She retained the portfolio after being re-elected in 2002 from Patan. In 2012, Patel shifted Ghatlodia in Ahmedabad.

2018 World's most admired company - Apple

- ❖ Technology giant Apple has topped Fortune magazine's list of the 'World's Most Admired Companies' for 2018.
- ❖ Apple has topped the list for the 11th consecutive year.

- ❖ E-commerce giant Amazon has retained its second spot for the 2nd consecutive year, followed by Google's parent Alphabet.
- ❖ Social media giant Facebook lost its place in the top ten most admired companies this year and was ranked 12th on the list.

VSSC director- Somanath

- ❖ Noted scientist S Somanath took charge as Director of Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre in Thiruvananthapuram.
- ❖ He succeeds K Sivan, who was appointed as ISRO Chairman recently.
- ❖ He is currently the Director of Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre at Valiamala.

FICCI - Dilip Chenoy

- ❖ Industry body Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (Ficci) had appointed Dilip Chenoy as its director general.
- ❖ Chenoy had been the managing director and CEO of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), director general of Society of Indian Automobile Manufactures (SIAM) as well as deputy director general of Confederation of Indian Industry (CII).
- ❖ Chenoy had resigned from NSDC in late 2015

Shram Awards

- ❖ Union government has announced the Prime Minister's Shram awards for the year 2016.
- ❖ Ministry of Labour and Employment announces Prime Minister's Shram award every year.
- ❖ These are given in four different categories to the workers in the Public sector undertakings (PSUs), Departmental undertakings of the Central and State governments and to private sector units employing 500 or more workers.
- ❖ It is in recognition of the distinguished performance and for outstanding contribution in the field of productivity.

First Ladies

- ❖ President of India has felicitated 112 exceptional women, who have achieved milestones in their respective fields of career and made India proud, at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.
- ❖ The women who have excelled in their respective fields were honoured under the banner of "First Ladies".

- ❖ 112 women were selected by the Ministry of Women and Child Development and this 'First Ladies' is the second leg of the '100 Women Achievers' campaign of the Ministry for Women empowerment and development.

Ashok Chakra -JP Nirala

- ❖ President Ram NathKovind awarded India's highest peacetime military decoration Ashok Chakra posthumously to IAF Garud commando Corporal Jyoti Prakash Nirala.
- ❖ Niralalaid down his life after gunning down two terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ Corporal Nirala was part of a Garud Special Forces Unit of the Indian Air Force, a detachment of which was attached to a Rashtriya Rifles battalion under the aegis of 'Op Rakshak' in Jammu and Kashmir. J.P.Niralafirst Indian Air Force Commando to receive the award after his death.

Director - Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre

- ❖ Dr.V.Narayanan took charge as the new director of ISRO's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre in Valiamala , Thiruvananthapuram.
- ❖ He succeeds S Somanath who has been appointed Director, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre.
- ❖ Narayanan led team has successfully developed C25 Cryogenic Stage powered by a 20 tonne thrust Cryogenic Engine using Liquid Oxygen and Liquid Hydrogen propellant combination.

2018 Padma Awards

- ❖ The President of India has approved conferment of 85 Padma Awards for the year 2018.
- ❖ The list comprises 3 Padma Vibhushan, 9 Padma Bhushan and 73 Padma Shri Awards.

Padma Awards

- ❖ They were instituted in the year 1954.
- ❖ The Awards are given in various disciplines/ fields of activities, viz.- art, social work, public affairs, science and engineering, trade and industry, medicine, literature and education, sports, civil service, etc.
- ❖ Padma Awards, one of the highest civilian Awards of the country, are conferred in three categories, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri.

- ❖ The awards are announced on the occasion of Republic Day every year.

Innovation in governance award

- ❖ Panchayat Raj & Rural Development and IT Minister N. Lokesh received the Kalam Innovation in Governance Award-2018 presented by the Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Centre in New Delhi.
- ❖ It has been awarded as part of the Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam Memorial Summit and Awards on Innovation in Governance.
- ❖ The Kalam Centre in recognising the development of rural areas and integration of technology in rural governance by the Andhra Pradesh government and selected Andhra Pradesh for innovation award in the Panchayat Raj & Rural Development category.

