

TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM CURRENT AFFAIRS – MARCH, 2018

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CONTENT

TNPSC BITS	10
TAMILNADU	13
Subsidised 'Amma' Two-Wheeler Scheme.....	13
State Food Commission - TAMILNADU	13
Tamil Nadu Tourism awards.....	14
Six-member expert committee	14
Bhoodan Board reconstitution.....	14
ICF – Carbon Dioxide.....	15
Sagar Kavach	16
Insect Museum.....	16
Chennai - Salem Flight service	17
Bar Council poll	17
NATIONAL.....	18
21st National Conference on e-Governance.....	18
8th Indo- Seychelles Army exercise) February 24 – March 4(.....	18
International Conference on Sustainable Biofuels 2018	18
15th Edition of Bio Asia 2018	19
World’s largest solar park	19
India’s first Aviation Multi Skill Development Centre	20
Paschim Leher (XPL-18).....	21
Global Digital Health Partnership Summit.....	21
C-162 - Coast Guard	22
Shifting of AWBI Headquarters	22
Decline in Child Marriages.....	22
M777 ultra-light howitzers	23
Northeast Elections	24
Global Fire Power Index 2017	25
Number of billionaires - India	26
Rajya Sabha panel of presiding officers.....	27
EBRD - INDIA.....	27
Delhi airport.....	28



International Solar Alliance	28
We for Development.....	30
Samvedna	30
SUVIDHA	30
Mumbai - 16th most expensive city	31
Solar Energy – First Union Territory.....	32
HT Cotton.....	32
National Conference on Counterfeiting & Role of Enforcement Agencies.....	32
Proposal to abolish the death penalty	33
Passive euthanasia	33
National Nutrition Mission.....	34
Know India Programme	35
India’s first coastal policing academy.....	35
Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) from USA.....	35
TB Summit.....	36
#YesIBleed Campaign	36
Interceptor boat- ICG	37
Annual Survey of India’s City-Systems (ASICS).....	37
Cadre Management	38
'Krishi Unnati Mela'.....	39
105th Indian Science Congress.....	39
Union Budget	40
SATH-E Roadmaps	40
Promotion of tourism in North-East.....	41
'Varuna-18'	41
Energy Transition Index	42
Ayushman Bharat	43
Commission on sub-categorization of OBCs.....	44
World’s first Trusted Digital Repository.....	45
Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, 2017	46
National Year of Millets.....	47
National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement	47
India-Egypt Joint Commission Meeting.....	48
INS Ganga decommissioned.....	48
Print Biennale India 2018.....	49
Third largest electricity producer	49
COMCASA	50



SAUBHAGYA –Skill Training.....	51
Atal Innovation Mission.....	51
Study in India programme.....	52
Steps to improve collegium system.....	52
Creamy layer for SCs/STs – Centre’s opposition.....	54
Stay on trial - valid only for 6 months.....	54
International Solar Alliance and India.....	55
Draft policy on Defense Production.....	56
E-Tribes India.....	56
INTERNATIONAL.....	57
EPG.....	57
20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM).....	57
Saudi Arabia - Military.....	58
FATF.....	58
Mascots for 2020 Olympics and Paralympics.....	59
Russia– Olympics.....	59
Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier – China.....	60
Rooppur Nuclear power plant.....	60
Marshall Islands.....	61
India’s top oil supplier.....	62
Warship Squadron– Japan.....	62
Nile festival - 6th Indian edition.....	62
Italy's First Black Senator.....	63
Juniper Cobra.....	63
Elie Wiesel Award.....	63
China – Extension of Tenure of President.....	64
Genocide Day.....	64
Crime free zone.....	65
World ATM Congress.....	65
Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for TPP.....	65
Joint declarations of Financial partnership.....	66
MILES-18.....	67
First Indo-French Knowledge Summit.....	67
India-France Defence pact.....	67
Kinzhal missile.....	67
World Happiness Report 2018.....	68
Bidya Devi Bhandari - Nepal President.....	69



Angela Merkel Fourth Term Chancellor.....	70
Philippines quit from ICC	70
Gulf Shield – 1 joint military exercise.....	71
Vladimir Putin - Russia	72
African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)	72
Pakistan's First Female Senate Opposition Leader	73
Peru - New President	74
Floating Island	74
Egypt President Re-elected	75
Expulsions of diplomats	75
May Day.....	77
Kim Jong-un's visit to China	77
Win Myint - Myanmar's New President	77
ECONOMY.....	78
National Financial Reporting Authority.....	78
US securities - India.....	79
FIN-Tech	79
Ofloxacin import.....	80
Double tax avoidance agreement	80
Cost of Living Index 2018	80
World's first brass futures contracts.....	81
Yellow Army Savings Account.....	82
Loan facility.....	83
Trade Imbalance.....	83
SEBI rules	84
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.....	86
Rustom 2	86
SpaceX.....	87
Integrated app for all government services	88
e-Commerce Portal for Fishers.....	88
ATGM - Nag.....	89
Thermo electric compound	89
Meri e-Pustak.....	89
Udyam Sakhi Portal.....	90
Women Entrepreneurship Platform.....	90
India's first cloned Assamese buffalo born	90
BIRAC	91



BrahMos	91
‘Chandrayaan-2’	92
Smart India Hackathon 2018	93
NASA.....	94
New Planet K2-229b	94
ENVIRONMENT	95
Newton-Bhabha Fund	95
New species of water strider.....	95
RIMES - Odisha.....	96
Global carbon emissions.....	96
Earth Hour.....	97
Neutrino Observatory	98
National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) 2017-18.....	99
Brazzaville Declaration	99
STATE.....	101
Aadi Mahotsava	101
Youth Festival 2018.....	101
Health-cum-life insurance scheme for farmers.....	101
Financial Year 17 - Bihar.....	102
Khushi Scheme- Odisha	102
Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas programme.....	102
India's first helicopter taxi	102
Shigmotsav 2018	103
Healthcare Scheme - Karnataka	103
International Yoga Festival 2018	103
Pink Electricity Zone.....	103
WE Hub.....	104
Floating Lab - Loktak Lake	104
MGNREGA ranking.....	104
MSME International Trade Fair 2018.....	105
Swachh Shakti 2018	105
Silver Jubilee of Losar festival.....	105
Saubhagya Yojana - Uttarakhand.....	106
First cyber police station	106
Women Patrolling Squad	106
Criminal Laws (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill, 2018	107
Ban on use of plastic - Maharashtra.....	107



'Religious Minority' status for Lingayat	107
Naipunya Ratham – Andhra Pradesh	109
Krem Puri.....	110
Karnataka Assembly Election	110
AAI – Assam	111
Madhavpur Mela in Gujarat.....	111
PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS	112
Death of former SC Judge Rathinavel Pandian	112
Laureus Awards 2018.....	112
Political and Public Life Awards	113
90th Academy Awards (Oscars 2018).....	114
Pritzker Prize - Balkrishna Vitaldas Doshi.....	116
'Pride of Birmingham' award.....	116
ITB – Berlin	117
New Special Director.....	117
Border guarding force – First Women Officer	118
Wings India 2018	119
Stephen Hawking - Death.....	119
Press Information Bureau – Director General.....	120
Nari Shakti Puraskar 2017	120
2017 Kochon Prize.....	121
G.K. Reddy Memorial National Award	121
Abel Prize	122
Scientific Adviser	122
UNESCO Executive Board	123
Yuri Gagarin's 50th death anniversary	124
J.C. Daniel Award	124
SPORTS	125
Austrian Open.....	125
69th Strandja Memorial boxing tournament	125
Asian Wrestling Championships	126
IBSF Snooker World Cup.....	126
Youngest captain in international cricket history.....	126
ISSF World Cup.....	127
National tennis championship	127
Asian wrestling championships	127
Tal Memorial Rapid chess title.....	128

ISSF World Cup.....	128
Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey	129
Hero Indian Open	129
ISSF World Cup.....	130
Deodhar Trophy 2018.....	130
Nidahas Trophy	131
Asian Cross-Country Championship.....	131
2019 FIFA U-20 World Cup	132
Deepa Malik - Asian Rank	132
Motors Sports Award - Anindith Reddy.....	133
Irani Cup - Vidarbha	133
Table Tennis in Odisha.....	134
Junior ISSF World Cup	134
ISSF junior World Cup	134
ISSF junior World Cup - Bronze	135
100 ODI wickets	135
Jockey Youth Cup	136
Asian Billiards.....	136
CWG 2018.....	137
ISSF Junior World Cup	137
IMPORTANT DAYS.....	138
Rare Disease Day – February 28.....	138
Zero Discrimination Day - March 01.....	138
World Wildlife Day - 03 March.....	139
World NGO Day – 27 February	140
National Safety Day – March 4.....	140
International Women's Day - 08 March.....	140
49th Raising Day of CISF - 10 March.....	140
World Consumer Rights Day – 15 March	141
33rd Inception Day of NCRB – 11 March	142
World Sleep Day – March 16.....	142
World Sparrow Day - March 20	142
World Water Day - 22 March	143
International Day of Forests - 21 March	144
World Poetry Day - 21 March.....	144
International Day for Achievers – 24 March	144
World Tuberculosis Day – 24 March	144

Martyrs' Day – March 23	145
World Meteorological Day – March 23	145
MISCELLANEOUS	146
‘SRIJAN’ - MyGov portal	146
Fourth India-Europe 29 Business Forum	147
Fastest growing IT services brand - 2018.....	147
Mastercard women entrepreneurs index	147
Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship	149
45th anniversary of Chipko movement	149

TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Shri M. Subbarayudu, (IFS: 1994), presently Ambassador of India to Peru, has been concurrently accredited as the next Ambassador of India to State of Bolivia.
- ❖ The Jammu & Kashmir government has constituted the first ever State Council for Promotion of Urdu Language in a bid to promote the official language of the state.
- ❖ The third Partnership Summit of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) was held in Visakhapatnam. The event is to be held by CII in association with the Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion, Government of India, and Andhra Pradesh Government.
- ❖ Michael McCormack has been elected Australia's new deputy prime minister after being selected as the leader of the country's National Party, the junior partner in the country's coalition government. He replaces Barnaby Joyce.
- ❖ Senior TV journalist Rahul Mahajan has been appointed the new Editor-in-Chief of Rajya Sabha Television. The television channel is run and managed by the Upper House of Parliament.
 - The recommendation was made by a five-member Search Committee headed by A Surya Prakash, chairman of Prasar Bharti.
- ❖ With a mission to build a New India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi flagged off the 'Run for New India' marathon in Surat, Gujarat.
- ❖ The government has launched a scheme to provide free of cost viral load testing, at least once a year, for 1.2 million people who are living with HIV/AIDS (PLHIV) and are on treatment. The viral load is used to monitor the effectiveness of Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) over time.
 - It measures the amount of HIV genetic material (RNA) in the blood and reports how many copies of the virus are present.
- ❖ Shri Vinay Kumar (IFS: 1992), currently Joint Secretary in Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. He will succeed incumbent Manpreet Vohra.
- ❖ The Maharashtra's first Mega Food Park named as Satara Mega Food Park Pvt. Ltd. was inaugurated at Degaon Village in Satara district. This is overall 12th Mega Food Park operationalized in country so far.
- ❖ Phirangi puram is all set to become Andhra Pradesh's first all-women rail station. It will be a big step in addressing gender equality in the biggest public-sector organisation in the country. It will be the third-of-its-kind railway station in the country after Jaipur's Gandhi Nagar and Mumbai's Matunga.
- ❖ Samina Baig, Pakistan's first woman to climb Mount Everest, was today appointed as the goodwill ambassador of the UN Development Programme.

She will lead efforts to build national awareness and partnerships around the Global Goals for Sustainable Development.

- ❖ Senior IAS officer Sudhir Tripathy, an IAS officer of 1985 batch, is likely to be appointed as the next Chief Secretary of Jharkhand. He will be succeeding the incumbent Chief Secretary Rajbala Verma. He is presently at the post of Additional Chief Secretary in the state health department.
- ❖ A new train named as 'Arunachal Express' between Naharlagun in Arunachal Pradesh and Anand Vihar Terminal in the national capital was flagged off by Union Ministers Kiren Rijiju and Rajen Gohain for making travelling viable and convenient for the commuters
 - This is the second direct train for Arunachal Pradesh and 14th for North East to connect with the national capital.
- ❖ The Union Minister of State (I/C) of the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Dr. Jitendra Singh, launched the social media of "Namaste Shalom", a magazine on India-Israel relations. The magazine is edited by Tarun Vijay, former MP.
- ❖ Senior Indian-origin Scotland Yard officer Neil Basu became first person of Asian heritage to be appointed as Counter Terrorism Chief.
- ❖ Book reading event held by Pune based Aadharsh mandal organization in Gadchiroli district of Madhya Pradesh.
 - For this event 7 thousand people gathered here. In this event People read the book named Gandhian Ideologies and Peace and this event is get registered in Guinness world record.
 - Before that, in the last May 18, Turkey conducted such an event in which 5,754 people participated and it get registered in Guinness world record.
- ❖ Washington became the first state to set up its own net-neutrality requirements after U.S. regulators repealed Obama-era rules that banned internet providers from blocking the contents in online traffic.
- ❖ The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, received the first copy of the book 'Fulfilling Babu's Dreams – Prime Minister Modi's Tribute to Gandhiji' from Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev.
- ❖ India-Russia diplomatic relations have completed 70 years of successful partnership. As part of the celebrations, International Federation of Indo-Russian Youth Clubs jointly with BRICS International Forum presented a programme - Vision for Future at the Pravasi Bhartiya Kendra, New Delhi.
- ❖ On International Women's Day (March 8), Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan announced a pension scheme for single women above 50 years of age and widows above 50 years of age — one perhaps unique in the country.
- ❖ Shri Ravi Thapar (IFS: 1983), presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to

Lebanon. Nengcha L. Mukhopadhaya is the current Ambassador of India to Lebanon.

- ❖ Britain's Prince Charles has appointed Indian-origin steel tycoon Sanjeev Gupta as an official ambassador for the Industrial Cadets programme. The programme helps young people aged 9-21 to develop skills and gain an insight into the manufacturing industry.
- ❖ The Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation has constituted Mahanadi Water Dispute Tribunal with Supreme Court Judge A M Khanwilkar as chairman of Tribunal.
 - The two other members are Justice Ravi Ranjan of Patna High Court and Justice Indwermeet Kaur Kochar of Delhi High Court.
- ❖ Banlotwa has become the first 'alcohol-free' village in Jharkhand state.
- ❖ A total of 102 rhinos have been counted in Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary here during a census carried out by the state's forest department. The one horned rhino census was conducted after six years in the sanctuary.
 - Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary is the "densest habitat of one horned rhinos in the world".
- ❖ Ms. Sangeeta Bahadur, current Additional Secretary in Ministry of External Affairs, has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Belarus.
- ❖ The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) has launched its "lost and found" mobile application for passengers at 59 airports across India. It can be downloaded from the website of Ministry of Information and Technology.
 - The app offers three facilities – lost and found items at airports, tracking complaints or request status and technical consultancy in security, and fire services.
- ❖ Tamilnadu government is set to introduce a free phone number service to provide equivalent Tamil words for other language words.
 - People can call the number and enquire Tamil word for words from any other language. Similarly, eminent Tamil people and general public can call to this number and register any new technical Tamil word they learn or come across.
- ❖ ICICI Bank launches 'InstaOD', India's first online overdraft facility for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME).
- ❖ National flag has been unfurled in India's tallest flag post in Belagavi, Karnataka. The 110-metre-tall flag post at Kote Kere is near the historic Belagavi fort in the city. It is taller than the post in Pune (107 m) and the one at the India-Pakistan border at Attari (105 m) in Punjab.
- ❖ General Bipin Rawat, Chief of the Army Staff released a book on Paramveer Chakra Awardees - Paramveer Parwane. The book illustrates the bravery of Paramveer Chakra Awardees from 1947 to 1965 and is written by Dr Prabhakaran Jain published by Medha Books.

- ❖ General President-elect of Indian Science Congress Manoj Kumar Chakrabarti announced that the 106th edition of the Indian Science Congress (ISC) will be held in January 2019 at Barkatullah University, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh. The theme for 2019 ISC will be “Future India: Science & Technology”.
- ❖ The Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has launched India’s first Sign Language Dictionary of 3000 Words. The dictionary has been developed by Indian Sign Language Research & Training Centre (ISLR & TC) under the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPwD). This dictionary is available in both print and video formats.
- ❖ Tata Power announced the appointment of Praveer Sinha as the firm’s chief executive officer and managing director with effect from May 1.
- ❖ Amidst the Facebook data scandal, Chief Election Commissioner OP Rawat announced that the social networking platforms will remain their social media partner during the Karnataka Assembly elections.
- ❖ Surat has become the first district in the country to have 100% solar powered Primary Health Centers (PHC). There are a total of 52 PHCs in the district and all of them are now powered by solar system.
- ❖ Former Indian captain Rahul Dravid has been named as the election icon to motivate young voters to come and vote in the upcoming Karnataka Assembly elections. Meanwhile, film and music director Yograj Bhat will make the Karnataka Election Anthem.

TAMILNADU

Subsidised 'Amma' Two-Wheeler Scheme

- ❖ Prime Minister launched the subsidised scooter scheme for working women on the occasion of the 70th birth anniversary celebrations of late Tamil Nadu leader J.Jayalalithaa.
- ❖ As part of the scheme, every beneficiary will be given 50% of the cost of a two-wheeler or a grant of INR 25,000.
- ❖ Each year, one lakh working women would be covered.
- ❖ This Amma two-wheeler scheme was a pet project of Jayalalithaa which was proposed by her in the election manifesto.

State Food Commission - TAMILNADU

- ❖ The State government has constituted a six-member Tamil Nadu State Food Commission with IAS officer R.Vasuki as its Chairperson

- ❖ It has been constituted more than a year after it decided to implement the National Food Security Act (NFSA).
- ❖ As per Section 16 of the National Food Security Act, 2013, every State should constitute a State Food Commission for the purpose of monitoring and reviewing implementation of this Act.
- ❖ According to the NFS Act, 2013, the Commission shall
 - Monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Act in relation to the State,
 - Inquire into complaints of violations of entitlements,
 - Give advice to the State government for the effective implementation of food and nutrition related schemes.
- ❖ The Commission is empowered to either Suo moto or on receipt of complaint, inquire into violations of entitlements and can give advice to the government, and has all the powers of a civil court.
- ❖ About 50.55% of the State's population or around 3.6 crore, out of the total 7.2 crore consumers, are eligible for entitlements under the NFSA.

Tamil Nadu Tourism awards

- ❖ Chennai International Airport has received the Tamil Nadu tourism award. This is the third time in a row that Chennai Airport has won the honour
- ❖ The awards honoured the best and friendliest services in Tamil Nadu in the tourism sector.
- ❖ The awards were conferred by Madura Welcome, a tourist guide book company, in association with the Ministry of Tourism, government of India.

Six-member expert committee

- ❖ The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court has constituted a six-member expert committee to explore and analyse the current educational scenario in the State in terms of examination system and challenges faced by children.
- ❖ The six member committee comprising Directors of Technical Education, School Education and Higher Education, Vice Chancellor of Karaikudi Alagappa University, C.Ramasubramanian - Psychiatrist, K.Sekar, Registrar of National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro-Sciences.

Bhoodan Board reconstitution

- ❖ More than four years after the expiry of the term of the Bhoodan Board, the State government has reconstituted it with a chairperson and 12 members.

- ❖ Minister for Khadi & Village Industries Board G. Baskaran is the chairperson of the Bhoodan Board and the Director of Land Reforms [as the Board's Member Secretary].
- ❖ The Secretary to the Revenue and Disaster Management Department, the Commissioner for Land Reforms, the Commissioner of Agriculture, and the Director of Horticulture and Plantation Crops are the other official members of the board.

Historical Background of Bhoodan Board

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu Bhoodan Yagna Act, 1958, was enacted to regulate lands received as donations for the Bhoodan Yagna Movement started by Acharya Vinoba Bhave
- ❖ The board's function was to regulate and transfer the title of the lands to Bhoodan Board and to distribute the lands to the landless poor.
- ❖ In 2006, the control of the board was transferred from the Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Department to the Land Reforms Department.
- ❖ Though the board was initially a five-member body, it was later expanded to 12 members in 2000.
- ❖ In 2009, the board was reconstituted with 14 members. The recently reconstituted board has 13 members.

ICF – Carbon Dioxide

- ❖ Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai has achieved overall reduction of carbon dioxide emission.
- ❖ Carbon dioxide causes environmental pollution and is a main source of global warming.
- ❖ The carbon compounds emitted heavily from the factories cause global warming and bring climate change.
- ❖ Chennai ICF, a Public-Sector Undertaking has completely reduced the amount of carbon emissions.
- ❖ Electricity requirement for ICF is achieved by wind and solar energy.
- ❖ Steps has been taken to produce 10.5 MW of electricity by windmills and 2.4 MW of electricity by solar energy.
- ❖ Further, the office and premises in ICF are illuminated by LED bulbs.
- ❖ Along with this, the lubrication used in the industry has been significantly reduced resulting in reduced carbon emission from the ICF.
- ❖ Furthermore, a large number of saplings are planted and maintained to contain high levels of pollution and heat in the premises.
- ❖ Integral Coach Factory (ICF) located at Perambur in Chennai has become the first railway organisation to achieve carbon-neutral status.

Sagar Kavach

- ❖ A comprehensive coastal security exercise, 'Sagar Kavach', to assess the preparedness of the police and other security agencies in the event of a terror attack began.
- ❖ The objective is to provide seamless sea-ward cover along the coast jointly by all security agencies from the coastal belt area line to the limit of territorial waters at 12 nautical miles.
- ❖ It is a joint exercise conducted in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and the Union Territory of Puducherry.
- ❖ The exercise is conducted half yearly with an objective to check coastal security mechanism and validate standard operating procedures.
- ❖ The two-day exercise was conducted by the State police, Indian Coast Guard and Navy.

Insect Museum

- ❖ Tamilnadu Chief Minister opened an insect museum in Tamil Nadu Agricultural University (TNAU)
- ❖ It is established at the Department of Agricultural Entomology of TNAU.
- ❖ The museum houses 20,000 insects from 50 species



- ❖ The museum has displays of both beneficial and harmful insects.
- ❖ The facility is claimed to be the first insect museum in India.
- ❖ The museum, which has been built on an area of 6,691sqft, has an exhibit area that has seven radial walls with displays under themes such as insect

diversity, insect biology, beneficial insects, insects and plants and cultural entomology.

- ❖ Curated specimen of 27 orders of insects are on display.
- ❖ The museum also has TV screens, which display insect-related information, insect shaped dioramas and a souvenir shop.

Chennai - Salem Flight service

- ❖ In a major fillip to providing regional connectivity, direct flight services from Salem to Chennai re-commenced with Tamil Nadu CM Edappadi K Palaniswami flagging off the first flight at Salem airport after a gap of 7 years.
- ❖ The flight services would be operated under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) of UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagarik).
- ❖ Trujet, Hyderabad-based Turbo Megha Airways, is introducing the 72-seater flight, and 50 % of the seats will be reserved for the passenger under UDAN.
- ❖ The Salem airport was thrown open in 1993 and the NEPC, a private airline, operated flights between Chennai and Coimbatore via Salem.
- ❖ Due to poor patronage, the airlines suspended its operation within a short period.
- ❖ The airport was revived in September 2009, when now defunct Kingfisher Airlines operated flights.
- ❖ This service too was suspended abruptly in 2011 and the airport was later closed.

Bar Council poll

- ❖ The election to the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry (BCTNP) was held after seven years.
- ❖ Elections to the BCTNP were held last in March 2011.
- ❖ The election was overseen by Bar Council of India (BCI) appointed Returning Officers and former Madras High Court judges, Justices G.M. Akbar Ali and T. Mathivanan.
- ❖ Advocates practising for a continuous period of 10 years would be qualified to contest the elections.
- ❖ A total of 192 candidates were in the fray for the 25 seats of the BCTNP. The total number of voters is 53,620.
- ❖ The BCTNP has been under the temporary administration of a BCI-appointed Special Committee chaired by Advocate General Vijay Narayan since the last council's five-year term expired.

NATIONAL

21st National Conference on e-Governance

- ❖ The 21st National Conference on e-Governance was held in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- ❖ It was organised by Department of Administrative Reforms and Public Grievances (DARPG), along with Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeITY) in association with Telangana.
- ❖ This year, theme of the conference was 'Technology for accelerating Development'.
- ❖ E-Governance is one of the subjects allocated to DARPG, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions under II Schedule to the Allocation of Business Rules, 1961.
- ❖ DARPG has been entrusted role to promote e-Governance activities in consonance with the overall national objectivities and priorities.

8th Indo- Seychelles Army exercise (February 24 – March 4)

- ❖ The eighth joint military exercise between the Indian Army and Seychelles People's Defence Forces started on Feb 24 and will continued till March 4 at Mahe Island, Seychelles.
- ❖ Indo-Seychelles counter insurgency and counter terrorism exercise is named 'Lamitye', which means friendship.
- ❖ This exercise is the eighth in the series of bilateral exercises being conducted in the beautiful island nation.
- ❖ India and Seychelles have been conducting this joint exercise since 2001.
- ❖ The exercise is conducted biennially with the aim of enhancing military cooperation and interoperability between the two countries on counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations.
- ❖ The focus of the ongoing exercise is to conduct counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist operations in semi-urban environment under the United Nations (UN) Charter.

International Conference on Sustainable Biofuels 2018

- ❖ The two-day international conference on Sustainable Biofuels was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ It was jointly being organized by Department of Biotechnology and Biofuture platform.

- ❖ This event will enable the biofuel sector experts of different countries to exchange their experience and share best practices for development and commercialization of advanced biofuels.
- ❖ Department of Biotechnology (DBT) under Ministry of Science & Technology is nodal agency coordinating and steering activities of Mission Innovation (MI) in India.
- ❖ Mission Innovation India unit was set-up in 2017 by DBT at- International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology (ICGEB), New Delhi.
- ❖ It aims to accelerate research and development, low cost innovation in advanced bio fuel sector.

15th Edition of Bio Asia 2018

- ❖ Bio Asia, the annual flagship event of the Government of Telangana, was held at Hyderabad - the life sciences hub of India.
- ❖ The theme of the Bio Asia 2018 is 'RIGHT TIME, RIGHT NOW'
- ❖ The 15th edition of the prestigious event is organized by the Industries and Commerce Department in partnership with Government of India, Federation of Asian Biotech Associations (FABA) and Pharmaceutical Export Promotion Council (Pharmexcil).
- ❖ Technology Conferences of Bio Asia is a Science-Business bridge, that aims to bring together a trans-disciplinary environment for driving innovation in the life sciences industry.
- ❖ Ireland, Netherlands and South Africa are the International Partners for the 15th edition of the event whereas the States of Gujarat, Assam and Rajasthan are the Indian State partners for the event.
- ❖ Bio Asia 2018 had deliberation on the strategies to take on this rapid pace of change, innovative ways to develop new model's healthcare delivery and the opportunities exist right now for the Life Sciences value chain.

World's largest solar park

- ❖ Shakti Sthala, hailed as the world's largest solar park by Karnataka govt. was inaugurated by CM Siddaramaiah in Pavagada taluk of Karnataka's Tumkur district.
- ❖ The first phase of the park has 600 MW while another 1,400 MW will be added by December 2018.
- ❖ Once fully operational, the park will have the capacity to produce 2,000 MW of electricity — 453 MW more than the current world's largest solar park in China, the Tengger Desert Solar Park.

- ❖ One of the unique features of the plant is, the land for the park was leased from the local community for 25 years, instead of the common practice of acquisition.
- ❖ The park's development was initiated with the creation of the Karnataka Solar Power Development Corp. Ltd (KSPDCL) in March 2015 as a joint venture between Karnataka Renewable Energy Development Ltd (KREDL) and Solar Energy Corp. of India (SECI).
- ❖ This solar project is part of the “Karnataka Solar Policy 2014-2021”
- ❖ Karnataka has emerged as the third-largest producer of renewable energy in the country.



India's first Aviation Multi Skill Development Centre

- ❖ Union Ministry of Civil Aviation inaugurated the country's first Aviation Multi Skill Development Centre at Chandigarh Airport's old terminal.
- ❖ The centre, which is a CSR initiative of Airports Authority of India (AAI), will initially train 2,360 students free of cost in three years.
- ❖ The Centre was established in collaboration with National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and it is supported by Aerospace and Aviation Sector Skill Council (AASSC) of India.
- ❖ The project is implemented by Bird Education Society for Travel and Tourism.
- ❖ The selected students will be trained based on course curriculum and assessments designed by AASSC in accordance with National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF).

Paschim Leher (XPL-18)

- ❖ The Western Naval Command of the Indian Navy has concluded Tri-service maritime exercise 'Paschim Leher' in the Arabian Sea.
- ❖ The objective of the exercise was to build interoperability between Indian Navy, Indian Army, Indian Air Force and Coast Guard.
- ❖ The three-week long exercise tested operational readiness of Indian Navy's Western Command and execution of its operational plans, logistics and administrative plans.
- ❖ INS Vikramaditya, frontline ships of Western Fleet and Eastern Fleet, including newly-inducted Kolkata class ones, submarines, potent missile vessels of 22nd Killer Squadron, patrol vessels and craft of local flotilla and Coast Guard participated in the exercise.

