

TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM CURRENT AFFAIRS – APRIL 2018

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TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Union Minister for Food Processing Industries Harsimrat Kaur Badal inaugurated Greentech Mega Food Park Private Ltd- the first mega food park in Rajasthan at Roopangarh Village in Ajmer.
- ❖ Veteran director Shekhar Kapur has been appointed as chairman of the central panel of the 65th National Film Awards (NFA). The central panel comprises a chairperson and 10 other members, including five regional chairpersons who head the respective regional panels.
- ❖ Lt Gen Harpal Singh, an alumnus of National Defence Academy (NDA) of Khadakwasla, has been appointed Director General Border Roads (DGBR). He was commissioned into the Corps of Engineers in 1982. He later commanded a Border Roads Task Force in Jammu and Kashmir valley.
- ❖ Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar launched a skill development initiative of BMW, termed 'Skill Next,' at the car major's plant in Chennai with the students of College of Engineering, Guindy.
- ❖ The Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Indian Government signed USD 80 million loan agreement to help modernize Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions and improve the skills ecosystem in Himachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The 5th India Maize Summit 2018 was held at FICCI in New Delhi to harness the potential of maize and technological innovations. The purpose of the summit is to promote producer aggregation and to create linkages with farmers by exploring opportunities in agri-marketing.
- ❖ Gurugram-based hotel aggregator Oyo has launched its own cryptocurrency called 'Oyo Smart Coin'.
- ❖ Jaipur will co-host 8th Theatre Olympics, the largest international theatre festival being held for the first time in India. The Jaipur chapter of Theatre Olympics 2018 is organized by National School of Drama (NSD) under the aegis of Ministry of Culture in collaboration with Ravindra Manch Society and Art & Culture Department, Rajasthan Government.
- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind inaugurated World Hindi Secretariat building in Port Louis, Mauritius. The Secretariat is fully financed by Government of India and provided a grant of Rs. 33 crores. Land for it was given by Government of Mauritius.



- ❖ India's largest private sector lender ICICI Bank became first Indian bank to go live on SWIFT's (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication System) Global Payment Innovation (GPI), an improved cross-border payments service.
- ❖ Madhubani railway station got a complete makeover with Mithila paintings. The makeover project was a unique initiative of Indian Railways. Mithila painting is folk painting practiced in Mithila region of India (especially Bihar) and Nepal. It is also known as Madhubani paintings which mean 'forest of honey'. It has been mentioned in ancient Indian texts like Ramayana
 - Mithila painting has been accorded the coveted GI (Geographical Indication) status.
- ❖ India donated US \$1 million to Swaziland of Africa to support Swaziland's National Disaster Management Agency as well as for foodgrains production
- ❖ Labour Secretary M Sathiyavathy took charge as a member of Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). Vinay Mittal, the Chairman of the UPSC administered oath of office and secrecy.
- ❖ Dr. Promila Gupta is appointed as the Director General Health Services (officer-in-charge) in the Union Health Ministry. She will succeed Dr. B. D. Athani who is currently in charge of the DGHS office.
- ❖ Inspector General KR Nautiyal, on promotion to the rank of Additional Director General, has been appointed as the new Coast Guard Commander (Eastern Seaboard). He will succeed Inspector General KS Sheoran on April 12, 2018.
- ❖ The UN World Tourism Organization has appointed FC Barcelona's Argentine star Lionel Messi as an ambassador to promote responsible tourism.
- ❖ Smriti Irani, Union cabinet minister of textile, information, and broadcasting, launched the Uttar Pradesh Neem Project at Kathaura in Amethi district. The project has been initiated by the Gujarat Narmada Valley Fertilizers & Chemicals Limited (GNFC).
- ❖ Christian Sewing has been appointed as a new chief executive of Deutsche Bank.
- ❖ Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) has unveiled the beta version of portal (www.tariff.trai.gov.in) to enable consumers to see tariffs of different TSPs (telecom service providers) and different Licensed Service Areas (LSAs) at single place.
- ❖ The Government has appointed senior bureaucrat Chandra Bhushan Kumar as Deputy Election Commissioner and he will have a tenure of five years.



- ❖ SBI Life Insurance Company Limited has appointed Sanjeev Nautiyal as its new MD and CEO. Nautiyal replaces Arijit Basu, who takes over a key role in the State Bank of India Group. Nautiyal is a Certified Associate of the Indian Institute of Bankers (C.A.I.I.B).
- ❖ Himachal Pradesh Health Minister Vipin Parmar has launched Mothers Absolute Affection (MAA) programme in the state with an aim to promote breastfeeding.
- ❖ Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb launched the state component of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojna (PMKVY) in Agartala. He assured that the target to give training to more than 1 lakh 16,000 youths by 2020.
 - Tripura is the first state in the North East to implement the state component of PMKVY through Directorate of Skill Development (DSD).
- ❖ The Union government has amended Income Tax rules (under sections 139A and 295 of the Income Tax Act) that will now allow transgenders to be recognized as an independent category of applicants for obtaining a Permanent Account Number (PAN) for their tax-related transactions.
- ❖ Inspector General Vijay Chafekar took over as new Flag Officer, Indian Coast Guard (West Region). He succeeds K R Nautiyal, who has been promoted as Additional Director General and Indian Coast Guard Commander, Eastern Seaboard, Vishakhapatnam.
 - The ICG (West region) comprises a critical area that extends to outer limits of the Exclusive Economic Zone from the coasts of Maharashtra, Goa, Karnataka, Kerala, Daman and Diu and Lakshadweep.
- ❖ Ms. Sripriya Ranganathan presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Korea.
- ❖ India and Morocco have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in the field of Mining and Geology for a period of 5 years to promote mineral exploration.
- ❖ Boeing India subsidiary of US aerospace manufacturer Boeing, Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) and Mahindra Defence Systems entered into an agreement to manufacture fighter aircraft F/A-18 Super Hornet in India. Super Hornet is US Navy's main carrier-borne fighter.
- ❖ The Commonwealth countries at the end of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) in London have adopted Commonwealth Cyber Declaration to take action on cybersecurity by 2020. The declaration is considered as world's largest and most geographically diverse inter-governmental commitment on cybersecurity cooperation.



- ❖ Scientists have discovered a giant mosquito with a wingspan of 11.15 centimetres in China's Sichuan province. The mosquito belongs to the world's largest mosquito species *Holorusiamikado*. This mosquito species was first found in Japan and normally have wing span of about eight centimetres. The mosquito mainly feeds on nectar and not on blood.

TAMIL NADU

Elections to cooperative societies

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu State Co-operative Societies Election Commission has announced the schedule for electing the office-bearers for cooperative societies across the State.
- ❖ M. Rajendran, Commissioner of Tamil Nadu State Co-operative Societies Election Commission announced that the polls would be held in five phases.
- ❖ Elections to the cooperative Societies held the year 2013. The executive committee member's 5 year tenure going to complete this month (April).
- ❖ So, to ensure the filling of office members of Cooperative Society through the election, the Cooperative Societies election commission announced the elections to the cooperative societies.
- ❖ Cooperative Societies' Election Commission going to conduct elections to elect the executive committee members of 18,775 societies which come under 15 government departments including Cooperatives, Milk Production, Dairy form Development, Fisheries, Handloom, and Textiles.
- ❖ Elections are planned to conduct in a 5-phase manner because the cooperative societies in Tamilnadu, being working in three set up of primary societies, central societies, and state societies.
- ❖ Cooperative Societies' additional register, Chennai, and Cooperative Societies Regional sub-registers are appointed as the election observers.

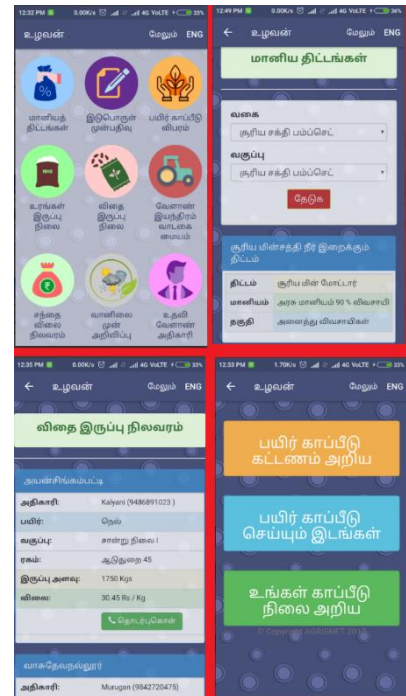
Amma Free Wi-Fi zones

- ❖ The Tamil Nadu government has launched Amma Free Wi-Fi zones in five cities of the state.

- ❖ The Wi-Fi facility has been inaugurated at Labour Statue, Marina, Chennai, Central bus stands of Salem and Tiruchirappalli, Gandhipuram bus stand in Coimbatore and Mattuthavani bus stand in Madurai.
- ❖ The facility would be free for first 20 minutes every day and Rs.10 would be charged per hour thereafter.
- ❖ The facility has been provided by state-run Tamil Nadu Arasu Cable TV Corporation (TACTV) at a total cost of Rs 8.50 crore.

'Uzhavan' - Bi-lingual Mobile App

- ❖ Tamil Nadu Government launched bi-lingual 'Uzhavan' (farmer) mobile application in Chennai, in a bid to use technology for benefit of farmers.
- ❖ The app available in Tamil and English language. Through this app ryot to can access to nine types of services, including details about their crop insurance.
- ❖ Through this app, a farmer can avail the following services
 - Can Get information on farm subsidies,
 - Can Get details on their crop insurance,
 - Can receive weather forecast for next four days
- ❖ It will also provide information on seeds and fertilizer stocks in local government and private stores.
- ❖ TN Government also launched 'Amma Bio-Fertiliser' scheme aimed at better management of nature farming and promoting and maintaining soil fertility.



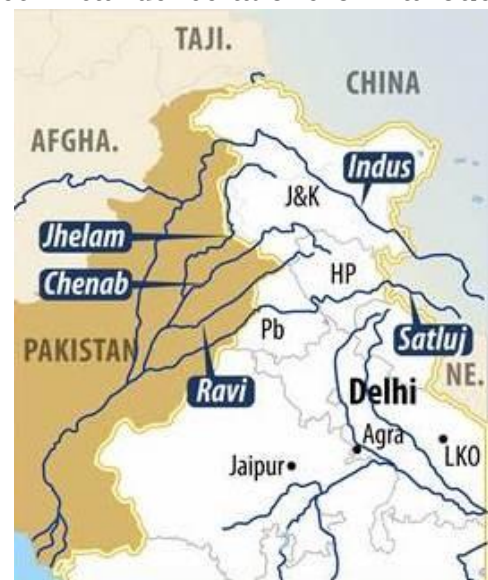
NATIONAL

Educational reforms – Cabinet approval

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved a slew of reforms for school education in the country, in what could be considered as the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan-2 project.
- ❖ The SSA, the Rashtriya Madhyamik Shiksha Abhiyan, and teacher training would be integrated into a single scheme from Classes 1 to 12.
- ❖ The integrated scheme will be in place from April 1, 2018, to March 31, 2020, with an estimated allocation of Rs. 75,000 crores over the period (20% increase from the present).
- ❖ The government would focus on educationally backward districts, disabled students, and women.
- ❖ The skill courses, which are now functional from Class 9 to Class 12, would begin from Class 6 in future, aimed at enhancing the employability of students.
- ❖ The Centre has also approved an increase in the outlay for making educational loans interest-free for students with modest financial means for studying in universities and colleges charging high fees.

114th meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC)

- ❖ The 114th meeting of the Permanent Indus Commission (PIC) between India and Pakistan has started in New Delhi to hold technical deliberations on various issues.
- ❖ The PIC is mandated to establish and maintain cooperative arrangements for the implementation of the treaty and to promote cooperation between the two sides in developing the Indus water systems.
- ❖ The meeting of the PIC is held alternately in India and Pakistan at least once every year as mandated by the Treaty.
- ❖ India's Indus water commissioner PK Saxena and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) officials will be part of the Indian delegation for the annual meeting.