Best tableau prize in Republic Day parade 2018

- ❖ Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman gave away the Republic Day Parade 2018 best tableau award to Maharashtra at Cariappa Parade Ground in Delhi Cantonment.
- ❖ Maharashtra's tableau was titled Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj coronation.
- ❖ Assam's tableau depicting traditional "masks and sastras" bagged the second prize
- ❖ The third prize went to Chhattisgarh's display of Ramgarh's ancient amphitheatre and artistes performing dance based on Kalidasa's Meghadootam.
- ❖ Punjab Regiment Contingent has bagged the award for the best marching contingent among the three services
- ❖ Indo-Tibetan Border Police has bagged the award for the best marching contingent among the paramilitary and other auxiliary forces
- ❖ Among the tableaux by Union Ministries and departments, the first prize went to Khelo India of the Youth Affairs and Sports Ministry.

Students' category

- ❖ The South Central Zone Cultural Centre from Nagpur got the first prize for the Baredi dance of Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The North East Zone Cultural Centre from Dimapur, Nagaland, and Oxford Foundation School, Delhi, won consolation prizes for performing the Sangrai Mog dance of Tripura and the Shikshit Bharat, Shashakt Bharat dance, respectively.

Outstanding Parliamentarian Award

- ❖ The Indian Parliamentary Group (IPG) conferred the Outstanding Parliamentarian Award for 2017 on Biju Janata Dal leader in the Lok Sabha Bhartruhari Mahtab.
- ❖ Trinamool Congress member of the Lok Sabha Dinesh Trivedi gets the award for 2016 and Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad (Congress) for 2015.
- ❖ Rajya Sabha member Najma Heptulla gets the award for 2013 and Lok Sabha member Hukumdev Narayan Yadav for 2014.
- ❖ The awardees were selected on the basis of their experience, debating skills, awareness of issues and the depth with which issues were raised

About

- ❖ The Outstanding Parliamentarian Award is an award given by the Indian Parliamentary Group to an outstanding sitting Member of the Indian Parliament for overall contribution in the Indian Parliament.
- ❖ It was instituted in 1992 by Shivraj Patil, who was the Speaker of Lok Sabha from 1991 to 1996.
- ❖ Indian Parliamentary Group is a 24-member autonomous body of the current and former MPs of both houses.
- ❖ The group is headed by the Speaker.

SPORTS

King Salman World Blitz Championship

- ❖ Indian chess Grand Master and five-time World Champion Viswanathan Anand won bronze at the King Salman World Blitz Championship at Riyadh.
- ❖ Anand won against Maxime Vachier-Lagrave of France. Anand's only loss in the championship was to the Russian grandmaster Ian Nepomniachtchi.
- ❖ It was World Champion grandmaster Magnus Carlsen who won the tournament, by defeating Anton Korobov of Ukraine.
- ❖ The women's title was won by Nana Dzanigdze of Georgia, who drew with Elina Daniellian of Armenia in the final round

Viswanathan Anand

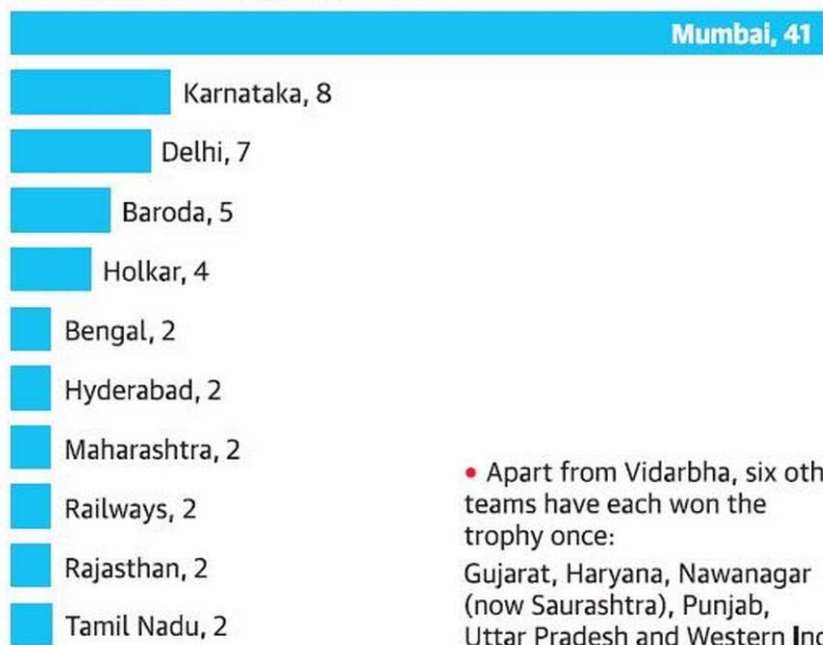
- ❖ Viswanathan Anand became India's first grandmaster in 1988. He is first Asian to win FIDE World Chess Championship from 2000 to 2002.