VIKRAMADITYA: SYMBOL OF POWER AT SEA

COMMISSIONED | Nov 2013
DISPLACEMENT | 44,500 tonne
MAX SPEED | 30 knots
MAX RANGE | 7,000 nautical miles at economical 18 knots speed
CAPACITY | 24 MiG-29K supersonic fighters & 10 helicopters (anti-submarine Ka-28s, early-warning KM-31s, Dhruv ALH & Chetaks)

CREW » 110 officers, 1,500 sailors

HEIGHT 60 metre (20-storey tall, with 22 decks)

LENGTH 284 metre

COST » \$2.33 billion (for Admiral Gorshkov's refit), plus \$2 billion (for 45 MiG-29Ks)

POWER PLAY

A carrier battle group is the most visible symbol of raw combat power prowling on the high seas	US has 11 Nimitz-class nuclear-powered "super-carriers". Each over 94,000-tonne & capable of carrying 80-90 fighters	China inducted its first 65,000-tonne carrier Liaoning in Sept 2012. Second one under construction, with 2 more in the pipeline	India & Italy have 2 carriers each UK, France, Russia, Spain, Brazil & Thailand have 1 carrier each
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Global Digital Health Partnership Summit

- ❖ Shri J.P.Nadda, Union Minister for Health and Family Welfare attended the Global Digital Health Partnership Summit held at Canberra, Australia.
- ❖ The Union Health Minister spoke on the topic: Making Digital Health Services a Priority in Healthcare Reform.
- ❖ Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has the great potential towards improvement of delivery of healthcare services.
- ❖ India is committed to reforms in health service delivery using ICT under Digital India Program of Government of India.

C-162 - Coast Guard

- ❖ Bharati Defence and Infrastructure Ltd (BDIL) delivered high-speed interceptor boat ICG C-162 to Indian Coast Guard (ICG) at BDIL jetty in Mangaluru, Karnataka.
- ❖ C-162 is the sixth in a series of 15 high speed interceptor boats being procured by the ICG.
- ❖ It is fitted with new generation of Arneson Surface Drive propulsion system, propelled by two engines of 1650 kW each.
- ❖ The vessel will be based at Kochi, Kerala and will be used for patrolling purposes.

Shifting of AWBI Headquarters

- ❖ Government has shifted headquarters of Animal Welfare Board of India (AWBI) to Ballabgarh in Faridabad District of Haryana from Chennai, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It was shifted after consultation with AWBI for better coordination between the Environment Ministry and AWBI for carrying out the animal welfare activities.
- ❖ AWBI is a statutory advisory body established in 1962 under Section 4 of The Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960.
- ❖ The Board consists of 28 Members, who serve for a period of 3 years. S.P.Gupta, is the chairman of the board.
- ❖ Initially, it was within jurisdiction of the Ministry of Food and Agriculture.
- ❖ Later in 1990, the subject of Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was transferred to Environment Ministry.

Decline in Child Marriages

- ❖ UNICEF has appraised India for a sharp decline of 20 per cent in child marriages during the last decade.
- ❖ According to UNICEF, India saw a sharp decline in child marriages over the last ten years with 27% of girls getting married before their 18th birthday as against 47% a decade ago.
- ❖ Globally, the proportion of girls who were married as children decreased by 15% in the last decade, from 1 in 4 to approximately 1 in 5.
- ❖ Also 25 million child marriages were prevented globally in the decade of 2005-06 to 2015-16.

- ❖ The largest reduction was seen in South Asia with India being at the forefront.
- ❖ The UN children's agency stated the following reasons for the decline,
 - ✓ Increasing rates of girls' education
 - ✓ Proactive government investments in adolescent girls
 - ✓ Strong public awareness about the illegality of child marriage and the harm it causes

M777 ultra-light howitzers

- ❖ India and US officials has test-fired M777 ultra-light howitzers (ULH) at Pokhran firing range in Rajasthan.
- ❖ The test was conducted in the wake of accident and repairs during its trial in September 2017.
- ❖ In May 2017, the Army took delivery of two M777 ultralight howitzers made by the BAE Systems US under a contract signed in 2016.
- ❖ M777 Ultra-Light Howitzers (ULH) artillery Guns is manufactured by BAE Systems' Global Combat Systems division.
- ❖ Indian Army is going to deploy these artillery guns in high-altitude areas in Arunachal Pradesh and Ladakh, bordering China.



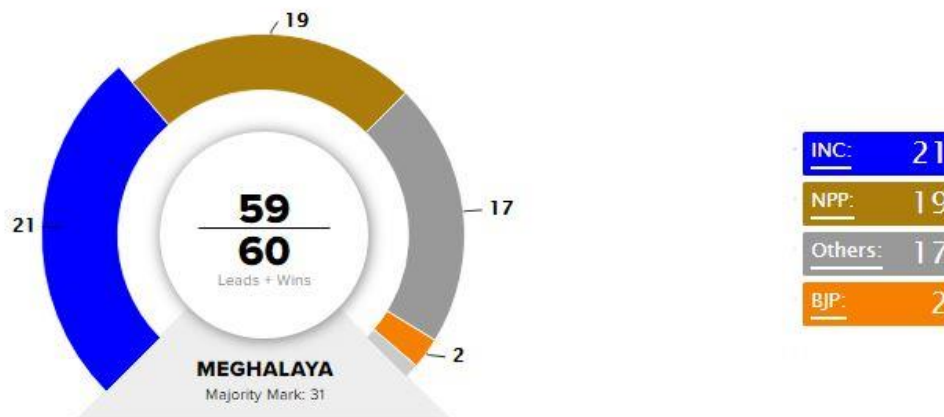
Northeast Elections

- ❖ Tripura went to the polls on February 18 and elections were held in Nagaland and Meghalaya on February 27.
- ❖ The terms of elected governments in the Meghalaya, Nagaland, and Tripura are scheduled to expire on 6, 13 and 14 March respectively.
- ❖ The three north-eastern states have 60 assembly constituencies each.

Meghalaya

- ❖ National People's Party (NPP) president Conrad Sangma was sworn in as Meghalaya chief minister,
- ❖ Meghalaya governor Ganga Prasad governed the oath in Shillong.
- ❖ Sangma will be leading an alliance of the NPP, BJP, United Democratic Party (UDP), Hill State People's Democratic Party (HSPDP) and others.

MEGHALAYA ELECTION RESULTS



Nagaland

- ❖ Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party (NDPP) leader Neiphiu Rio was sworn in as Nagaland chief minister and Nagaland governor P.B. Acharya governed the oath.
- ❖ BJP's Y. Patton sworn as the deputy chief minister of Nagaland.
- ❖ This is Rio's fourth time as the chief minister of the north eastern state.
- ❖ Rio is heading the 'People's Democratic Alliance' government in partnership with the BJP in the state.
- ❖ Neiphiu Rio was the Chief Minister of Nagaland for three terms between 2003 and 2014, making him the only Nagaland Chief Minister to have served three consecutive terms.

NAGALAND ELECTION RESULTS



Tripura

- ❖ In the Left Front bastion of Tripura, the BJP and its ally Indigenous People’s Front of Tripura (IPFT) won a total of 43 seats against CPM 16.
- ❖ Biplab Kumar Deb, the Tripura BJP president, is set to take oath as the 10th chief minister of the state.
- ❖ Manik Sarkar, the Ex chief minister has governed Tripura since 1998. He was at the helm for the four consecutive times.

TRIPURA ELECTION RESULTS



Global Fire Power Index 2017

- ❖ According to the Global Fire Power Index 2017, India has been ranked the fourth most powerful military power out of 133 countries in the world.
- ❖ US, Russia, and China are in the first three places. India’s Rival Pakistan ranks 13th on the list.
- ❖ According to the report, France, Germany, UK, Japan and Israel, though in top 15, rank much behind India.

- ❖ The Global Firepower index relied on 50 parameters like military resources, natural resources, geographical features, and available manpower.
- ❖ The list did not take nuclear stockpiles into account “but recognised/suspected nuclear powers received a bonus.”

1	 United States	PwrIndx: 0.0857, GFP Affiliations: North America; NATO; Apacific
2	 Russia	PwrIndx: 0.0928, GFP Affiliations: Apacific; EasternEuro; Asia
3	 China	PwrIndx: 0.0945, GFP Affiliations: Apacific; Asia
4	 India	PwrIndx: 0.1593, GFP Affiliations: Apacific; Asia
5	 France	PwrIndx: 0.1914, GFP Affiliations: Europe; NATO; European Union
6	 United Kingdom	PwrIndx: 0.2131, GFP Affiliations: Europe; NATO; European Union
7	 Japan	PwrIndx: 0.2137, GFP Affiliations: Apacific; Asia
8	 Turkey	PwrIndx: 0.2491, GFP Affiliations: Middle East; NATO; Balkan; Asia
9	 Germany	PwrIndx: 0.2609, GFP Affiliations: Europe; NATO; European Union
10	 Egypt	PwrIndx: 0.2678, GFP Affiliations: Africa; Middle East

Number of billionaires - India

- ❖ India comes third after China and USA with 31 new Indians on Hurun's Global Rich List 2018.
- ❖ The Hurun Rich List 2018 ranked 2,694 billionaires from 68 countries and 2,157 companies.
- ❖ Although Mukesh Ambani remains the richest Indian, one of the Indians to see a massive growth in wealth is Gautam Adani whose wealth doubled and grew by 109% to USD 14 billion.
- ❖ The Three of the youngest billionaires in India Shradha Agarwal, Divyank Turakhia, Paytm founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma are is at 32nd rank 35th rank, 39th rank respectively.

- ❖ The richest person in the world is Jeff Bezos of Amazon, followed by Warren Buffett of Berkshire Hathaway, Bill Gates of Microsoft, Mark Zuckerberg of Facebook.

Top 10 Countries With the Highest Number of Billionaires

COUNTRIES	NO. OF BILLIONAIRES	NEW BILLIONAIRES IN 2017
Greater China	819	210
USA	571	19
India	131	31
UK	118	29
Germany	114	5
Switzerland	83	6
Russia	71	3
France	51	1
Brazil	49	6
Canada	49	14

Source - Hurun Report, Global Rich List 2018

Rajya Sabha panel of presiding officers

- ❖ Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu nominated JD(U) MP from Bihar Kahkashan Parveen on the panel of presiding officers for conducting proceedings of the House.
- ❖ She is the first woman on the panel in recent times.
- ❖ According to the House rules, the chairman nominates from amongst the members up to six vice-chairmen or presiding officers who chair the proceedings in absence of the chairman and the deputy chairman.
- ❖ The panel of vice-chairmen or presiding officers includes Satyanarayan Jatiya (BJP), Tiruchi Siva (DMK), TK Rangarajan (CPM), Bhubaneswar Kalita (Cong), Basawaraj Patil (BJP) and Sukhendu Sekhar Ray (TMC).

EBRD - INDIA

- ❖ India will become the 69th member of EBRD. The shareholders of European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) have given their approval for India's membership in the international financial institution.
- ❖ After India becomes the 69th member of EBRD, Indian companies can undertake joint investments in regions in which the EBRD operates Reconstruction and Development work.

- ❖ The decision is followed by Indian government's application to seek the EBRD membership back in December 2017.

EBRD

- ❖ EBRD is an international financial institution founded in 1991 and headquartered in London.
- ❖ It is owned by 65 countries and two EU institutions, and US is the biggest shareholder.
- ❖ Besides Europe, member countries of the EBRD are also from other continents
 - North America - Canada and US
 - Africa - Morocco
 - Asia - Japan, China, South Korea
 - Australia.
- ❖ EBRD's core operations pertain to private sector development in their countries of operation.
- ❖ The minimum initial investment towards the membership of EBRD will be approximately one million Euros.
- ❖ The EBRD is not to be confused with the European Investment Bank (EIB) which is owned by EU member states and used to support EU policy.

Delhi airport

- ❖ According to the latest Airport Service Quality (ASQ) 2017 rankings released by Airports Council International, Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport is the best airport in the world in terms of passengers' experience.
- ❖ With 63.5 million passengers flying through the Delhi airport in 2017, it has surpassed Changi in terms of passenger growth.
- ❖ It is now the seventh busiest airport in Asia and among the top 20 busiest airports across the world.
- ❖ ASQ Survey is the world's benchmark measure of airport excellence and it is the only worldwide programme to survey passengers at the airports on their day of travel.
- ❖ The programme measures passengers' views on 34 key performance indicators.

International Solar Alliance

- ❖ India hosted the first International Solar Alliance (ISA) summit in New Delhi.
- ❖ A three-page 'Delhi Solar Agenda' issued at the end of the conference.

- ❖ In this agenda ISA reiterated its commitment to the 2030 UN Agenda for Sustainable Development.

PM Modi's 10-point action plan to promote solar power

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday listed out 10 action points at the founding conference of the International Solar Alliance, to bring about a solar revolution worldwide. They include:



- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Ensuring that cheap and improved solar technology is easily available ▶ Increasing the percentage of solar energy in countries' national energy mix ▶ Encouraging innovation for development of solutions to problems/challenges ▶ Ensuring concessional and risk-free funding for solar projects | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Developing regulatory aspects and norms to speed up adoption of solar technologies, solutions ▶ Consultancy support for bankable solar projects in developing nations ▶ Ensuring efforts to propagate solar revolution stress on partnerships and assimilation ▶ Ensuring creation of a network of centres of excellence that takes into account local circumstances and factors ▶ Ensuring solar energy policies are seen in the context of development that will help in achieving Sustainable Development Goals. ▶ Making the ISA secretariat a strong and professional body |
|--|--|

- ❖ Also the agenda, states that countries will works to increase share of solar energy in the final energy consumption in their respective national energy mix to tackle global challenges of climate change.
- ❖ India also announced its \$1.4 billion assistance for developing 27 solar projects in 15 countries.
- ❖ As per the agenda the member countries will consider off-grid solar applications to cater to the energy requirements of poorer and remote communities.

ISA

- ❖ The ISA is an Indian initiative, jointly launched by the Prime Minister of India and the president of France on November 2015 in Paris, on the side-lines of COP-21, the UN climate conference.
- ❖ The International Solar Alliance is alliance 121 countries, most of them being sunshine countries, which come either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.
- ❖ The primary objective is to collectively work for efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil-based fuels.
- ❖ The Headquarters is in India with its Interim Secretariat being setup in Gurgaon.
- ❖ The agreement will become operational after at least 15 countries have ratified it.
- ❖ It is also expected to mobilise \$1 trillion for funding solar energy projects by 2030.
- ❖ The institutional structure of ISA consists of an Assembly, a Council and a Secretariat.

We for Development

- ❖ Prime Minister Narendra Modi inaugurated a two-day National Legislators Conference in New Delhi.
- ❖ Hosted by Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan, the two-day conference is based on the theme “We for development”.
- ❖ The motive of the conference is to bring MPs and MLAs on a single platform where ideas and plans for development can be exchanged.
- ❖ Role of public representatives in development and optimum use of resources were the subjects on agenda for discussions.
- ❖ The government has identified 115 most backward districts and termed them “aspirational”.
- ❖ The Prime Minister has called for posting young IAS officers as district magistrates in “aspirational” districts.

Samvedna

- ❖ A Multilateral Air Force exercise named 'Samvedna' was conducted in India.
- ❖ The exercise was spearheaded by Indian Air Force and Southern Air Command (SAC).
- ❖ Samvedna, which means 'Empathy', is the first composite HADR (High Availability Disaster Recovery) Air exercise in the South Asian region.
- ❖ It involved representatives from Air Forces of Srilanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and UAE.
- ❖ It focused on practicing Air Force centric HADR solutions in a Multi-national cooperative Disaster Management environment.
- ❖ It was conducted to ensure better understanding and sharing of response procedures between a number of friendly neighbouring nations.

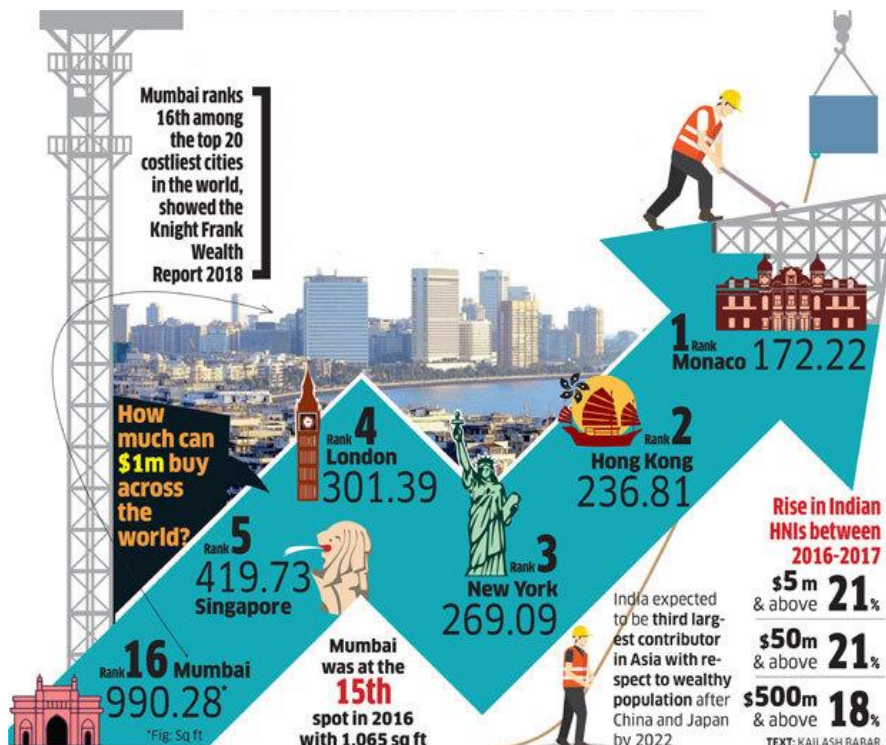
SUVIDHA

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers has launched ‘Suvidha’, a 100% Oxo-biodegradable Sanitary Napkin, under Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP).
- ❖ It will be physically available at all Janaushadhi Kendras in country by World Menstrual Hygiene Day (May 28, 2018).
- ❖ SUVIDHA napkin has special additive added in it, which makes it biodegradable when it reacts with oxygen after it is used and discarded.

- ❖ It was launched under government’s vision of providing Affordable and Quality Healthcare for All. It will ensure ‘Swachhta, Swasthya and Suvidha’ for underprivileged women.
- ❖ Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana was launched by Dept. of Pharmaceuticals to provide quality medicines at affordable prices to masses through special kendra’s known as PMBJP.

Mumbai - 16th most expensive city

- ❖ According to the Knight Frank Wealth Report 2018, Mumbai ranks 16th among the top 20 costliest cities in the world. The city of Mumbai was at the 15th position during 2016.
- ❖ Monaco, the sovereign city-state in Western Europe ranks first among the top 20 costliest cities in the world, followed by Hong Kong which has secured the second position.
- ❖ The New York City secures the third position and London stands at the fourth position.
- ❖ The index is drawn from four major indicators: wealth, investments, lifestyle and future.
- ❖ Delhi, Chennai and Bengaluru feature among the top 100 cities in the list.



Solar Energy – First Union Territory

- ❖ Diu has become the first and only Union Territory in the country to be fully run on solar energy.
- ❖ Diu has an area of just 42 square kilometres and population of 56,000. For water and electricity, the Union territory was solely dependent on Gujarat government.
- ❖ The UT generates total of 13 megawatts (MW) of electricity from solar power generating facilities daily.
- ❖ Of this, 3 MW is generated by rooftop solar plants and 10 MW by its other solar power plants.

HT Cotton

- ❖ The government has constituted a committee to investigate into the illegal or unauthorised cultivation of Herbicide Tolerant (HT) or BG-III cotton in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat and Maharashtra.
- ❖ For this, the Department of Biotechnology in the Ministry of Science and Technology has constituted a Field Inspection and Scientific Evaluation Committee (FISEC).
- ❖ The cultivation of BG-III or HT cotton has not been approved by Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of the Ministry of Environment.
- ❖ The commercial cultivation, sale, cultivation and seed production of unapproved HT cotton is punishable offence under Seeds Act 1966, Seed Rules 1968, Seeds (Control) Order 1983 with regard to Environmental Protection Act, 1986 and Environmental Protection Rules, 1989.
- ❖ Herbicide-Tolerant (HT) Cotton also known as BG-III cotton is innovation in Bt Cotton contains Round-up Ready and Round-up Flex (RRF) gene.

National Conference on Counterfeiting & Role of Enforcement Agencies

- ❖ The National Conference on Counterfeiting and Role of Enforcement Agencies was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ It was organised by Cell for IPR Promotion and Management (CIPAM) in collaboration with European Union (EU).
- ❖ The conference intends to bring together national and international experts in IPR domain on one platform to have a dialogue and to provide fresh ideas for further strengthening the IPR protection ecosystem.

CIPAM


- ❖ CIPAM is a professional body under the aegis of the Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) in the Ministry of Commerce & Industry.
- ❖ It is mandated to effectively implement National Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) Policy adopted in May 2016 with slogan – “Creative India; Innovative India”.

Proposal to abolish the death penalty

- ❖ In 2013, the Supreme Court had asked Law Commission to examine whether death penalty is deterrent punishment or is retributive justice or the one which serves an incapacitate goal.
- ❖ In its report in 2015, the then Law Commission of India, headed by Justice A P Shah, had proposed the abolition of capital punishment for non-terrorism cases, following which the ministry had sought comments from state governments.
- ❖ Of the 14 states and Union Territories that have replied to the Home Ministry on a proposal to abolish the death penalty, only two, Karnataka and Tripura, want the practice to be done away with.
- ❖ The states/UTs that vetoed abolition of capital punishment were Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jharkhand, Bihar, Tamil Nadu and Delhi.

Passive euthanasia

- ❖ The Supreme Court has given landmark judgement by providing legal sanction to passive euthanasia if patients slip into irreversible coma.
- ❖ The Supreme Court (SC) allowed passive euthanasia and right to give advance medical directives or ‘Living Wills’.
- ❖ The ruling was given by five-judge Constitution Bench led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra.
- ❖ The judgement by five-judge Constitution bench is based on the opinion that Right to life includes right to die with dignity.

<h3>Sense of an ending</h3> <p>While recognising passive euthanasia, the SC has allowed advance directive, or living will, by which patients can spell out whether treatment can be withdrawn if they fall terminally ill or are incompetent to express their opinion</p>		<h3>GUIDELINES FOR 'RIGHT TO DIE'</h3> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ "Living Will" to be executed only by an adult ▶ It must be done with free consent before a magistrate ▶ A terminally-ill patient's guardian can authorise stoppage of treatment ▶ Treatment can be withdrawn only during emergency ▶ A medical board must certify stoppage of treatment ▶ The patient's guardian can seek a review in high court if a medical board refuses to stop treatment 	
<h4>WHO, WHAT AND HOW OF A LIVING WILL</h4>			
<h4>WHO CAN MAKE IT:</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An adult with a sound and healthy mind ▪ It should be voluntarily executed, based on informed consent ▪ It should be expressed in "clear and unambiguous" terms 	<h4>CONTENTS OF WILL:</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Circumstances in which treatment should be withheld or withdrawn ▪ Specify that the will can be revoked any time ▪ Name of the "guardian 	<p>or close relative" who will give the go-ahead for starting passive euthanasia</p> <h4>HOW TO PRESERVE IT?</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The will shall be attested by two witnesses and preferably 	<p>counter-signed by a first class judicial magistrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The magistrate shall preserve one hard copy and one soft copy each and forward it to the district court registry ▪ Copy will be given to a local govt. official, who shall nominate a custodian for the will
		 <p>Aruna Shanbaug</p>	
		<p>This judgment is because of Aruna Shanbaug, who suffered for 42 years. We must thank her – Pinki Virani, activist and author who had sought mercy killing for Shanbaug.</p> 	

- ❖ The court's ruling was pronounced on a 2005 plea filed by Prashant Bhushan on behalf of NGO Common Cause that sought recognition of a living will so that an individual could exercise the right to refuse medical treatment at a terminally-ill stage of life.
- ❖ Passive euthanasia is an act of withdrawing or withholding medical support to dying patient who has no hope for revival or cure.
- ❖ Active Euthanasia is the act by which a person is killed by being given an overdose of pain killers or prescribed drugs, where there is no hope for further recovery. The Supreme court has firmly refused to condone active euthanasia.

National Nutrition Mission

- ❖ Prime minister launched National Nutrition Mission (NMM) at an event held at Jhunjhunu in Rajasthan on the occasion of International Women's Day.
- ❖ NNM is an apex body under the Ministry of Women and Child Development to monitor, supervise, fix targets and guide nutrition related interventions across Ministries.

myGov
मेरी सरकार

NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION
एक ही स्वास्थ्य

The world is now different

Holistic Approach to Ensure Adequate Nutrition

Cabinet approves setting up of National Nutrition Mission

To reduce the level of stunting, under-nutrition, anemia & low birth weight babies

To monitor, supervise, fix targets & guide the nutrition related interventions

Will create synergy, ensure better monitoring, issue alerts for timely action

Will incentivize States/UTs for meeting the targets

To cover 315 districts in 2017-18, 235 districts in 2018-19 & remaining districts in 2019-20

Budget of ₹ 9046.17 Cr earmarked for 3 years

NATIONAL NUTRITION MISSION

- ❖ It will monitor various schemes contributing towards addressing malnutrition.

- ❖ The mission will be jointly launched by the ministries of WCD, Health and Family Welfare and Water Resources, together with NITI Aayog.
- ❖ The mission has set an ambitious goal of reducing incidence of stunting among children from 38.4 % now to 25 % by 2022.

Know India Programme

- ❖ The Indian Government's External Affairs Ministry has launched the 41st to 46th edition of the “Know India Programme (KIP)”.
- ❖ 40 participants of Indian Origin from 9 countries attended 46th edition of Know India Programme (KIP).
- ❖ Madhya Pradesh was partner state of this edition.
- ❖ KIP is an initiative scheme of Ministry of External Affairs for Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) between the age group of 18 to 30 years to make them to know about India.
- ❖ The scheme was launched in 2004.

India's first coastal policing academy

- ❖ Union home ministry recently sanctioned the launch of the National Academy of Coastal Policing (NACP).
- ❖ The country's first national academy to train police forces to effectively safeguarding the Indian shoreline will start functioning in Devbhumi Dwarka district of Gujarat from April 2018.
- ❖ It is to be situated in Gujarat's Fisheries Research Centre located in coastal Okha in Devbhoomi Dwarka district.
- ❖ The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD), Home ministries' policing think tank, will pilot the establishment and running of the academy.
- ❖ The first-of-its-kind national coastal policing academy will be created and run by a team of paramilitary and defence forces, the academy will sharpen the skills of marine forces of coastal States.
- ❖ The Border Security Force (BSF), Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard (ICG) will form core to run academy. The BSF will also provide security to campus.
- ❖ It will have faculty from Indian Navy, ICG and BSF.

Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) from USA

- ❖ India for the first time has started process of importing Liquid Natural Gas (LNG) from United States.
- ❖ The first US-sourced LNG shipment was imported by state-owned GAIL.

- ❖ GAIL had signed 20-year Sale Purchase Agreement (SPA) with US' natural gas exporter Cheniere Energy in December 2011.
- ❖ India primarily imports LNG from Qatar and Australia under long-term contracts.

TB Summit

- ❖ Prime Minister launched Tuberculosis (TB) Free India Campaign after he inaugurated Delhi End-TB Summit in New Delhi.
- ❖ The campaign aims to take activities of National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB elimination forward in Mission mode.
- ❖ National Strategic Plan (NSP) for TB elimination sets deadline to eradicate TB from the country by 2025.
- ❖ It is five years ahead of global target of 2030 mentioned in the Sustainable Development Goals-3 - complete eradication of TB globally.
- ❖ The summit was co-hosted by Union Health Ministry, World Health Organisation's South East Asia Regional Office and Stop TB Partnership.
- ❖ The summit would set the stage for the September 2018 United Nations High-Level Meeting on TB, where for the first time, TB would be discussed in the UN General Assembly at the Heads of State level.

#YesIBleed Campaign

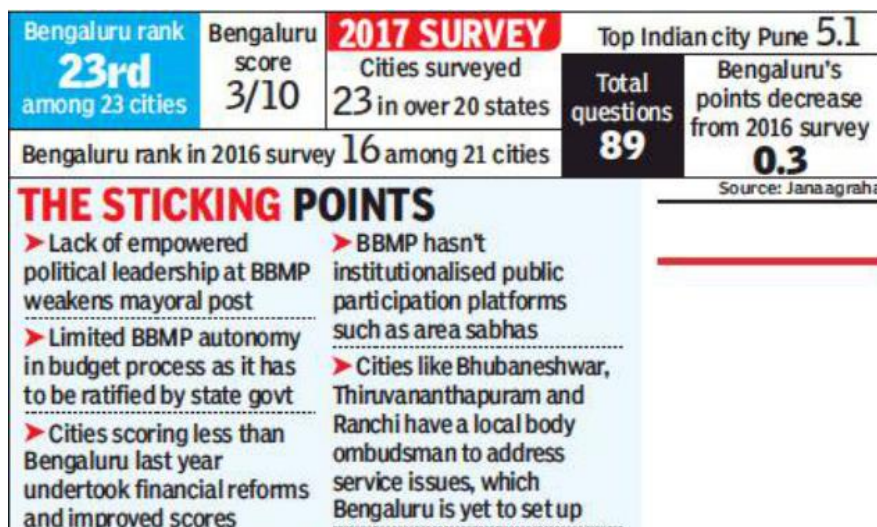
- ❖ The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched #YesIBleed menstrual hygiene campaign on the occasion of International Women's Day 2018.
- ❖ It is the second edition of such campaign that aims to create holistic approach to issue of menstruation.
- ❖ The "#YesIBleed" campaign has been initiated formally across all multi-media platforms, including Facebook and YouTube to spread awareness about issue.
- ❖ The United Nations has recognised menstrual hygiene as global public health and human rights issue.
- ❖ According to the results of the study, "Sanitary Protection: Every Woman's Health Right", only 12% of Indian women have access to sanitary napkins and remaining 88% have no access as they find sanitary pads unaffordable.