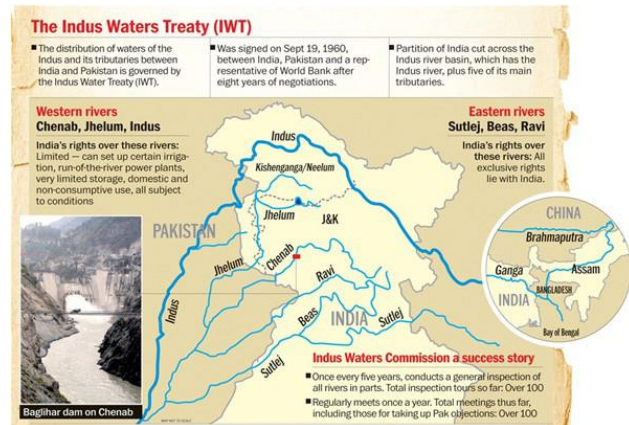
- ❖ The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) is a water-distribution treaty between India and Pakistan signed in 1960. The treaty was signed by the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan's President Ayub Khan. It was brokered by the World Bank.
- ❖ The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) deals with river Indus and its five tributaries, which are classified into 2 categories:

Eastern rivers:

1. Sutlej
2. Beas
3. Ravi

Western rivers:

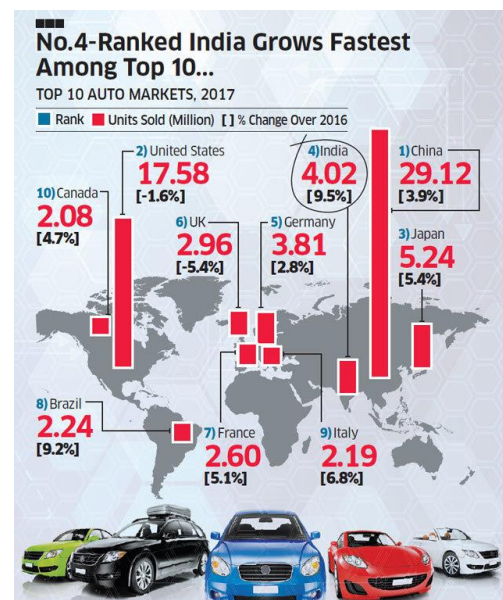
1. Jhelum
2. Chenab
3. Indus



- ❖ According to the treaty, all the water of eastern rivers shall be available for unrestricted use in India.
- ❖ According to the treaty, India should give the unrestricted water flow of western rivers to Pakistan.

India – 4th largest auto market

- ❖ India has emerged as the fourth largest automobile market with a growth rate of 9.5% as against the German car market which grew at 2.8% with 3.8 million vehicles sold in the country last year.
- ❖ New-auto sales climbed 14% on the year to 322,074 vehicles in December, according to data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers.
- ❖ Full-year sales rose 10% to roughly 4.01 million vehicles, an all-time high.
- ❖ India is now behind US, China, and Japan in terms of car production.
- ❖ Maruti Suzuki India consolidated its lead in passenger vehicles, which make up 80% of the market.





- ❖ Emerging markets have accounted for more than half the worldwide total for the first time back in 2010, according to IHS Markit, while China has been the world's largest market since 2009.
- ❖ India has been a standout performer in recent years. Its auto market doubled in size in just a decade.
- ❖ World Bank data shows that Gross domestic product per capita shot up about 70% between 2007 and 2016 to just over \$1,700.

USA - India naval training

- ❖ Indian Navy's Talwar class frigate INS Tarkash carried out a "greeting and training" exercise with the U.S. Navy's Theodore Roosevelt Carrier Strike Group (TRCSG)
- ❖ TRCSG was until now involved in operations against the Islamic State in the Arabian Gulf.
- ❖ INS Tarkash sailed in formation with the aircraft carrier USS Theodore Roosevelt, the guided-missile destroyer USS Preble (DDG 88) and other ships as part of the exercise.

MoU between India and Zambia

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Zambia in the field of Judicial Cooperation.
- ❖ During recent years, social, cultural and commercial relations between India and Zambia have developed in the positive direction.
- ❖ The signing of an agreement on cooperation in the field of justice will further enhance good relations between the two countries and add new dimensions in the field of judicial reforms.

MoU between India and Canada on IPRs

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Canada to establish bilateral cooperation activities in the field of Intellectual Property (IP).



- ❖ The MoU was signed in February 2018 and is intended to promote innovation, creativity and economic growth in both countries.
- ❖ It will facilitate the exchange of best practices, experiences, and knowledge on raising IP awareness among public, businesses and educational institutions of both countries.

SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act

- ❖ In an attempt to curb the misuse of SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989) and protect honest public servants Supreme Court gave the following verdict,
 - An arrest is not mandatory under the SC/ST Act, and the automatic arrest has been scrapped.
 - The court further directed that public servants can only be arrested with the written permission of their appointing authority.
 - This was to protect public servants and private employees from arbitrary arrests under the Atrocities Act.
 - Supreme Court also ruled that before arresting a public servant under the Act, a preliminary investigation by an officer not below the rank of deputy superintendent is a must.
- ❖ Union law ministry is preparing to file a review petition against the Supreme Court's ruling on the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 that puts a stop to immediate arrests in complaints filed under its provisions.
- ❖ Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act was enacted in the year 1989.

SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act

- ❖ It is a comprehensive law which not only defines atrocities against SCs and STs but also makes several rules, regulations etc. for proper protection of these vulnerable classes.
- ❖ One of the provisions of the law states that public servant (non SC/ST) neglecting his duties related to SCs/STs will be punished with imprisonment for a term of 6 months to 1 year.
- ❖ Ministry of Social Justice is the nodal ministry to enforce the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.



Mercer's Quality of Living Ranking 2018

- ❖ According to the Mercer's 20th Quality of Living Ranking 2018, Hyderabad and Pune have been jointly ranked at 142, making the best Indian cities to live in among the list of 450 cities around the world.
- ❖ They were closely followed by Bengaluru (149), Chennai (151), Mumbai, (154), Kolkata (160), with New Delhi (162) taking the last spot.
- ❖ Vienna has taken the top spot for the ninth consecutive year. Zurich took the second spot, while Auckland and Munich jointly hold the third place.
- ❖ In the fifth spot was Vancouver, which is the highest-ranked city in North America.
- ❖ Singapore (25) and Montevideo (77) are the top cities in Asia and Latin America, respectively.
- ❖ This year, Mercer has provided a separate ranking on city sanitation, which analyzed waste removal and sewage infrastructure, levels of infectious diseases, air pollution, water availability and quality of the cities.
- ❖ Honolulu topped the city sanitation ranking, followed by Helsinki and Ottawa that took the second place.
- ❖ The capital of Bangladesh, Dhaka (230) and capital of Haiti, Port au Prince (231) took the bottom spot on the ranking.
- ❖ Among Indian cities, Bengaluru took the top spot as it was ranked 194, closely followed by Chennai (199) and Pune (206).
- ❖ Kolkata and New Delhi ranked among the bottom five cities worldwide and were placed at 227 and 228, respectively.

Constitutional Validity of Polygamy and Nikah-Halala

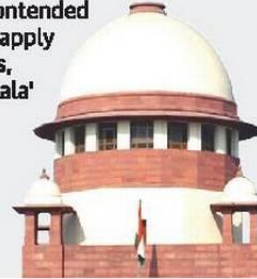
- ❖ The Supreme Court has agreed to examine the constitutional validity of the prevalent practices of polygamy and 'nikah halala' among Muslims and sought responses from the Centre and the Law Commission.
- ❖ Seven months after declaring triple talaq unconstitutional, the SC has decided to set up a Constitution bench to rule on the Muslim practices of polygamy and nikah halala.
- ❖ A PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court challenging the constitutional validity of practice of polygamy and Nikah-Halala under Muslim Personal law.

- ❖ The PIL claims that the provisions of Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937 in so far as it recognizes and validates the “sinful form” of Nikah-Halala and polygamy.
- ❖ It grossly injures the fundamental rights of married Muslim women and offends Article 14 (Right to Equality), Article 15 (Prohibition of discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth) and Article 21 (Right to Life) of the Constitution of India for being against public order, morality and health.

A relook on polygamy

• The SC considered the petitioners' submission based on its 2017 judgment where it had kept open the issue of polygamy and 'nikah halala' while quashing triple talaq

• The petitioners contended that IPC provisions apply to all Indian citizens, and that 'nikah-halala' is rape under IPC Section 375, while polygamy among Muslims is an offence under Section 494



• The petition also pointed out that while Muslim law allows a man to have multiple wives by way of polygamy, the same permission is not extended to Muslim women

Polygamy and Nikah-Halala

- ❖ A Muslim husband is allowed to have more than one wife.
- ❖ Under Nikah-Halala, if a Muslim woman after being divorced by her husband three times at different instances wants to go back to him, then she has to marry another person and then divorce the second husband to get re-married to her first husband.

Parivara and Talawara

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has given its approval for inclusion of communities, namely 'Parivara and Talawara' as a synonym of Nayaka at in the list of Scheduled Tribes (STs) of Karnataka.
- ❖ With this inclusion, persons belonging to these communities will be eligible to get Scheduled Tribes certificate from Karnataka and will also be eligible for all benefits meant for Scheduled Tribes in the state.
- ❖ This will fulfill the long-term demand of 'Parivara' and Talawara' communities for granting Scheduled Tribes status in the State of Karnataka.
- ❖ Scheduled Tribes are notified under Article 342 of Constitution.
- ❖ It is notable that any subsequent inclusion or exclusion and other modifications in the list of Scheduled Tribes can be made only through an amendment bill.

Sand Mining Framework

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Mines has launched Sand Mining Framework to help states deal with the sand mining issues, including demand-supply deficit and illegal extraction.
- ❖ It was launched at the third National Conclave on Mines & Minerals held in New Delhi.

Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana

- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved the proposal of enhancing the scope of Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY).
- ❖ The Union Government will now contribute Employer's full admissible contribution for first 3 years from the date of registration of new employee for all sectors including existing beneficiaries for their remaining period of 3 years.
- ❖ PMRPY has been in operation since August 2016.
- ❖ Under it, Government is paying 8.33% contribution of Employers to Employees' Pension Scheme (EPS) in respect of new employees (joined on or after 1st April 2016) having new Universal Account Number (UAN), with salary up to Rs. 15,000/- per month.

Swachh Bharat Summer Internship

- ❖ Government is going to launch Swachh Bharat Summer Internship (SBSI) 2018 aimed at engaging college youth with Swachhata work in villages in coming Summer vacation.





- ❖ The initiative will be launched by
 - Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, the convening and coordinating Ministry of Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) in association with Ministry of Human Resource Development.
- ❖ Every intern who completes the SBSI will also be provided a Certificate of Internship by the Swachh Bharat Mission.
- ❖ 2 credit points as an 'elective' under Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) will be awarded to students in Higher Educational Institutions undertaking and completing SBSI.

Re-structuring of NSDF and NSDC

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the proposal for restructuring of National Skill Development Fund (NSDF) and National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) to strengthen their governance, implementation and monitoring framework.
- ❖ The purpose of restructuring is also to ensure better corporate governance, transparency, and accountability in operations of NSDC. Besides, it will also strengthen oversight role of NSDF.
- ❖ It will also lead to a restructuring of the composition of Board of NSDF and NSDC to strengthen governance, implementation and monitoring framework.
- ❖ NSDC and NSDF were set up by Ministry of Finance and registered in July 2008 and January 2009 respectively for implementing coordinated action for skill development.
- ❖ NSDF entered into Investment Management Agreement (IMA) with NSDC for utilization of its corpus to meet desired objectives of National Skill Development Mission and encourage skill development in the country.

India, UK, and Ireland - MoU on organized crime

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland regarding cooperation in the field of organized crime.
- ❖ It is an exchange of information for purposes of combating international criminality and tackling serious organized crime.



- ❖ India and UK already have an agreement concerning investigation and prosecution of crime and tracing, restraint and confiscation of proceeds and instruments of crime which was signed in 1995.

Protected Area Permit rules

- ❖ The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is planning to relax the protected area permit (PAP) regime to enable foreign tourists to access border areas.
- ❖ The move is being initiated to promote tourism, create job opportunities for the locals and generate revenue for the states.
- ❖ MHA will coordinate with other agencies and state governments to identify possible locations for which protected area permit (PAP) regime provisions may be relaxed.
- ❖ However, citizens from Pakistan and China are unlikely to be given these relaxations.
- ❖ Under Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958, all areas falling between Inner line and International Border of some states have been declared as protected areas.
- ❖ The protected areas currently include whole of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, and Sikkim, besides parts of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, and Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ Some parts of Sikkim fall under protected area regime while others under restricted area regime.
- ❖ As per MHA's December 2010 circular, Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland were excluded from protected area regime initially for a period of one year from January 2011, subject to some conditions.
- ❖ Citizens of Afghanistan, China and Pakistan and foreign nationals of Pakistani origin are not allowed to enter such areas.

Aspirational Districts - NITI Aayog

- ❖ The NITI Aayog launched the baseline ranking for 101 aspirational districts based on 49 indicators across several sectors
- ❖ It includes health and nutrition, education, agriculture and water resources, financial inclusion, skill development and basic infrastructure.