- ❖ He is the first recipient of Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award in 1991, India's highest sporting honour.
- ❖ In 2007, he was awarded Padma Vibhushan India's second highest civilian award, making him first sportsperson to receive award.

Vidarbha win Ranji Trophy 2017

- ❖ Vidarbha won Ranji Trophy title after beating Delhi by nine wickets at Indore's Holkar stadium.
- ❖ Until 2017, Vidarbha had never won a single Ranji Trophy in the 84-year long history of the tournament.
- ❖ Last year, it was Gujarat who won their maiden Ranji title.

Team, number of Ranji Trophy wins



SOURCE: CRICINFO

• Apart from Vidarbha, six other teams have each won the trophy once:
Gujarat, Haryana, Nawanagar (now Saurashtra), Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Western India

Ranji Trophy

- ❖ The Ranji Trophy is a domestic first-class cricket championship played in India between teams representing regional and state cricket associations.
- ❖ The competition is named after first Indian cricketer who played international cricket, Ranjit Singhji, who was also known as "Ranji". He played for England and Sussex.
- ❖ Bombay have won the tournament the most number of times with 41 wins including 15 back-to-back wins from 1958–59 to 1972–73.

Royal Cup golf – Thailand

- ❖ Indian golfer Shiv Kapur won the Royal Cup golf tournament at the Phoenix Gold Golf and Country Club in Pattaya, Thailand.
- ❖ This latest win marks Kapur's fourth Asian Tour win and sixth international title. He has won twice on European Challenge Tour.
- ❖ Kapur is also the only player to win thrice on the continental tour in this year.

International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) Rankings

- ❖ G Sathiyam becomes India's highest-ranked player in the latest International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) rankings.
- ❖ The current ranking of Sathiyam is 49, surpassing his compatriot the legendary Sharath Kamal who is in 51st spot.
- ❖ As for the women, Manika Batra is topping the world chart among Indians at 62th.

First International medal in Skiing

- ❖ The 21-year-old Manali girl Aanchal Thakur clinched bronze in the coveted Alpine Ejder 3200 Cup organised by the International Ski Federation (FIS) at the Palandoken Ski Centre in Erzurum in Turkey.
- ❖ Aanchal won the medal in the slalom race category.
- ❖ This is the first Medal for India in International Skiing event. Hence she became the first Indian to win a medal at an international skiing event.

Baby Olympics

- ❖ Bahrain has announced plans to host the first-ever 'Baby Olympics' where two to four-year-olds will take part in the games in April.
- ❖ The games will include five disciplines – athletics, gymnastics, football, basketball and weightlifting.
- ❖ The move is aimed at creating "awareness among youngsters to practice sport.

National Women's Boxing Championship

- ❖ Former world silver-medallist Sarjubala Devi (48kg), representing Manipur, claimed the gold as well as the best boxer trophy in National Women's Boxing Championship.
- ❖ The Railways Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) emerged overall champions in the National Women's Boxing Championships.

- ❖ Former world and Asian champion L.Sarita Devi (60kg), representing the All India Police (AIP), also picked up a gold medal after beating RSPB's Pavitra in her summit clash.

ICC Cricketer of the Year

- ❖ Indian skipper Virat Kohli has bagged the honour of becoming the second Indian in a row to win the prestigious Sir Garfield Sobers Trophy for being named as the World Cricketer of the Year 2017.
- ❖ It was spinner Ravichandran Ashwin who had won the award the previous year.
- ❖ He has also been named the captain of Men's ODI and Test Teams of the Year.