Interceptor boat – ICG

- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) has commissioned interceptor boat ICGS C-437 at Porbandar, Gujarat as part of its efforts to strengthen coastal security.
- ❖ ICGS C-437 shall be based at Jakhau under administrative and operational control of commander Coast Guard Region of North West.
- ❖ The boat has advanced navigational and communication equipment with capability to respond to any maritime situation.
- ❖ It is capable of undertaking multifarious task such as surveillance, search and rescue, rendering assistance to boats and craft during disasters.

Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS)

- ❖ The fifth edition of the Annual Survey of India's City-Systems (ASICS) has been released by Janaagraha Centre for Citizenship and Democracy.
- ❖ The objective of the survey was to measure the preparedness of cities to deliver high quality infrastructure and services in the long term by evaluating "city systems".



- ❖ Pune, Kolkata and Thiruvananthapuram top the country in terms of urban governance.
- ❖ Delhi and Mumbai figure in the sixth and ninth positions respectively.
- ❖ Among the medium cities (with a population of up to one million), Ranchi has broken into the top 10.
- ❖ Bengaluru and Chandigarh (perceived as a planned city) figured at the bottom of the list.
- ❖ On a scale of 1 to 10, the 23 cities – many of which are part of the government's flagship smart cities mission – scored between 3 and 5.1 on four key components of governance.

ASICS SCORES 2017

Rank	City	Score	Score Change over 2016
1	Pune	5.1	0.9
2	Kolkata	4.6	0.5
3	Thiruvananthapuram	4.6	0.2
4	Bhubaneswar	4.6	1.1
5	Surat	4.5	1.3
6	Delhi	4.4	0.8
7	Ahmedabad	4.4	1.1
8	Hyderabad	4.3	0.3
9	Mumbai	4.2	0.1
10	Ranchi	4.1	0.8
11	Raipur	4.0	0.7
12	Kanpur	3.9	0.2
13	Lucknow	3.8	0.5
14	Guwahati	3.8	--
15	Bhopal	3.7	--
16	Ludhiana	3.5	0.5
17	Visakhapatnam	3.4	--
18	Jaipur	3.4	0.8
19	Chennai	3.3	-0.3
20	Patna	3.3	-0.1
21	Dehradun	3.1	--
22	Chandigarh	3.1	1.0
23	Bengaluru	3.0	-0.3



London
Score: 8.8



New York
Score: 8.8



Johannesburg
Score: 7.6

Cadre Management

- ❖ The IPS Officers' association's Tamil Nadu chapter president and Director-General of Police K.P. Mahendran has written a strongly worded letter to the Home Secretary.
- ❖ In that he stated that the rules framed by Parliament as regards posting of cadre officers were being flouted, much to the disadvantage of "young direct IPS officers".
- ❖ It is in the wake of the Tamil Nadu government's policy of assigning non-IPS officers to cadre posts meant for IPS officers.

- ❖ Going by the established rules, the 76 cadre posts in the rank of Superintendent of Police / Deputy Commissioner of Police should be filled only by IPS officers, whereas the State had filled 54% of the posts with non-cadre officers.
- ❖ A non-IPS officer cannot continue for a period beyond three months unless the State government obtains prior approval from the Central government
- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs had issued a clear directive that the provisions under Rule (9) of The Indian Police Service (Cadre) Rules, 1954, was to ensure that “a non-cadre officer is not appointed to a cadre post if a suitable cadre officer is available.”
- ❖ Besides a SC order clearly mandating that only IPS officers should be assigned to cadre posts.
- ❖ There was also the judgment of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which struck down the appointment of non-cadre officers to cadre posts.

'Krishi Unnati Mela'

- ❖ The 3-day annual Krishi Unnati Mela was held in New Delhi with the focus on doubling farmers' income.
- ❖ The theme of the fair is doubling farmer's income by 2022.
- ❖ 'Krishi Unnati Mela' is aimed at creating awareness about the latest technological developments in the agriculture and allied sectors among farmers.
- ❖ Prime Minister laid foundation stone for 25 Krishi Vigyan Kendras and unveil a portal on organic farming.
- ❖ He also conferred Krishi Karman Award and Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhaya Krishi Vigyan Protsahan Puruskar to progressive farmers and states on the occasion.

105th Indian Science Congress

- ❖ Prime Minister inaugurated 105th session of Indian Science Congress (ISC) at Manipur Central University in Imphal.
- ❖ The theme of 5-day ISC is “Reaching the Unreached Through Science & Technology”.
- ❖ The ISC 2018 was organised by the Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA), a premier scientific organisation of India.
- ❖ This is 2nd time the Science Congress is being held in the north east. Earlier it was held at Shillong (Meghalaya) in 2009.

Indian Science Congress Association

- ❖ ISCA was started in the year 1914 at its headquarters in Kolkata.

- ❖ It organises Indian Science Congress annually in the first week of January.
- ❖ The first meeting of the ISCC was held in January 1914 in the Asiatic Society, Kolkata.

Union Budget

- ❖ The Union government has passed the budget in Lok Sabha without discussion by applying the guillotine process as the opposition paralysed the functioning of both the houses of parliament by putting forward various demands.
- ❖ Guillotine is a tool used in parliamentary business.
- ❖ After the Budget is presented, Parliament goes into recess for about 3 weeks.
- ❖ During this time, the House Standing Committees examine Demands for Grants for various Ministries and prepare reports.
- ❖ After Parliament reassembles, the Business Advisory Committee (BAC) draws up a schedule for discussions on the Demands for Grants.
- ❖ Given the limited time, the House cannot take up the expenditure demands of all Ministries.
- ❖ The BAC therefore identifies some important Ministries for discussions.
- ❖ These may include Ministries of Home, Defence, External Affairs, Agriculture, Rural Development and Human Resource Development.
- ❖ Then the Members will discuss the policies and working of Ministries.
- ❖ Once the House is done with these debates, the Speaker applies the “guillotine”.
- ❖ This is to put to vote at once, all the other outstanding demands for grants that have not been discussed.
- ❖ This usually happens on the last day earmarked for the discussion on the Budget.
- ❖ In this the un discussed demands also considered as discussed one and it taken for voice vote along with discussed grants.
- ❖ The purpose is to ensure timely passage of the Finance Bill.

SATH-E Roadmaps

- ❖ NITI Aayog has released comprehensive roadmaps and detailed timelines for its initiative Sustainable Action for Transforming Human Capital in Education (SATH-E)
- ❖ SATH-E project is to introduce system-wide Governance Transformation in school education.

- ❖ These roadmaps, which operate between 2018 to 2020, lay out detailed interventions which will be taken by the three participating States- Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha – aiming to become ‘Role Model States’ in school education.
- ❖ The roadmaps were jointly prepared by NITI Aayog, the three States and the knowledge partners of the SATH Initiatives, the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) and Piramal Foundation for Education Leadership (PFEL).
- ❖ These roadmaps present customized, action-oriented programmes, outlining interventions at the individual, district and State level.
- ❖ It will be facilitated by National Steering Group (NSG), chaired by CEO of NITI Aayog and including Chief Secretaries of 3 states.

Promotion of tourism in North-East

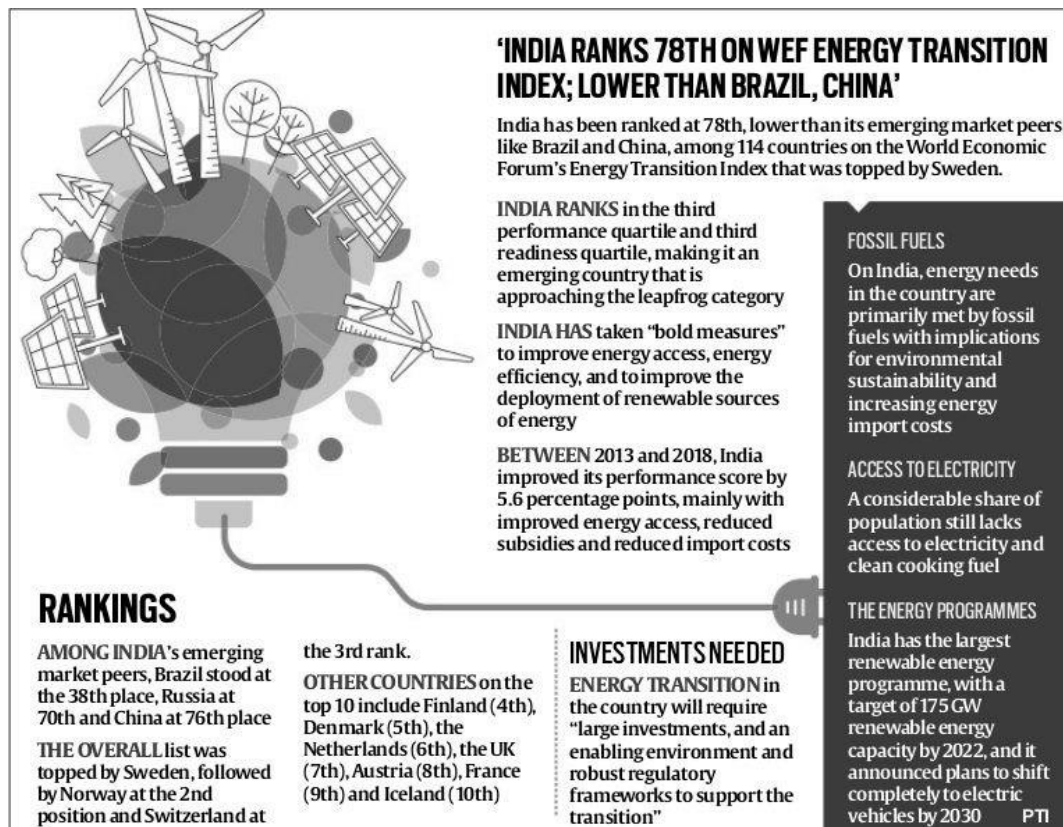
- ❖ Online accommodation platform major Airbnb has signed four MoUs to boost tourism in North East India.
- ❖ It has signed MoUs with the North Eastern Council (NEC), the North East Tourism Development Council (NETDC) and two key livelihood initiatives, North East Rural Livelihood Project (NERLP) and North Eastern Region Community Resource Management Society (NERCRMS).
- ❖ The MoUs aim at creating hospitality micro-entrepreneurs across key destinations in tourism in the North East India.
- ❖ Under MoUs, NEC, NETDC and Airbnb had agreed to expand tourism in north east India through Airbnb’s global platform.

'Varuna-18'

- ❖ The Indo-French joint naval exercise Varuna-18 was held in Arabian Sea off Goa coast.
- ❖ Varuna-18 was conducted in three sea areas, including the Arabian Sea, Bay of Bengal and South Western Indian Ocean.
- ❖ In 2017, Varuna was conducted in three sea areas in the European waters.
- ❖ The exercise was conducted in three phases.
- ❖ The Indian Navy and the French Navy have conducted bilateral maritime exercises since May 1993.
- ❖ Since 2001, this Indo-French Bilateral exercises have been named as Varuna and there have been fifteen editions of the same till date.

Energy Transition Index

- ❖ India was ranked at 78th among 114 countries on World Economic Forum's (WEF) Energy Transition Index (ETI).
- ❖ Energy Transition Index (ETI) was released as part of report titled Fostering Effective Energy Transition.
- ❖ The index ranked countries based on how well they are able to balance energy security and what extent they have an access with environmental sustainability.
- ❖ The Energy Transition Index was topped by Sweden, followed by Norway at the second position and Switzerland at the third.
- ❖ Rounding out the Top 10 were Finland (4th), Denmark (5th), the Netherlands (6th), the United Kingdom (7th), Austria (8th), France (9th) and Iceland (10th).
- ❖ Among India's emerging market peers, Brazil stood at the 38th place, Russia at 70th and China at 76th place.
- ❖ India has also been implementing National Solar Mission (NSM), a largest government-mandated renewable energy programme, with a target of generating 175 Giga Watts renewable energy capacity by 2022.
- ❖ Under national solar mission among 175 Giga Watts 100 GW will be produced from Solar installations, 60GW from wind, 10GW from biomass and 5 GW from small hydro facilities.



Ayushman Bharat

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the launch of the Ayushman Bharat — National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM), which was announced in the Budget.
- ❖ AB-NHPM will subsume the on-going centrally sponsored schemes — Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY) and the Senior Citizen Health Insurance Scheme (SCHIS).
- ❖ AB-NHPM aims to target over 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on Socio Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC) database.

AYUSHMAN BHARAT

Health Cover for All

The union cabinet has approved the Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Mission, also known as Modicare, that will provide ₹5 lakh health cover to the poorest 100 million families. Billed as the biggest healthcare scheme of its kind in the world, the government hopes to get it rolling soon.

BENEFITS	WHO IS ELIGIBLE
<p>₹5 LAKH health insurance per family per year</p> <p>Will cover existing diseases</p> <p>Pre- and post-hospitalisation expenses covered</p> <p>Defined transport allowance per hospitalisation</p> <p>Covers almost all secondary and many tertiary care procedures</p> <p>Small negative list of hospitalisation that's not covered</p>	<p>107.4 MILLION families likely to be eligible</p> <p>Those identified as poor and vulnerable</p> <p>Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) data to be used</p> <p>No cap on family size or age</p>

CLAIM METHOD

- 1 Cashless benefits from any public/ pvt empanelled hospitals
- 2 Private hospitals will be empanelled online based on defined criteria
- 3 Beneficiary can approach any hospital across the country
- 4 NITI Aayog will develop an IT framework for cashless/paperless treatment


- ❖ States will be required to form State Health Agency (SHA) to implement scheme and at district level also, a structure for implementation of the scheme will be set up.


- ❖ The scheme will work in partnership with NITI Aayog to operationalise a robust, modular and interoperable IT platform which will involve a paperless and cashless transaction.
- ❖ For giving policy directions and fostering coordination between Centre and States, Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission Council (AB-NHPMC) will be set up at apex level. It will be chaired by Union Health and Family Welfare Minister.

Commission on sub-categorization of OBCs

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved second and final extension of term of Commission constituted to examine issue of Sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes in Central List for period of 12 weeks up to June, 2018.

All For 27%
Commission to be appointed under Article 340

 **Commission has to submit report within 12 weeks of its formation**

 **Sub-categorisation recommended by now-defunct NCBC in 2011; parliamentary panels recommended it in 2012 and 2013**

11 states introducing sub-categorisation in state services: Andhra, Telangana, Puducherry, Karnataka, Haryana, Jharkhand, Bengal, Bihar, Maharashtra, J&K and Tamil Nadu

- ❖ The Commission was constituted under article 340 of the Constitution with the approval of President on October 2, 2017.
- ❖ The Commission, headed by Justice (Retd.) G Rohini, commenced functioning on October 11, 2017 and has since interacted with all the

States/UTs which have sub categorised OBCs and the State Backward Classes Commissions.

- ❖ The commission was tasked to
 - examine the extent of inequitable distribution of benefits of reservation among castes included in broad category of OBCs, especially with reference to OBCs included in the Central list.
 - take up exercise of identifying respective castes/sub-castes/communities synonyms in Central List of OBCs and classify them into their respective sub-categories.

World's first Trusted Digital Repository

- ❖ The National Cultural Audio-Visual Archives (NCAA) project of Ministry of Culture was certified as world's first Trusted Digital Repository as per ISO 16363:2012 standard.
- ❖ The certification was granted by Primary Trustworthy Digital Repository Authorisation Body Ltd. (PTAB), United Kingdom.

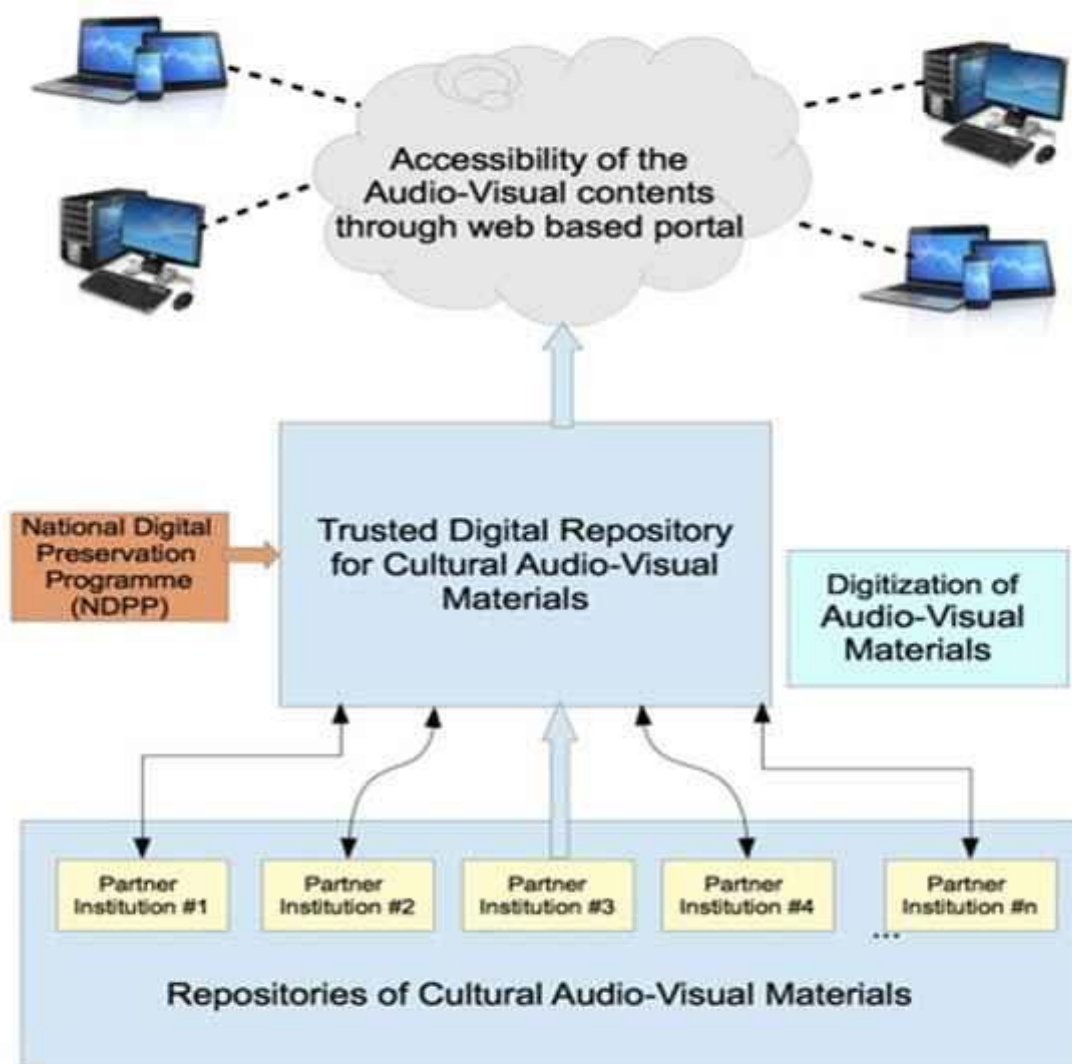
National Cultural Audio-visual Archives

- ❖ NCAA is implemented by Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA).
- ❖ Its primary objective is to identify and preserve cultural heritage of India available in audio-visual form through process of digitization and make it accessible to the people.
- ❖ The digitization and metadata standards followed by the Project are in parity with international standards within the overall framework of the Open Archival Information System (OAIS) model.
- ❖ The digitization standards are in concordance with those prescribed by the International Association of Sound & Audio-visual Archives (IASA) and the metadata schema is extended Dublin Core, followed by galleries, libraries, archives and museums worldwide.

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts

- ❖ It is nodal agency for data bank on art, humanities and cultural heritage.
- ❖ It also has been identified by UNESCO as nodal agency for development of regional databases for South and South East Asian countries on art, cultural heritage and life-styles.

National Cultural Audio-visual Archives (NCAA)



Schematic Diagram

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, Janpath, New Delhi - 110001

Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, 2017

- ❖ The Parliament has passed Payment of Gratuity (Amendment) Bill, 2017 to empower government to fix period of maternity leave and tax-free gratuity amount with an executive order.
- ❖ The Bill seeks to amend Payment of Gratuity Act, 1972 on two issues related to maternity leave and ceiling of gratuity payable to an employee.

- ❖ Gratuity is calculated based on 15 days of wages for each year of continuous and complete service, subject to a ceiling.
- ❖ The Bill allows the government to fix the period of maternity leave for female employees as deemed to be in continuous service in place of the existing 12 weeks.
- ❖ The legislation will enable the government to enhance the ceiling of tax-free gratuity to Rs. 20 lakhs from the existing Rs. 10 lakhs for employees falling under the Payment of Gratuity Act.
- ❖ The amendment to the payment of gratuity law comes in the backdrop of Maternity Benefit (Amendment) Act, 2017 enhancing the maximum maternity leave period to 26 weeks.

National Year of Millets

- ❖ The Centre is promoting cultivation of millets like ragi and jowar on a mission mode to achieve nutritional security.
- ❖ Millets, also called 'nutri cereals', are being procured at the support price and also being included under midday meal scheme and public distribution system (PDS).
- ❖ Millet cultivation has declined due to change in consumption pattern, dietary habits, unavailability of millets, low yield, less demand and conversion of irrigated area for growing rice and wheat.
- ❖ As a result of this, level of nutrients like protein, Vitamin-A, iron and iodine fell in women and children
- ❖ This has led to a special focus on millets, which are being promoted under the National Food Security Mission (NFSM) following recommendations by a committee headed by NITI Aayog member Ramesh Chand.

Millets – Geographic background

- ❖ Millets are tolerant to drought, are photo insensitive and resistant to climate change.
- ❖ Their cultivation requires less water in comparison to rice and wheat.
- ❖ They are cultivated on low-fertile land, mountainous, tribal and rain-fed areas in Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana.

National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement

- ❖ A two-day National Conference on Drug Law Enforcement was organized by Narcotics Control Bureau, Ministry of Home Affairs

- ❖ India is vulnerable to narcotic drug trafficking as it is located between two largest Opium producing regions of the world - Golden Crescent in the west and Golden Triangle in the east.
- ❖ The Conference working sessions focused on various topics such as ‘Wider context of drug trafficking in India’, ‘Financial Investigations’ and ‘Foreign & Cyber Investigations’.

Steps taken by government

- ❖ The government has constituted Narco-Coordination Centre (NCORD) in November, 2016 and revived the scheme of “Financial Assistance to States for Narcotics Control”
- ❖ The government has scheduled 7 new substances into the list of Narcotic drugs in the year 2017
- ❖ In last four years, India has signed 5 Bilateral Agreements/MoUs with Australia, Singapore, Mozambique, Thailand and Nepal in drug matters.
- ❖ Narcotics Control Bureau has been provided funds for developing a new software i.e. Seizure Information Management System (SIMS) which will create a complete online database of drug offences and offenders.
- ❖ Government has constituted a fund called “National Fund for Control of Drug Abuse” to meet the expenditure incurred in connection with combating illicit traffic in Narcotic Drug, Psychotropic Substances.

India-Egypt Joint Commission Meeting

- ❖ The 7th India-Egypt Joint Commission Meeting led by External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Egyptian Foreign Minister Sameh Shoukry was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ The two sides reviewed progress in the areas of political, trade and investment, science and technology, cyber security, capacity building, security, space and culture.

INS Ganga decommissioned

- ❖ INS Ganga, an indigenously built frigate of the Indian Navy, was decommissioned after over three decades of service.
- ❖ INS Ganga is a Godavari-class guided-missile frigate of the Indian Navy and was built in Mumbai by Mazagon Dock Limited.
- ❖ It was commissioned on December 30, 1985.



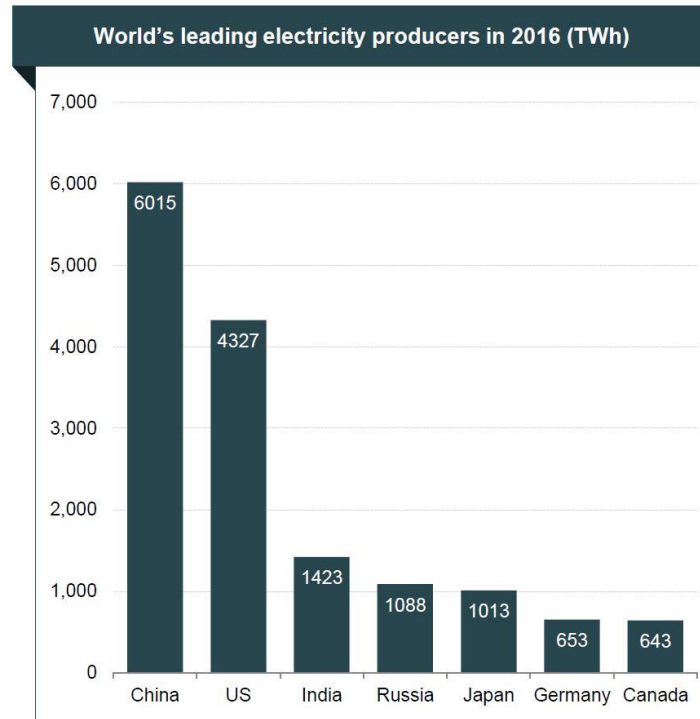
- ❖ The Godavari class was the first significant indigenous warship design and development initiative of the Indian Navy.
- ❖ INS Ganga exhibits capabilities in all three dimensions of naval warfare.

Print Biennale India 2018

- ❖ The first-ever International Exhibition of Graphic Prints 'Print Biennale India 2018' was held in Lalit Kala Akademi with a record number of 17 countries taking part in it.
- ❖ A total number of 988 entries at the national level were received of which 127 have been chosen for display
- ❖ With countries like USA, UK, Sri Lanka, Italy, Mexico, China, Israel, Sweden, Lithuania, Poland, Argentina, Greece, Nepal, Bangladesh, and Mauritius participating in this exhibition, the Biennale has elicited global interest.

Third largest electricity producer

- ❖ India has produced 1,423 Billion Units of Electricity in financial year 2016 and became the third largest producer and the third largest consumer of electricity in the world.



- ❖ It is behind China (6,015 BU) and the United States (4,327 BU).
- ❖ India's electricity production grew 34% over seven years to 2017
- ❖ India now produces more energy than Japan and Russia.

COMCASA

- ❖ India may finally end up signing the second defence foundational pact with the US — the Communications, Compatibility, Security Agreement (COMCASA)

COMCASA

<p>What Legal framework to allow US to transfer high-end communication security equipment to India.</p>	<p>Why</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enable Indian and US forces to operate more closely, share information on secure networks Improve performance of US-sourced platforms with compatible, secure communication systems Establishes platform to share real-time operational information with US & its allies
• The Controversy •	
<p> UPA refused because it feared getting dragged into a US military alliance</p>	<p> The agreement may specify US personnel to be given access to US-sourced communication equipment for periodic inspection</p>
<p> The coding and keying systems will be same, allowing US access to Indian tactical information</p>	<p> Integration with existing Russian weapon system may be a challenge</p>

- ❖ The COMCASA agreement will enable Indian military to obtain critical, secure and encrypted defence technologies from the other country.
- ❖ COMCASA was earlier referred to as the CISMOA (Communication & Information on Security Memorandum of Agreement).
- ❖ Being a 'Major Defence Partner' of the US, it is imperative for India to sign the mandatory three foundational pacts
- ❖ So far, India has signed only one of the foundational agreements, called the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA). It had signed the pact with the US in 2016 after decades of negotiation.
- ❖ The LEMOA is a modified version of the Logistics Support Agreement (LSA) focused on India that will enable access to each other's military facilities for purposes of refuelling and replenishment.
- ❖ COMCASA and Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement for Geo-Spatial Cooperation (BECA) are the two remaining pacts that were not signed.

SAUBHAGYA – Skill Training

- ❖ Ministry of Power has partnered with the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship to train the manpower in six states for speedy implementation of its SAUBHAGYA scheme.
- ❖ These six states are Assam, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha and Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ Under this partnership, around 47,000 Distribution Lineman-Multi Skills and 8,500 Technical Helpers will be trained to meet the requirement of power sector projects under Saubhagya scheme.

SAUBHAGYA (Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojna)

- ❖ "Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana" (SAUBHAGYA) to provide last mile electricity connectivity to all rural and urban households.
- ❖ It will provide subsidy on equipment like transformers, meters and wires.
- ❖ The government has set the target of providing 24X7 power for all by 2019.

Atal Innovation Mission

- ❖ NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) has signed Statement of Intent (SOI) with German tech company SAP to promote culture of innovation and entrepreneurship across 100 Atal Tinkering Labs across India.
- ❖ SAP will adopt 100 Atal Tinkering Laboratories in 2018 for five years to nurture science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) learning among secondary school children across India.

About Atal Innovation Mission

- ❖ NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission is among one of flagship programs of Government to promote innovation and entrepreneurship culture in country.
- ❖ Its mandate is to create umbrella structure to oversee innovation ecosystem of country and revolutionize innovation eco-system.
- ❖ For this Atal Tinkering Labs are established across the country.
- ❖ AIM targets to have at least one Atal Tinkering Lab in every district and proposed Smart City of India.
- ❖ It aims to give substantial boost to the innovation ecosystem and to catalyse the entrepreneurial spirit in the country.

Study in India programme

- ❖ The Ministry of Human Resources Development (HRD) has approved 'Study in India' programme to attract foreign students to pursue higher education in India.
- ❖ The 'Study in India' programme's primary objective is to
 - Target foreign students by branding India as an attractive education destination.
 - To reduce the export – Import imbalance in the number of International students
- ❖ In Times Higher Education Ranking 2018, top spot has gone to University of Oxford where 38% population is of Indian students.
- ❖ On contrary, Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru has only 1% population of International students.
- ❖ The All India Survey on Higher Education 2016-17, released recently, says that there are just 47,575 students of foreign nationalities studying in Indian universities.