- ❖ The initiative is aimed at creating competition at the state, district, and even the block level.
- ❖ The chosen districts for the Aspirational Districts programme will be ranked on their incremental progress, exemplifying and encouraging the spirit of competitive federalism.
- ❖ As per the baseline ranking, Vizianagaram in Andhra Pradesh is ranked highest with a score of 48.13 %.
- ❖ According to the baseline rankings, the worst performing districts in the country are Mewat in Haryana, Asifabad in Telangana and Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ The 'Champions of Change' dashboard was created by NITI Aayog in partnership with the Government of Andhra Pradesh for monitoring the real-time progress of the districts.

4 UP DISTS AMONG LAST 10

Base-line Ranking of 101 Aspirational (Backward) districts

BETTER FIVE

- 1 Vizianagaram (Andhra Pradesh)
- 2 Rajnandgaon (Chhattisgarh)
- 3 Osmanabad (Maharashtra)
- 4 Cuddapah (Andhra Pradesh)
- 5 Ramanathapuram (Tamil Nadu)

* BOTTOM FIVE

- 1 Mewat (Haryana)
- 2 Asifabad (Telangana)
- 3 Singrauli (MP)
- 4 Kiphire (Nagaland)
- 5 Shrawasti (UP)

*Uttar Pradesh has four districts, Shrawasti, Baharaich, Siddharth Nagar & Balrampur, in bottom ten most backward districts

'Transformation of Aspirational Districts' programme

- ❖ The programme was launched Prime Minister Narendra Modi in January 2018.
- ❖ It aims to quickly and effectively transform some of the most underdeveloped districts of the country.

C-17 Globemaster

- ❖ The Indian Air Force (IAF) for first time flawlessly landed its largest transport US-manufactured aircraft, C-17 Globemaster.
- ❖ IAF landed C-17 Globemaster at strategic Tuting Advanced Landing Ground (ALG) in Arunachal Pradesh, which is close to the Chinese border.
- ❖ The landing of this aircraft is seen as part of IAF's move to strengthen its overall operations in a strategically-key border state.





C-17 Globemaster

- ❖ The C-17 is US-manufactured transport aircraft commonly used to perform strategic airlift missions, transporting troops and cargo throughout the world along with medical evacuation and airdrop duties.
- ❖ It can be operated in diverse terrain from Himalayan air bases in North India at 13,000 ft to Indian Ocean bases in South India.
- ❖ In 2013, C-17 was officially put into service by IAF.

I – Metros

- ❖ The Union Housing Ministry has launched I-Metros at a Conference on “Indian Metros: Collaborating for Excellence” held at Metro Bhawan in New Delhi.
- ❖ I-Metros is an association of all Indian Metro Rail companies.
- ❖ It is established for Indian Metro Rail companies for mutual sharing of ideas & experiences for nurturing excellence in their performance.
- ❖ On this occasion, “The Operator’s Story”- a publication by World Bank and Railway and Transport Strategy Centre (RTSC), Imperial College London on findings of the research on “What makes Metros successful” was also released.

Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the signing of Migration and Mobility Partnership Agreement between India and France.
- ❖ The agreement represents a major milestone in enhancing people-to-people (P2P) contacts between both countries.
- ❖ It will be initially valid for a period of 7 years and incorporates provision for automatic renewal and monitoring mechanism through Joint Working Group (JWG).

India - Hellenic Agreement

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has apprised Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Cooperation in the field of Renewable Energy between India and Hellenic.
- ❖ The MoU envisages establishing Joint Working Group (JWG) to review, monitor and discuss matters relating to areas of cooperation.

- ❖ This MoU aims to establish a basis for the cooperative institutional relationship to encourage and promote technical bilateral cooperation on new and renewable issues on basis of mutual benefit equality.

1st National Conclave on Psychological Trauma, Child Protection, and Mental Illnesses

- ❖ The first National Conclave on Psychological Trauma, Child Protection, and Mental Illnesses held in New Delhi.
- ❖ The two-day conclave was organized by Ministry of Women & Child Development in collaboration with the Department of Psychiatry, AIIMS.
- ❖ It was aimed to provide a comprehensive synthesis of research, service provision and clinical practice in addressing psychological trauma and subsequent mental illnesses in Indian children and adolescents.

IMPRINT-II

- ❖ The Ministry of Human Resource Development has sanctioned Rs. 1000 crore for phase II of Impacting Research Innovation and Technology (IMPRINT) India programme to boost research and innovation in the country.
- ❖ Under the IMPRINT-II, a fund is being created by Department of Science and Technology (DST) under Ministry of Science and Technology and HRD Ministry together.
- ❖ In that participation will come from industry and other interested Ministries. The project will be run as a separate vertical in coordination with DST.
- ❖ IMPRINT India Programme is a joint initiative of Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Indian Institute of Science (IISc).
- ❖ It seeks to develop a roadmap for research to solve major engineering and technology challenges in 10 technology domains relevant for the country.





Size India

- ❖ National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), New Delhi under the Ministry of Textiles is going to conduct National Sizing Survey dubbed as Size India.
- ❖ The survey is to develop comprehensive size chart for ready-to-wear industry based on body measurements of the Indian population.
- ❖ Size India project is scientific exercise where anthropometric data will be collected from 25,000 sample (both men and women) population in the age group 15 to 65 years across six major cities.
- ❖ So far, 14 countries have successfully completed national sizing surveys.
- ❖ The six cities where this survey is going to be conducted- Kolkata, Mumbai, New Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Shillong.

World's second largest mobile phone producer

- ❖ India has replaced Vietnam to become the second-largest producer of mobile phones in the world, only after China.
- ❖ This information has been shared by the government on the basis of data provided by the Indian Cellular Association (ICA).
- ❖ As per the information, the annual production of mobile phones in India increased from 3 million units in 2014 to 11 million units in 2017.
- ❖ According to data shared by ICA, India accounted for 11 percent of global mobile production in 2017 compared to 3 percent in 2014.
- ❖ The top three mobile producing countries are China, India, and Vietnam.
- ❖ The government has established a Fast Track Task Force (FTTF) under Ministry of Electronics and IT, which has set the target to achieve around 500 million mobile phone production in India by 2019.

Sahyog-Hyeoblyeog 2018

- ❖ India, South Korea joint anti-piracy, search and rescue exercise 'Sahyog-Hyeoblyeog 2018' was conducted in the Bay of Bengal off the Chennai coast in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The exercise was conducted between Indian Coast Guard (ICG) and Korean Coast Guard (KCG) as part of the proposed establishment of MoU between them to improve maritime security in Indian Ocean Region (IOR).



- ❖ In this exercise, ICG's Dornier aircraft and ICG Shaurya, Rani Abbakka, C-423, C-431 from India participated.
- ❖ From Korean side KCG's deployed ship BADARO participated.

President's official visit

- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind has made a three-nation official state visit to African countries of Equatorial Guinea, Swaziland and Zambia from April 7 to 12, 2018.
- ❖ It will be the first-ever visit by any head of state of India to Equatorial Guinea and Swaziland. Indian President's visit to Zambia will be taking place after 29 years.
- ❖ It is his 3rd visit to the African continent. Earlier in 2017, he made his first official visit to Djibouti. And in March 2018, President Ram Nath Kovind made his second official visit to two African nations - Madagascar and Mauritius.

Chakravat HADR Exercise

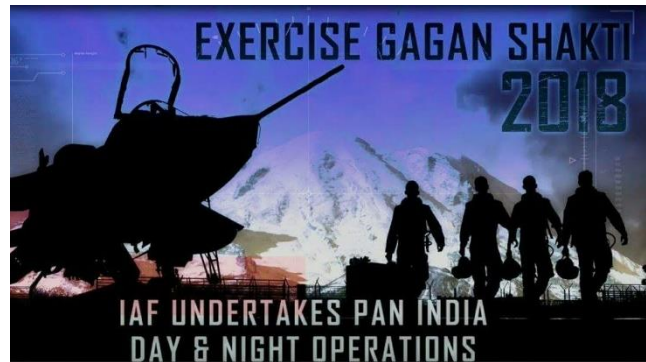
- ❖ Indian Navy conducted multi-agency humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) exercise named 'Chakravat' meaning 'cyclone' off the Kochi Coast.
- ❖ It was led by the Southern Naval Command at BTP Jetty of the Cochin Port with coordination of Kerala Government.
- ❖ The aim of the exercise is to review response mechanism in the event of a cyclonic storm.
- ❖ In this exercise, participation came from Indian Coast Guard, State Disaster Management Authority, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Coastal Police.

Global Logistics Summit 2018

- ❖ The Global Logistics Summit (GLS-2018) was held in New Delhi from April 5-6, 2018 to improve logistics and connectivity.
- ❖ The summit was organized by Department of Commerce, Ministry of Commerce & Industry along with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) and World Bank Group.
- ❖ Improving logistics and connectivity are vital for increasing intra-state and international trade flows.
- ❖ India spends around 14.4% of its GDP on logistics and transportation sector.
- ❖ It is notable that in November 2017, the logistics sector was granted infrastructure status.

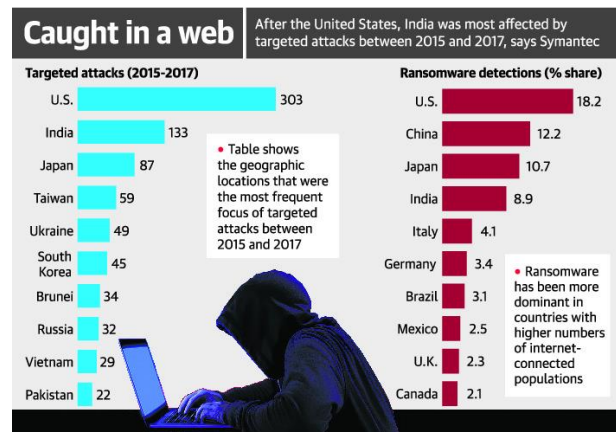
Exercise Gaganshakti 2018

- ❖ Indian Air Force (IAF) is going to conduct Exercise Gaganshakti 2018, biggest air combat exercise along Pakistan, China borders between April 10 to 23, 2018.
- ❖ Though it is IAF centric exercise, it will also be executed keeping in mind “Joint Operational Doctrine” so that requirements of other services are also met.
- ❖ The aim of this exercise is real-time coordination, deployment and employment of air power in short and intense battle scenario.
- ❖ Gaganshakti is a biennial exercise to assess war waging capabilities of IAF. During this exercise, the entire machinery of the IAF will be activated.
- ❖ For the first time, indigenously manufactured Tejas Light Combat Aircraft fighter jets will participate in the exercise.
- ❖ The all-encompassing Gaganshakti 2018 will be conducted in two phases, the first being at the western border and second phase will be along the northern borders with Pakistan.



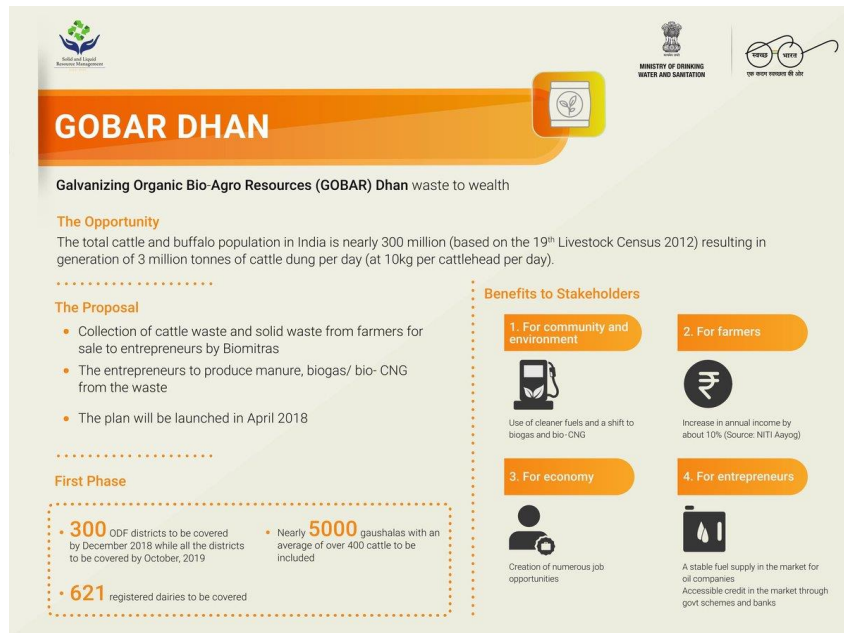
Internet Security Threat Report

- ❖ According to the recently released Internet Security Threat Report, India emerged as a third most vulnerable country in terms of risk of cyber threats, such as malware, spam, and ransomware in 2017.
- ❖ The report was published by security solutions provider Symantec and India have moved up by one place over a previous year.
- ❖ United States (with 26.61% global threats) was the most vulnerable country to such cyber-attacks, followed by China (10.95%) in 2017.
- ❖ In India, 5.09% of global threats were detected, slightly less than 5.11% in 2016.
- ❖ India continues to be second most impacted by spam and bot's attacks, third most impacted by network attacks, and fourth most impacted by ransomware.
- ❖ The global threat ranking of countries was based on 8 metrics viz. malware, spam, bots, phishing, network attacks, web attacks, ransomware and crypto miners.