Manav Thakkar

- ❖ Manav Thakkar from Surat became the first Indian paddler to grab the world No.2 spot in the boys' under-18 category of the International Table Tennis Federation (ITTF) rankings.
- ❖ Li Hsin-Yang of Chinese Taipei holds the No. 1 spot while China's Wang Chuqin is in third spot.
- ❖ Manav Thakkar has bagged two Pro-tour gold medals in Slovenia and Indian Open and finished runners-up in Thailand Open last year.
- ❖ Manav has also ranked into the top-15 in the boys' U-21 rankings. Diya Chitale rose to No. 5 in the girls' under 15 category in the International Table Tennis Federation .

Blind Cricket World Cup 2018

- ❖ India beat the arch-rivals Pakistan by two wickets in a thrilling final and retained the Blind Cricket World Cup title at Sharjah Cricket Stadium in UAE.
- ❖ India successfully defended the coveted title and lifted the title for the second consecutive time. With this win, the Reddy-led team also remained unbeaten in the tournament.

First standalone Women's World T20- West Indies

- ❖ Antigua & Barbuda, Guyana, and St Lucia will host the Women's World T20 from November 9 to 24 later this year.
- ❖ This will be the first instance of the Women's World T20 being played as a standalone event, after the previous six editions were organised alongside the men's World T20 and the second hosted by the West Indies (after the 2010 edition).

- ❖ The qualifier tournament for the competition is scheduled to be held in July 2018 in the Netherlands.

Swedish Open - Shuttler Siddharth Singh

- ❖ Young Indian shuttler Siddharth Pratap Singh (19-year-old from Raipur) secured his maiden international title, bagging the Swedish Open Junior International Series with a straight-game victory over Denmark's Mads Christophersen in the final match held at Uppasala (Sweden).

Roger Federer wins Australian Open

- ❖ World No. 2 Roger Federer of Switzerland defeated No. 6 Marin Cilic of Croatia to clinch his sixth Australian Open title.
- ❖ This is 20th Grand Slam title of the Swiss professional tennis player.
- ❖ Roger Federer has won the Australian Open six times, the French Open once, Wimbledon eight times and the US Open five times.

Grand Slam tournaments

- ❖ There are four Grand Slam tournaments in Tennis World. They are also called Majors. By winning this four, one can clinch the Grand Slam Title.
 - Australian Open,
 - French Open,
 - Wimbledon
 - US Open.
- ❖ Australian Open and US Open tournaments are played on a hard Court.
- ❖ Whereas French Open and Wimbledon is played on a Clay court and Grass Court respectively.

Khelo India

- ❖ Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports launched the PLEDGE for Khelo India at the Khelo India School Games Carnival in Delhi.
- ❖ The pledge is a promise to participate and encourage sportsmanship spirit
- ❖ It is aimed at inspiring youngsters to build mass participation and excellence in sports.

IMPORTANT DAYS

125th Birth Anniversary - Satyendra Nath Bose

- ❖ The Government conducted a ceremony of the commemoration of professor Satyendra Nath Bose's 125th birth anniversary at Kolkata.

Satyendra Nath Bose

- ❖ Physicist Satyendra Nath Bose, born on January 1, 1894 in Calcutta.
- ❖ Bose is widely called the 'Father of the God Particle' for his work on the Boson Particle.
- ❖ The class of particles that obey Bose-Einstein statistics has been named Bosons, after Prof Bose.
- ❖ SN Bose also worked in European X-ray and crystallography laboratories, where he got to work with Einstein as well as Louis de Broglie and Marie Curie.
- ❖ Bose was honoured with Padma Vibhusan in 1954, the second-highest civilian award in India. In 1959 he was appointed National Professor, the highest honour in the country for a scholar.

Guru Gobind Singh Jayanti – January 5

- ❖ The 351st birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th and last Guru of Sikhs was celebrated on January 5.
- ❖ Guru Gobind Singh was formally installed as the leader of the Sikhs at age nine, becoming the tenth Sikh Guru
- ❖ He was the founder of the Sikh warrior community called Khalsa in 1699 and introduced the Five Ks. In Sikhism, the Five Ks are five items that Guru Gobind Singh commanded Khalsa Sikhs to wear at all times, which includes
 1. Kesh: uncut hair.
 2. Kangha: a wooden comb.
 3. Kara: an iron or steel bracelet worn on the wrist.
 4. Kirpan: a sword or dagger.
 5. Kacchera: short breeches.