Steps to improve collegium system

- ❖ The Supreme Court highlighted in a judgment that Urgent measures are required to improve the collegium system of appointment of judges, including the setting up of an independent secretariat.

NJAC VS COLLEGIUM SYSTEM

WHAT'S COLLEGIUM SYSTEM

- Collegium system based on Three Judges Cases
- Under it, appointment of judges are made by Chief Justice of India and four most senior Supreme Court judges.
- Has no constitutional backing.
- Constitution of India's Article 124 says appointments to be made by President in consultation with judges as President may deem necessary.
- Critics say it is a closed-door system which lacks transparency

WHAT'S NJAC

- NJAC was a body created to end the two-decade-old Supreme Court Collegium system of judges appointing judges.
- Was passed by Lok Sabha on August 13, 2014. Was passed by Rajya Sabha a day later.
- Will consist of six people – CJI, two senior-most Supreme Court judges, Law Minister and two 'eminent' persons.
- Critics say judges in NJAC will need support of others to push a name through. They fear judicial independence being compromised.



- ❖ It said that “corrective measures” are needed to be taken against “post-appointment conduct or inadequate performance or failure to uphold righteous conduct” by sitting judges.
- ❖ A Bench of Justices A.K. Goel and Rohinton F. Nariman said the improvements contemplated by the five-judge NJAC (National Judicial Appointments Commission) Bench, in December 2015, in the collegium system had not been implemented.
- ❖ The Centre should ensure that the new memorandum of procedure brought about the improvements recommended by the NJAC Bench.
- ❖ It reiterated that a full-time body consistent with independence of judiciary appears to be immediate need for the system.

Creamy layer for SCs/STs – Centre’s opposition

- ❖ The Union government has opposed the idea of a "creamy layer" within the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) category.
- ❖ The government told a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra that the principle of creamy layer cannot be applied to the presidential order on quota for SC/ST groups.
- ❖ The court was hearing a petition to exclude the affluent members or the “creamy layer” of the SC and ST communities from accessing the reservation benefits.
- ❖ This is the first time such a petition has been filed urging the Supreme Court to introduce the 'creamy layer' concept to the SCs/STs.
- ❖ In 1992, a nine-judge Bench of the court in the Indra Sawhney case or the Mandal case (as it was popularly known), upheld the caste-based reservation for the OBCs as valid.
- ❖ The Mandal judgment had confined the exclusion of 'creamy layer' only to the OBCs and not the SC/STs.
- ❖ Now, the petition wants the same exclusion from quota benefits to the 'creamy layer' among the SC/STs too.
- ❖ The petition refers to the report of the Centre's 'Advisory Committee on the revision of the list of Schedule Castes and Schedule Tribes', also known as Lokur Committee, set up in 1965.
- ❖ It said that “backwardness has a tendency to perpetuate itself and those who are listed as backward try to remain as such due to various concessions and benefits they derive. Thus, backwardness becomes a vested interest”.

Stay on trial - valid only for 6 months

- ❖ The Supreme Court held that any stay of a criminal or corruption trial, or even a civil case, will be valid only for six months.
- ❖ It means trials cannot be held up for indeterminate periods just because a High Court has granted stay.
- ❖ A Bench of Justices Adarsh Kumar Goel and Rohinton F. Nariman observed that Proceedings are adjourned sine die on account of stay.
- ❖ Even after the stay is vacated, intimation is not received and proceedings are not taken up, have often led to delay and denial of the fundamental right to speedy justice.
- ❖ Supreme Court said that the order to stay trial will be extended after 6 months only in “exceptional cases” and that too in a judicial order which fully explains the reasons for the extension.

International Solar Alliance and India

- ❖ The International Solar Alliance (ISA) and Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) signed Host Country Agreement in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Agreement will give ISA a juridical personality and gives it power to contract, to acquire and dispose of movable and immovable properties, to institute and defend legal proceedings.
- ❖ ISA shall be deriving its status, privileges and immunities as per Article 10 of the Framework Agreement.



ISA

- ❖ The ISA is an Indian initiative, jointly launched by the Prime Minister of India and the president of France on November 2015 in Paris, on the sidelines of COP-21, the UN climate conference.
- ❖ The International Solar Alliance is alliance 121 countries, most of them being sunshine countries, which come either completely or partly between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn.
- ❖ The primary objective is to collectively work for efficient exploitation of solar energy to reduce dependence on fossil-based fuels.
- ❖ The Headquarters is in India with its Interim Secretariat being setup in Gurgaon.
- ❖ The agreement will become operational after at least 15 countries have ratified it.
- ❖ It is also expected to mobilise \$1 trillion for funding solar energy projects by 2030.
- ❖ The institutional structure of ISA consists of an Assembly, a Council and a Secretariat.

Draft policy on Defense Production

- ❖ The Ministry of Defence has released draft policy on defence production that aims to make India one of the top five manufacturers of defence platforms with active participation of public and private sectors.
- ❖ At present, India is one of the world's largest importer of military equipment and weapons.
- ❖ The Objectives of Policy on defence production is to
 - ✓ Make India one of top five manufacturers of defence platforms with active participation of public and private sectors.
 - ✓ Make India self-reliant in defence production as well as fulfil demand of friendly countries.
 - ✓ Achieve turnover of Rs.1,70,000 crore in military goods and services by 2025 by promoting domestic defence industry.
- ❖ Followings are mentioned in Draft policy on defence production
 - ✓ Licensing process for defence industries will be liberalised
 - ✓ list of items requiring for licences will be reviewed and pruned.
 - ✓ All applications for licences for defence industries will be disposed off in 30 days.

E-Tribes India

- ❖ The Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED), under Ministry of Tribal Affairs has launched E-Tribes India banners on e-commerce platforms.
- ❖ TRIFED also launched its websites-www.tribesindia.com, www.trifed.in and Retail Inventory Software and M-commerce app as part of Digital India Initiative.
- ❖ TRIFED also launched TRIFED's Handbook for Retail Trade of tribal products and quarterly magazine 'Tribes Haat' was also launched.
- ❖ To ensure the availability of tribal products over large area TRIFED has entered into agreements with e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Snapdeal, Flipkart and Paytm.
- ❖ On the request of Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Ministry of Commerce has also for sale of tribal products through TRIFED on Government e-Marketplace (GeM).

Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED)

- ❖ TRIFED is multi-State Cooperative Society under Ministry of Tribal Affairs. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

- ❖ It was established in August 1987 by then Ministry of Welfare under Multi State Cooperative Societies Act 1984 (which has now been replaced by Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002).

INTERNATIONAL

EPG

- ❖ The seventh meeting of the Eminent Persons Group (EPG) on Nepal-India relations was held in Kathmandu.
- ❖ The two-day meeting will mainly focus on the 1950 Peace and Friendship treaty, trade, environment, border dispute and ways to resolve them.
- ❖ EPG is a joint mechanism consisting experts and intellectuals from India and Nepal.
- ❖ It was set up in 2016 to provide suggestions for updating all existing bilateral treaties and agreements between both the countries.
- ❖ Next meeting of the group will be held in New Delhi.

20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM)

- ❖ The 20th Conference of Commonwealth Education Ministers (20CCEM) was held in Nadi, Fiji.
- ❖ The theme for 20CCEM is “Sustainability and Resilience: Can Education Deliver? “
- ❖ The 20CCEM was the first meeting of Commonwealth Education Ministers since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- ❖ The Integrated Partners Forum (IPF) was held in parallel to the Ministers’ Conference
- ❖ In this 20th CCEM, Ministers reaffirmed that education is a fundamental human right and is indispensable for the achievement of sustainable development.
- ❖ The Government of Kenya will be hosting the 21st CCEM in 2021.
- ❖ The Commonwealth education conference has been taking place every three years since 1959, when the first meeting was held in Oxford.
- ❖ It is the second largest meeting organised by the Commonwealth Secretariat after the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM).

Saudi Arabia - Military

- ❖ The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has for the first-ever time opened applications for women to enlist in the military.
- ❖ Women can apply for positions with the rank of soldier in the provinces of Riyadh, Mecca, al-Qassim and Medina.
- ❖ Women applicants must be Saudi citizens, between 25 to 35 years of age, have a high-school diploma, and must pass a mandatory medical check-up.
- ❖ The military roles do not involve combat. Instead, women will reportedly be given the opportunity to work in the security department.
- ❖ The initiative has been reportedly undertaken as part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030 programme, launched by Saudi Crown Prince, Mohammad bin Salman.

FATF

- ❖ China has been elected as the vice-president of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) at the plenary meeting in Paris.
- ❖ Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is a global body mandated to combat terror financing and money laundering.
- ❖ In its plenary meeting, the FATF placed Pakistan under “grey list” to monitoring in its International Cooperation Review Group until June 2018 for compliance of Anti-Money Laundering and Combating Finance of Terrorism regulations.
- ❖ However, China, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, leading the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) that votes as one bloc, were against Pakistan being put in the grey list.
- ❖ As per FATF rules, three votes from the FATF's 37 members are needed for not putting a country in the grey list.

Financial Action Task Force (FATF)

- ❖ The Financial Action Task Force (FATF) is an inter-governmental body established in 1989 by the Ministers of its Member jurisdictions.
- ❖ FATF Secretariat is housed at the headquarters of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in Paris.
- ❖ Established during the G7 Summit in Paris (France), the organisation aims to establish international standards for combating money laundering and terrorist financing and seeks to combat the growing problem of money laundering.
- ❖ FATF's decision making body is the 'FATF Plenary'. The FATF plenary sessions are held in February, June and October every year.
- ❖ It consists of over 37 member countries including India.

Mascots for 2020 Olympics and Paralympics

- ❖ Japan has chosen two futuristic fox-like creatures with "supernatural" powers as its mascots for the 2020 Tokyo Olympic and Paralympic Games.
- ❖ The choice of the mascots comes following a vote where pupils from 16,769 schools were allowed to choose one of three mascot pairings.
- ❖ The winning mascots, which will be named later in the year, were designed by Ryo Taniguchi, a character designer and illustrator.
- ❖ The mascot voting process was part of Tokyo's 2020's national education programme "Yoi Don!" which translates as "Get Set".
- ❖ The Tokyo 2020 Olympics will take place from July 24 to August 9 with the Paralympics running from August 25 to September 6.

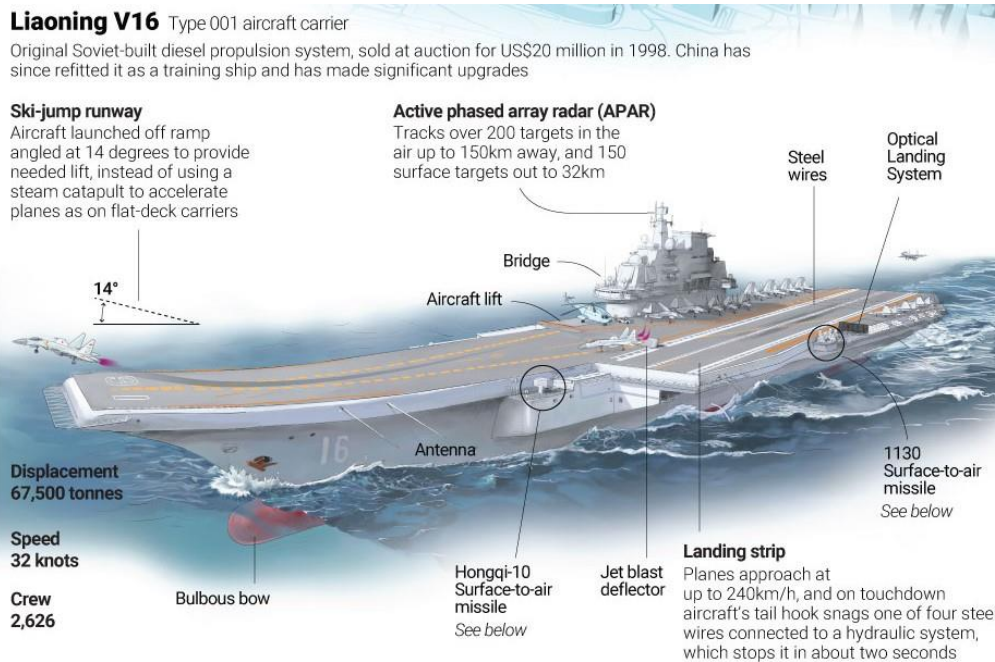


Russia – Olympics

- ❖ Russia's Olympic membership has been restored by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) following its suspension from Pyeongchang Winter Olympics 2018.
- ❖ The IOC in December banned Russia from competing in Pyeongchang, for its state-sponsored doping programme during the Winter Olympics it hosted in Sochi in 2014.
- ❖ Despite the ban, 168 Russians competed as neutrals in South Korea under Olympic Committee Flag.
- ❖ The Olympic Athletes from Russia (OAR) team was the third largest and won 17 medals, including two golds.
- ❖ Russia is also banned from the 2018 Winter Paralympics in March but, again, some athletes will compete as neutrals.

Nuclear-powered aircraft carrier – China

- ❖ The China Shipbuilding Industry Corporation (CSIC) has announced to build its first nuclear-powered aircraft carrier Liaoning.
- ❖ China commissioned its first-ever aircraft carrier - Liaoning is bought from Ukraine, in 2012.
- ❖ Its second carrier and the first domestically built carrier, known as Type 001A, was launched in April last year.



- ❖ At present, China's navy has two aircraft carriers running on conventional oil.
- ❖ US Navy's Nimitz-class and Ford-class carrier is run by nuclear power.
- ❖ French Navy's flagship, the Charles de Gaulle is only non-US aircraft carrier powered by nuclear reactors.

Rooppur Nuclear power plant

- ❖ India, Bangladesh and Russia have signed a tripartite memorandum of understanding for cooperation in the construction of the Rooppur nuclear power plant in Bangladesh.
- ❖ It will be the first initiative under an India-Russia nuclear deal to undertake atomic energy projects in third countries. It will also be India's first atomic energy venture abroad.
- ❖ Rooppur Nuclear project is Bangladesh's first atomic energy project. It is being built with Russia's help near Dhaka.

- ❖ After commissioning of two units, each with capacity of 1200 MWs, Bangladesh will be third South Asian country after India and Pakistan to harness atomic energy for energy purpose.
- ❖ Russia will build nuclear power plant for this plant on a turnkey basis which means that contractor will complete whole project and they will be liable for any problems that arise in plant.
- ❖ Since India being not member of Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG), it will not participate directly in construction of atomic power reactors in third country.

Marshall Islands

- ❖ The Marshall Islands, a Pacific island nation has become the first country in the world to recognise a crypto currency or digital currency as its legal tender after passing a law through its parliament to create the digital currency "Sovereign," or SOV.
- ❖ The Marshall Islands is partnering with Israeli fintech start up Neema to launch its SOV.



- ❖ The island country will issue 24 million SOVs in Initial Currency Offering (ICO).
- ❖ The digital currency in the island nation will have an equal status with the US dollar as a form of payment. The US dollar is the Pacific island nation's current currency.
- ❖ Earlier, Venezuela became the first country to launch its own cryptocurrency 'Petro' but its validity as legal tender is not yet known.
- ❖ The Republic of Marshall Islands is an island country located in the Pacific Ocean. The country is part of the larger island group of Micronesia.
- ❖ The U.S. runs a military base on Kwajalein Atoll.

India's top oil supplier

- ❖ Iraq has overtaken Saudi Arabia to become India's top crude oil supplier, meeting more than a fifth of the country's oil needs in the current financial year.
- ❖ It is notable that Saudi Arabia traditionally has been India's top oil supplier.
- ❖ Iran, for the second year in a row continued to be the third largest supplier.
- ❖ Venezuela is India's fourth largest supplier, followed by Nigeria.
- ❖ India is 80% dependent on imports to meet its oil needs.
- ❖ India's dependence on West Asia for its crude oil need has increased from 58% in 2014-15 to 63.7% in April-January period of this fiscal.

Warship Squadron – Japan

- ❖ Japan's navy has appointed Ryoko Azuma as the Commander of the First Escort Division of the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.
- ❖ She became the first woman to command a warship squadron., including the flagship Izumo helicopter carrier.
- ❖ Ryoko Azuma, will command four ships with a combined crew of 1000, that make up the Maritime Self Defense Force's (MSDF) First Escort Division.

Nile festival - 6th Indian edition

- ❖ Sixth edition of the India by the Nile (IBN) festival 2018 is being held in Cairo, Egypt.



- ❖ The sixth edition will be running from March 6 to March 17 showcasing multidisciplinary performances.

- ❖ It is the biggest foreign festival in Egypt and encourages artistic collaborations between the two countries.
- ❖ This year, the festival will also bring two new events, a fashion show and screening of the Indian movies.
- ❖ The festival is organised by the Embassy of India in Egypt and the Maulana Azad Centre for Indian Culture in collaboration with entertainment company Teamwork Arts.

Italy's First Black Senator

- ❖ An Italian man of Nigerian origin, who is the chief immigration spokesman for the far-right League party, has been elected as the country's first black senator.
- ❖ Tony Iwobi was elected in the industrial city of Brescia in northern Italy, which a major immigration hub.
- ❖ He used the campaign slogan #StopInvasion, a reference to the more than 690,000 migrants who have landed on Italian shores from North Africa since 2013.
- ❖ Italy's general election left the country with a hung parliament in which no single party or coalition commands an overall majority
- ❖ The League, led by Matteo Salvini, was the winning party in the right-wing alliance that took the most votes but fell short of an overall majority.

Juniper Cobra

- ❖ Juniper Cobra is a U.S., European Command bilateral exercise.
- ❖ The exercise is part of a routine training cycle, designed to improve coordination between the U.S. forces and the Israel Defense Force.
- ❖ The focal point of Juniper Cobra remains is to provide integrated ballistic missile defense to counter regional threats to Israel and maintaining U.S. support of Israel's military activities.

Elie Wiesel Award

- ❖ The US Holocaust Memorial Museum invalidated the prestigious Elie Wiesel Award that was presented to Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi in 2012.
- ❖ The museum stated that the lack of action by Myanmar State Counsellor, and Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, against the genocide committed by the military against the Rohingya community was the primary reason behind them stripping her of the award.

- ❖ It has been reported that over 7,00,000 Rohingyas have fled the country in an attempt to escape the atrocities committed by the country's military against the minority community.



China – Extension of Tenure of President

- ❖ China has passed a historic constitutional amendment to formally remove the term limits to enable President Xi to stay on as the Chinese president beyond 2023.
- ❖ China's national legislature incorporated President Xi Jinping's thought on 'Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era', in the country's constitution.
- ❖ The limit on the presidency was introduced by former Chinese President Deng Xiaoping in 1982.
- ❖ In china the tenure of presidency is five years.
- ❖ One can be a president for china for 2 times only i.e. 10 years.
- ❖ In addition to removing the term limits, decision has been taken for the establishment of a new anti-graft super agency in China, called the National Supervisory Commission.
- ❖ The overarching body will extend the powers of the party's graft watchdog to police all public employees, from officials and managers of state-owned enterprises to teachers, doctors and journalists.

Genocide Day

- ❖ Bangladesh will observe a one-minute 'blackout' on March 25 to mark 'Genocide Day', in memory of the three million people killed by Pakistani forces during the country's Liberation War in 1971.
- ❖ Bangladesh started observing March 25 as 'Genocide Day' in 2017.

Crime free zone

- ❖ The director generals of the Border Security Force (BSF) and Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) declared an 8.3 km stretch of the Indo-Bangladesh border as a 'crime-free zone'.
- ❖ The stretch falls between the border outpost of Gunarmath and Kalyani of the BSF and Putkhali and Daulatpur of the BGB.



- ❖ Both border guarding forces with the help of the civil administrations of the two countries, NGOs and the local population will help in ensuring that no crime takes place along the stretch.

World ATM Congress

- ❖ The World ATM Congress (WATMC-2018) was held at Feria de Madrid in Spain from March 6 to 8.
- ❖ Entering its sixth year, it is the world's largest international air traffic management (ATM) exhibition and conference attracting thousands of delegates each year.
- ❖ In it, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) participated and showcased its achievements and initiatives.
- ❖ Conceived by the Civil Air Navigation Services Organization (CANSO) in partnership with the Air Traffic Control Association (ATCA), the World ATM Congress brings together the world's leading product developers, experts, stakeholders in aviation to share the best practices in air traffic management.

Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for TPP

- ❖ 11 Pacific Rim countries have formally entered into Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership or CP TPP or TPP11 in Santiago, Chile.

- ❖ It is the revised version of Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) proposed by US, that was finalized after US withdrew from it.
- ❖ TPP11 includes Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore and Vietnam.
- ❖ It will be world's third largest trade bloc after European Union (EU) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).
- ❖ It will come into effect 60 days after six of the 11-member countries ratify the agreement domestically.
- ❖ It eliminates some requirements of original TPP demanded by US, including rules to ramp up intellectual property protection of pharmaceuticals.
- ❖ The US withdrew from the 12-member Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) agreement in January 2017.
- ❖ After US withdrawal, remaining 11 countries had decided to forge ahead regardless and finalized the agreement in January 2018.



Joint declarations of Financial partnership

- ❖ The International Solar Alliance (ISA)- African Development Bank (AfDb), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB), Green climate fund (GCF) and the New Development Bank (NDB) has signed Joint financial partnership Declarations for promoting Renewable Energy.
- ❖ The International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) and International Energy Agency (IEA) have signed a Joint Partnership Declaration with the ISA to deepen their cooperation in support of Renewable Energy.

MILES-18

- ❖ The MILES-18, the first-ever multi-nation naval exercise at sea was held at the Andaman sea.
- ❖ 11 naval ships of 8 countries (Australia, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand) and nine Indian ships had participated in MILES-18.
- ❖ The 3-day exercise was conducted as part of 10th edition of MILAN 2018.
- ❖ This multi-national mega event was organised by Andaman Nicobar naval command with theme 'Friendship Across the Seas' to expand regional cooperation and combat unlawful activities in critical sea lanes.
- ❖ Milan exercise was first held in 1995 with participation of just five navies
- ❖ The exercise is being hosted biennially by Indian Navy under the aegis of Andaman and Nicobar Command.

First Indo-French Knowledge Summit

- ❖ The first Indo-French Knowledge Summit for university, scientific and technology cooperation was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ The two-day summit was jointly organized by French Embassy in India and Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- ❖ The summit's objective was to design roadmap of Franco-India cooperation for next five years, in collaboration with companies in both countries.

India-France Defence pact

- ❖ India and France have inked strategic pact providing for use of each other's military facilities including allowing the warships of both countries to each other's naval bases.
- ❖ The deal is similar to logistical support pact (LEMOA - Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement) with US on use of each other's land, air and naval bases.
- ❖ On ties in maritime security sphere, both countries will have unprecedented level of cooperation to ensure peace and stability in Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Kinzhal missile

- ❖ Russia successfully launched high-precision aero ballistic Kinzhal hypersonic missile from a MiG-31 supersonic interceptor jet.

- ❖ The Kinzhal missile is one of array of new weapons developed by Russia.
- ❖ The Kinzhal is said to travel at 10 times the speed of sound.
- ❖ The range of Kinzhal missile is 2,000km.
- ❖ The first air unit equipped with Kinzhal system was deployed in Russia's Southern Military District in December 2017.

Facts

- ❖ Mach is a unit of sound's speed.
- ❖ Mach number is greater than five is called Hyper-sonic speed.
- ❖ Sub-sonic – Any speed lower than the speed of sound. Mach number greater than 1 is called as super-sonic.
- ❖ Cruise Missile – It is a guided missile that flies major portion of its flight within atmosphere at approximately constant speed.
- ❖ Ballistic Missile – It is a missile that follows a ballistic trajectory and guided only relatively during brief periods and spends most of their flight out of the atmosphere.

World Happiness Report 2018

- ❖ According to the recently released World Happiness Report 2018 by the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) India was ranked 133rd among 156 countries.
- ❖ This year it is sixth edition of the World Happiness report since it was first published in 2012.
- ❖ India was behind majority of South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) nations apart from Afghanistan, which was ranked 145th.
- ❖ While, Bhutan was ranked at 97th, Bangladesh at 115th, Nepal at 101st and Sri Lanka at 116th spot.
- ❖ Pakistan ranked 75th and China ranked 86th in this World happiness index.
- ❖ The Top 10 countries that rule the World Happiness Index are Finland, Norway, Denmark, Iceland, Switzerland, Netherlands, Canada, New Zealand, Sweden and Australia.
- ❖ Finland is at the top of both rankings in this report, with the happiest immigrants, and the happiest population in general.
- ❖ The index ranked 156 countries based on factors (parameters) such as inequality, life expectancy, GDP per capita, social freedom, generosity, public trust and social support.
- ❖ These parameters are used to generate a happiness score of country on a scale from 1 to 10.

- ❖ The 2018 report, for the first time ranked happiness of foreign-born immigrants in 117 countries.
- ❖ The overall ranking of a country's happiness is based on the collective results from Gallup World Poll Surveys from 2015-2017, which show both change and stability.



Bidya Devi Bhandari - Nepal President

- ❖ Nepal's first woman President Bidya Devi Bhandari was re-elected for second term in Nepal President office.
- ❖ In the recently held presidential election, she defeated Nepali Congress (NC) leader Kumari Laxmi Rai with overwhelming majority.



- ❖ President of Nepal is ceremonial head of state, under the new Republican Federal Constitution of Nepal.
- ❖ The electoral college for presidential election comprised of members of Parliament and Provincial Assemblies.

Angela Merkel Fourth Term Chancellor

- ❖ German lawmakers voted to re-elect Angela Merkel as Chancellor for a fourth, and likely final term.
- ❖ The majority vote in the Bundestag means the Christian Democratic Union leader embarked on her fourth term.
- ❖ She has been elected at the helm of German politics following months of negotiations with the Social Democratic Party (SPD) that culminated in the revival of the so-called grand coalition (mockingly dubbed a "GroKo" in German).
- ❖ In a secret ballot, 364 of the Bundestag's 709 members voted in favour of Merkel -- nine more than the 50 per cent required
- ❖ Merkel will be formally appointed by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier before taking the oath of office.

Philippines quit from ICC

- ❖ The Philippines has formally submitted the Letter of Withdrawal from the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC).
- ❖ It will make Philippines only second country to withdraw from the Rome statute, following Burundi in 2017.
- ❖ Philippines had ratified Rome statute related to Hague-based ICC in 2011.

International Criminal Court (ICC)

- ❖ ICC is the world's first intergovernmental legal body with permanent international jurisdiction to prosecute individuals for genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes.
- ❖ It is based in The Hague, Netherlands.
- ❖ It began its functioning on 1 July 2002, the date that Rome Statute entered into force. It has 123-member states.
- ❖ It is notable that India is not a member in this court.
- ❖ The Rome Statute is multilateral treaty which serves as ICC's foundational and governing document.
- ❖ India has not signed Rome Statute.
- ❖ The ICC has jurisdiction to prosecute individuals and it is not a part of United Nations (UN).
- ❖ United Nations Security Council or individual states may also refer situations to the Court.

Gulf Shield – 1 joint military exercise

- ❖ The Gulf Shield – 1 military exercise of 23 countries including Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states was held in Eastern Region of Saudi Arabia.
- ❖ The one-month exercise was the largest military drill in the region as it saw participation of ground, naval and air forces of participating countries.



- ❖ The multilateral exercise organised by Ministry of Defence of Saudi Arabia was aimed to raise military readiness of participating countries, modernise joint exercise mechanisms and enhance coordination and cooperation.

Vladimir Putin - Russia

- ❖ Vladimir Putin won his fourth term as president and will continue to lead Russia for the next six years.
- ❖ According to central election commission data, with 99.8 percent of ballots counted Putin received 76.67 per cent of the vote.
- ❖ This year's victory has marked an increase in Putin's share of votes from 2012 when he won 64 per cent of the votes.
- ❖ Under the current Russian constitution, this should be Putin's last six-year term in office.
- ❖ As per Russian constitution one can be a president of Russia maximum 4 times.
- ❖ By this win, Putin will be in power until 2024.
- ❖ Vladimir Putin is already Russia's longest-serving leader since Stalin, former Russian president.

Russia presidential election



African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA)

- ❖ The 44 African countries out of 55 members of African Union (AU) have signed agreement to create African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), one of the world's largest free trade blocs.
- ❖ The agreement was signed at a summit held in Kigali, Rwanda. The signed AfCFTA agreement contains legal framework for free trade area.
- ❖ It will come into force after it is ratified by individual countries through their respective domestic processes.
- ❖ 10 countries including Nigeria, Africa's largest economy and most populous country have refused to sign the agreement.

- ❖ Once AfCFTA becomes reality, it will be largest free-trade area in terms of participating countries since the formation of the World Trade Organization (WTO).
- ❖ African heads of government agreed to establish a continental free trade area in 2012 and started negotiations in 2015 to boost intra-Africa trade.

CFTA

#AUCitizen | #AFCFTA



1 CREATE a single continental market for goods and services, with free movement of business persons and investments

3 EXPAND intra African trade through better harmonization and coordination of trade across RECs and Africa

2 RESOLVE the challenges of multiple and overlapping memberships and expedite the regional and continental integration processes



4 ENHANCE competitiveness at the industry and enterprise level

Pakistan's First Female Senate Opposition Leader

- ❖ Pakistan's prominent lawmaker Sherry Rehman made history by becoming the first woman Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, the upper house of parliament.



- ❖ Sherry belongs to the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chaired by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.
- ❖ She has served as Pakistan's Ambassador to the US from 2011 to 2013 and was elected to the Senate in 2015.

Peru - New President

- ❖ Martin Vizcarra, who served as Peru's first vice president and ambassador to Canada, has been sworn in as the country's new president.



- ❖ His predecessor Pedro Pablo Kuczynski resigned amid corruption scandals.