GOBARDhan Yojana

- ❖ The Union Government will launch GOBARDhan (Galvanising Organic Bio-Agro Resources) Yojana, a central government scheme nationally from Karnal district of Haryana by end of April 2018.
- ❖ The government aims to cover nearly 700 districts under the scheme in this financial year (2018-19).
- ❖ The scheme focuses on managing and converting cattle dung and solid waste from farms and fields to useful compost, biogas, and bio-CNG.
- ❖ The central and state governments will provide funds in the ratio of 60:40, which will depend upon the number of households in villages.
- ❖ The scheme will be hugely beneficial for the country as India is home to highest cattle population in the world (around 300 million in number) which produces around 3 million tonnes of dung.



GOBAR DHAN

Galvanizing Organic Bio-Agro Resources (GOBAR) Dhan waste to wealth

The Opportunity
The total cattle and buffalo population in India is nearly 300 million (based on the 19th Livestock Census 2012) resulting in generation of 3 million tonnes of cattle dung per day (at 10kg per cattlehead per day).

The Proposal

- Collection of cattle waste and solid waste from farmers for sale to entrepreneurs by Biomitras
- The entrepreneurs to produce manure, biogas/ bio- CNG from the waste
- The plan will be launched in April 2018

First Phase

- 300 ODF districts to be covered by December 2018 while all the districts to be covered by October, 2019
- Nearly 5000 gaushalas with an average of over 400 cattle to be included
- 621 registered dairies to be covered

Benefits to Stakeholders

- For community and environment**
Use of cleaner fuels and a shift to biogas and bio-CNG
- For farmers**
Increase in annual income by about 10% (Source: NITI Aayog)
- For economy**
Creation of numerous job opportunities
- For entrepreneurs**
A stable fuel supply in the market for oil companies
Accessible credit in the market through govt schemes and banks

Railway link between Kathmandu and Raxaul

- ❖ India has agreed to build strategic railway link between Raxaul in Bihar and Kathmandu in Nepal to facilitate people-to-people (P2P) contact and bulk movement of goods.
- ❖ The new electrified rail line will be financed by India.
- ❖ There are three other railway projects in the pipeline between the two countries viz. Nautanwa- Bhairahawa, New Jalpaiguri-Kakarbhatta and Nepalgunj Road-Nepalgunj.
- ❖ The proposed railway line comes nearly two years after China in March 2016, agreed to construct strategic railway link with Nepal through Tibet.
- ❖ China aims to reduce landlocked Nepal's dependence on India for transit connectivity.
- ❖ China and Nepal have recently also signed a transit treaty which also comes years after a sense of mistrust that had prevailed.



Project Dhoop

- ❖ The Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) launched 'Project Dhoop' to address rising incidence of Vitamin D deficiencies (VDD), particularly amongst the young people.
- ❖ It has been launched by FSSAI along with National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC).
- ❖ The project aims to encourage schools to shift their morning assembly to around noon-time, mainly between 11 am to 1 pm to ensure maximum absorption of Vitamin D in students through natural sunlight.



FSSAI

- ❖ FSSAI is a nodal statutory agency responsible for protecting and promoting public health in India through regulation and supervision of food safety.
- ❖ It was established under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and operates under the aegis of Union Ministry of Health & Family Welfare.

Van Dhan Vikas Kendra

- ❖ The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has approved the establishment of the first multipurpose "Van Dhan Vikas Kendra" on a pilot basis for the establishment in Bijapur District of Chhattisgarh State.
- ❖ Van Dhan Vikas Kendra will be an important part of Central Government's scheme of "Mechanism for marketing of Minor Forest Produce (MFP) through Minimum Support price (MSP) and development of Value chain for MFP".
- ❖ This scheme is for socio-economic development of tribals living in forests, for whom, collecting Minor Forest Produce (MFP) is a major source of livelihood.
- ❖ The first "Van Dhan Vikas Kendra" in Bijapur District of Chhattisgarh will provide skill upgradation and capacity building training and will have primary processing and value addition facility for Minor Forest Produce.
- ❖ The Tribals derive 20-40% of their annual income from MFP.



- ❖ Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India (TRIFED) has assigned the work for the establishment of this pilot Vikas Kendra to Chhattisgarh Minor forest produce (CGMFP) Federation.

World EXPO 2020 Dubai

- ❖ India and World Expo 2020 Dubai have signed participants contract for India's pavilion in prestigious World Expo 2020 held once in 5 years.
- ❖ The contract provides for setting up of India pavilion at Expo 2020 on the extra-large plot (about one acre) in Opportunity segment.
- ❖ India's pavilion at World Expo 2020 will be developed in public-private partnership mode.

World's first micro-factory

- ❖ IIT-trained Australian scientist of Indian origin Veena Sahajwalla has launched world's first micro-factory.
- ❖ It can transform components from electronic waste items into valuable materials for re-use.
- ❖ This micro-factory can operate on site as small as 50 square meters and can be easily located wherever waste may be stockpiled.
- ❖ The e-waste micro-factory uses green manufacturing technologies to turn many types of consumer waste such as glass, plastic into commercial materials and products.

Banning of Steroid Creams

- ❖ The Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry have banned the sale of 14 steroid creams to prevent the indiscriminate sale of ointments containing steroids and antibiotics.
- ❖ These 14 preparations were included under Schedule H of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945 to impose the ban.
- ❖ The decision was taken following consultation with Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB).
- ❖ It is notable that DTAB already recommendation to ban the sale of such creams without a prescription.



- ❖ It also had submitted their recommendations to Central Drugs Standards Control Organisation (CDSCO).
- ❖ Some banned ointments are beclomethasone, desonide, alclometasone and fluocinonide among others.

Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB)

- ❖ DTAB is highest statutory decision-making body on technical matters related to drugs in the country. It is constituted as per the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.
- ❖ It is part of Central Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

NITI Aayog Forum for North East

- ❖ The first meeting of newly constituted 'NITI Aayog Forum for North East' was held in Agartala, Tripura.
- ❖ The Meeting is convened to discuss ways to boost development projects in the North East states.
- ❖ The first meeting of NITI Aayog Forum for North East was chaired by Vice-Chairman of NITI Aayog – Rajeev Kumar and the Minister of State for Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), Jitendra Singh.
- ❖ 'NITI Forum for North East' was constituted in February 2018
- ❖ The aim of the NITI Forum for North East is to ensure the sustainable economic growth of the North Eastern Region (NER) of India and review the status of development projects in the North Eastern region at periodic intervals.

65th National Film Awards

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has recently announced the 65th National Film Awards for the year 2017.
- ❖ The Feature Film Central panel was headed by Shri Shekhar Kapur, an eminent filmmaker known for his works in Hindi cinema and international cinema.
- ❖ The Non- Feature Film panel was headed by Shri. Nakul Kamte.
- ❖ The National Film Awards are most prominent film award ceremonies in India, established in 1954. Since then awarded annually.
- ❖ Winners in different categories of these awards are selected by a national panel of Juries appointed by Union Government.



Award categories	Recipients
Dada Saheb Phalke Award	Vinod Khanna
Best Feature Film	Village Rock star (Assamese)
Best Director	Jayaraj for Bhayanakam (Malayalam)
Best Actress	Sridevi for 'Mom'
Best Actor	Riddhi Sen for 'Nagar Kirtan'
Best Action Direction	'Baahubali 2
Best Choreography	Ganesh Acharya for 'Toilet, Ek Prem Katha'
Best Special Effects	'Baahubali 2: The Conclusion'
Special Jury Award	Nagar Kirtan (Bengali)
Best Lyrics	J.M prahalath (Muthurathina song)
Best Music Direction	AR Rahman for 'Katr Veliyidayi'
Best Make-up Artist	Ram Rajak for 'Nagar Kirtan'
Best Costume	Gobinda Mandal for 'Nagar Kirtan'
Best Production Design	Santosh Rajan 'Take Off'
Best Editing	Rima Das for 'Village Rockstar'
Best Sound Design	'Walking With The Wind'
Best Audiography (Location Sound)	Mallika Das, Village Rockstar
Best Location Sound Recording	Mallika Das for 'Village Rockstar'
Best Screenplay Original	Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum
Best Screenplay Adapted	Bhayanakam
Best Cinematography	Nikil.S.Pravin -Bhayanakam
Best Female Playback Singer	Sashaa Tirupati for 'Katr Veliyidayi'
Best Male Playback Singer	K.J Yesudas for the song 'Poy Maranja Kalam' from 'Viswasapoorvam Mansoor'

Best Child Artist	Anita Das for 'Village Rockstar'
Best Children's Film	'Mhorkya'
Best Film on Environmental Conservation	'Irada'
Best Feature Film on National Integration	Dhappa (Marathi)

Best Regional Films Special Mention

Marathi	Mhorkya
Malayalam	Take Off

Best Regional Films

Tamil	To let
Hindi	Newton
Ladakh	Walking With The Wind
Lakshadweep	Sinjar
Tulu	Paddayi
Marathi	Kachcha Limboo
Malayalam	Thondimuthalum Driksakshiyum
Kannada	Hebbettu Ramakka
Bengali	Mayurakshi
Assamese	Ishu
Telugu	Ghazi
Gujarati	Dhh
Odiya	Hello Arsi

UAV technology - Task Force

- ❖ The Union Government has constituted 13-member task force to prepare a roadmap and fast-track implementation of unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) technology or drones in the country.
- ❖ The 13-member task force will be headed by Minister of State (MoS) for Civil Aviation Jayant Sinha and will have representatives from government, PSUs, industry and sectoral experts.



- ❖ The task force will prepare roadmap, including UAV technology outcomes, timelines, implementation and review mechanism and measurable metrics for implementation of UAV technology.
- ❖ This task force will clearly delineate the role of the industry sector in UAV technology utilisation and it will submit its report in six months.

Army Commanders' conference

- ❖ The Army Commanders' Conference, chaired by Army Chief General Bipin Rawat, has started recently in New Delhi.
- ❖ Army Commanders' Conference is held biannually for formulating important policy decisions through collegiate deliberations.
- ❖ A six-day-long conference is an important event for planning and execution process of the Indian Army in military actions.
- ❖ The commanders will discuss issues like mitigation of future security threats, enhancement of combat capabilities of the army, infrastructure development along the northern borders, strategic setting up of railway lines in strategic locations, and budget allocation.

India Mobile Congress – 2018

- ❖ The second edition of India Mobile Congress (IMC-2018) will be held in New Delhi on October 25-27, 2018.
- ❖ The theme of the second edition of IMC is New Digital Horizons - Connect, Create, innovate.
- ❖ It will be organized by Department of Telecommunications (DoT) and Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI).
- ❖ IMC was launched in 2017 to provide a platform for policymakers, industry, and regulators to engage in meaningful deliberations to drive the future activities of the telecom sector.
- ❖ The first IMC was held at Pragati Maidan in September 2017.



e-FRRO scheme

- ❖ Union Home Ministry has launched the web-based application e-FRRO (e-Foreigners Regional Registration Office) scheme aimed at providing fast and efficient visa-related services online to visitors to India.
- ❖ The e-FRRO is a web-based application aimed to build a centralized online platform to provide fast and efficient visa-related services to foreigners.
- ❖ As of now, foreigners staying in India on visa duration of more than 180 days have to get themselves registered with FROs.
- ❖ With this scheme, foreigners will not be required to visit Foreigners Registration Office (FRO) or Foreigner Regional Registration Office (FRRO) offices anymore.
- ❖ The e-FRRO (e-Foreigner Regional Registration Officer) was being implemented on pilot basis in four FRROs - Bangalore, Chennai, Delhi, and Mumbai - from February 12.
- ❖ Now it has been formally launched in eight more FRROs - Kolkata, Amritsar, Hyderabad, Cochin, Thiruvananthapuram, Calicut, Lucknow, and Ahmedabad.

India-Wiesbaden Conference 2018

- ❖ The India-Wiesbaden Conference 2018 was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ The title of the conference was 'Securing Global Supply Chains through Government-Industry Partnerships towards Effective Implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540'
- ❖ India-Wiesbaden Conference 2018 was hosted by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in cooperation with Government of Germany and UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA).
- ❖ Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) was industry partner.

UNSC Resolution 1540

- ❖ The Wiesbaden Process was initiated by Government of Germany in 2012 to strengthen implementation of UNSC Resolution 1540 through Government-Industry partnerships.
- ❖ UNSC Resolution 1540 establishes legally binding obligations on all states to adopt and enforce appropriate and effective measures to prevent the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their delivery systems to non-state actors.

- ❖ India has established legally backed robust export control system to implement UNSC 1540 as part of its long-standing commitment to prevent the international proliferation of weapon of mass destructions.