Army Air Defence - 25th Raising Day

- ❖ 25th Raising Day of Army Air Defence was celebrated on 10th January 2018.
- ❖ The Corps of Army Air Defence was first raised during British era in 1939 and it took active participation in the Second World War.
- ❖ However, since January 10, 1994, it is exercising autonomous status.

- ❖ Corps of Army Air Defence is one of the active corps of Indian army tasked with protection of Indian air spaces from enemy aircrafts and missiles, specially below 5000 feet.
- ❖ Motto of Army Air Defence is 'AKASHE SHATRUN JAHI' (Kill The Enemy in Sky).

National Youth Day – January 12

- ❖ The National Youth Day is observed every year on 12 January to mark the birth anniversary of social reformer, philosopher, thinker and youth icon of India Swami Vivekananda.
- ❖ This year it is 155th birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda. Observance of the day seeks to propagate the philosophy and the ideals of Swami Vivekananda for which he lived and worked.
- ❖ Swami Vivekananda was born as Narendranath Dutta on 12 January 1863 and died on 4 July 1902. He and was chief disciple of 19th century saint Ramakrishna Paramhansa.
- ❖ He was known for his speech in Chicago's speech and who also a one of the most prominent figures of India who introduced Indian philosophies of Vedanta and Yoga to "Western" World.

70th Army Day

- ❖ January 15 is observed every year as Army Day in India.
- ❖ On this day in 1949, Field Marshal Kodandera M Cariappa took over as the first Commander-in-Chief of the Indian Army from General Sir Francis Butcher, the last British Commander-in-Chief.
- ❖ Army day is dedicated to the soldiers who fought to safeguard the country's honour.

8th National Voters' Day observed – January 25

- ❖ The 8th National Voters' Day (NVD) was observed across the country by the Election Commission of India.
- ❖ The objective of the Day is
 - to increase enrolment of voters, especially of newly eligible ones
 - to spread awareness among voters regarding effective participation in the electoral process.
- ❖ National Voters' Day was initiated in 2011 to commemorate the foundation day of the Election Commission of India (ECI) which came into existence on 25th January 1950.

Republic Day 2018 – January 26

- ❖ Republic day in India is celebrated every year on 26th of January to honour the Constitution of India as it came into force on the same day in the year 1950.
- ❖ In a first, the Republic Day celebrations was held with 10 chief guests.
- ❖ The significance of the ASEAN leaders attending the event is that ASEAN completes 50 years of formation and that India completes 25 years of its partnership with the grouping.
- ❖ The Constitution came into effect on January 26, 1950, a date specially chosen to coincide with the anniversary of ‘Purna Swaraj Diwas’.
- ❖ This was the day the Indian Independence Act was consequently repealed and India was established as a democratic republic, no longer a dominion of the British Crown.
- ❖ The ASEAN Heads from Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Brunei – will be hosted in this year’s celebrations.

World Leprosy Day

- ❖ The World Leprosy Day is observed internationally every year on last Sunday of January month to raise global awareness of Leprosy.
- ❖ Observance of the day focuses on target of zero cases of leprosy-related disabilities in children.
- ❖ The day was initiated by French philanthropist, Raoul Follereau in 1954 as way to raise global awareness of this deadly ancient disease.
- ❖ Leprosy is also known as Hansen’s disease and it is one of the oldest diseases known to humankind.
- ❖ It is caused by bacteria called Mycobacterium leprae , which multiplies very slowly in the human body.

National Cleanliness Day - 30th January

- ❖ National Cleanliness Day is observed every year on January 30th in India to highlight the responsibility for environmental cleanliness.
- ❖ The day calls to maintain high standards of cleanliness in our homes, work place, road/streets and public places.