Floating Island

- ❖ An uninhabited and muddy Bay of Bengal island is in process to turn into home for 1,00,000 Rohingya Muslims who have fled a military crackdown in Myanmar.
- ❖ The government of Bangladesh is reportedly making “temporary arrangements” for these people to the island named Bhasan Char (meaning floating island).
- ❖ Floating Island, which emerged from the silt only about 20 years ago, is about 30 km (21 miles) from the mainland.
- ❖ Bangladesh PM Sheikh Hasina has cleared that putting Rohingya on the low-lying island would be a “temporary arrangement”
- ❖ It is to ease congestion at the camps in Cox's Bazar, which houses nearly 700,000 Rohingya who have fled Myanmar since August, 2017.

Egypt President Re-elected

- ❖ Egypt's President Abdul Fattah al-Sisi has been re-elected for a second four-year term with a sweeping majority, garnering nearly 92 per cent of vote share.
- ❖ Mr.Sisi had secured a landslide victory against his sole challenger, al Ghad party chief Moussa Mustafa Moussa, winning more than 90% of the vote.
- ❖ Mr. Sisi led the military's overthrow of Egypt's first democratically elected president, Mohammed Morsi in 2013, after the revolution of 2011, following mass protests against his rule. He was elected for a four-year presidential term in 2014.

Abdel Fattah al-Sisi



Aged 63

- **2010**
Head of **military intelligence** under President Hosni Mubarak
- **2012**
Appointed **defence minister and head of armed forces** by Mohamed Morsi, Egypt's 1st freely elected, civilian leader
- **2013**
Ousts Morsi in **coup. Violent crackdown** on Morsi supporters
- **2014**
Elected **president. Muzzles press and opposition.** Economic reform
- **2018**
Re-elected for a 2nd four-year term

Expulsions of diplomats

- ❖ Russia has said it will expel 60 U.S. diplomats and close the American consulate in St. Petersburg.

- ❖ It has been done as part of a tit-for-tat retaliation against the expulsions of dozens of Russian diplomats ordered by the US and other countries earlier this week over the poisoning of a former spy in Britain.
- ❖ Russia's foreign ministry said that 58 staffs from the U.S. embassy in Moscow and 2 from its consulate in Ekaterinburg will be declared "persona non-grata" and must leave Russia before April 5.
- ❖ US President ordered 60 Russian diplomats, whom it considers as spies, to leave the country in response to the nerve-agent poisoning of a former Russian spy Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia in the UK and closed Russia's consulate in Seattle.
- ❖ Further, 14 European Union countries announced they were expelling a total of 30 Russian diplomats in a coordinated international response.
- ❖ This was the biggest Western expulsion of Russian diplomats since the height of the Cold War.
- ❖ Australia also announced that it would expel two Russian diplomats over the UK spy attack.
- ❖ The U.K. has already called in the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to analyse the nerve agent (so-called Novichok type of nerve agent) used in the poison attack.

Diplomatic expulsions tied to the Skripal affair

Number of expulsions per country



May Day

- ❖ The Sri Lankan government has decided to postpone International Workers' Day events from May 1 to May 7 this year, to avoid an overlap with the Buddhist festival of Vesak.
- ❖ The decision was taken after considering a request made by the Maha Sangha, an influential body of the Buddhist clergy in Sri Lanka.
- ❖ Buddhist festival of Vesak Known as 'Buddha Purnima' or 'Buddha Jayanti', this Vesak Day is celebrated to commemorate the birth, enlightenment and death of the Buddha.
- ❖ As per the Sinhalese calendar, Vesak week often falls in May, but this year it begins on April 29 and 30.

Kim Jong-un's visit to China

- ❖ North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has pledged to denuclearise and meet U.S. officials after a historic meeting with President Xi Jinping.
- ❖ The visit was Mr. Kim's first known trip outside North Korea since he assumed power in 2011.
- ❖ China has traditionally been secretive North Korea's closest ally but ties have been frayed by its pursuit of nuclear weapons and China's backing of tough UN sanctions in response.
- ❖ Kim Jong-un's predecessors, grandfather Kim Il-sung and father Kim Jong-il, both promised not to pursue nuclear weapons but secretly maintained programmes to develop them, culminating in the North's first nuclear test in 2006 under Kim Jong-Il.

Win Myint - Myanmar's New President

- ❖ Myanmar's parliament picked a close ally of de facto leader Aung San Suu Kyi as the country's new president.



- ❖ Due to health problems Htin Kyaw resigned the president post recently. Then Win Myint, a week ago resigned his post as the lower house speaker. Then he was chosen as president by both chambers of the parliament where Suu Kyi's ruling National League for Democracy (NLD) party holds a comfortable majority.
- ❖ The president is the head of state and government in Myanmar, and under Myanmar's constitution it has far-reaching powers.
- ❖ However, Htin Kyaw's role was more ceremonial because Suu Kyi has been Myanmar's de facto leader since April 2016.
- ❖ Aung San Suu Kyi's party got a huge victory in the 2015 election which held after a massive struggle. Because of the foreign citizenship holding of Suu her sons she couldn't become a president of Myanmar.
- ❖ Then she became a national advisor and her close ally Htin Kyaw become president.

ECONOMY

National Financial Reporting Authority

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for establishment of National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA)
- ❖ The decision aims at establishment of NFRA as an independent regulator for the auditing profession which is one of the key changes brought in by the Companies Act, 2013.
- ❖ The inclusion of the provision in the Act was on the specific recommendations of the Standing Committee on Finance.

- ❖ It aims to tighten regulatory oversight over auditors and plug loopholes.
- ❖ NFRA will be 15 members body, consisting of Chairperson, three full-time Members and one Secretary.
- ❖ The jurisdiction of NFRA
 - For investigation of Chartered Accountants and their firms would extend to listed companies and large unlisted public companies.
 - Govt. can also refer other entities for investigation where public interest is involved
- ❖ It will function as an overarching watchdog for auditing profession and even powers of Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) to act against erring chartered accountants will be vested with NFRA.

US securities - India

- ❖ According to recent figures compiled by US Treasury Department, India is 12th largest overseas holder of US government securities.
- ❖ The holding of India went up to \$144.7 billion in December last.
- ❖ In 2017, China was the largest holder of US government securities with holdings to the tune of \$1.18 trillion, followed by Japan at \$1.06 trillion.
- ❖ Among the BRIC countries, India had the third largest exposure while that of Russia was lower among BRIC.

FIN-Tech

- ❖ The centre has set up 8-member steering committee look into the development and regulation of the financial technology (fintech) sector in India.
- ❖ The committee will be headed by Subhash Chandra Garg, Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs.
- ❖ Committee's objective is to consider various issues relating to
 - Means of using data available with Goods and Services Tax Network (GSTN) and information utilities such as credit information companies to make applications for financing of MSMEs.
 - How Fintech could be leveraged in critical sectors of economy.
- ❖ It will also work with entities such as UIDAI to create and use unique enterprise identification number.

Ofloxacin import

- ❖ The Revenue Department in the Finance Ministry has imposed anti-dumping duty on import of 'Ofloxacin'.
- ❖ 'Ofloxacin' is a pharma product used in treatment of certain infections from China.
- ❖ The levy has been slapped for 3 years following the recommendations of the Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties (DGAD).
- ❖ The product has been exported to India from China below its normal value, resulting in dumping.
- ❖ Ofloxacin is in a class of antibiotics called fluoroquinolones. It works by killing bacteria that cause infection.
- ❖ The duty levy is aimed at ensuring fair trading practises and creating a level-playing field for domestic producers with regard to foreign producers and exporters.
- ❖ In India, anti-dumping duty to be levied is recommended by Ministry of Commerce (i.e. by DGAD), while Finance Ministry imposes it.

Double tax avoidance agreement

- ❖ India and Hong Kong signed a bilateral double taxation avoidance treaty to curb evasion and promote flow of investment.
- ❖ The Agreement for the Avoidance of Double Taxation and the Prevention of Fiscal Evasion will stimulate flow of investment, technology and personnel from India to Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and vice versa
- ❖ Hong Kong is former British colony and is special administrative region of China which enjoys a high degree of autonomy under which it has an independent taxation system.
- ❖ It is an important financial and trading partner of India.

Cost of Living Index 2018

- ❖ As per The Economist Intelligence Unit's report "Worldwide cost of living 2018; Which global cities have the highest cost of living", Bengaluru is the world's fifth cheapest city among 133 global cities.

BENGALURU, DELHI AMONG WORLD'S CHEAPEST CITIES



Bengaluru, Chennai and New Delhi are among the cheapest cities in the world, according to an Economist Intelligence Unit survey which names Singapore as the priciest city. The Worldwide Cost of Living 2018 survey says South Asian cities, particularly those in India and Pakistan, offer the best value for money.

The cheapest cities in the world

Rank	City (Country)
133	DAMASCUS (Syria)
132	CARACAS (Venezuela)
131	ALMATY (Kazakhstan)
130	LAGOS (Nigeria)
129	BENGALURU (India)
127	KARACHI (Pakistan)
127	ALGIERS (Algeria)
126	CHENNAI (India)
124	BUCHAREST (Romania)
124	NEW DELHI (India)

The most expensive cities in the world

Rank	City (Country)
1	SINGAPORE (Singapore)
2	PARIS (France)
2	ZURICH (Switzerland)
4	HONG KONG (Hong Kong)
5	OSLO (Norway)
6	GENEVA (Switzerland)
6	SEOUL (South Korea)
8	COPENHAGEN (Denmark)
9	TEL AVIV (Israel)
10	SYDNEY (Australia)

Source: Economist Intelligence Unit

- ❖ Chennai and New Delhi, at eighth and tenth places, respectively, are among the top ten cheapest cities to live in.
- ❖ War-torn city of Damascus in Syria was the first in the cheapest cities list followed by Caracas, the South American city in Venezuela.
- ❖ Singapore retained its title as the world's most expensive city for the fifth consecutive year. Singapore was ranked ahead of Paris placed second on the list, Zurich (3rd) and Hong Kong (4th).
- ❖ The Worldwide Cost of Living report is a biannual Economist Intelligence Unit survey that compares more than 400 individual prices across 160 products and services that prevails in various cities.
- ❖ This reports gives in status of the world cities by comparing various price aspects of food, drink, clothing, household supplies, home rents, transport, private schools, recreational costs.

World's first brass futures contracts

- ❖ The country's largest commodity exchange platform Multi Commodity Exchange of India (MCX) has launched futures trading in brass for the first time globally, which will facilitate brass stakeholders to hedge their price risk.
- ❖ It will provide its stakeholders with more organised and robust price discovery platform.

- ❖ MCX Brass futures is the first non-ferrous contract with compulsory delivery option.
- ❖ The price is quoted as per the ex-warehouse Jamnagar (delivery centre) inclusive of taxes and duties, excluding GST.

Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX)

- ❖ MCX was launched in November 2003 and operates within regulatory framework of Forward Contracts Regulation Act, 1952 (FCRA, 1952) under SEBI.
- ❖ MCX is country's first listed commodity futures exchange that facilitates online trading, and clearing and settlement of commodity futures transactions, thereby providing platform for risk management.
- ❖ Globally, MCX ranks no. 1 in silver, no. 2 in natural gas, no. 3 in crude oil and gold in futures trading.
- ❖ MCX offers futures trading in bullion, ferrous and non-ferrous metals, energy, and a number of agricultural commodities.

Yellow Army Savings Account

- ❖ Equitas Small Finance Bank has launched a new 'Yellow Army Savings Account' to increase its customer base through its association with the Chennai Super Kings (CSK), a franchise of the Indian Premium League (IPL).



- ❖ The yellow army savings account will offer an interest rate of six per cent per annum for balance below Rs.10 lakhs and 6.5 per cent per annum for balance above Rs.10 lakhs.

Equitas

- ❖ Equitas Small Finance Bank is a small finance bank founded in 2007 by Equitas as a microfinance lender
- ❖ The headquarters is in Chennai, India.

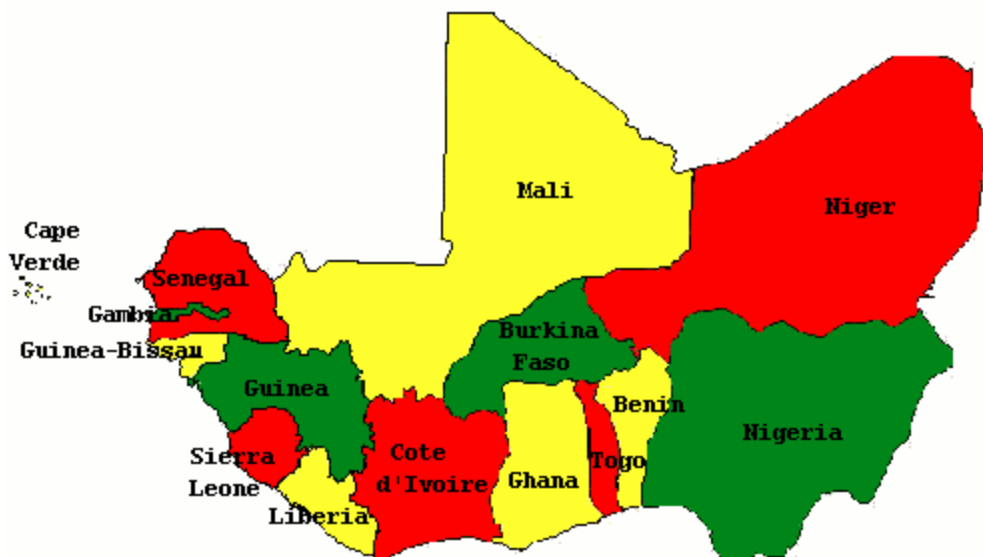
- ❖ Equitas Small Finance Bank is the first private sector bank from Tamil Nadu post-independence.
- ❖ With effect from 4 February 2017, Equitas became a scheduled bank. Scheduled Banks in India refer to those banks which have been included in the Second Schedule of Reserve Bank of India Act, 1934.

Loan facility

- ❖ The Export-Import Bank (Exim Bank) said it will provide a USD 500 million credit facility to ECOWAS Bank for Investment and Development (EBID) to fund various development projects in the western-south Africa.
- ❖ With the signing of this line of credit (LoC) agreement, Exim Bank till date has extended four LoCs to EBID, with the support of the government, taking the total value of LOCs to \$1,000 million.

Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS)

- ❖ The ECOWAS is regional group of 15 West African countries. It was founded in May 1975, with the signing of the Treaty of Lagos.
- ❖ Its mandate is to promote economic integration in all fields of activity of the constituting countries.
- ❖ Its 15-member countries are Benin, Cape Verde, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo.

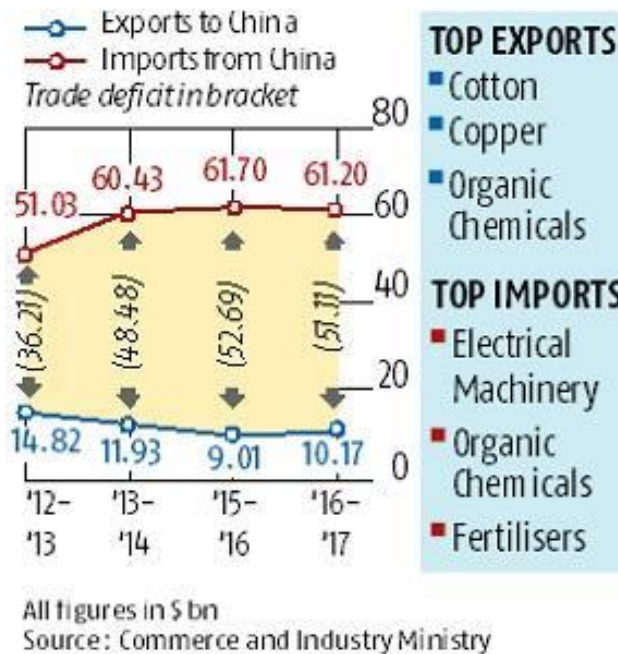


Trade Imbalance

- ❖ The eleventh session of the China-India joint-group on Economic Relations, Trade, Science & Technology was held recently in New Delhi.

- ❖ The session was co-chaired by the Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Suresh Prabhu and the Minister of Commerce of the People’s Republic of China, Mr. Zhong Shan.
- ❖ Both countries agreed to continue to take forward initiatives identified in 5 Year Development Programme for Economic and Trade Cooperation (DPETC) signed in September 2014.
- ❖ India has emerged as the seventh largest export destination for Chinese products, and the 24th largest exporter to China.
- ❖ India and China are the largest emerging economies of world with 35% of the world’s population and around 20% of the world’s GDP
- ❖ But the relative volume of bilateral trade is less than 1% of global trade.

STATE OF TRADE: CHINA



SEBI rules


- ❖ The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has tightened the corporate governance norms for listed companies by accepting most of the recommendations of the Uday Kotak Committee which is constituted for corporate governance.
- ❖ It has decided to reduce the maximum number of directorships to seven from 10 in a phased manner while expanding the eligibility criteria for directors.
- ❖ The SEBI has mandated top 500 companies by market capitalisation to separate the position of chairperson from that of managing director (MD) or chief executive officer (CEO) from April 01, 2020.

Raising Standards

Separate posts for chairperson and managing director	At least one woman independent director in board
Shareholder nod for royalty payment to related party exceeding 2% of consolidated turnover	
Disclosure of utilisation of funds from QIP/ preferential issue	Reduced maximum no. of listed co directorship to 8 from 10
Disclosure of auditor credentials, audit fee and reasons for resignation of auditors	

OTHER PROPOSALS APPROVED

Congestion charges on algo trading for a prescribed slab	Reduced additional expense to be charged by MFs to 5 bps from 20bps
Physical settlement for all stock derivatives in a phased manner	



Increased maximum investment amount in venture capital undertakings by an angel fund to ₹10 cr from ₹5 cr

- ❖ SEBI also suggested to split the roles of CEO, chairman and directors.
- ❖ The SEBI has reduced maximum number of directors in a listed firm to 8.
- ❖ The regulator has also enhanced the roles of the audit committee along with those of the nomination and remuneration committee and the risk management committee at companies.
- ❖ SEBI has amended the eligibility criteria for stocks to be included in the derivatives segment. last such amendment was done six years ago.
- ❖ This committee was constituted under kotak bank's chairman Uday Kotak for the improvement of institutional structure of the companies. It gave its recommendation on October.

Mutual Funds (MFs)

- ❖ For mutual funds (MFs), the regulator has reduced the cap for expenses charged for each scheme.
- ❖ The maximum limit has been reduced from 20 basis points of the daily net asset value of the schemes to 5 basis points,
- ❖ It would benefit the investors in the form of marginally higher net asset value (NAV) of the scheme.

KEY DECISIONS

Algo trading made more accessible

- Sharing of co-location services
- Free tick-by-tick data feed to result in lower costs

Derivatives trading rules tightened

- Income-based exposure for individual investors
- More due diligence, documentation for additional exposure

Most Kotak panel proposals okayed

- At least one woman independent director
- Segregation of CEO and chairperson's posts

Public consultation on

- Compliance framework for firms under the IBC
- New set of buyback regulations
- Simplifying the takeover code

Other decisions

- Extra charges on equity MFs cut by 15 basis points
- Stringent action against firms for not complying with listing rules
- Depositories allowed to distribute dividends
- Transfer of securities only in dematerialised form
- Easy regulations for angel funds

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Rustom 2

- ❖ India's Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has successfully flew its Rustom 2 at its Aeronautical Test Range at Challakere in Chitradurga district of Karnataka.
- ❖ Rustom 2 also known as TAPAS-BH-201.



- ❖ A medium-altitude long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle, Rustom 2 or TAPAS-BH-201 has been developed by India on the lines of the American Predator drones.
- ❖ It comes seven years after the first flight of Rustom-I took place on 2009 at the Taneja Aerospace Air Field near Hosur.
- ❖ Having the capability to fly for 24 hours at stretch, the combat aerial vehicle can conduct sustained surveillance and can carry weapons along with surveillance equipment.

SpaceX

- ❖ Space X has launched the Paz mission with two experimental satellites Tintin A (Microsat-2a) and Tintin B (Microsat-2b) from the Space Launch Complex 4E at California's Vandenberg Air Force Base.
- ❖ Space X has completed the launch of its mission using a recycled Falcon 9 rocket.
- ❖ These two satellites, if successful will pave the way for Star link, a constellation of satellites that would provide a cheap, high speed, global Internet connection.
- ❖ Star link will have 12,000 small satellites in two layers — low earth orbit (LEO) and very low earth orbit (VLEO).
- ❖ The LEO constellation will provide high-speed broadband services around the world; the VLEO constellation will enhance capacity.
- ❖ The UN Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development estimated in 2016 that 57% of the world's population was offline.



- ❖ Paz mission is mainly about the Spanish radar imaging satellite with applications such as border control, intelligence, military operations, environmental monitoring.
- ❖ Satellites in LEO constellation will operate in the frequency bands of Ku, Ka and V band.
- ❖ Satellites in VLEO constellation will operate in the frequency bands of V band.
- ❖ LEO located in the altitude of 1110-1325 km above the earth.
- ❖ VLEO located in the altitude of 335-346 km above the earth.

Integrated app for all government services

- ❖ The Telangana govt. has launched an m-Governance mobile application called 'T App Folio' the official digital application of the state.
- ❖ It will help citizens with one-point access to government services like Mee Seva services, RTA services, fee payments and bill payment services etc.
- ❖ Telangana has become the second state government in India after Karnataka to set up a mobile service delivery gateway in place for the provision of government to citizen (G2C) services.
- ❖ T App Folio has integrated T Wallet, my GHMC, RTA and Hawk Eye through a Single Sign-On feature using which users of T App Folio can access mobile apps using their T App Folio credentials.
- ❖ The platform is being launched in Telugu and English for the convenience of citizens
- ❖ Telangana state has been ranked number 1 in digital transactions based on the number of e-transactions per 1,000 populations for the period of June 2, 2014 to December 31, 2017 by the government of India's e-Taal website.

e-Commerce Portal for Fishers

- ❖ CMFRI has developed a multivendor e-commerce website and mobile app to help fish farmers and fishermen sell their produce and marine catch directly to the customers.
- ❖ The website, www.marinefishsales.com, and mobile app, marine fish sales, were developed under the National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA) project of the CMFRI as part of improving income of the coastal community.
- ❖ Fishermen and fish farmers who want to sell their catch and fish online may form Self-Help Groups (SHGs) and register with the platform.
- ❖ The CMFRI will monitor vendor profiles, order status and sales.

ATGM - Nag

- ❖ India successfully test-fired the DRDO developed Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) Nag in desert conditions.
- ❖ The ATGM NAG was tested at Pokhran's field firing range in Jaisalmer district against two tank targets at different ranges and timings.
- ❖ The ATMG Nag missile is one of five missile systems developed indigenously by DRDO under integrated guided missile development programme (IGMDP).
- ❖ The other four missiles developed under this programme include Agni, Akash, Trishul and Prithvi.

Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) Nag

- ❖ The Nag missile is third generation anti-tank guided missile which works on “fire and forget” principle.
- ❖ It has been equipped with highly advanced Imaging Infrared Radar (IRR) seeker along with integrated avionics. This technology is possessed by very few nations.
- ❖ Its helicopter launched version is known as Helicopter-Launched NAG (HELINA) that can be fired from Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopter (ALH) and HAL Rudra attack helicopter.

Thermo electric compound

- ❖ Researchers have developed silver copper telluride (AgCuTe), a novel compound that exhibits poor thermal conductivity in the 25 °C to 425 °C range but shows good electrical conductivity.
- ❖ It was developed by researchers from Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru.
- ❖ The new material having thermoelectric properties is made from silver, copper, and tellurium.
- ❖ The compound is used as a thermo-electric material for converting waste heat of chemical, thermal, or steel power plants into electricity.

Meri e-Pustak

- ❖ The Haryana State Council of Educational Research and Training has developed a new mobile application ‘Meri e-Pustak’.
- ❖ It has also started a test version of digi-LEP (learning enhancement programme) teacher training online course.
- ❖ As NCERT recognizes ‘Meri e-Pustak’ of SCERT, Haryana has become the first state to develop its in-house app by its departmental resources and NCERT support.

Udyam Sakhi Portal

- ❖ On the occasion of International Women's Day (March 8), the Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises has launched Udyam Sakhi Portal (www.udyamsakhi.org) for women entrepreneurs.
- ❖ The portal is a network for nurturing entrepreneurship and creating business models for low cost products and services in order to empower women and make them self-reliant and self-sufficient.

Women Entrepreneurship Platform

- ❖ NITI Aayog has launched Women Entrepreneurship Platform (WEP) on the occasion of International Women's day.
- ❖ WEP's theme song 'Naari Shakti' composed and sung by renowned singer Kailash Kher was also released.
- ❖ Three pillars on which WEP is built,
 - ✓ Ichha Shakti - Motivating aspiring entrepreneurs to start their enterprise.
 - ✓ Gyaan Shakti - Providing knowledge and ecosystem support to women entrepreneurs to help them foster entrepreneurship.
 - ✓ Karma Shakti - Providing hands-on support to entrepreneurs in setting-up and scaling up businesses.
- ❖ The Women Entrepreneurship Platform will provide unique services such as credit evaluation of women-led start-ups by CRISIL to the women entrepreneurs.

India's first cloned Assamese buffalo born

- ❖ The Central Institute for Research on Buffaloes (CIRB) has claimed that a cloned Assamese buffalo male calf was born for the first time in India.
- ❖ A team of researchers used unique methods and produced the clone calf 'Sach-Gaurav' through a normal delivery. The CIRB cloning team was led by PS Yadav.
- ❖ It was born to Murrah buffalo, at Hi Tech Sach Dairy Farm, and making it first buffalo calf to be born in field.
- ❖ This is second cloned male buffalo produced by ICAR-CIRB after Hisar-Gaurav, born in December 2015.
- ❖ The genotype of the calf was confirmed through microsatellite analysis for parentage verification and chromosome analysis.



BIRAC

- ❖ The Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) celebrated its 6th Foundation Day on 20th March, 2018.
- ❖ The Theme for the year 2018 is ‘Sustaining Innovation – A Market Driven Pathway’.
- ❖ BIRAC is not-for-profit Public-sector Enterprise (PSE) set up by Department of Bio-Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology to empower emerging biotech industry to undertake strategic research and innovation. It is basically industry academia interface.
- ❖ The event saw the announcement of the preliminary winners of the SoCH (Solutions for Community Health) awards.
- ❖ SoCH (Solutions for Community Health) award is an innovation challenge award which was launched on the MyGov portal in September 2017.

BrahMos

- ❖ Supersonic cruise missile BrahMos was successfully flight-tested for the first time with indigenously developed seeker at Pokhran test range, Rajasthan.
- ❖ So far, seeker, a critical technology in missiles was imported from Russia.
- ❖ During the test missile with India-made seeker flew in its designated trajectory and target with pin-point accuracy.
- ❖ The indigenous seeker was developed by Research Centre Imarat (RCI), Hyderabad, in collaboration with other DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) labs.
- ❖ The seeker technology, which determines the accuracy of a missile, is a closely guarded secret.
- ❖ BrahMos is a joint collaboration between India and Russia and the missile is capable of being launched from land, sea, sub-sea and air against surface and sea-based targets.

- ❖ The Army and Navy have already inducted the missile, while the air-launched version was test-fired for the first time in 2017 from a modified Su-30MKI aircraft.

‘Chandrayaan-2’

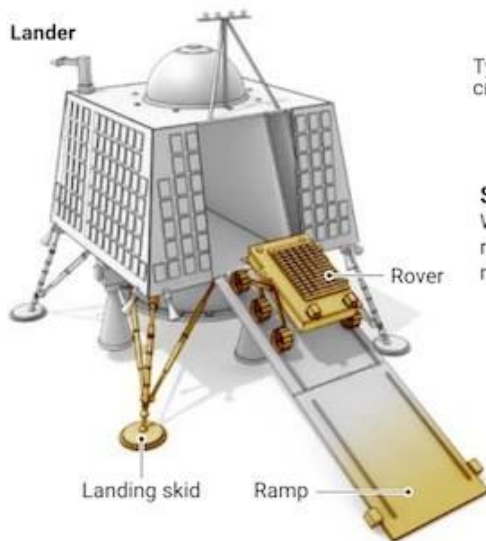
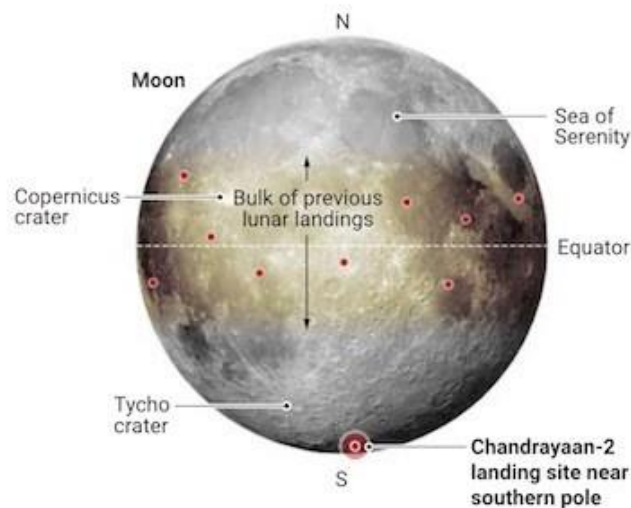
- ❖ The launch of India’s second lunar mission ‘Chandrayaan-2’ has been postponed to October, 2018 as the experts have suggested some tests.

About Chandrayaan-2

- ❖ The 800-crore INR Chandrayaan-2 mission is a totally indigenous mission
- ❖ With Chandrayaan-2 ISRO is experimenting with an orbiter, a rover and a lander for the first time.