National Electronic Health Authority

- ❖ The Union health ministry has finalized the draft of the proposed Digital Information Security in Healthcare Act (DISHA).
- ❖ It is a crucial step in establishing the National Electronic Health Authority (NeHA) which would function as an independent regulator.
- ❖ NeHA is a nodal agency for creating regulatory framework and guidelines for interoperability and exchange of digital healthcare data in the country.
- ❖ The authority will play a key role in promoting e-health standards by enforcing privacy and security measures and regulating storage and exchange of healthcare records.
- ❖ This Act will also pave the way for the setting up of Health Information Exchanges.
- ❖ The draft Digital Information Security in Healthcare Act enables people to have the right to privacy, confidentiality, and security of their digital health data.
- ❖ The NeHA will have the power to formulate standards, operational guidelines and protocols for the generation, collection, storage and transmission of the electronic health records (EHR).

THE DATABASE

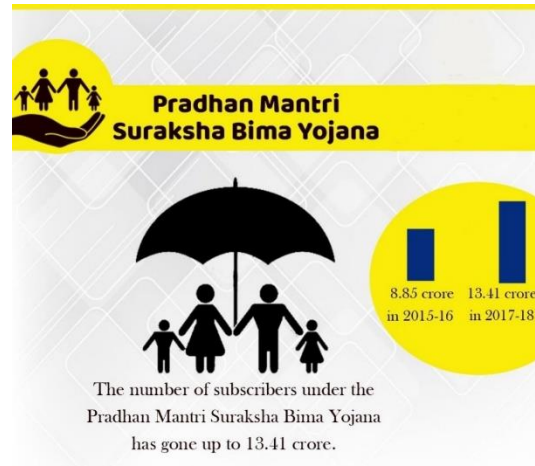
- India's Integrated Health Information System will be called National e-Health Authority (NeHA). Countries like Canada, UK and Australia already have it.
- It will also enforce laws and regulations relating to privacy of the patient's health information.
- There will be a provision of Electronic Health Records (EHR), which will provide accurate information about patients. Patients records can be quickly accessed.
- Other services like SMS-based services, live and asynchronous telemedicine and interactive voice response service (IVRS) are being looked at.
- Rural areas set to benefit the most.

Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bhima Yojana

- ❖ The number of subscribers under the Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana has gone up to 13.41 crore.
- ❖ The number of enrolments in Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana (PMSBY) has increased from 8.85 crores in 2015-16 to 13.41 crore in 2017-18 through auto-debit under the scheme.

About Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bhima Yojana

- ❖ Launched in May 2015, PMSBY provides a cover of Rs 2 lakh for accidental death or total permanent disability and Rs 1 lakh in case of permanent partial disability.
- ❖ The coverage period under this scheme is June 1 each year to May 31 of the subsequent year and the accidental insurance policies under implementation with different central government departments have been converged to PMSBY from June 1, 2017.
- ❖ PMSBY is offered/administered by both public and private sector general insurance companies, in a tie-up with banks, regional rural banks, and cooperative banks.



MoU on defense salary package

- ❖ Indian Army has signed Memorandum of Undertaking (MoU) with HDFC Bank on the Defence Salary Package.
- ❖ The first MoU between HDFC Bank and the Indian Army was signed in 2011 and was renewed on 13 Mar 2015.
- ❖ The current MoU is tailor made to suit requirements of serving soldiers, pensioners and families.
- ❖ Currently, Indian Army has MoUs on Defence Salary Package with 11 public and private sector banks.

10th Defence Expo

- ❖ The 10th edition of Defexpo India, a biennial exhibition on Land, Naval and Internal Homeland Security Systems, concluded at Thiruvananthapuram district.
- ❖ The four-day long defence expo (April 11 - 14) is formally inaugurated by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi.
- ❖ On the sidelines of the DefExpo, indigenously designed and built Indian Naval ships, Sahyadri-a stealth frigate, Kamorta - anti-submarine warfare corvette, Sumitra - a naval advanced offshore patrol vessel, Airavat - an amphibious ship



and Kirch - a missile corvette, were kept 'Open to Visitors' at Chennai Port for the first time in the history.

- ❖ The DefExpo witnessed four-days of hectic activities which underlined the theme of 'India: The Emerging Defence Manufacturing Hub' showcasing India's capability in the export of defence systems and components.
- ❖ Land systems got a large share of the spotlight with 155 mm Advanced Towed Artillery Gun (ATAG) has been unveiled at the expo.
- ❖ Designed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) in partnership with Kalyani Group, Tata Power, and Ordnance Factory Board, it is the first time India will have its own ATAG.

Uniform road tax structure

- ❖ The Group of Ministers (GoM) constituted by Union Ministry of Road Transport and Highways has proposed One Nation One Tax policy for seamless movement of commercial vehicles across the country.
- ❖ The 2-day meeting of GoM headed by Rajasthan transport minister Yoonus Khan was held in Guwahati, Assam.
- ❖ It will
 - Allow transfer of vehicles from one state to another without levying road tax.
 - Check on people registering their vehicles in low tax states and running them in other states.
- ❖ Centre has the powers to decide principles on which motor vehicles tax can be levied. The uniform tax should be based on invoice price of vehicles in three slabs.
- ❖ 8% tax on vehicles below 10 lakhs, 10% for vehicles costing between 10 -20 lakhs, and 12% for vehicles above 20 lakhs.
- ❖ Diesel vehicles may have to pay 2% extra taxes, while electric vehicles will be given 2% discount.

Meghalaya Landscapes Management Project

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Finance has signed Loan Agreement with IBRD (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development) loan of US \$48 million for Meghalaya Community – Led Landscapes Management Project (MCLLMP).



- ❖ The project aims to strengthen community-led landscapes management in selected landscapes in Meghalaya by 2023.
- ❖ The project consists of three components,
 - Strengthening knowledge and capacity for natural resource management.
 - Community-led landscape planning and implementation.
 - Project management and governance.
- ❖ The Restoration of degraded and highly degraded landscapes under the project will increase water for local communities and improve soil productivity which will in turn increase incomes and reduce poverty.

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development

- ❖ The International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) is an international financial institution that offers loans to middle-income developing countries.
- ❖ The IBRD is the first of five member institutions that compose the World Bank Group.
- ❖ It was established in 1944 with the mission of financing the reconstruction of European nations devastated by World War II.

India's first offshore wind project

- ❖ The National Institute of Wind Energy (NIWE) under Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) has issued Expression of Interest (EoI) for first offshore wind energy project in India.
- ❖ The global EoI is issued for offshore wind energy developers for developing 1000 MW (1 GW) offshore wind energy project in Gulf of Khambat, off the coast of Gujarat.
- ❖ With the announcement of this first offshore wind energy project, MNRE is attempting to develop this sector in India.
- ❖ This will help India to attain energy security and achieve National Action Plan for Climate Change (NAPCC) targets.
- ❖ Under National Offshore Wind Energy Policy, Chennai based NIWE was designated nodal agency to carry out necessary studies and surveys before final bidding of offshore wind project sites.
- ❖ NIWE has identified areas off coasts of Gujarat and Tamil Nadu for development of offshore wind power.

- ❖ It had installed first offshore LiDAR in Gulf of Khambhat for measurement of wind resource.
- ❖ It will install the second LiDAR off Tamil Nadu coast by September 2018.

First International road construction project

- ❖ The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has signed an agreement for upgradation of Yagyi – Kalewa section of highway in Myanmar to two lanes with the earthen shoulder.
- ❖ This project is part of India-Myanmar-Thailand (IMT) Trilateral Highway and this project is NHAI's first international project.
- ❖ It is being funded by Ministry of External Affairs, India and will be executed on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) mode at a cost of Rs.1177 crores.
- ❖ The IMT Trilateral Highway is regional highway being constructed under India's Act East policy to boost connectivity in the region.
- ❖ It will connect India's Moreh in Manipur with Mae Sot, Thailand via Myanmar.
- ❖ The highway is expected to boost trade and commerce in ASEAN-India Free Trade Area, as well as with rest of Southeast Asia.

International Energy Forum Ministerial Meeting

- ❖ India, world's third-largest energy consumer after US and China hosted 16th International Energy Forum (IEF) Ministerial Meeting in New Delhi.
- ❖ It was formally inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This is second time India hosting IEF Ministerial meeting. It had earlier hosted 5th IEF Ministerial in 1996 at Goa.
- ❖ The theme of 2018 IEF Ministerial Meeting was "The Future of Global Energy Security: Transition, Technology, Trade, and Investment".
- ❖ It was attended by Petroleum Ministers from 42 countries and was co-hosted by China and South Korea.



HOSTED BY THE
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CO-HOSTED BY
CHINA & KOREA





- ❖ It was aimed to improve policy and investment decisions and through increased knowledge and experience sharing.

First high-speed electric locomotive

- ❖ India's first high-speed electric locomotive with 12000 horsepower (HP) engine has been flagged off by PM from Madhepura Electric Locomotive Factory in Bihar.
- ❖ It is first big Make-in-India project developed and completed by Indian Railways in collaboration with French firm Alstome.
- ❖ With this, India joins an elite list of countries, including Russia, China, Germany and Sweden that have 12,000 HP and above capacity electric locomotives.
- ❖ Till now, the most powerful electric engine in Indian Railways was of 6,000 HP. This 12,000 HP locomotive will be attached to freight trains. They will be used to transport coal and iron ore.

First health & wellness center

- ❖ PM inaugurated the first Health and Wellness Centre in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh to mark the launch of Ayushman Bharat Yojana - National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM).
- ❖ The insurance scheme dubbed as Modicare was announced in Union Budget 2018 and was approved by Union Cabinet in March 2018 with budgetary support of Rs 10,500 crore.
- ❖ It aims to target over 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on Socio-Economic and Caste Census 2011 (SECC) database.
- ❖ It is the World's largest government-funded healthcare programme.
- ❖ Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission Council (AB-NHPMC) will be set up at apex level for giving policy directions and fostering coordination between Centre and States for implementation of the scheme
- ❖ It will be chaired by Union Health and Family Welfare Minister.

Poshan scheme

- ❖ NITI Aayog will start ranking states on the nutrition parameter under the government-run Poshan Abhiyaan.



- ❖ The first meeting of the National Council on India's Nutrition Challenges under Poshan (nutrition) Abhiyaan was convened by NITI Aayog to address the important undernourishment issues through coordination and review meeting between ministries.
- ❖ The Council will submit its report on countries nutrient status to the Prime Minister every six months.
- ❖ Poshan Abhiyaan seeks to provide quality nutrition to pregnant women. It is set to evolve as a Jan Andolan.
- ❖ As 80 percent of a child's brain develops during the first 1,000 days of his life, Poshan Abhiyaan will provide a focussed attention on this critical period
- ❖ The Abhiyaan targets to reduce stunting, under-nutrition, anemia (among young children, women, and adolescent girls) and reduce low birth weight.
- ❖ The target of the mission is to bring down stunting among children in the age group 0-6 years from 38.4 percent to 25 percent by 2022.

Draft of National Clean Air Programme

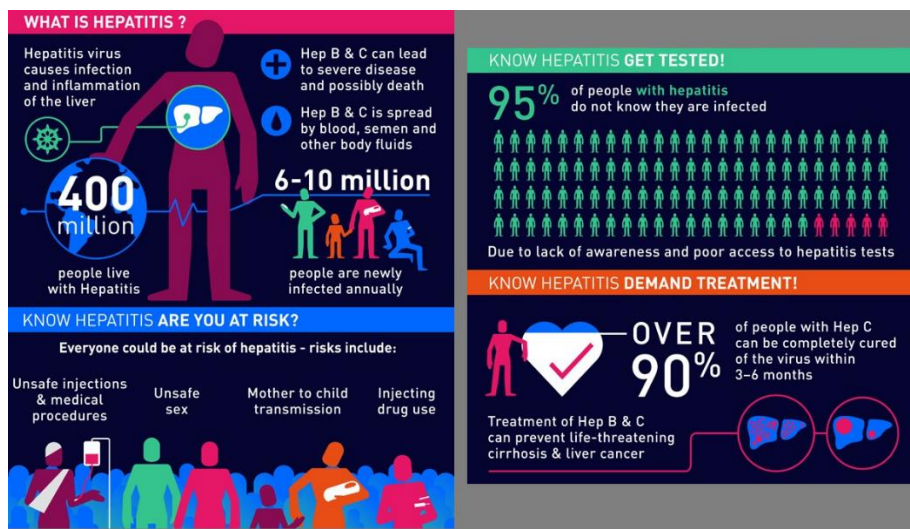
- ❖ The Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change released the draft of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP).
- ❖ NCAP aims to enhance and develop an effective and a proficient network to monitor the ambient air quality across the country for a comprehensive and reliable database.
- ❖ The Ministry has detailed a host of measures to bring down air pollution in the country under the NCAP and few of these are:
 - Air quality monitoring network
 - Identification of alternative technology for real-time monitoring
 - Setting up of 10 city super network
 - Indoor air pollution monitoring and management
 - Air pollution health impact studies
 - Air quality forecasting system
 - Issuance of notification on dust management
 - Setting up of a Three-tier mechanism for review, assessment, and inspection for implementation of the NCAP.

Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan

- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved restructured Centrally Sponsored Scheme of Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan (RGSA).
- ❖ The restructured scheme will focus on skill improvement training of Panchayat level government workers, building infrastructure, stepping up initiatives for effective e-governance under e-Panchayat Mission Mode Project (MMP) to attain the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).
- ❖ The scheme will be extended to all states/UTs of the country and will also include institutions of rural local government in non-Part IX areas, where Panchayats do not exist.
- ❖ The fund sharing ratio for the scheme for state components will be 60:40 barring Northeast and hilly states where it will be 90:10. For UTs, the central share will be 100%.

National Programme for Control of Viral Hepatitis

- ❖ The ministry of health and family welfare is set to roll out a National Programme for Control of Viral Hepatitis from the 2018-19 financial year.
- ❖ A budget of Rs 600 crore for the next three years has been approved.
- ❖ Health ministry has reported that about 1.2 crore people suffer from Hepatitis C in the country.
- ❖ There is no known vaccine for Hepatitis C. Hepatitis B is sexually transmitted one. but Unlike Hepatitis B, it is not sexually transmitted.



- ❖ Hepatitis C is caused by a blood-borne virus which affects the liver. It could spread through the use of injectable drugs, unsafe injection practices, unsafe health care, and transfusion of unscreened blood and blood products.
- ❖ Sofosbuvir is recommended the drug for Hepatitis C under the new WHO treatment guidelines for Hepatitis C.
- ❖ Haryana has become the first state in the country to treat Hepatitis-C patients of all categories through oral medicine.
- ❖ For the first time, the state government has included oral medicine in government hospitals for Hepatitis-C.
- ❖ Hepatitis is a medical condition in which there occurs inflammation of liver cells and its complications vary with the type of infection.
- ❖ There are 5 types of hepatitis viz. A, B, C, D, and E. Each type is caused by a different hepatitis virus and It is mostly caused by a group of viruses called hepatitis viruses.

First International SME Convention 2018

- ❖ The first International SME (Small, Medium Enterprises) convention was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ The four-day convention has been organised by Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises.
- ❖ It aims to provide general platform for free and fair business discussions and Entrepreneur to Entrepreneur (E2E) exchange of ideas, for addressing the impediments in business progress.
- ❖ The MSMEs sector constitute single largest employer after Agriculture sector in India.





Revoke of AFSPA

- ❖ The Union Home Ministry has removed Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) from Meghalaya and reduced it to eight police stations from 16 police stations in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The Act has however been extended by another six months in three eastern districts of Arunachal Pradesh – Tirap, Longding and Changlang – which border Myanmar and specific areas under eight police stations of seven other districts bordering Assam.
- ❖ The three districts have been under the AFSPA since January 2016. The Act was withdrawn from Tripura in 2015.
- ❖ The Act was only in place in Meghalaya for a 20-km area along the Assam border and not in operation in Mizoram.
- ❖ It is effective in the whole of Nagaland, Assam, Manipur (excluding seven assembly constituencies of Imphal).
- ❖ The state governments of Assam and Manipur now have the powers to keep or revoke the Act.

AFSPA

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

What are ‘disturbed’ areas

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

How is a region declared ‘disturbed’?

- ❖ Section (3) of the AFSPA empowers the governor of the state or Union territory to issue an official notification in The Gazette of India, following which the Centre has the authority to send in armed forces for civilian aid. Once declared ‘disturbed’, the region has to maintain status quo for a minimum of three months, according to The Disturbed Areas (Special Courts) Act, 1976.”

Sagar Kavach

- ❖ Two-day coastal security exercise ‘Sagar Kavach’ to strengthen the coastal security and to assess coastal security mechanism was held along Kerala coast.

- ❖ The exercise saw the participation of Indian Coast Guard (ICG), Indian Navy, Coastal Police and Marine Enforcement wing and various other security stakeholders.
- ❖ The Exercise 'Sagar Kavach' is held twice a year.

Harimau Shakti 2018

- ❖ Bilateral joint training exercise HARIMAU SHAKTI 2018 between India and Malaysia will be conducted in the dense forests of Sengai Perdik, Hulu Langat, Malaysia from 30 April 18 to 13 May 2018 as part of ongoing defence cooperation between both countries.
- ❖ This is the first instance the joint training exercise of Indian and Malaysian soldiers is being organized on Malaysian soil.
- ❖ Indian contingent is being represented by 4 GRENADIERS, one of the oldest infantry battalions having rich operational experience in conventional as well as counter insurgency warfare.
- ❖ Malaysian contingent is being represented by soldiers from Royal Ranjer Regiment and Royal Malay Regiment, known for their experience in Jungle Warfare.



India and WHO - MoA

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) between India and World Health Organisation (WHO) represented by its Regional Office for South-East Asia acting through its country office in India.
- ❖ The bilateral Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) was signed in March 2018 in New Delhi.
- ❖ It aims to encourage cooperation between India and WHO. This will facilitate in improving the public health status of people in India.
- ❖ It was established on 7 April 1948.
- ❖ It is a member of United Nations Development Group and its headquarters is located at Geneva.

- ❖ The WHO is a specialized agency of United Nations that acts as coordinating authority on international public health.

Restructured National Bamboo Mission

- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved restructured National Bamboo Mission (NBM) during the remaining period of 14th Finance Commission (2018-20).
- ❖ It is a Centrally Sponsored Scheme under National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA).
- ❖ CCEA has also approved Empowerment of Executive Committee for the formulation of guidelines of NBM and make changes therein.
- ❖ The restructured mission will focus on the development of bamboo in limited states where it has a social, commercial and economic advantage.
- ❖ The restructured mission will focus particularly in North Eastern region and in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Karnataka, Bihar, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala.
- ❖ NBM, a Centrally Sponsored Scheme was started in 2006-07. It was subsumed under Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH) during 2014-15 and continued till 2015-16.
- ❖ It aims to promote the growth of bamboo sector through an area based regionally differentiated strategy.

Death penalty for child rapists

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved promulgation of Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance to provide death penalty for rapists of girls below 12 years.
- ❖ The ordinance amends Indian Penal Code (IPC), Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC), Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act 2012 and Indian Evidence Act of 1872.

WHAT'S IN STORE FOR INNOCENCE KILLERS

Key provisions in the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance

Rape of a girl under 12 years: 20 years in jail or life imprisonment or death

Gang-rape of a girl under 12 years: Imprisonment for life or death

Rape of a girl under 16 years: Minimum punishment increased from 10 to 20 years, extendable to imprisonment for life

Gang-rape of a girl under 16 years: Imprisonment for life

Rape of women: Minimum punishment raised from imprisonment of 7 years to 10 years, extendable to life

- Dedicated manpower for investigation of rape cases
- Probe and trial each to be completed in two months
- No anticipatory bail for accused in rape or gang-rape of a girl under 16 years

STATE OF CRIME

On avg, 4 women report rape every hour in India, according to national crime statistics

ONLY FOR RAPE CASES

New fast track courts, new posts of public prosecutors, special forensic kits for hospitals, police stations, special forensic labs in each state/UTs






- ❖ This Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance also has also provision for maintaining national database of rapes and profile of sexual offenders by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).
- ❖ This data will be regularly shared with States/UTs for monitoring, tracking and investigation of rape cases by police.

Justice Rajesh Bindal committee Recommendations

- ❖ The Committee headed by Justice Rajesh Bindal has submitted its report on legal issues related to inter country removal & retention of children and its recommendations to the Ministry of Women and Child Development.
- ❖ The Committee has recommended that the Government may establish an 'Inter Country Parental Child Removal Disputes Resolution Authority' (ICPCRDRA).
- ❖ The authority
 - Will be chaired by retired High Court Judge and shall have members from Legal and Social sector background along with representatives from key Ministries.
 - Has been envisaged to provide a one window solution in cases of inter country removal and retention of Children which is arising because of parental issues.
- ❖ Along with its recommendation, The Committee has also submitted draft legislation - International Child Abduction bill to the Government.
- ❖ Currently, there is no specific legislation in India addressing issues related to abduction of children from and into India because of parental issues in abroad.

Inter country child abduction- Hague Convention

- ❖ Law Commission of India (LCI) had prepared draft legislation titled "The Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction Bill, 2016 to address the issue and support India's accession to Hague Convention on Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1980.
- ❖ 94 states are party to Hague Convention on the Civil Aspects of International Child Abduction 1980
- ❖ India is not signatory to it (as country has to have domestic law in place before it can become signatory).
- ❖ The convention is applicable to any child, up to age of 16 years who is habitual resident of any of member states.

Integrated Initiative for Prevention & Control of Viral Hepatitis

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has decided to roll out 'Integrated initiative for prevention & control of viral hepatitis' under National Health Mission (NHM) for prevention and control of viral hepatitis.
- ❖ Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver. Hepatitis is most often caused by a virus and There are 5 types of viral Hepatitis in Common. Those are Hepatitis A, Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C, Hepatitis D, Hepatitis E.
- ❖ Viral hepatitis is recognised as public health problem worldwide. India is committed to ending it by 2030.



Protected Area Permit regime

- ❖ Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has relaxed six-decade-old protected area permit (PAP) regime to allow foreign tourists to access border areas of Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur for five years with effect from April 1, 2018 with protected area permit (PAP).
- ❖ However, citizens from Pakistan, China and Afghanistan, will remain to be banned from all PAP areas, including Nagaland, Mizoram and Manipur.
- ❖ Under Foreigners (Protected Areas) Order, 1958, all areas falling between Inner line and International Border of some states have been declared as protected areas.
- ❖ The protected areas currently include whole of Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland and Sikkim, besides parts of Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Jammu and Kashmir.
- ❖ Some parts of Sikkim fall under protected area regime while others under restricted area regime.



Central Project Monitoring Unit: e-Vidhan

- ❖ The Government has launched Central Project Monitoring Unit for e-Vidhan project at Parliament.
- ❖ The new office of Central Project Monitoring Unit for the e-Vidhan project of the Government was created as a part of Swachhata Pakhwada being observed by the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs from April 16th to 30th, 2018.
- ❖ e-Vidhan is a project to digitize and make the functioning of State Legislatures in India paperless.
- ❖ The Government expects the project to contribute to the cleanliness & environment by reducing the use of papers to a great extent.
- ❖ The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs is the Nodal Ministry for the project.
- ❖ One of the key component of the strategy devised for implementation of the project is to create Project Monitoring Units both at Central as well as State levels.

e-Sanad

- ❖ Ministry of Human Resource Development integrated e-SANAD portal and National Academic Depository.
- ❖ e-Sanad is aimed at online verification of the documents with an objective to extend contactless, cashless and paperless document attestation/ apostille service to applicants in India as well as abroad.
- ❖ The programme aims to promote Indian education to 2 lakh international students by 2023. 55% of the total seats will be available, under fee waiver scheme on merit basis.
- ❖ The programme will however not affect the number of seats available for Indian students.
- ❖ Further, eSanad has been integrated with Non- Tax Receipt Portal (NTRP) successfully for cashless payment.

BCCI under RTI

- ❖ The Law Commission has recommended that the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) along with its constituent member cricketing associations be covered under the Right to Information (RTI) Act.



- ❖ The Commission, headed by Justice (retd) B S Chauhan, has held that BCCI exercises state-like powers affecting the fundamental rights of the stakeholders, guaranteed under Part III of the Constitution.
- ❖ The Commission also noted that it falls under the definition of a public authority that has received substantial financing from governments.
- ❖ From 2007-2008 onwards, the registration of BCCI under section 12A of the Income Tax Act, 1961, as a charitable trust, was withdrawn.
- ❖ Hence, it has been recommended that BCCI be viewed as an agency or instrumentality of State.
- ❖ The Commission concluded that BCCI ought to be classified as “state” within the meaning of Article 12 of the Constitution.

Defense Planning

- ❖ The Centre has set up a Defence Planning Committee (DPC) chaired by National Security Advisor (NSA) AjitDoval to facilitate "comprehensive" planning for the defence forces besides focusing on military doctrines to deal with emerging security challenges.
- ❖ Apart from the NSA, the committee will comprise the foreign secretary, chairman of chiefs of staff committee, the Army, Navy and Air Force chiefs and secretary (expenditure) in the Finance Ministry.
- ❖ The chairman of the DPC can co-opt experts into it depending on requirement.