Martyrs' Day – 30th January

- ❖ In India, there are several days declared as Martyrs' Day (at national level also known as Sarvodaya day). They are named in honour of those who are recognised as martyrs for the nation.
- ❖ The date was chosen as it marks the assassination of Mohandas Karam chand Gandhi in 1948, by Nathuram Godse.
- ❖ India is one of the 15 nations that celebrate Martyr's Day every year. A two-minute silence in memory of Indian martyrs is observed throughout the country at 11 AM.

MISCELLANEOUS

Renaming of Sabarimala temple to original name

- ❖ The Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) has decided to restore the name of the Sabarimala temple to Sabarimala Sree Dharma Sastha Temple at a TDB meeting held at the board headquarters in Thiruvananthapuram
- ❖ It will revoke the decision taken by the previous board for renaming it as Sabarimala Sree Ayyappa Swami Temple in 2016.

Bhima Koregaon Battle

- ❖ It is one of the last battles of 3rd Anglo-Maratha War in January 1818, between Maratha ruler Bajji Rao Peshwa II and the British East India Company along with the local Mahar community.
- ❖ The battle brought an end to the domination of Peshwas.
- ❖ Historically, Mahars were considered as untouchables.
- ❖ Maratha King Shivaji, nevertheless, recruited large number of Mahars into the Maratha Army in the 17th century.
- ❖ However, relations between Mahars and Peshwas turned sour after Bajji Rao II reportedly insulted the community by rejecting their offer to serve the army.
- ❖ This made them to side with the English against the Peshwa's numerically superior army.
- ❖ After the victory, British erected a commemorative victory pillar (Koregaon Ranstambh) in Bhima-Koregaon village in 1818.
- ❖ This year, the event commemorating the 200th anniversary of the battle had been met with protests in Maharashtra.

Largest prime number

- ❖ A very big number over 23 million digits long has discovered to be the “largest known prime number”.
- ❖ This number was discovered using a software called GIMPS.
- ❖ A prime number is a number that can only be divided by itself and by 1. For example: 2, 3, 5, 7, 11, and so on.
- ❖ Prime numbers are used in Cryptography (the study of secret messaging, involves sharing information via secret codes), credit cards, cell phones, all depend on cryptography.

China's Internet in Nepal

- ❖ China became Nepal's second Internet service provider, breaking India's monopoly in providing Internet access to the Himalayan country.
- ❖ So far, Nepal had been linked to the global internet network through Indian telecom operators.
- ❖ A new terrestrial fibre cable launched in 2016 by China Telecom Global (CTG) will now connect Nepal and China through the Jilong (Rasuwagadhi) border gateway.

Global Manufacturing Index

- ❖ The World Economic Forum (WEF) has ranked India at 30th position on a global manufacturing index.
- ❖ Geneva-based WEF released the first 'Readiness for the future of production report'.
- ❖ Japan topped the rankings on the back of developing the best structure of production.
- ❖ Considering BRICS Nations, India ranks below China's 5th place but above other BRICS peers, Brazil, Russia and South Africa.
- ❖ Among BRICS nations, Russia is ranked 35th, Brazil 41st and South Africa at 45th place.
- ❖ India has been placed in the Legacy group (strong current base, at risk for future) category in the report.

New Mensa record

- ❖ Indian-origin boy Mehul Garg in United Kingdom has achieved the highest score in Mensa IQ test.
- ❖ He scored maximum score of 162 to become a member of Mensa.

- ❖ He scored two points more than Einstein and Hawking.
- ❖ Mensa is the largest and oldest high IQ society in the world.
- ❖ It was established in October 1946 and is headquartered in Lincolnshire, England.
- ❖ Its mission is to identify and foster human intelligence for benefit of humanity.

238th anniversary of India's first newspaper

- ❖ Journalists and social activists celebrated Hicky's Day paying tributes to the fighter-journalist James Augustus Hicky
- ❖ It is also the 238th anniversary of India's first newspaper -the Bengal Gazette launched by James Augustus Hicky on January 29, 1780.
- ❖ Hicky's Bengal Gazette (Original Calcutta General Advertiser) was an English language weekly newspaper published in Kolkata (then Calcutta), the then capital of British India.
- ❖ It was the first newspaper printed in Asia. The newspaper in its time was strong critic of administration of Governor General Warren Hastings.