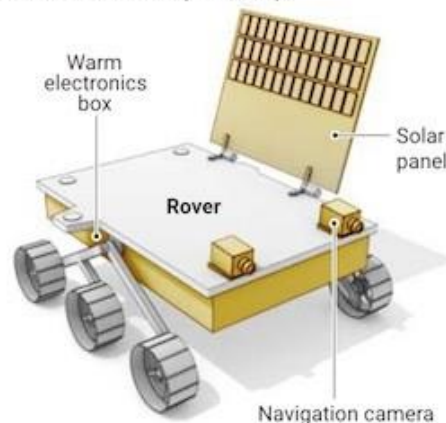
Pole position

If all goes to plan, India’s Chandrayaan-2 mission this summer will attempt a soft landing on an ancient high plain of the moon, some 600 kilometers from the south pole. It would be the first landing so far from the equator.



Seeking ground truth

With spectrometers for assaying elements in the regolith, the briefcase-size rover hopes to make the most of the 14-Earth-day lunar day.

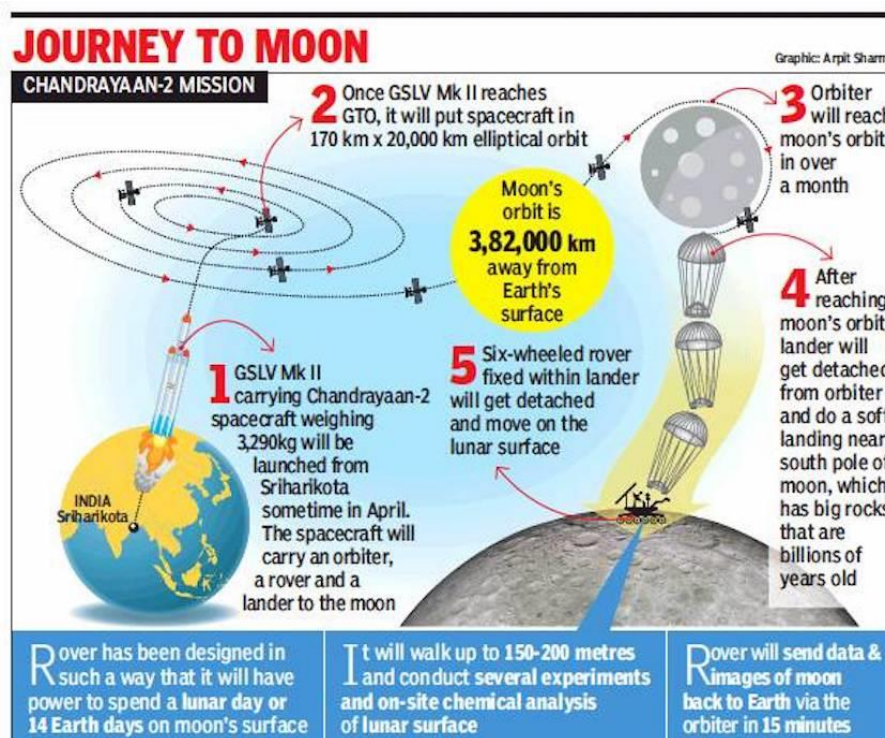


Exploring lunar nova

The lander is equipped with a seismometer to listen for moonquakes and a Langmuir probe that will measure fluctuations in the wispy plasma enveloping the lunar surface.

- ❖ Once the GSLV-F10 put the spacecraft in the 170 km x 20,000 km elliptical orbit, the orbiter would be manoeuvred towards the 100-km lunar orbit by firing thrusters and then the lander housing the rover will separate from the orbiter.

- ❖ After a controlled descent, the lander will soft-land near the south pole of the lunar surface and deploy the rover.
- ❖ Soft-landing on the lunar surface is the most challenging part of the mission.
- ❖ Till now, only the US, Russia and China have been able to soft-land spacecraft on the lunar surface.
- ❖ During the 14 Earth days, the six-wheeled rover will have the power to move around 100-200 metre.
- ❖ The instruments, including a high-intensity camera, on the rover will observe the lunar surface and take images of the moon.



- ❖ It will send back data to the Earth via the orbiter within 15 minutes that will be useful for analysis of the lunar soil.
- ❖ Payloads of the 3,290kg Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft will collect scientific information on lunar topography, mineralogy, elemental abundance, lunar exosphere and signatures of hydroxyl and water-ice.

Smart India Hackathon 2018

- ❖ All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) under the aegis of Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD) is organizing Smart India Hackathon 2018.
- ❖ Smart India Hackathon 2018 is a non-stop digital product development competition, where problems are posed to technology students for innovative solutions.

- ❖ It will harness creativity & expertise of students and sparks institute-level hackathons.
- ❖ It builds funnel for 'Start up India' campaign and crowdsources solutions for improving governance and quality of life.
- ❖ It also provides opportunity to citizens to provide innovative solutions to India's daunting problems.
- ❖ Smart India Hackathon 2018 would be the second massive scale hackathon initiative in India following Smart India Hackathon 2017.

NASA

- ❖ NASA has partnered with private space launching company SpaceX to launch Transiting Exoplanet Survey Satellite (TESS) to search for exoplanets using the transit method.
- ❖ The mission will be launched in April 2018 on board of Space X's Falcon 9 rocket from the Cape Canaveral Air Force Station.
- ❖ It is equipped with four wide-angle telescopes.
- ❖ The primary mission objective of TESS is to survey brightest stars near Earth.
- ❖ This will reveal whether planets are rocky (like Earth), gas (like Jupiter) or something even more unusual.
- ❖ TESS will occupy a never-before-used orbit high above Earth.

New Planet K2-229b

- ❖ Scientists using Kepler 2 telescope have discovered hot, metallic, Earth-sized planet named K2-229b orbiting dwarf star located 260 million light years away.
- ❖ They had employed Doppler spectroscopy technique also known as 'wobble method' to discover and characterise this faraway planet.
- ❖ The planet is almost 20 per cent larger than Earth but has a mass which is over two-and-a-half times greater. It reaches a day side temperature of over 2000 degrees Celsius.
- ❖ K2-229b orbits this star every fourteen hours. It has same high density that of Mercury-like planets.

ENVIRONMENT

Newton-Bhabha Fund

- ❖ The joint team of India and United Kingdom has won the Newton-Bhabha Fund for the project called "Groundwater Arsenic Research in Ganga River Basin.
- ❖ The project is jointly undertaken by India's Department of Science and Technology along with the Natural Environment Research Council of UK.
- ❖ Main aim of the research is finding solutions to water challenges faced in pervasively arsenic-affected Ganga River Basin.
- ❖ The project to be conducted from three sites - Bijnor and Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh and Nadia in West Bengal.
- ❖ The project is aimed to assess problem of arsenic poisoning and to understand aggravation such situation in next 25 to 30 years and its influence on groundwater management practices and suggest water remedial technologies accordingly.
- ❖ It is a fund provided by British Council.
- ❖ The scheme is part of the UK's £375 million Newton Fund to support science and innovation partnerships between the UK and emerging powers.

New species of water strider

- ❖ Scientists from the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) have discovered a new species of water strider from Nagaland.
- ❖ The species, named *Ptilomeranagalanda jehamalar* and *Chandra*, was found in the river Intanki, Peren district.
- ❖ This newly discovered species belongs to *Ptilomeraagriodes* genus. It is only found in rocky, fast flowing streams and rivers that are not exposed to lot of sunlight.
- ❖ The presence of black stripes on the dorsal side differentiates this species from other known species of the subgenus *Ptilomera*.
- ❖ So far, only five species of water striders under the subgenus *Ptilomera* were known in India. These includes,
 - *Ptilomeraagriodes* - peninsular India,
 - *Ptilomeraassamensis* -north eastern India,
 - *Ptilomeralaticaudata* - northern and north eastern India,
 - *Ptilomeraoccidentalis* - Uttarakhand and
 - *Ptilomeratigrina* -Andaman Islands.
- ❖ With discovery of *Ptilomeranagalanda*, the number of species of water striders belonging to subgenus *Ptilomera* has increased to six in India.

- ❖ Water striders are a group of insects adapted to life on the surface of water, using surface tension to their advantage. Their presence serves as indicator water of water quality
- ❖ Other than being a good indicator of water quality, water striders also play an important role in the food chain by feeding on mosquito larvae.

RIMES - Odisha

- ❖ The Odisha government is set to collaborate with the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES) for strengthening its early warning services and enhancing preparedness for management of disasters in the State.
- ❖ The Odisha State Disaster Mitigation Authority (OSDMA) and RIMES would forge a partnership in the field of drought monitoring and early warning for different natural disasters.
- ❖ RIMES is already working with the Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Authority.

RIMES

- ❖ The RIMES is an intergovernmental body registered under United Nations.
- ❖ India is chairman of the body. It was established in 2009 and was registered with UN in July 2009.
- ❖ It is managed by 45 collaborating countries in Asia Pacific and Africa Region.
- ❖ It operates from its regional early warning centre located at campus of Asian Institute of Technology in Pathumthani, Thailand.

Global carbon emissions

- ❖ According to International Energy Agency (IEA), the global energy-related carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions rose to historic high of 32.5 giga tonnes in 2017.
- ❖ This large amount of global energy-related carbon emissions comes after it was flat for three years. It was due to higher energy demand and slowing of energy efficiency improvements.
- ❖ According to preliminary estimates from the IEA Global energy demand rose by 2.1 percent last year to 14,050 million tonnes of oil equivalent, more than twice the previous year's rate, boosted by strong economic growth.

International Energy Agency (IEA)

- ❖ IEA is an inter-governmental organization established in 1974 as per framework of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

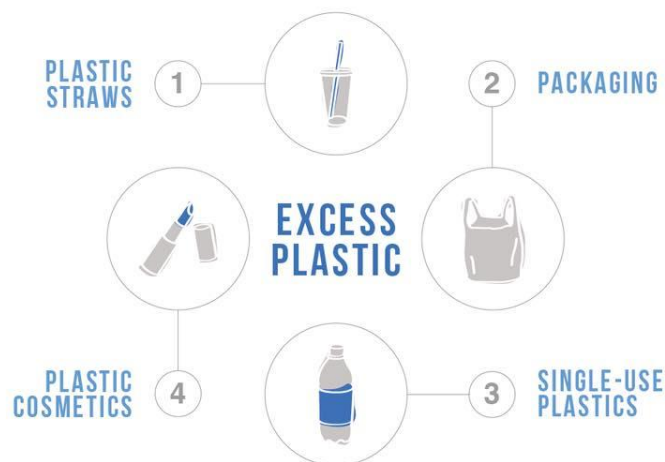
- ❖ Presently it has 30 member countries including India. It is headquartered in Paris, France.
- ❖ It was established in the wake of the 1973 oil crisis after the OPEC cartel had shocked the world with a steep increase in oil prices.
- ❖ It acts as energy policy advisor to 29 member countries and also non-member countries like China and Russia.
- ❖ Its prime focus is on the “3Es” of effectual energy policy: energy security, economic development and environmental protection.

Earth Hour

- ❖ The twelfth Earth Hour was observed on March 24 from 8:30PM to 9:30 PM
- ❖ Earth hour aims to raise awareness about the importance of protecting the environment and wildlife.



GIVE UP



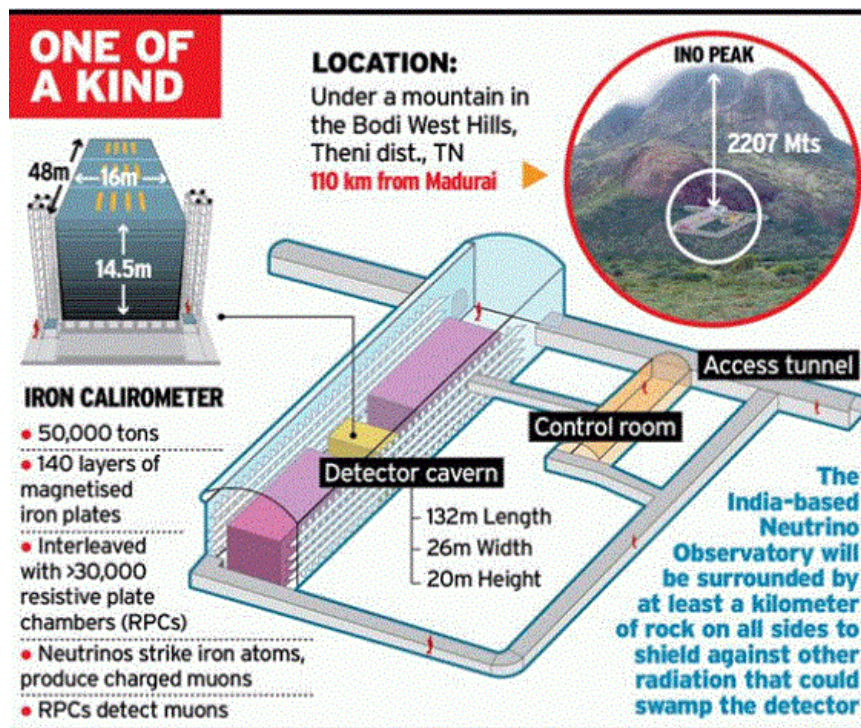
TO GIVE BACK

- ❖ Earth Hour is the world's largest grassroots movement for the environment where citizens around the world unite to take a stand against climate change by turning off non-essential lights for one hour.
- ❖ It is a global initiative of the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), with a record participation of 178 countries and territories around the world.

- ❖ On the occasion of Earth Hour, 2018, WWF-India is launched the "Give Up to Give Back" initiative to inspire organisations, institutions and individuals to make the choice to curb some habits, practices and lifestyles that burden our lives and the environment.
- ❖ The campaign includes taking steps like giving up single-use plastics, giving up fossil fuels, giving up lonely car rides for your employees, give up e-waste among others.

Neutrino Observatory

- ❖ The Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF's) has given environmental clearance to India-based Neutrino Observatory (INO) project to be set up in Bodi West hills in Tamil Nadu.



- ❖ The approval was given by MoEF's Expert Appraisal Committee after taking up INO project issue as special case.
- ❖ The project will now be sent for an approval from Tamil Nadu government and National Board of Wildlife (NBWL), as Mathikettan Shola National Park in Kerala's Idukki district is about 4.9km from the proposed site.
- ❖ Neutrinos are sub-atomic particles produced by the decay of the radioactive elements and are elementary particles that lack an electric charge
- ❖ Neutrinos are key to understanding the evolution of the universe and energy production in the sun and other stars.
- ❖ It is jointly supported by Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) and Department of Science & Technology (DST), with DAE acting as the nodal agency.

- ❖ The project aims at building a world-class underground laboratory with a rock cover of approximately 1200 meter.
- ❖ Its mandate is to conduct basic research on elementary particle called neutrino.
- ❖ The observatory will be located underground in order to provide adequate shielding to the neutrino detector from cosmic background radiation.

National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) 2017-18

- ❖ According to National Annual Rural Sanitation Survey (NARSS) 2017-18, over 93% households in villages who have access to toilets are using them and about 77% homes in rural areas have got toilets.
- ❖ The survey was conducted by Independent Verification Agency (IVA) under World Bank support project to Swachh Bharat Mission Gramin (SBM-G).



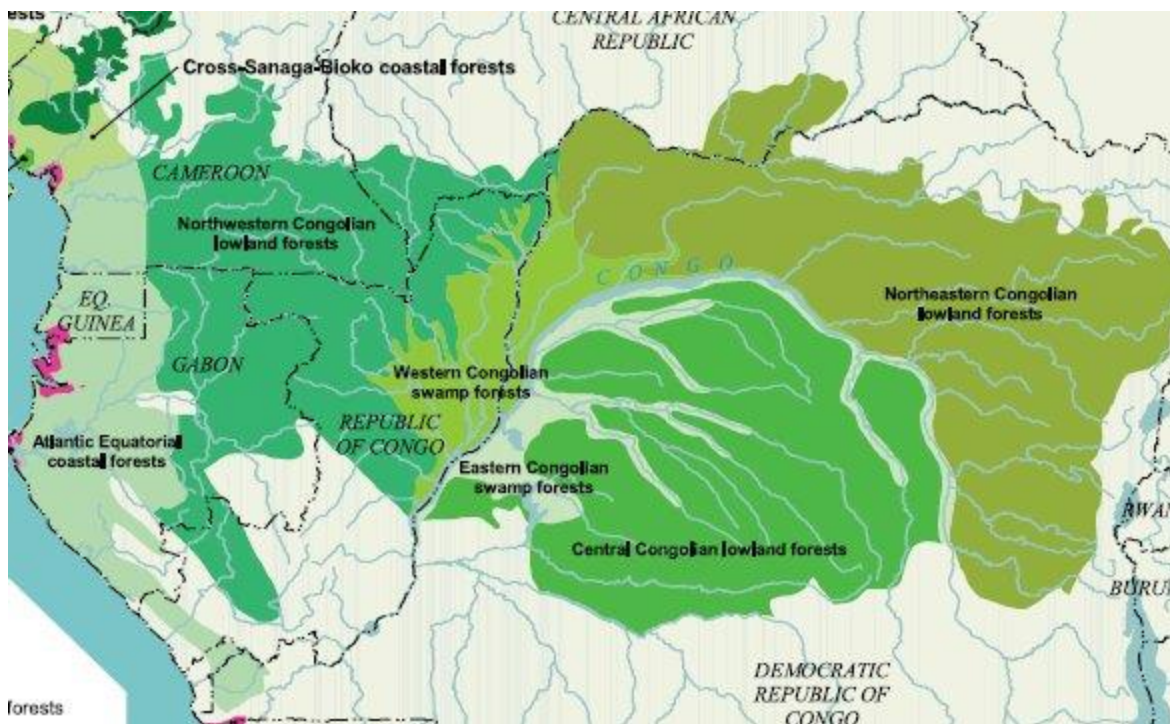
- ❖ The survey was conducted between mid-November 2017 and mid-March 2018 and covered 92,040 households in 6,136 villages across India.
- ❖ It used the PPS (Probability Proportion to Size) sampling methodology and its data was collected using Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) platform.

Brazzaville Declaration

- ❖ The Brazzaville declaration was signed jointly by Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo and Indonesia to promote better management and conservation of the world's largest tropical Peatlands-Cuvette Centrale region in Congo Basin.
- ❖ The declaration was signed to conserve the region from unregulated land use and prevent its drainage and degradation.
- ❖ It has been signed on the side-lines of Third Partners Meeting of Global Peatlands Initiative held in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.



- ❖ They are globally important carbon store. The unregulated exploitation of peatlands can potentially be detrimental to environment and to climate, as it could release carbon emissions that have been locked in for millennia.



- ❖ Peatlands are wetlands that contain mixture of decomposed organic material, partially submerged in layer of water, lacking oxygen.
- ❖ Their high carbon content makes them uniquely vulnerable to incineration if they are drained.
- ❖ The Cuvette Centrale region in Congo Basin is world's largest natural tropical peatlands. It stores three years equivalent of global greenhouse gas emissions.

STATE

Aadi Mahotsava

- ❖ Assam has organised a tribal festival called 'Aadi Mahotsava' at Gandhi Mandir Indoor stadium field in Guwahati to celebrate the ethnic tribal culture of the country.
- ❖ The 10-day festival is being conducted by the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) in collaboration with the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in an attempt to celebrate the rare art and culture of the tribal communities.
- ❖ It was established in August 1987 by the then Ministry of Welfare, Government of India, under the Multi State Cooperative Societies Act 1984 (which has now been replaced by the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act, 2002).

Youth Festival 2018

- ❖ The 7th edition of the Youth Festival has started with theme “Let Love Live” at Central Park in New Delhi on February 22, 2018.
- ❖ The 6-day event is organised by Sahitya Kala Parishad and the Department of Art, Culture and Languages, Delhi Government.
- ❖ The main purpose of this fest is to promote young performers.
- ❖ This year’s festival is focused on “celebration of the freedom to love” and will host performances that drive home this message among the youngsters of Delhi.

Health-cum-life insurance scheme for farmers

- ❖ The Chief Minister of Telangana, K Chandrasekhar Rao has announced a health-cum-life insurance scheme worth 5 lakh Rupee for the farmers in the state at the regional conference of Farmers’ Coordination Committees in Karimnagar
- ❖ The Farmers’ Coordination Committees would have to ensure that each and every farmer in the village gets the benefits of the scheme.
- ❖ The entire premium of the health-cum-life insurance scheme of farmers will be fully borne by the government and the coverage will be made available in case of hospitalisation.

Financial Year 17 - Bihar

- ❖ Bihar clocked a growth rate of 10.3% in 2016-17 as against 7.5% in the corresponding fiscal a year ago, according to the latest Economic Survey tabled in the state Assembly.
- ❖ According to the 12th Economic Survey of Bihar, its growth rate is higher than that of the national average of 7.0 per cent.
- ❖ The state has consistently been revenue surplus, which increased from Rs 5,101 crore in 2012-13 to Rs 10,819 crore in 2016-17.

Khushi Scheme - Odisha

- ❖ The Odisha government has launched a scheme 'Khushi' to provide free sanitary pads to 17 lakh girl students across the state.
- ❖ The scheme will be implemented by the health and family welfare department of the state for girl students from Class 6 to 12 in all the govt. and govt-aided schools in the state.
- ❖ Earlier, the state government implemented various schemes exclusively for the empowerment of women.
 - ✓ Mission Shakti-for economic empowerment.
 - ✓ MAMATA Scheme- a maternity benefit scheme.

Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas programme

- ❖ Odisha Government has launched 'Ama Gaon, Ama Vikas' (Our Village, our development) programme to reach out to people in rural areas and involve themselves in developmental activities.
- ❖ Under this programme, people can directly send their grievances to Chief Minister's Office (CMO) at Secretariat in Bhubaneswar through Wi-Fi enabled latest technology video wall vans.

India's first helicopter taxi

- ❖ India's first helicopter taxi service was launched in Bengaluru to fly passengers from Kempe Gowda International Airport to Electronic City.
- ❖ The helicopter taxi service was launched by Kochi-based Thumbay Aviation Private Limited and it has also developed its own app named 'Heli Taxi' where people can book their flights.

Shigmotsav 2018

- ❖ Shigmotsav has been organized enthusiastically in Goa. Shigmotsav or Shigmo is one of the several cultural festivals of the coastal state and is celebrated through colours, costumes, music, dance and parades.
- ❖ Shigmo parades offer glimpses of Goan life depicted through folk dance and music performances by locals.

Healthcare Scheme - Karnataka

- ❖ Karnataka Chief Minister unveiled a healthcare scheme named 'Arogya Karnataka' (Healthy Karnataka) aimed at benefitting about 1.43 crore households in the state.
- ❖ It will provide quality primary, secondary and tertiary treatment to both below-poverty-line (BPL) and above-poverty-line (APL) families in the state.
- ❖ Through the scheme, all the BPL households will get free treatment at government hospitals while for APL households, the state will bear about 30% of the treatment cost.

International Yoga Festival 2018

- ❖ Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat on March 1 inaugurated the week-long 29th annual, world-famous International Yoga Festival (IYF) in Rishikesh's Parmarth Niketan.
- ❖ International Yoga Festival was started in the year 1999 in Rishikesh, Parmarth Niketan Ashram.
- ❖ Since its inception yoga festival is being celebrated every year.
- ❖ The 2010 edition considered as a most successful event as it witnessed a maximum number of participants.

Pink Electricity Zone

- ❖ On International Women's Day (march 8), Madhya Pradesh West Power Distribution Company (MPWPDC) started a "Pink Electricity Zone' managed by women staffers.
- ❖ It is India's first pink electricity zone
- ❖ Assistant engineer, junior engineer, line supervisor, lineman, metre readers, accountant, computer operators of the zone are all women.
- ❖ The Pink Electricity Zone comprises 25 women staffers who would look after the energy maintenance work of 13,000 power connections.

WE Hub

- ❖ The Telangana government has launched Women Entrepreneurs Hub (WE Hub) to encourage women entrepreneurs on International Women's Day celebrations.
- ❖ WE-Hub is India's first state-led incubator exclusively for women entrepreneurs.
- ❖ It would provide access to capital, mentorship and enabling environment to women entrepreneurs to start a business.
- ❖ Six MoUs were signed at the WE-Hub launch event. The six MoUs will help to promote women entrepreneurship through co-incubation programs, workshops and social innovation programs.

Floating Lab - Loktak Lake

- ❖ The Institute of Bio resources and Sustainable Laboratory (IBSD), Imphal has set up a floating laboratory in northeast India's largest freshwater lake, Loktak to constantly monitor its water quality and eventually improve it.
- ❖ A study will be carried out to convert the water plants into organic fertilizer along with studying the quality of life of the lake dwellers, and providing recommends for improving their life.
- ❖ This venture will be helpful in conservation and sustainable development of the lake thereby improving the life of the lake dwellers drastically.



MGNREGA ranking

- ❖ West Bengal has become the best performing State both in terms of allotting jobs and utilising funds under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).
- ❖ Tamil Nadu has occupied the second rank.

Top performers		
State	Work days (Cr.)	Fund spent (Cr.)
West Bengal	28.21	7,335.31
Tamil Nadu	22.17	5,981.75
Andhra Pradesh	18.16	5,054.17

Source: Manas Ranjan Bhunia

- ❖ Goa is ranked at the bottom of the list.

MSME International Trade Fair 2018

- ❖ The Odisha MSME International Trade Fair-2018 was held from March 5 to 10 on the IDCO Exhibition Ground, Bhubaneswar.
- ❖ The 5th edition of the six-day MSME trade fair organised by the MSME dept. of the Odisha government with focus on the promotion of food processing sector was inaugurated by CM Shri Naveen Patnaik.
- ❖ 350 stalls were set up in this trade fair and Theme Pavilion is devoted for the food processing sector.

Swachh Shakti 2018

- ❖ The Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation in association with Uttar Pradesh Government had organized Swachh Shakti 2018, a Women's Convention on occasion of International Women's Day (March 8) in Lucknow.
- ❖ This year, Uttar Pradesh had hosted Swachh Shakti 2018.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh, largest state in country (in terms of population) with massive rural populace.

Silver Jubilee of Losar festival

- ❖ The Buddhist Community of Itanagar celebrated the silver jubilee of the Losar Festival at the Nyokum Lapang Ground in Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The three-day festival, organized by the Itanagar Buddhist Cultural Society (IBCS) was celebrated from March 2 to March 4.

- ❖ The Losar festival which is celebrated as the New Year by the Buddhist community has entered into 2145 Earth Dog year as per the Buddhist calendar.

Saubhagya Yojana - Uttarakhand

- ❖ Union Minister of State for Energy R.K. Singh along with CM Trivendra Singh Rawat launched Saubhagya Yojana at Pavilion Ground in Dehradun.
- ❖ Under the scheme more than 2 lakhs 50 thousand families will be provided electricity connection in the state.
- ❖ The Union Government has set the target to provide electricity for all by 2019.

Saubhagya Yojana

- ❖ “Pradhan Mantri Sahaj Bijli Har Ghar Yojana” (Saubhagya) aims to provide last mile electricity connectivity to all rural and urban households.
- ❖ It will provide subsidy on equipment like transformers, meters and wires.
- ❖ The government has set the target of providing 24X7 power for all by 2019.

First cyber police station

- ❖ Haryana’s first cyber police station, equipped with a digital forensic laboratory, was inaugurated in Gurugram.
- ❖ A separate magistrate will also be appointed for the station. It will act as a centralised monitoring station for all kinds of online and tech-related crimes.
- ❖ The police station will have trained manpower and modern equipment to deal with crimes in the cyber world.

Women Patrolling Squad

- ❖ The South District Police in Delhi launched an 'all women patrolling squad' on March 8, 2018, on the occasion of International Women’s Day.
- ❖ The squad named ‘Nightingale’ has been formed to ensure safety and security of women at public places.
- ❖ The squad comprises 16 women personnel, aged between 20-35 years, in the ranks of sub-inspectors and constables who have been trained in unarmed combat and driving.

Criminal Laws (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill, 2018

- ❖ The Rajasthan assembly passed a bill (Criminal Laws (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill) approving death penalty to those convicted of raping or gang-raping a girl up to 12 years of age.
- ❖ With this, Rajasthan has become the second state in the country after Madhya Pradesh to award death penalty and lifetime imprisonment to child rapists.
- ❖ The Criminal Laws (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill, 2018 adds sections 376-AA and 376-DD to the Indian Penal Code, 1860
- ❖ Earlier in 2017, Madhya Pradesh assembly had passed 'The Penal Law (Madhya Pradesh Amendment) Bill-2017', which awarded death to similar convicts.

Ban on use of plastic - Maharashtra

- ❖ Maharashtra Government has banned the use of plastic in time-bound manner, citing environmental and public health concerns.
- ❖ The ban exempts plastic used to cover medicines, forest and horticulture products, solid waste, tree saplings and use of plastic in Special Economic Zones (SEZ) for export purposes.
- ❖ Similarly, plastic covers and wrappers used for manufactured and processed products would also be exempted.
- ❖ The decision will be enforced across rural and urban Maharashtra.

'Religious Minority' status for Lingayat

- ❖ The state cabinet of Karnataka has decided to recognise Lingayat as a 'religious minority' and include the Veerashaivas who follow Basavanna as a group within the community, approving recommendations of the HN Nagamohan Das Committee.
- ❖ Now the proposal will be sent to the Union Government for the final approval.

Lingayat - Veerashaivas

- ❖ Lingayat, a distinct Shaivite religious tradition, are followers of the 12th-century poet-philosopher-social reformer Basaveshwara who rebelled against established Hindu tradition by defying the caste system and Vedic rituals.
- ❖ The people of the community are strict monotheists, they worship only one God, namely, Linga (Shiva) in the form of ishtalinga.
- ❖ They consider themselves different from Veerashaivas, also a Shaivite religious tradition, who adhere to the Vedas and support the caste system.

- ❖ While the Veerashaivas think the community was an ancient religion established by Shiva and Basavanna was one of its saints.
- ❖ Though the community (Lingayat) constitutes 17% of the total population in Karnataka, they are dominant in close to 100 of the 224 assembly seats, mostly in North Karnataka.
- ❖ There have been nine chief ministers from the community.