Offline Aadhaar Verification

- ❖ Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has brought an updated QR code on e-Aadhaar.
- ❖ This updated digitally signed 'QR code' will now contain the photograph of the Aadhaar user with other non-sensitive details like name, address and birth date.
- ❖ The new 'QR code' can be used for offline user verification without disclosing the 12-digit identification number.

INTERNATIONAL

First female UN political affairs chief

- ❖ Long-serving American Diplomat Rosemary di Carlo was appointed to become the first woman to head UN political affairs, one of the most high-profile positions at the world body.
- ❖ DiCarlo will replace Jeffrey Feltman, another American who held the post of under-secretary-general for political affairs since 2012, overseeing UN efforts to end conflicts worldwide.
- ❖ The appointment marks the first time in the world body's history that a woman will hold the senior position.



18 new missions - Africa - 2021

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the opening of 18 new Indian Missions in Africa over a four-year period from 2018.
- ❖ The 18 new Indian Missions in Africa will be opened in Cape Verde, Chad, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Republic of Congo, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Guinea Bissau, Guinea, Liberia, Mauritania, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Somalia, Sierra Leone, Swaziland and Togo.
- ❖ The decision will enhance India's diplomatic outreach and increase its footprint in the resource-rich African continent.
- ❖ It will further enhance the cooperation to implement commitments of India-Africa Forum Summit.

Naval base - India's proposal

- ❖ Seychelles President Danny Faure told Parliament that Seychelles government will not take up the Assumption island project deal with India for ratification.
- ❖ This announcement came two months after India signed a revised agreement with the Indian Ocean archipelago nation of Seychelles for the building of military facilities on Assumption Island, Seychelles' Opposition has refused to let it pass in their Parliament.

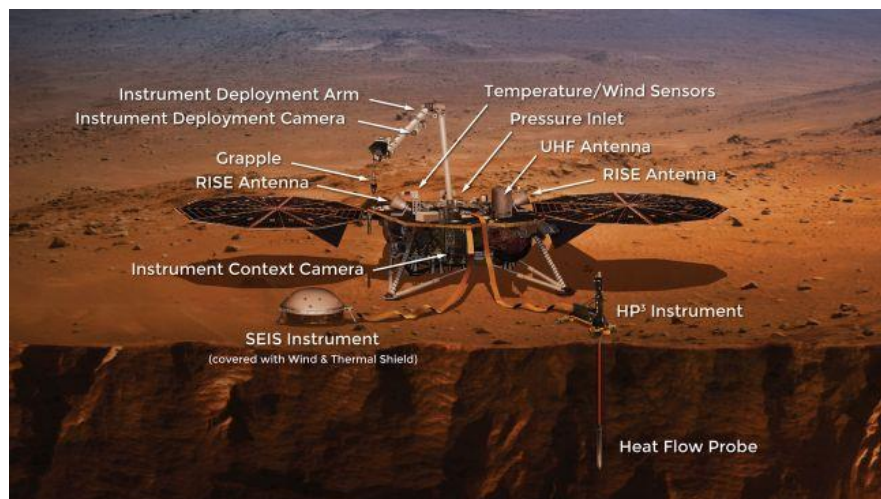
- ❖ Seychelles is an archipelago of 115 islands in the Indian Ocean, off East Africa.
- ❖ After China inaugurated its first overseas military base in Djibouti, near Suez Canal- one of the world's busiest shipping lanes, India signed an agreement with Seychelles to establish a military base in Seychelles to control the dominance of China.

Seychelles Agreement

- ❖ The agreement had been signed in 2015 during the visit of PM Modi but there are some troubles occurring because of the refusal of Seychelles parliament to ratify it.
- ❖ The agreement is very important for India, as it gives the way to set a military base on both Seychelles and Mauritius (Agalega island), the intention behind the treaty is to extend India's strategic footprint in the Indian Ocean.
- ❖ The agreement aims to establish a cooperation between two countries in establishing anti-piracy operations and enhanced EEZ surveillance to prevent intrusions by potential economic offenders including those indulging in illegal fishing, poaching, drug and human trafficking.

NASA – InSight Mission

- ❖ The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced to send its first-ever mission to Mars to study its deep interior and find traces of how it was formed.

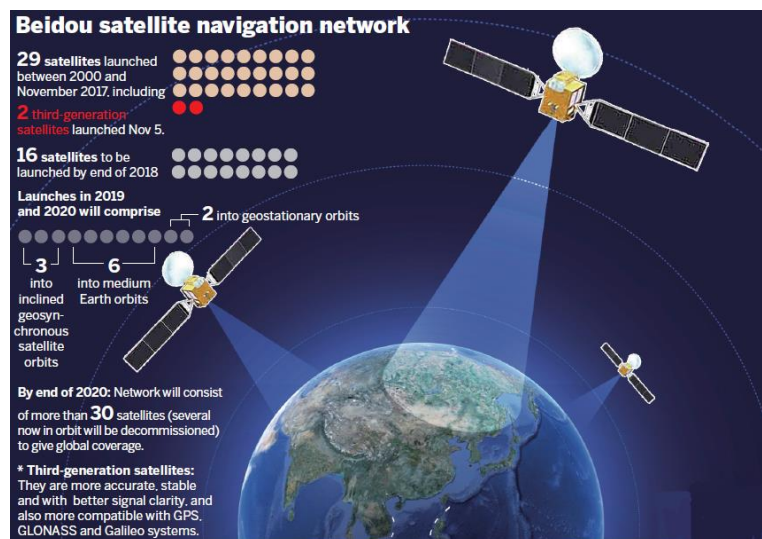


- ❖ Scheduled to be launched on May 5, 2018, NASA's Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy, and Heat Transport (InSight) will be the first-ever mission dedicated to studying the heart of Mars.

- ❖ It also will be the first NASA mission, after the Apollo Moon Landings, to place a seismometer on the soil of another planet. The seismometer is a device that measures quakes.
- ❖ InSight is a part of the Discovery Program of NASA which is managed by the Marshall Space Flight Centre in Huntsville, Alabama.
- ❖ InSight stands for Interior Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport.
- ❖ InSight will bring back information about the earliest stages of Mars' formation dating 4.5 billion years ago.
- ❖ It will give hints of how rocky bodies form such as Earth, its moon and also about planets of other solar systems.
- ❖ Lockheed Martin Space in Denver built and tested the InSight spacecraft and JPL manages the InSight Project for NASA's Science Mission Directorate in Washington.

BeiDou-3 navigation satellite

- ❖ China has successfully launched a pair of twin Beidou-3MEO satellites – Beidou-30 and Beidou-31 –into space.
- ❖ It has been launched as part of its third and final stage of launching its domestic Beidou (Compass) satellite navigation system.
- ❖ They were launched on board Long March-3B carrier rocket from Xichang Satellite Launch Centre in southwest China's Sichuan Province. It was 269th mission for the Long March rocket family.
- ❖ The twin satellites are Medium Earth Orbit component of the third phase of Beidou satellite navigation system.
- ❖ They will work together with six previously launched BeiDou-3 satellites once they pass series of tests.





- ❖ They were developed by the Innovation Academy for Microsatellites at Chinese Academy of Sciences and China Academy of Launch Vehicle Technology, respectively.

BeiDou Navigation System

- ❖ BeiDou is the 2nd generation of Chinese homegrown navigational system seen as a rival to US's Global Positioning System (GPS). It was named after Chinese term for plough or Big Dipper constellation.
- ❖ The first BeiDou satellite was sent into space in 2000. The system became operational in December 2011, with a constellation of 10 satellites providing services in China only.
- ❖ In December 2012, it began offering services to customers in Asia-Pacific region. On its completion in 2020, it will provide services to global customers.

Digital Initiative for ease of exports

- ❖ The Ministry of Commerce and Industry have launched digital initiatives of Export Inspection Council (EIC) for ease of export.
- ❖ The ministry launched this initiative under flagship Digital India Initiative to boost India's potential for agricultural and food export.
- ❖ The initiatives are
 - ✓ Lab-one assessment portal
 - ✓ Export Alert Monitoring portal
- ❖ Lab-one assessment portal will provide a unified approach to all stakeholders like accreditation bodies, regulators, and laboratories by bringing them together on the common platform.
- ❖ Export Alert Monitoring portal will monitor non-compliances raised by importing countries.

Export Inspection Council (EIC)

- ❖ EIC is the official export certification body of Central Government. EIC has developed portals to reduce transaction time and cost in a transparent manner.
- ❖ EIC was established by Central Government under Section 3 of Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963.
- ❖ EIC is an advisory body to Central Government. It is empowered to notify commodities which will be subject to quality control and inspection prior to export.



- ❖ EIC also exercises technical and administrative control over the five Export Inspection Agencies (EIAs), one each at Chennai, Delhi, Kochi, Kolkata and Mumbai established by Ministry of Commerce.

Desert Tiger 5

- ❖ The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Malaysia concluded joint military exercise “Desert Tiger 5” in Dubai, UAE.
- ❖ The main aim of Desert Tiger 5 is mutually sharing expertise and enhancing joint military actions between these two countries.

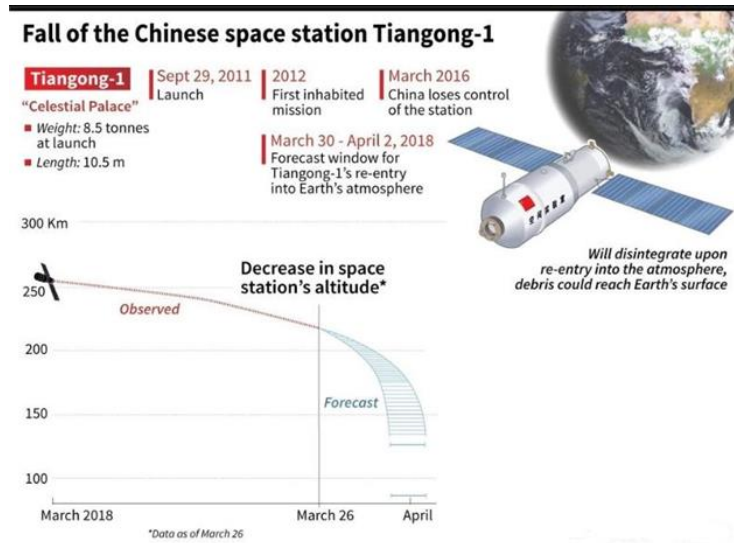
International conference on human rights

- ❖ Nepal will host an international conference to address the issues relating to human rights and impunity in South Asia.
- ❖ Over 50 representatives from 20 countries will be participating in this event.
- ❖ The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) of Nepal is hosting the three-day international conference with the theme 'Identifying challenges and assessing progress: addressing impunity and human rights in South Asia'.
- ❖ The conference will issue a 'Kathmandu Declaration' at the conclusion through holding intensive discussions on various issues relating to human rights and impunity.

Tiangong-1

- ❖ China's out-of-control Tiangong-1 space lab has re-entered Earth's atmosphere, landing in the middle of the South Pacific Ocean near world's 'spacecraft cemetery or graveyard'.
- ❖ Tiangong-1 (Heavenly Palace or Celestial Palace-1) was China's first prototype space station or space laboratory.
- ❖ It was placed in orbit in September 2011 as part of China's efforts towards building its own space station independent and unconnected to any other international space-active countries.

- ❖ During its lifespan, Tiangong-1 had served as both manned laboratory and experimental testbed to demonstrate orbital rendezvous and docking capabilities during its active operational life.
- ❖ It was a first operational component of Tiangong program, which aims to place a larger, modular station into orbit by 2023, the time when US-led International Space Station is expected to go out of service.
- ❖ Tiangong-1 was originally planned to be decommissioned in 2013 but its mission was repeatedly extended. It reportedly stopped functioning in 2016.
- ❖ China has launched a second lab, Tiangong-2 in 2017 which continues to be operational.



9th India, Japan, US trilateral meeting

- ❖ The 9th India-Japan-US trilateral meeting was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ The trilateral countries agreed to continue to collaborate to promote increased connectivity in Indo-Pacific.
- ❖ The India-Japan-US trilateral was launched in December 2011 when Hillary Clinton was US Secretary of State.
- ❖ The inaugural ministerial trilateral was held in September 2015 in New York on sidelines of United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) Session which was hosted by then US Secretary of State John Kerry.



- ❖ The last ministerial dialogue was also held in New York, the US in September 2017.

External Affairs Minister's Azerbaijan visit

- ❖ External Affairs Minister (EAM) Sushma Swaraj embarked a three-day official visit to Azerbaijan's capital city Baku to participate in Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Conference.
- ❖ The NAM Mid-Term Ministerial Conference held at Baku on 5-6 April under the theme of "Promoting international peace and security for sustainable development"
- ❖ The Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is a group of states that are not formally aligned with or against any major power bloc. As of 2012, the movement has 120 members.
- ❖ 17 states and 10 International organizations have an observer status to NAM. NAM plays an important role in the maintenance of the international peace and security.
- ❖ In 2011, the Republic of Azerbaijan joined the movement at the XVI Ministerial Conference held in Bali (Indonesia).
- ❖ In 2019, the Republic of Azerbaijan will host the XVIII Summit of the NAM and will be chair of NAM between 2019 -2022.