Historical Background

- ❖ Though the movement for a separate religious tag for the Lingayat was started as far back as 1942, it was resurrected in 2017 by Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah
- ❖ In December 2017, a seven-member expert committee - HN Nagamohan Das Committee - was formed by the Karnataka government to study five separate demands, three of which were for a separate minority religion status for Lingayat.
- ❖ While one representation demanded minority status for both Veerashaiva and Lingayat considering them the same, another demanded it only for the Lingayat as it considers Veershaivas to be Hindus.
- ❖ The committee submitted its report on March 2, 2018 recommending 'Religious Minority' status for the Lingayat community.
- ❖ It concluded that there is enough evidence to differentiate Lingayat religion from Hindu religion and also added that Veerashaivas - another sect looking

to get religious minority status, too can be part of the larger umbrella of 'Lingayat religion'.



Naipunya Ratham – Andhra Pradesh

- ❖ The Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Chandrababu Naidu flagged off Naipunya Ratham, a multi-utility vehicle which aims to bring technology and innovation to the remote corners of the state.
- ❖ The government will roll out 12 more Naipunya Rathams by May month.
- ❖ The first phase of the launch would cover 13 districts and 28 smart villages in collaboration with Hewlett Packard, Entrepreneurship Development Institute of India and Guide Foundation for Development.



- ❖ The Naipunya Rathams are part of the 'Smart Village Smart Ward Programme' that will facilitate and look to improve digital literacy, digital skills.
- ❖ Schoolchildren can avail technical and educational information, youth can use it for their skill development purposes and the vehicle also possesses excellent system for entertainment purposes as well.

Krem Puri

- ❖ The world's longest sandstone cave named Krem Puri was recently discovered in Meghalaya.
- ❖ 'Krem' means 'cave' in Khasi language.
- ❖ The cave system which is 24,583 metres long was discovered in near Laitsohum village, located in the Mawsynram area in Meghalaya's East Khasi Hills district.
- ❖ It has a length of 24.5 km, almost three times the height of Mount Everest, and contains some dinosaur fossils from 66-76 million years ago
- ❖ The previous world record holder in the longest sandstone cave category was Venezuela's Cueva Del Saman in Edo Zulia. This is an 18,200-metre (18.2km) long quartzite sandstone cave.
- ❖ The dinosaur fossils in the longest sandstone cave in the world include those of the Mosasaurus.
- ❖ It was a carnivorous aquatic lizard that resided on Earth around 66-70 million years ago.
- ❖ Meghalaya is also home to India's longest cave in the general category - the Krem Liat Prah-Umim-Labit limestone cave system located in Jaintia Hills. It measures over 31 km in length.

Karnataka Assembly Election

- ❖ The Election Commission of India (ECI) declared that Elections to the Karnataka Assembly will be conducted on May 12 in a single phase to elect 224 legislators and the results will be declared on May 15.
- ❖ The Model Code of Conduct, which is a code of behaviour for candidates, parties and the incumbent government on campaign trail, came into immediate effect.
- ❖ It will be applicable on the state government and the Union government.
- ❖ The Gazette notification for the election will be issued on April 17.
- ❖ The last date for filing of nominations is April 24 and the last date of withdrawal of candidature is April 27. The entire election process will be completed on May 18.

- ❖ The EC wants “accessible polls” in Karnataka. To do so, VVPAT (Voter Verifiable Paper Audit Trail System) will be provided at all polling stations and photograph of all the candidates will also be put up on the EVMs.
- ❖ The Commission had issued orders for increasing the height of standardised voting compartments to 30 inches for ensuring secrecy of voting.
- ❖ For the first time All-women teams will manage 450 of the total 56,696 polling booths in the Karnataka Assembly polls.
- ❖ As per the revised ceilings, the maximum limit of election expenses for the Assembly constituencies is 28 lakh rupees per a candidate in the State.

AAI – Assam

- ❖ The Airport Authority of India (AAI) has signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Assam government for sustainable development of human settlements at villages in Kamrup district.
- ❖ As per terms of MoU, AAI will provide financial assistance of Rs.4.58 crore for Kamrup district under its Corporate Social Responsibilities (CSR) initiative.
- ❖ The estimates of the financial assistance have been prepared by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to improve resilience of communities around Guwahati Airport.
- ❖ AAI is statutory body under aegis of Ministry of Civil Aviation. It was founded in April 1995 and is headquartered in New Delhi.

Madhavpur Mela in Gujarat

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Culture for the first time had organised Madhavpur Mela in Madhavpur Ghed in Porbandar District of Gujarat under the banner of Ek Bharat Shrestha Bharat.
- ❖ Its purpose is to bring various parts of country especially the North-East, close to each other culturally.
- ❖ Madhavpur Mela of Gujarat shares its connect to Mishmi Tribe of Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ Madhavpur Mela is celebrated by cultural fair held every year. And it is usually commencing on Ram Navami.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

Death of former SC Judge Rathinavel Pandian

- ❖ Former Supreme Court Judge Justice S. Rathinavel Pandian passed away at Chennai.
- ❖ He was a Judge of the Supreme Court of India from 1988 to 1994.
- ❖ After retirement as judge of the apex court, he was appointed chairperson of the National Commission for Backward Classes from 2006 to 2009
- ❖ In August 1971, Pandian was appointed State Public Prosecutor in the High Court of Madras, a post he held until he was elevated as judge in 1974.
- ❖ He served as Acting Chief Justice of the Madras High Court twice in 1988.



- ❖ He authored many significant Judgments including State of Haryana and Ors vs Ch. Bhajan Lal and SR Bommai Vs Union of India and Supreme Court Advocates-On-Record Association and another
- ❖ Recognising his meritorious contribution in the field of law and human rights, Pandian was presented the Justice VR Krishna Iyer Award in 2016.
- ❖ In the apex court, he was part of a Bench that decided the famous Indra Sawhney Case, in which the constitutionality of reservations to Backward Classes was upheld in 1992.
- ❖ After his retirement in 1994, Justice Pandian headed the fifth Central Pay Commission

Laureus Awards 2018

- ❖ Twenty-time tennis grand slam champion Roger Federer has won the 2018 Laureus World Sportsman of the Year and Comeback of the Year awards.

- ❖ Swiss tennis player Roger Federer holds the record for the most awards with six.



- ❖ Serena Williams took the World Sportswoman of the Year award after winning her 23rd grand slam in 2017.
- ❖ Formula 1 constructors' champions Mercedes picked up the Team of the Year accolade, and wheelchair athlete Marcel Hug won Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability.
- ❖ Breakthrough of the Year - Sergio Garcia (golfer)
- ❖ Laureus Academy Exceptional Achievement award - Francesco Totti.
- ❖ Brazilian football club Chapecoense were given the Best Sporting Moment of the Year for their response in adversity following a plane crash in 2016 in which they lost the majority of their team.
- ❖ The Laureus World Sports Awards, established in 1999, is an annual award ceremony honouring individuals and teams from the world of sports along with sporting achievements throughout the year.
- ❖ The name "Laureus" is derived from the Greek word for laurel, considered a traditional symbol of victory in athletics.

Political and Public Life Awards

- ❖ Actor-politician Shatrughan Sinha has been honoured with a lifetime achievement award for his contribution to the fields of arts and politics at a ceremony in the UK's Parliament complex.
- ❖ The annual 'Political and Public Life Awards' was presented by Britain's Asian Voice weekly newspaper is in its 12th year.



- ❖ It recognises individuals who have made a significant impact on public life or made a difference in their local communities.
- ❖ Among the other winners of the year included Pakistani-origin UK Cabinet minister Sajid Javid, who was named Cabinet Minister of the Year.
- ❖ India's Colors TV bagged the award for Television Channel of the Year and Jet Airways was judged Airline of the Year.
- ❖ An entrepreneur who has introduced the concept of Bengali cuisine supper clubs called 'Little Kolkata to the UK', Prabir Chattopadhyay, was named New Business Entrant of the Year.

90th Academy Awards (Oscars 2018)

- ❖ The 90th Annual Academy Awards (also known as Oscar Awards) were held at the Dolby Theatre in Los Angeles, the USA.
- ❖ The live-performance auditorium, formerly known as the Kodak Theatre, has hosted every Academy Awards since 2002.
- ❖ Jimmy Kimmel hosted the ceremony for the second year in a row. He has become the first host since Billy Crystal to do so.

Details of the awardees

- ❖ Best Picture – The Shape of Water
- ❖ Best Director - Guillermo del Toro, The Shape of Water



- ❖ Best Actress - Frances McDormand, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- ❖ Best Actor - Gary Oldman, Darkest Hour
- ❖ Best Supporting Actress - Allison Janney (I, Tonya)
- ❖ Best Supporting Actor - Sam Rockwell, Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri
- ❖ Best Original Screenplay - Get Out
- ❖ Best Adapted Screenplay - Call Me by Your Name
- ❖ Best Animated Feature Film – Coco - Lee Unkrich and Darla K. Anderson
- ❖ Best Foreign Language Film - A Fantastic Woman (Chile Movie)
- ❖ Best Original Score - The Shape of Water - Alexandre Desplat
- ❖ Best Original Song - Remember Me - Coco
- ❖ Best Documentary Feature – Icarus – Bryan Fogel and Dan Cogan
- ❖ Best Documentary Short - Heaven Is A Traffic Jam on the 405 – Frank Stiefel
- ❖ Best Live Action Short - The Silent Child - Chris Overton and Rachel Shenton
- ❖ Best Animation Short - Dear Basketball – Glen Keane and Kobe Bryant
- ❖ Best Sound Editing – Dunkirk – Richard King and Alex Gibson
- ❖ Best Sound Mixing – Dunkirk – Mark Weingarten, Gregg Landaker and Gary A. Rizzo
- ❖ Best Production Design - The Shape of Water
- ❖ Best Cinematography - Blade Runner 2049 – Roger Deakins
- ❖ Best Makeup and Hair - Darkest Hour – Kazuhiro Tsuji, David Malinowski and Lucy Sibbick
- ❖ Best Costume Design - Phantom Thread - Mark Bridges
- ❖ Best Film Editing – Dunkirk

- ❖ Best Visual Effects - Blade Runner – John Nelson, Gerd Nefzer, Paul Lambert and Richard R. Hoover

Pritzker Prize - Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi

- ❖ Balkrishna Vithaldas Doshi became the first Indian to receive the Pritzker Prize also dubbed as ‘Architecture Nobel’.



- ❖ The international Pritzker prize is awarded each year to a living architects for significant achievement.
- ❖ It was established by the Pritzker family of Chicago through their Hyatt Foundation in 1979.
- ❖ It bestows laureates with \$100,000 along with a bronze medallion.
- ❖ Balkrishna Doshi is a pioneer of low-cost housing design, committed to sustainable architecture that brought modernist design to a country rooted in traditionalism.
- ❖ His noted works include Life Insurance Corporation Housing in Ahmedabad, Vidhyadhar Nagar in Jaipur, Aranya Low Cost Housing in Indore.

'Pride of Birmingham' award

- ❖ Indian-origin Birmingham man Harry Athwal was selected for this year's 'Pride of Birmingham's Outstanding Bravery Award'.
- ❖ He was awarded for risking his life in order to help a fatally injured young boy in the 2017 Barcelona terror attack.

- ❖ Athwal is among 11 winners who will be presented with their awards at a ceremony at the University of Birmingham.
- ❖ The annual awards, organised by the Birmingham Mail newspaper and TSB Company.
- ❖ It is conferred to recognise the people's courage, caring, compassion and social responsibilities.



ITB – Berlin

- ❖ India has won the Best Exhibitor Award at ITB - Berlin.
- ❖ The ITB Berlin (Internationale Tourismus - Börse) is the world's largest tourism trade fair.
- ❖ India was represented by Tourism Minister K.J.Alphons along with Ministry officials.
- ❖ India's Incredible India presented a short film named "Yogi of the Racetrack " in the meet.

New Special Director

- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the appointment of Vivek R Wadekar (1991 IRS) as the new Special Director in the Enforcement Directorate (ED).
- ❖ He is appointed for five years as the new Special Director in the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

- ❖ The ED is the central investigative agency, under the Union finance ministry, that enforces the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) in the country.

Border guarding force – First Women Officer

- ❖ In another first for women, 25-year-old Prakriti has been inducted as the first woman direct-entry combat officer in the border guarding force, ITBP.



- ❖ The Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) force is the last of the CAPFs (Central Armed Police Force) to induct women officers in combat roles after the government first allowed it to enrol them in 2016.
- ❖ The force already has women in combat roles but only in the constable ranks.
- ❖ The ITBP, that guards the 3,488 km-long Line of Actual Control (LAC) between India and China, was raised in 1962 in the aftermath of the Chinese aggression.
- ❖ Two other forces, the Border Security Force (BSF) and the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), were allowed to directly induct women officers in 2013 and 2014 respectively.

ITBP

- ❖ ITBP was raised on 24th October in 1962 and is deployed on guarding 3488 km long India-China Border from Karakoram Pass in Ladakh to Jachep La in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The ITBP is one of five Central Armed Police Forces of India and was raised on 24 October 1962, under CRPF (Central Reserve Police Force) Act, in the wake of 1962 Sino-Indian War.
- ❖ It was provided full autonomy after the Parliament enacted the Indo-Tibetan Border Police Force Act (ITBP), 1992. It works under the command of Union Home Ministry.

Central Armed Police Force

- ❖ Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) aid in combating external threats (they mainly manage internal security issues) but are managed by Ministry of Home Affairs.
- ❖ Central Armed Police Force 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 (ITBP), National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

Wings India 2018

- ❖ The biennial aviation show on Civil Aviation and Aerospace titled 'Wings India 2018' is held at the Begumpet Airport, Hyderabad.
- ❖ 'Wings India 2018' is organised with the aim of boosting the regional connectivity and theme of the event is "India-Global Aviation Hub".



- ❖ The aviation show is jointly hosted by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, Airport Authority of India and Federation of India Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).

Stephen Hawking - Death

- ❖ Renowned British theoretical physicist and cosmologist Stephen Hawking has passed away at the age of 76.
- ❖ The physicist suffered from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, an incurable degenerative disorder also known as Lou Gehrig's disease that left him almost entirely paralyzed.
- ❖ Hawking was diagnosed with the motor neuron disorder when he was 21. He lived with the degenerative disorder for more than 50 years.

- ❖ The British scientist was famed for his work with black holes and relativity and wrote several popular science books including 'A Brief History of Time', which became a worldwide bestseller.
- ❖ In 1974, he became one of the youngest fellows of Britain's most prestigious scientific body, the Royal Society.



- ❖ In 1979, he was appointed for the chair of "Lucasian Professor of Mathematics" at Cambridge University.
- ❖ His early life was chronicled in the 2014 film "The Theory of Everything"

Press Information Bureau – Director General

- ❖ Sitanshu Kar has been appointed as the Principal Director General of the Press Information Bureau, in effect the top spokesperson of the Government of India.
- ❖ He will replace Frank Noronha who will superannuate in April this year. Noronha was appointed in August 2014.
- ❖ Sitanshu Kar, a senior Indian Information Service (IIS) officer, is presently the DG news services division of All India Radio.
- ❖ In the past, he has served as spokesperson of the Ministry of Defence.

Nari Shakti Puraskar 2017

- ❖ President of India presented Nari Shakti Puraskar 2017 to 30 eminent individuals and 9 distinguished institutions at special ceremony held in Rashtrapati Bhavan on occasion of International Women's Day.

- ❖ They were felicitated in recognition of their efforts in rendering distinguished services for cause of women, especially vulnerable and marginalized women.

About Award

- ❖ It established in 1991 and since then it is conferred annually by President on the occasion of International Women's Day on March 8 every year.
- ❖ It carries cash award of 1 lakh Rupee and certificate for individuals and institutions.
- ❖ The Ministry of Women and Child Development announces these national level awards for eminent women, organisations and institutions who has made significant contribution for women empowerment.

2017 Kochon Prize

- ❖ The 2017 Kochon Prize was awarded to the Indian Council of Medical Research(ICMR) in New Delhi for building a tradition of excellence in Tuberculosis (TB) research and development.
- ❖ Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) was awarded for establishing India TB Research Consortium to accelerate Tuberculosis related R&D efforts in the country.

Kochon Prize

- ❖ The Kochon Prize is awarded annually by Stop TB Partnership to recognize the individuals and organizations that have made significant contribution in Tuberculosis elimination efforts.
- ❖ The prize is endowed by Kochon Foundation, a non-profit foundation registered in South Korea. It consists of prize of US \$65,000 award.
- ❖ The prize was established in 2006 in honour of late Chairman Chong-Kun Lee founder of Chong Kun Dang Pharmaceutical Corporation and Kochon Foundation.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR)

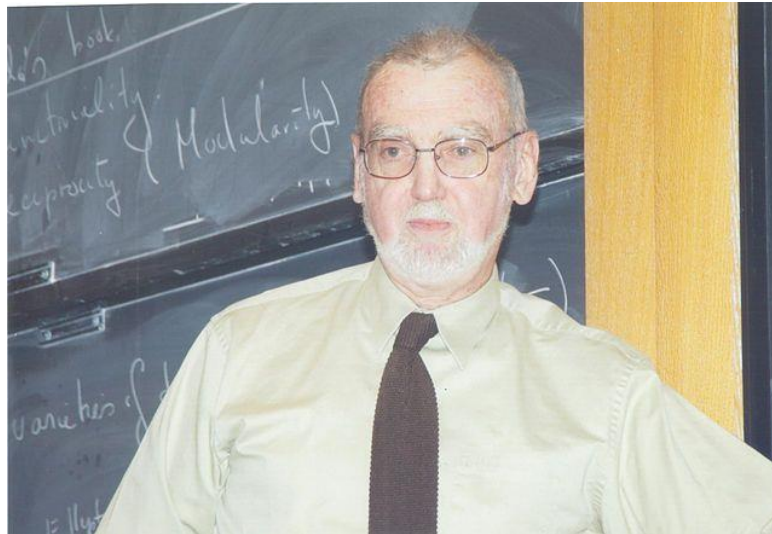
- ❖ Indian Council of Medical Research was established in 1911 as Indian Research Fund Association (IRFA) making it one of the oldest and largest medical research bodies in the world.
- ❖ The ICMR is India's apex scientific body for the formulation, coordination and promotion of biomedical research.
- ❖ The ICMR functions under the Department of Health Research, Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- ❖ ICMR's Governing Body is presided over by Union Health Minister.

G.K. Reddy Memorial National Award

- ❖ G.K. Reddy Memorial Award for excellence in journalism for the year 2016 was presented to eminent journalist and TV anchor Karan Thapar.
- ❖ GK Memorial has founded an award in the memory of distinguished and renowned journalist late Gunupati Keshava Reddy.

Abel Prize

- ❖ Canadian mathematician Robert Langlands won the prestigious Abel Prize.
- ❖ He was awarded for developing a programme connecting representation theory to number theory.



About the Prize

- ❖ The Abel prize is awarded annually by the Government of Norway to one or more outstanding mathematicians.
- ❖ The prize has been named after Norwegian mathematician Niels Henrik Abel
- ❖ The award was established in 2001 by the Government of Norway and complements its sister prize in the humanities, the Holberg Prize
- ❖ It is the most prestigious international academic award in mathematics.
- ❖ Earlier, S.R. Srinivasa Varadhan, an Indian American mathematician was awarded Abel Prize in 2007 for his fundamental contributions to probability theory and in particular for creating a unified theory of large deviation.

Scientific Adviser

- ❖ Krishnaswamy Vijay Raghavan was appointed principle scientific adviser to the government of India.
- ❖ He will succeed 81-year-old nuclear physicist R Chidambaram, who has been in the position for more than 16 years, having been appointed in 2001.



- ❖ Vijay Raghavan, a former director of National Centre for Biological Sciences, was appointed Secretary of Department of Biotechnology in 2013.

Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA)

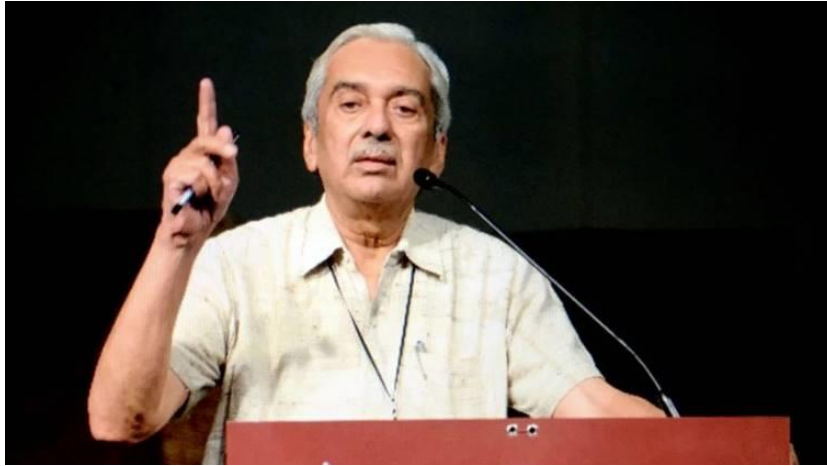
- ❖ The Principal Scientific Advisor (PSA), a post created by the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 1999, is the topmost advisor to the government on all matters related to scientific policy.
- ❖ The office of the PSA is one of the three scientific bodies the government relies on for advice on matters relating to science and which act as the interface between scientific institutions and the government.
- ❖ The other two are,
 - Science Advisory Council to the Prime Minister (SAC-PM)
 - Science Advisory Council to the Cabinet (SAC-C)
- ❖ Neither SAC-PM nor SAC-C have been functional under the government
- ❖ The Defence Minister has a Scientific Advisor of his/her own.

UNESCO Executive Board

- ❖ The Ministry of Human Resource Development has nominated former NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) director JS Rajput as India's representative to the Executive Board (EXB) of UNESCO
- ❖ The EXB has a four-year term and 58 seats. It is one of the constitutional organs of UNESCO and is elected by the General Conference.
- ❖ The board examines the work for the organisation and the corresponding budget estimates. In practice, it is the main organ responsible for all policies and programmes of UNESCO.

Notable accolades of JS. Rajput

- ❖ JS Rajput was awarded Padma Shri in 2014.



- ❖ He has been awarded the Maharishi Ved Vyas award by the Madhya Pradesh government for his contributions in the education sector.
- ❖ 'Education of Muslims in India', a book he edited, was released by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 15, 2015.

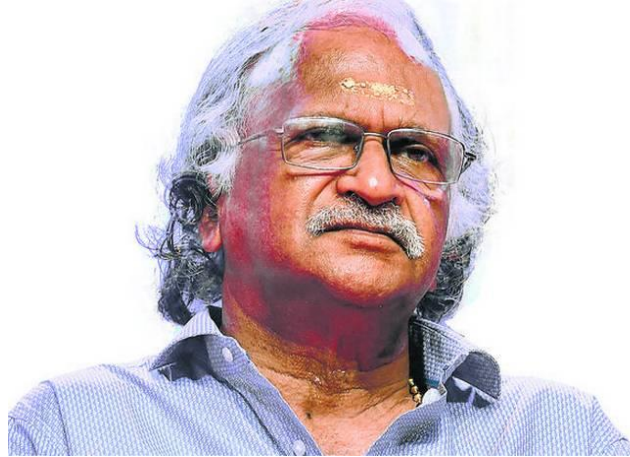
Yuri Gagarin's 50th death anniversary

- ❖ Yuri Gagarin, feted as a Soviet national hero for being the first man in space, was killed in a plane crash 50 years ago
- ❖ For the first time in Soviet history, a day of national mourning was declared for someone who was not a head of state.
- ❖ On 12 April 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin became the first human to journey into space.
- ❖ Gagarin's rocket was an adapted missile, called R-7 or 'Semyorka'. The rocket carried his 'Vostok' spacecraft, which translates as 'east' in Russian.
- ❖ Since 12 April 1961, the anniversary of Gagarin's first flight has been celebrated in Russia as a holiday known as Cosmonautics Day.
- ❖ Yuri Gagarin was also a back-up commander for the ill-fated Soyuz 1 mission, which crashed on 24 April 1967. He died in a training flight (MiG-15) in the following year.

J.C. Daniel Award

- ❖ Lyricist and director Sreekumaran Thampi has been selected for the J.C. Daniel Award, the Kerala government's highest honour for lifetime contribution to Malayalam cinema.
- ❖ The award, comprising Rs.5 lakhs and a citation, would be presented to Thampi at the Kerala State Film Award distribution function in Kollam.
- ❖ Thampi made his debut in 1966 with Kattumallika and has written over 1,000-odd.

- ❖ He wrote the songs for Bhayanakam movie. Its music director M.K. Arjunan won the State award for the best music director earlier this month.
- ❖ Thampi had won the Kerala Sangeeta Nataka Akademi award for lifetime contribution to light music and drama songs in 2015.



SPORTS

Austrian Open

- ❖ Reigning Commonwealth Games champion Parupalli Kashyap beat Malaysia's June Wei Cheam in straight games in the men's singles final to clinch the Austrian Open International Challenge badminton title in Vienna.
- ❖ This is Kashyap's first international title in over three years.
- ❖ His last title came at the Syed Modi International Badminton Championships in 2015.

69th Strandja Memorial boxing tournament

- ❖ Vikas Krishan defeated World Championships bronze medallist Troy Isley in the 75 kg final and claimed a gold medal at the Strandja Memorial Boxing Tournament in Sofia, Bulgarian.
- ❖ It was his first medal since the Asian Championships bronze last year (2017) in April-May.
- ❖ He was also adjudged the best boxer of the event.
- ❖ Along with Vikas, Amit Panghal (49kg) claimed a gold medal, rounding off India's best ever performance at the tournament
- ❖ The country ended with a whopping 11 medals -- five from men and six from women boxers. In all, the contingent clinched two gold, three silvers and six bronze medals.

- ❖ Mary Kom and Seema Poonia clinched the silver medal at the Strandja Memorial Tournament.

Asian Wrestling Championships

- ❖ Indian wrestler Vinesh Phogat won a silver medal at the ongoing Asian Wrestling Championships in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.
- ❖ Phogat lost to Chinese wrestler Chun Lei in the women's 50kg freestyle final.
- ❖ This is Phogat's second consecutive silver at the annual event, following her podium finish at the tournament in New Delhi in 2017.

IBSF Snooker World Cup

- ❖ India defeated Pakistan in the inaugural IBSF Snooker Team World Cup in Doha.
- ❖ The Indian combine of Pankaj Advani and Manan Chandra came back from 0-2 down in the best-of-five final to clinch it with a margin of 3-2.



Youngest captain in international cricket history

- ❖ Afghanistan's leg-spinner Rashid Khan has become the youngest captain in the history of international cricket.
- ❖ Prior to him, Rajin Saleh who led Bangladesh in the 2004 Champions Trophy at the age of 20 years and 297 days was the youngest skipper in men's international cricket.

- ❖ After he was elevated to the number one spot in the ODI bowlers ranking on February 20, Rashid also became the youngest player ever to hold the top spot for any form of ICC men's ranking.
- ❖ He was only 19 years and 152 days when topped the ICC Player Rankings for men, surpassing former Pakistani off-spinner Saqlain 21 years and 13 day record.

ISSF World Cup

- ❖ Indian shooter Shahzar Rizvi clinched the gold medal with a world record score in a memorable maiden ISSF (International Shooting Sport Federation) World Cup appearance, while Jitu Rai and Mehuli Ghosh bagged a bronze each in Guadalajara, Mexico.



- ❖ The Meerut-based Rizvi beat reigning Olympic champion Christian Reitz of Germany to win the top prize.

National tennis championship

- ❖ The Maharashtra women's team won the interstate national tennis championship 2018 held in Chhattisgarh.
- ❖ The championship was organised under the auspices of the All India Tennis Association (AITA) by the Chhattisgarh State Tennis Association (CSTA) from February 26 to March 3.

Asian wrestling championships

- ❖ Ace wrestler Navjot Kaur defeated Japan's Miya Imai and won gold medal in the 65kg freestyle wrestling category of Senior Asian Championships held in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.

- ❖ With this, she created history by becoming first Indian woman wrestler to win gold medal in Senior Asian Championships.



- ❖ This was also India's first gold in the ongoing championships. In the final match the women's 65kg freestyle wrestling category.
- ❖ Rio Olympics bronze medallist Sakshi Malik won the bronze in 62kg freestyle category.
- ❖ With this India has bagged 6 medals, which consisted one gold, silver and four bronze medals.

Tal Memorial Rapid chess title

- ❖ World rapid chess champion Viswanathan Anand lifted the 11th Tal Memorial rapid chess title after registering a final round draw against Boris Gelfand of Israel in Moscow.
- ❖ Anand, whose solitary loss came at the hands of Shakhriyar Mamedyarov of Azerbaijan in the third round, beat four other opponents on his way to the tournament's final round.

ISSF World Cup

- ❖ World Cup debutant Manu Bhaker marked her international debut with the gold in the women's 10m Air Pistol final held in Guadalajara, Mexico.
- ❖ The 16-year-old Bhaker pocketed India's second gold medal by defeating Alejandra Zavala Vazquez of Mexico in the women's 10m Air Pistol final.
- ❖ Manu, partnered with Om Prakash Mitharval for the 10m air pistol mixed team and contributed two gold medals for India.
- ❖ In total, India has seven medals and is now on top of the medal tally in this World Cup.

Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey

- ❖ Australia defeated England 2-1 in the final to lift their 10th Sultan Azlan Shah Cup title.



- ❖ Argentina claimed the bronze medal with a 3-2 win over Malaysia.
- ❖ Asian champions India finished a disappointing fifth after beating Ireland 4 - 1.

Sultan Azlan Shah Cup

- ❖ The Sultan Azlan Shah Cup, which began in 1983, is an annual international men's field hockey tournament held in Malaysia.
- ❖ The tournament is named after the ninth Yang di-Pertuan Agong (King) of Malaysia, Sultan Azlan Shah, an avid fan of field hockey.

Hero Indian Open

- ❖ Matt Wallace becomes the first Englishman to win the \$1.75 million Hero Indian Open title.



- ❖ Shubhankar Sharma of India finished in seventh position.
- ❖ India failed to retain the trophy for the first time in four years after SSP Chawrasia won it twice in 2016 and 2017 and Anirban Lahiri bagged it in 2015.

ISSF World Cup

- ❖ Akhil Sheoran dominated the Men's 50m Rifle 3-Position final to bag India's fourth gold medal at the ISSF (International Shooting Sport Federation) World Cup in Guadalajara, Mexico
- ❖ India's Anjum Moudgil clinched a silver medal in the women's 50m Rifle 3 Positions event and it was Anjum's first World Cup medal.
- ❖ India, however topped the medals tally for the first time in an ISSF competition with four gold, one silver and four bronze for a total of nine medals.

MEDAL STANDINGS					
		Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	 IND	4	1	4	9
2	 USA	3	1	2	6
3	 CHN	2	2	1	5
4	 FRA	1	1	3	5
5	 ROU	1	1		2
6	 FIN	1		1	2
6	 HUN	1		1	2
8	 GRE	1			1
8	 LUX	1			1
10	 GER		3	1	4

Deodhar Trophy 2018

- ❖ India B won 45th edition of the Deodhar Trophy 2018 by defeating Karnataka in final match by 6 wickets at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium in Dharamsala.

Deodhar Trophy

- ❖ The Deodhar Trophy is a List A cricket competition in Indian domestic cricket named after Prof. D. B. Deodhar, known as the Grand Old Man of Indian cricket.
- ❖ It is a 50-over knockout competition played annually among five zonal teams – North Zone, South Zone, East Zone, West Zone and Central Zone.
- ❖ Deodhar Trophy was realigned in 2015-16 season with winners of Vijay Hazare Trophy playing two teams – India A and India B, selected by the BCCI.
- ❖ North Zone has won most titles i.e. for record 13 times.

Nidahas Trophy

- ❖ India won the Nidahas Trophy by beating Bangladesh in the final at the R Premadasa Stadium, Colombo in Sri Lanka.

Nidahas Trophy

- ❖ Nidahas Trophy was first organized in 1998 to celebrate the 50 years of Sri Lanka's independence.
- ❖ The series was played between Sri Lanka, India and New Zealand.
- ❖ India, under Mohammad Azharuddin's captaincy, won the Nidahas Trophy, 1998.
- ❖ This year (2018), the trophy was played to celebrate Sri Lanka's 70th year of independence. The series was played between Sri Lanka, India and Bangladesh.

Asian Cross-Country Championship

- ❖ India's Sanjivani Jadhav, won the bronze in the 14th Asian Cross-Country Championships at Guiyang, China.



- ❖ The Indian women's team of Sanjeevani, Swati Gadhave, Jhuma Khatun and Lalita Babar also won a bronze.

2019 FIFA U-20 World Cup

- ❖ Poland is set to host the 2019 FIFA Under-20 World Cup.
- ❖ The Indian football associations made massive bid to host the FIFA Under-20 World Cup in 2019 ended after the FIFA Council members voted in favour of Poland for hosting the tournament.
- ❖ Recently India hosted the U-17 World Cup in 2017.

Deepa Malik - Asian Rank

- ❖ Indian para-athlete Deepa Malik won a gold medal in the F-53/54 category javelin event at the World Para Athletics Grand Prix in Dubai.



- ❖ With this, she became the Asian rank one in the F-53 category. With the win, Deepa has also qualified for the 2018 Asian Para Games in Indonesia, scheduled to be held in October 2018.

Motors Sports Award - Anindith Reddy

- ❖ Hyderabad's Anindith Reddy is awarded Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India's (FMSCI) National Motor Sports Person of the Year.
- ❖ Reddy was chosen for the topmost honour by country's motorsport body for winning both the MRF F1600 and JK Tyre's Euro JK championship - India's two premier single-seater series - in a single year.
- ❖ KD Madan, a former FMSCI president and K1000 champion, was conferred with Lifetime Achievement Award for his immense contribution to the motor sport in the country.

Irani Cup - Vidarbha

- ❖ Ranji Trophy winners Vidarbha grabbed their second title in the domestic cricket season as they won the Irani Cup by beating Rest of India at the Vidarbha Cricket Association stadium in Nagpur.



Irani Cup

- ❖ The Z. R. Irani Cup tournament was conceived during the 1959-60 season to mark the completion of 25 years of the Ranji Trophy championship.
- ❖ It was named after the late Z. R. Irani, who was associated with the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) from 1928 to 1970.
- ❖ The fixture is played annually between the incumbent Ranji Trophy winners and the Rest of India Team.

Table Tennis in Odisha

- ❖ Odisha will host the 80th Senior National Table Tennis Championships after a gap of 12 years.
- ❖ The state had hosted the event in 2001 and in 2006.
- ❖ The decision to allot the event to Odisha was taken during the 81st AGM of the Table Tennis Federation of India (TTFI), held at Gurugram.

Junior ISSF World Cup

- ❖ Indian shooter Elavenil Valarivan shattered the qualification world record and claimed the gold medal in 10m women's air rifle event of the season's first junior ISSF (International Shooting Sport Federation) World Cup in Sydney.
- ❖ The 18-year-old Elavenil, competing in her second World Cup and first final, shot 249.8 in the women's final to claim the top individual honours. Her 631.4 in the qualification was a new world record.
- ❖ Besides her individual podium finish, Elavenil also combined with Shreya Agrawal and Zeena Khitta to claim the team gold medal.
- ❖ Arjun Babuta bagged his second junior world cup medal, claiming a bronze in men's 10m air rifle event.

ISSF junior World Cup

- ❖ Manu Bhaker secured gold in individual 10m Air Pistol and then the team event at the ISSF (International Shooting Sports Federation) Junior World Cup in Sydney.



- ❖ The Indian trio of Manu, Devanshi and Mahima Turhi Agrawal won the team gold with a World junior record.
- ❖ Previously Manu had won the women's gold on World Cup debut in Guadalajara, Mexico.
- ❖ Gaurav Rana secured silver in individual 10m Air Pistol, while Anmol Jain grabbed the bronze.

ISSF junior World Cup - Bronze

- ❖ India's 16-year-old Vivan Kapoor won his first World cup medal in the ISSF (International Shooting Sports Federation) Junior Shooting World Cup.
- ❖ He won bronze medal in men's trap event.
- ❖ The 16-year-old shooter secured bronze with 30 hits out of 40.
- ❖ There was another bronze medal for the team as Vivaan, along with Lakshay and Ali Aman Elahi beat Italy by four points for the bronze.

100 ODI wickets

- ❖ Teenaged Afghanistan leg spinner Rashid Khan has become the fastest bowler to the milestone of 100 ODI wickets
- ❖ Rashid khan made this record in 44 matches which is eight fewer than the previous record holder, Australia's Mitchell Starc.
- ❖ Rashid took his 100th wicket in the format when he had West Indies' Shai Hope.

FASTEST TO 100 ODI WICKETS (BY MATCHES)

44	RASHID KHAN AFGHANISTAN
52	MITCHELL STARC AUSTRALIA
53	SAQLAIN MUSHTAQ PAKISTAN
54	SHANE BOND NEW ZEALAND
55	BRETT LEE AUSTRALIA

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Jockey Youth Cup

- ❖ India U-16 was crowned champions of the Jockey Cup International Youth Invitational Football Tournament after defeating hosts Hong Kong 4-2 in the final.
- ❖ Bekey Oram, Rohit Danu and Lalrokima scored the goals.



- ❖ This was the team's third consecutive victory in as many days, the team having earlier defeated Chinese Taipei (4-0) and Singapore (3-1)
- ❖ The team coached by Bibiano Fernandes is presently unbeaten in 22 matches which includes friendly matches against National Youth Teams and International Club and Academy sides.

Asian Billiards

- ❖ Pankaj Advani defended his Asian Billiards Championships title by defeating his practice partner B.Bhaskar 6-1 in the summit clash.



- ❖ With this win, Advani remains the reigning Indian, Asian and World champion in billiards for 2017-18.
- ❖ This is Advani's 11th gold medal at the Asian level of cue sports.
- ❖ India's Ameet Kamani won the Asian Women's Snooker title by defeating her Thai opponent Siripaporn Nuanthakhamjan.

CWG 2018

- ❖ PV Sindhu will be the flag-bearer of the Indian contingent for the opening ceremony of the Commonwealth Games (CWG) in Gold Coast, Australia.
- ❖ In the last Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014, Sindhu bagged a bronze in women's singles.



- ❖ In the previous three Commonwealth Games, the prestigious position during the march past of the opening ceremony had always gone to a member of the shooting squad.
- ❖ In 2006 Melbourne Games, India's flag-bearer was double trap shooter Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore, who is currently the sports minister.
- ❖ 2008 Olympic champion shooter Abhinav Bindra had the honour when India hosted the Games in 2010.
- ❖ Pistol shooter Vijay Kumar was the flag-bearer in 2014.

ISSF Junior World Cup

- ❖ Muskan Bhanwala clinched the gold medal in women's 25m pistol. By this India pipped China to the top of the medal tally at the ISSF Junior World Cup in Sydney, Australia.
- ❖ The Indian shooter Muskan Bhanwala won gold in finals by beating China's Qin Sihang and Thailand's Kanyakorn Hirunphoem, who respectively took silver and bronze in the pistol event.

- ❖ It's the first ISSF medal for Muskan Bhanwala and China's Qin Sihang.
- ❖ The Indian shooters Muskan, Manu Bhaker and Devanshi Rana won gold medal in team category.
- ❖ Muskan's medal was India's fourth individual gold in this historically prestigious tournament.
- ❖ Indian shooter Anish won two gold in this tournament.
- ❖ With this medal, Muskan and Anish have become the only siblings in the world to have won gold in the same edition of Junior World Cup.

IMPORTANT DAYS

Rare Disease Day – February 28

- ❖ 28 February 2018 will be the eleventh international Rare Disease Day coordinated by EURORDIS (EURORDIS – European Organisation for Rare Disease).
- ❖ Rare Disease Day is held on the last day of February every year to raise awareness amongst the general public and decision-makers about rare diseases.
- ❖ The Theme for the year 2018 is “Research”.
- ❖ Research is key. It brings hope to the millions of people living with a rare disease across the world and their families.
- ❖ The day was first launched by EURORDIS and its Council of National Alliances in 2008.
- ❖ The first Rare Disease Day was celebrated in 2008 on 29 February.

Zero Discrimination Day - March 01

- ❖ The Zero Discrimination Day (ZDD) is observed every year on March 1 to promote equality before the law and in practice throughout all of the member countries of the UN.
- ❖ The day urges people to join together against discrimination and celebrate everyone’s right to live a full and productive life with dignity.
- ❖ The symbol for Zero Discrimination is the butterfly, widely recognized as a sign of transformation.
- ❖ The UN first celebrated Zero Discrimination Day on 1 March 2014. It was observed after UNAIDS launched its Zero Discrimination Campaign on World AIDS Day in December 2013.



World Wildlife Day - 03 March

- ❖ World Wildlife Day is celebrated every year on March 03 to raise awareness about our planet's flora and fauna.
- ❖ This year the theme is "Big cats — predators under threat."
- ❖ The Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) was finalised on March 3 and the day has been celebrated as World Wildlife Day since 2014.



- ❖ CITES is an international agreement between the governments of 183 countries to protect wild plants and animals and ensure their survival.
- ❖ These are facing many and varied threats such as habitat loss, poaching, human-wildlife conflict & climate change, primarily caused by human activities.

World NGO Day – 27 February

- ❖ World NGO Day is an international calendar day, annually observed on the 27th February.
- ❖ The day was officially recognised and declared by the 12-member countries of the IX Baltic Sea NGO Forum of the Council of the Baltic Sea States in 2010 and first time marked by the UN, EU leaders and international organisations in 2014 – hosted by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.
- ❖ World NGO Day is to inspire people to become more actively involved within NGO sector and encourage a greater symbiosis between NGOs and both the public and private sector.

National Safety Day – March 4

- ❖ National Safety Day is celebrated on the 4th March every year in India by the National Safety Council of India to commemorate the establishment of this event and to enhance the safety awareness among people.
- ❖ This is the 47th observance of the day.
- ❖ To commemorate the Foundation Day of the Council on 4th March first National Safety Day (NSD) Campaign was launched in 1972.
- ❖ National Safety Council of India is a self-governing body (non-profit and nongovernmental organization for public service) which was established on 4th of March in 1966 under the Societies Act in Mumbai, having over 8000 members.
- ❖ Apart from this, to create awareness about safety, NSC will also celebrate National Safety Week from 4th of March to the 10th of March in 2018.

International Women's Day - 08 March

- ❖ International Women's Day (IWD) is celebrated on March 8 every year to celebrate women's achievements throughout history and across nations.
- ❖ This year, the UN theme for International Women's Day, is "Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women's lives".
- ❖ The UN celebrated its first official International Women's Day on 8 March during International Women's Year in 1975.

49th Raising Day of CISF - 10 March

- ❖ On 10 March 2018, 49th Raising Day of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) was observed.

- ❖ The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) is a central armed police force under the aegis of Union Ministry of Home Affairs and its headquarters are at New Delhi.
- ❖ It was initially established under the Central Industrial Security Force Act, 1968 to protect major PSUs.
- ❖ However, it was converted to an armed force with a larger ambit under an amendment to the Act in 1983.
- ❖ Now, CISF provides security to industrial ventures and establishments, VIPs and engages in disaster management amongst others.
- ❖ It also has a Fire Wing to tackle the fire accidents. The incumbent Director General of CISF is IPS Officer O.P.Singh.

World Consumer Rights Day – 15 March

- ❖ The World Consumer Rights Day (WCRD) is celebrated every year on March 15 to promote basic rights of consumers and raising awareness about consumer rights.
- ❖ The theme of the WCRD for the year 2018 is “Making Digital Market Places Fairer”



- ❖ The WCRD commemorate the historic address given by the then US President John F Kennedy to the US congress on this day in 1962. He was the first world leader to formally define ‘consumer rights’.
- ❖ The first WCRD was observed on 15 March 1983.
- ❖ In India, 24th December is observed as National Consumer Day. On this day in 1986, Consumer Protection Act, 1986 had received the assent of the President.

33rd Inception Day of NCRB – 11 March

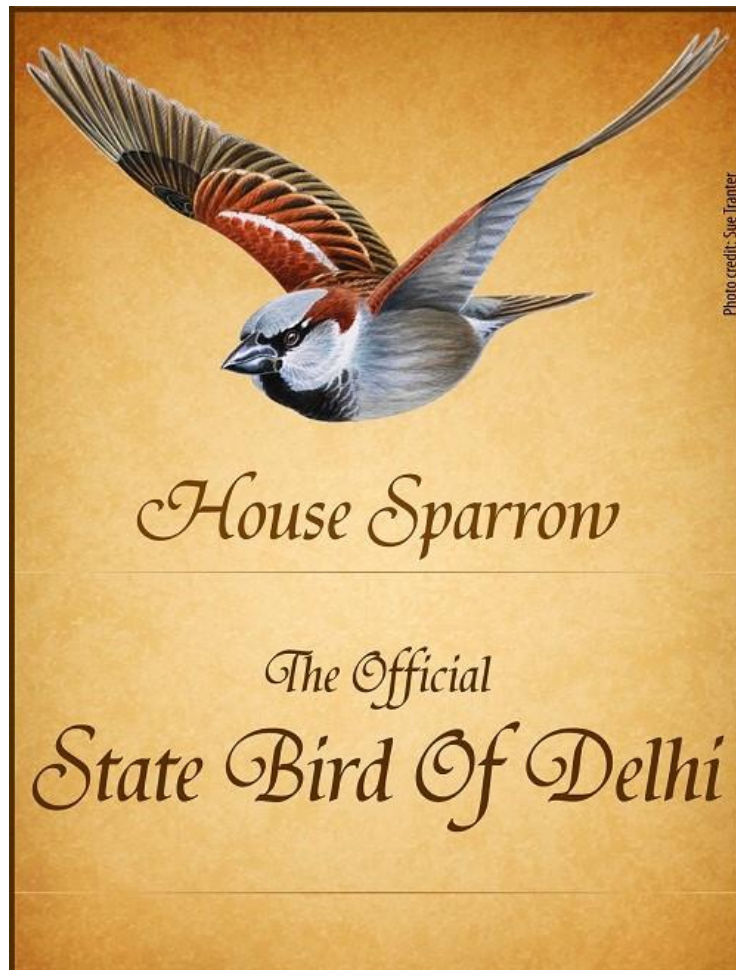
- ❖ The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) celebrated its 33rd Inception Day on March 11, 2018.
- ❖ On this occasion, “Citizen Services” mobile application developed in-house by NCRB was also released.
- ❖ NCRB is an Indian government agency responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the Indian Penal Code
- ❖ NCRB works under Union Home Ministry.
- ❖ It was established on 11 March 1986 as the central police organisation. It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- ❖ It is implementing and monitoring agency of Crime & Criminal Tracking Network System (CCTNS), a Mission Mode Project under the National e-Governance Plan of Government.
- ❖ Crime & Criminal Tracking Network System is connecting around 12800 police stations to allow search for a criminal / suspect on a national data base.
- ❖ NCRB publishes 4 annual publications on Crime, Prison Statistics, Accidental Deaths & Suicides and Finger Prints.

World Sleep Day – March 16

- ❖ World Sleep Day is held on Friday (March 16) before Spring Vernal Equinox of each year
- ❖ It is organized by the World Sleep Day Committee of World Sleep Society since 2008.
- ❖ It aims to lessen the burden of sleep problems on society through better prevention and management of sleep disorders.
- ❖ World Sleep Day is an annual event, intended to be a celebration of sleep and a call to action on important issues related to sleep, including medicine, education, social aspects.
- ❖ Future dates of World Sleep Day will be March 15, 2019 and March 14, 2020.

World Sparrow Day - March 20

- ❖ The World Sparrow Day (WSD) is observed every year on March 20 to raise awareness among people about house sparrows and other common birds in urban environments and threats to their populations.
- ❖ WSD is an international initiative by the Nature Forever Society of India (NFSI) in collaboration with the Eco-Sys Action Foundation (France) and also numerous other national and international organisations across the world.



- ❖ The purpose for celebrating the day is to use it as a platform to underscore the need to conserve sparrows as well as the urban biodiversity.
- ❖ The first WSD was organised in different parts of the World in 2010.
- ❖ In 2012, the then Delhi Government had launched campaign called “Rise of Sparrows” aimed at conservation of House Sparrow among other birds.
- ❖ It was also declared as the ‘state bird’ by the then Delhi Government for its conservation.

World Water Day - 22 March

- ❖ The World Water Day (WWD) is observed every year on 22 March to spread message of preservation and rational consumption of water.
- ❖ The theme for this year is ‘Nature for Water’. It explores how nature can be used to overcome the water challenges of the 21st century.
- ❖ It focuses attention on importance of universal access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities in developing countries.
- ❖ The first World Water Day was celebrated on 22 March 1993.

- ❖ The WWD was first formally proposed in Agenda 21 of United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil in 1992.
- ❖ Later, United Nations General Assembly accepted recommendation of UNCED and instituted this day by adopting a resolution in December 1992.

International Day of Forests - 21 March

- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly adopted resolution (A/RES/67/200) on 21 December 2012, which declared that 21 March of each year is to be observed as the International Day of Forests.
- ❖ The theme for each International Day of Forests is chosen by the Collaborative Partnership on Forests. The Theme for the year 2018 is "Forests and Sustainable Cities".
- ❖ This global celebration of forests provides a platform to raise awareness of the importance of all types of woodlands and trees and celebrate the ways in which they sustain and protect us.

World Poetry Day - 21 March

- ❖ World Poetry Day is Held every year on 21 March and it celebrates one of humanity's most treasured forms of cultural and linguistic expression and identity.
- ❖ A decision to proclaim 21 March as World Poetry Day was adopted during UNESCO's 30th session held in Paris in 1999.
- ❖ One of the main objectives of the Day is to support linguistic diversity through poetic expression and to offer endangered languages the opportunity to be heard within their communities.

International Day for Achievers – 24 March

- ❖ International Day for Achievers is observed every year on march 24.
- ❖ International Day for Achievers is celebrated to pay tribute to achievers' in any field for their outstanding achievements.

World Tuberculosis Day – 24 March

- ❖ World TB Day was observed every year on March 24 to raise public awareness about the devastating health, social and economic consequences of tuberculosis (TB) and to step up efforts to end the global TB epidemic.
- ❖ The theme for the year 2018 is "Wanted: Leaders for a TB-free world"

- ❖ The date marks the day in 1882 when Dr. Robert Koch announced that he had discovered the bacterium that causes TB, which opened the way towards diagnosing and curing this disease.

Martyrs' Day – March 23

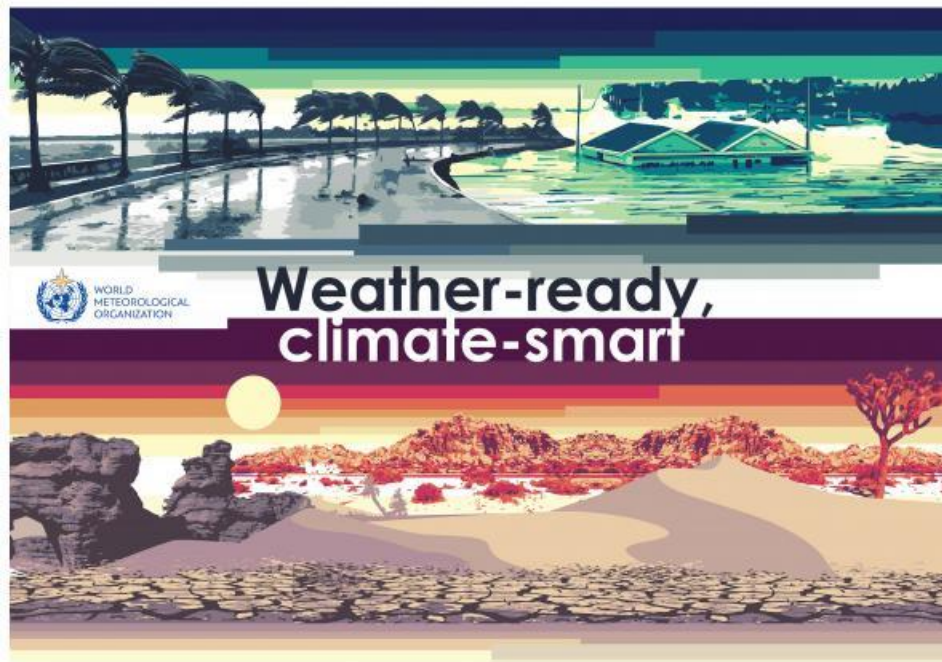
- ❖ March 23 is marked as Shaheed Diwas or Martyrs' Day to remember the day when three brave freedom fighters were hanged by the British.
- ❖ On March 23, 1931, Bhagat Singh along with his associates Sukhdev Thapar and Shivaram Rajguru were hanged to death for the assassination of 21-year-old British police officer John Saunders.



- ❖ The day they were executed is celebrated as Martyrs' Day throughout the country.
- ❖ Bhagat Singh was a socialist revolutionary and freedom fighter who was executed at the age of 23 for his dramatic violence against the British rule.
- ❖ They mistook Saunders for Superintendent James Scott, who was responsible for leading a lathi charge against Lala Lajpat Rai, who along with his followers was protesting against the Simon Commission.
- ❖ Lala Rajpat Rai succumbed to his injuries a few days later.
- ❖ Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru were hanged to death 11 hours before the scheduled time for the Saunder's murder case.

World Meteorological Day – March 23

- ❖ World Meteorological Day is observed every year on March 23 to commemorate the coming into force of the international convention establishing the World Meteorological Organisation on March 23, 1950.
- ❖ The theme of this year is 'Weather-Ready, Climate Smart'.



- ❖ The theme highlights the need for informed planning for day-to-day weather and hazards like floods as well as for naturally occurring climate variability and long-term climate change.

WMO

- ❖ The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) is an intergovernmental organization with a membership of 191 Member States and Territories.
- ❖ It originated from the International Meteorological Organization (IMO), which was founded in 1873.
- ❖ Established by the ratification of the WMO Convention on 23 March 1950, WMO became the specialised agency of the United Nations for meteorology (weather and climate), operational hydrology and related geophysical sciences.
- ❖ The Organization is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.

MISCELLANEOUS

‘SRIJAN’ - MyGov portal

- ❖ Ministry of Railways has launched SRIJAN (Station Rejuvenation through Joint Action), an idea competition for development of 635 railway stations.
- ❖ It was launched on MyGov portal by Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Limited (IRSDC).
- ❖ IRSDC has taken up massive redevelopment of around 600 major Railway stations across the country.

- ❖ In this mega exercise, it will take assistance and involve all stakeholders i.e. railway passengers, urban planners, architects, engineers.

MyGov portal

- ❖ It is a citizen engagement platform launched by Central Govt. in 2014 to promote active participation of citizens in country's governance and development.
- ❖ It is hosted and managed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).

Fourth India-Europe 29 Business Forum

- ❖ The fourth India-Europe 29 Business Forum (IE29BF) took place in New Delhi from 5-6 March 2018.
- ❖ The theme of IE29BF 2018 was 'Synergising Economic Vision for Expanded Relations'. For IE29BF 2018, Czech Republic was the 'Focus Country'.
- ❖ The Forum was created for the first time in 2014 by Ministry of External Affairs and Federation of Indian Chambers and Commerce (FICCI)
- ❖ The Forum is primarily meant to promote Business-to-Business (B2B) meetings
- ❖ It aims to provide an institutionalized platform for promoting business exchanges between India and the twenty-nine countries of Central Europe region.

Fastest growing IT services brand - 2018

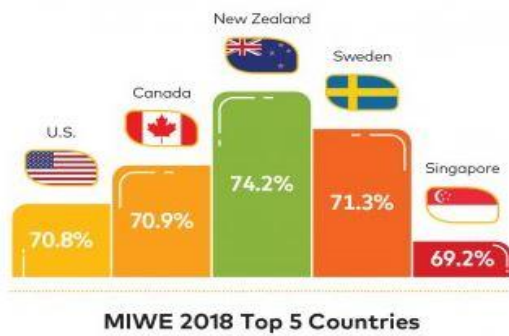
- ❖ According to Brand Finance IT Services 15 annual report for 2018, Tata Consultancy Services has been named as the fastest growing IT services brand in the world.
- ❖ TCS (Tata Consultancy Services) now has a total brand value of USD 10.391 bn, a growth of 14.4% from the last year's total of USD 9.081 billion, with an increase of USD 1.309 bn.
- ❖ Brand Finance is the world's leading brand valuation firm founded in 1996 by David Haigh.

Mastercard women entrepreneurs index

- ❖ According to the recently released second edition of the Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs (MIWE), India ranked 52 among 57 countries.
- ❖ India is only ahead of Iran, Saudi Arabia, Algeria, Egypt, and Bangladesh
- ❖ India's rank remained unchanged from previous year at 52, significantly behind the United States (4th) and China (29th).

- ❖ According to the report, the Indian women business owners, leaders or professionals exhibit less inclination towards business ownership due to cultural bias.
- ❖ The MIWE focusses on female entrepreneurs' ability to capitalise on opportunities granted through various supporting conditions within their local environments.

MAPPING OUT THE LANDSCAPE



TYPE OF ENTREPRENEURS



Opportunity-Driven

Markets with strong enabling conditions such as **New Zealand, Canada, United Kingdom, UAE** and **Portugal** tend to foster more opportunity-driven entrepreneurs



Necessity-Driven

Markets such as **Ghana, Brazil, Bangladesh, Vietnam** and **Mexico** which have fewer supporting conditions, have more necessity-driven entrepreneurs

The Mastercard Index of Women Entrepreneurs tracks female entrepreneurs' ability to capitalize on opportunities granted through various supporting conditions within their local environments. The Index uses 12 indicators and 25 sub-indicators to look at how 57 economies across Asia Pacific, Middle East & Africa, North America, Latin America and Europe differ in this regard.

THE PATH TO PROFIT



Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship

- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated Festival of Innovation and Entrepreneurship (FINE) in New Delhi.
- ❖ The 5-day festival was organised by Rashtrapati Bhavan in association with Department of Science and Technology (DST) and National Innovation Foundation - India (NIFI).



- ❖ He also presented Gandhian Young Technological Innovation Awards.
- ❖ FINE is an initiative to recognise, respect, showcase, reward innovations and foster supportive ecosystem for innovators.

45th anniversary of Chipko movement

- ❖ Google commemorated the 45th anniversary of the forest conservation initiative called the Chipko movement with a doodle.



- ❖ The goal of the Chipko Movement was to draw attention to and prevent deforestation, which had begun to occur on a mass scale to make way for dams or industry or roads.

- ❖ The word 'chipko', which means to hug, soon became the name of the eponymous movement.
- ❖ In modern India, Chipko Movement started in April 1973 in Uttar Pradesh's Mandal village in the upper Alakananda valley. Soon it spread to other Himalayan districts of the state.
- ❖ The Chipko Movement, led by local women, was spearheaded by Chand Chandi Prasad Bhatt and his NGO Dasholi Gram Swarajya Sangh.
- ❖ Sunderlal Bahuguna, a Gandhian activist and philosopher, also appealed to the then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, to implement a ban on cutting down the trees.
- ❖ However, the original movement dates back to the 18th century in Rajasthan where a large group of people from the Bishnoi community resisted the cutting of trees (ordered by Jodhpur's Maharaja) by hugging them.