Boao Forum - Ban Ki-moon

- ❖ Former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was elected as Chairman of Boao Forum for Asia.
- ❖ By this selection, Ban Ki-moon is going to replace Japan's Yasuo Fukuda, the incumbent Chairman of Boao Forum for Asia.
- ❖ The former governor of People's Bank of China Zhou Xiaochuan was appointed vice-chairman.
- ❖ The appointments took place during the second session of annual Boao Forum, known as "Asian Davos" underway in China's Hainan province.



- ❖ Ban Ki-moon is a South Korean diplomat and was eighth Secretary-General of United Nations from January 2007 to December 2016.

Boao Forum for Asia (BFA)

- ❖ BFA was established in 2001. Its first meeting was held in April 2002 and since then it is held annually.
- ❖ It is modeled on annual World Economic Forum (WEF) held annually in Davos, Switzerland.
- ❖ It is a non-profit organization that hosts high-level forums for leaders from government, business, and academia in Asia and other continents to share their vision on most pressing issues in this dynamic region and world.
- ❖ Its fixed meeting is held annually in Boao, Hainan province, China although Secretariat is based in Beijing. The forum sometimes is known as the “Asian Davos”.
- ❖ This forum takes its name from the town of Boao in China’s southern Hainan province, which has been the permanent venue for its annual conference since 2002.



ICBM Sarmat Missile

- ❖ Russia has successfully test-fired its latest nuclear Inter-Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) RS-28 Sarmat.
- ❖ The test was carried out at the Plesetsk Cosmodrome, as a spaceport in the west of Russia, close to the Arctic Circle.
- ❖ The ICBM Sarmat has the capacity to reach any point in the world. The missile will enter into service by 2021.
- ❖ The RS-28 Sarmat is a heavy liquid-propellant ICBM capable of carrying nuclear charges.





- ❖ The objective of this development is to replace the R-36M2 Voyevoda ICBM, which is Russia's only Strategic Missile Force since 1988.
- ❖ The name Sarmat is based upon the nomadic Sarmatian tribes which used to live between 6th and 4th century BC in current territories of Russia, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan.

BABUR Missile - Pakistan

- ❖ Pakistan Navy successfully test fired indigenously developed Submarine Launched version of Cruise Missile (SLCM) BABUR.
- ❖ The missile was tested from an underwater dynamic platform off Pakistan's coast in the Arabian Sea and flew to strike a target at an undisclosed location.
- ❖ This is only the second time that Pakistan has announced a test of the submarine-launched Babur-III missile, with the first test being conducted in January 2017.
- ❖ The Babur-3 is capable of "delivering various types of payloads" and uses "underwater controlled propulsion."

Bangladesh - Quota

- ❖ Due to nation-wide protests by thousands of students, Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina announced abolishment of the quota system for recruiting government officials through an annual civil service exam.
- ❖ At present, 56% posts in the annual civil service examination are reserved under various quotas.
- ❖ Among those, the largest chunk—30%—is reserved for children of freedom fighters.
- ❖ The quota system in Bangladesh's civil service was introduced in 1972 after independence on December 16, 1971.

Eighth Regional 3R Forum

- ❖ The Eighth Regional 3R Forum in Asia and Pacific was held in Indore, Madhya Pradesh.



- ❖ The theme of this edition of the forum was “Achieving Clean Water, Clean Land and Clean Air through 3R and Resource Efficiency– A 21st Century Vision for Asia-Pacific Communities”.
- ❖ It was co-organized by Ministry of Housing and Affairs, Japan’s Environment Ministry, and United Nations Centre for Regional Development (UNCRD).
- ❖ The government of Madhya Pradesh, Indore Municipal Corporation and Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) were Organizing State Partner, City Partner and Industry Partner of the event.
- ❖ The Regional 3R Forum in Asia and Pacific was launched in 2009 in Tokyo, Japan with the objective of integrating 3Rs– reduce, reuse and recycle in policy, planning and development.

United Nations Centre for Regional Development

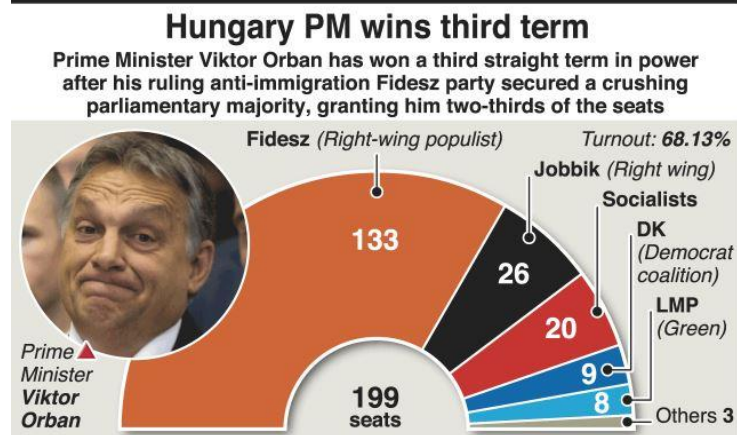
- ❖ UNCRD was founded in 1971 as an instrument to help achieve the strategy for Second United Nations Development Decade.
- ❖ It was created by agreement between Government of Japan and UN. Its operations are supported by UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN/DESA).

Arab League Summit 2018

- ❖ The 29th Arab League Summit 2018 has started in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia on April 15 to promote Arab joint action to address challenges facing by the Arab League’s nation.
- ❖ Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid, the Vice President and Ruler of Dubai is leading the UAE’s delegation to the 29th Arab League Summit.
- ❖ In this annual gathering of Arab leaders, Saudi Arabia called for a unified stand against Iran.
- ❖ King Salman of Saudi Arabia chaired the summit and named it as the “Jerusalem Summit” to remind everyone around the world that Palestine is “engraved in the conscience of all Arab people”.
- ❖ The summit begins 24 hours after the US, France, and Britain launched air strikes in war-torn Syria in response to a chemical attack on the rebel enclave of Eastern Ghouta last week.

Viktor Orbán – Hungary

- ❖ Viktor Orbán, the Incumbent Hungarian Prime Minister, secured a major victory for the third time in the row in the recently held elections. The right-wing Fidesz party won 134 seats in the 199-seat parliament.
- ❖ By this huge win Orbán holding a two-thirds majority for the third time, and powers to change constitutional laws.
- ❖ In the recently held election, other parties such as Jobbik, a nationalist party won 25 seats, and the Socialists and their allies took 20.
- ❖ Viktor Orbán is the country's longest serving-leader since the fall of communism in 1989. In overall, this is the fourth term for Viktor Orbán.



Myanmar – India border agreement

- ❖ Myanmar has indefinitely deferred signing agreement with India to streamline the free movement of people within 16 km along the open border between two countries.
- ❖ India and Myanmar share 1,643 km unfenced border along four states viz. Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Mizoram and permit free movement regime (FMR) up to 16 km beyond the border.
- ❖ In January 2018, Union Cabinet had approved Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between India and Myanmar on land border crossing to enhance economic interaction between people of two countries.
- ❖ To give it shape, Central Government had asked four border states with Myanmar to distribute “border pass” to all the residents living within 16 km from the border.



- ❖ The agreement has been deferred twice in the past seven months.
- ❖ The agreement will facilitate movement of people on basis of valid passports and visas which will enhance economic and social interaction between two countries.

Free movement regime (FMR)

- ❖ FMR was a bilateral agreement between India and Myanmar that allows free movement of Indian and Myanmar's citizens within 16 km of the border without visa restrictions for 72 hours.
- ❖ Its purpose is to alleviate insecurity of tribal living along India and Myanmar border as they still continue to have trans-border linkages with their kith and kin.

Turkey's first nuclear power plant

- ❖ Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin launched the construction of Turkey's first nuclear power plant in the Mediterranean Mersin region.
- ❖ TAEK (Turkey atomic energy authority) has granted Russian builder Rosatom a construction license to start work on the first unit of the Akkuyu nuclear power plant.
- ❖ Once completed the power station will provide 10 percent of the electricity needs of Turkey.
- ❖ The first stage is due to come online in 2023, the 100th anniversary of modern Turkey's founding, and be completed entirely in 2026.
- ❖ The Akkuyu plant will become the 56th nuclear plant under construction in the world.



Japan's first marine unit since World War II

- ❖ Japanese Self-Defence Forces, Japan's unified military command, activated its first marine component since World War II at a military base near Sasebo on the south-west island of Kyushu.



- ❖ Dubbed the Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade, or ARDB, the newly formed group displayed their ability to repel and recapture islands from other occupying forces.
- ❖ Japan, in its post-Second World War constitution Japan renounced the right to wage war.
- ❖ Amphibious Rapid Deployment Brigade (ARDB) has been Inducted to bolster its defences against China.
- ❖ Japan and China have a long history of territorial disputes over islands in the East China Sea, in particular, a rocky, uninhabited island chain known as the Diaoyu Islands in Beijing and the Senkaku in Tokyo.

India's Almond Consumption

- ❖ According to the Almond Board of California (ABC), India has emerged as the largest importer of Almond until February this crop year (August 2017 to July 2018), overtaking Spain and China.
- ❖ Spain has imported 119 million pounds this year till February, while China has imported 138 million pounds.
- ❖ India overtook China in last crop year 2016-17 to be ranked the 2nd by importing 167 million pounds, a 33 percent rise over 125-million-pound imports in the previous year.
- ❖ Spain was the biggest almond importer in 2016-17 with 210 million pounds, while China had 150 million-pound imports.
- ❖ California grows 80 percent of the total almonds in the world, of which 33 percent is consumed in the US and Canada, while 67% is exported to 90 countries.
- ❖ In 2004-05, the Asia Pacific region accounted for 25% of the exports, which has now gone up to 38%, mainly driven by demands from India and China.

President of Sierra Leone

- ❖ Julius Maada Bio has recently taken oath as the new President of Sierra Leone in the capital Freetown.
- ❖ Mr Bio is a former military junta leader who briefly ruled Sierra Leone in 1996.
- ❖ Representing the Sierra Leone People's Party (SLPP), Maada Bio defeated ruling All People's Congress (APC) party candidate Samura Kamara, an economist by training.



- ❖ President Ernest Bai Koroma has stepped down after serving two five-year terms giving the opposition party its first presidency in 10 years.
- ❖ The election is the fourth since Sierra Leone's brutal civil war ended in 2002,
- ❖ Sierra Leone is a country in West Africa, on the Atlantic Ocean. It's known for the white-sand beaches lining the Freetown Peninsula.

Law on equal wages for men, women

- ❖ The Cabinet of United Arab Emirates (UAE) has approved the issuance of law on Equal Wages and Salaries for men and women.
- ❖ The new law will ensure equal pay for men and women working in the country.
- ❖ The approval of the law comes in line with the government's objective to ensure the protection of women's rights and support their role in the national development process.
- ❖ Since past few years, the UAE Government has attempted to narrow the gender gap in the nation through consolidated efforts including the establishment of the UAE Council for Gender Balance in 2015.
- ❖ The government also launched the world's first Gender Balance Guide in September 2017.
- ❖ The guide was prepared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in collaboration with the United Arab Emirates Gender Balance Council (2017).
- ❖ The guide lays down a road-map for UAE and its organizations to harness the untapped potential of women.

Soft Drinks Sugar tax - UK

- ❖ The Soft Drinks Industry Levy also known as soft drinks sugar tax or sin tax or sugar tax came into force in the United Kingdom.
- ❖ It has been done as part of government's plan to combat obesity and sugar related disease.
- ❖ With the introduction of sugar levy, UK joins group of countries including Mexico, France, and Norway that have introduced similar fat taxes.
- ❖ The Soft Drinks Industry Levy was announced in 2016.



- ❖ It is based on levels of sugar in drinks, along with most sugary drinks paying highest taxes in the United Kingdom.

International Conference on Accessible Adventure 2018

- ❖ International Conference on Accessible Adventure was held at Pokhara in Nepal.
- ❖ The theme of the conference is “Inspiration and Perspiration” and it was organized by Nepal Tourism Board (NTB).
- ❖ This conference relates to the awareness, planning, commitment and collaboration necessary to make Nepal “The Accessible Adventure capital of Asia.”
- ❖ The conference has announced March 30 as the new annual ‘Tourism for All’ day – a day to focus on progress and the importance of accessibility in the tourism industry in Nepal.
- ❖ ICCA 2018 focuses on the accessible adventure as it is a subset of accessible tourism focused on meeting the needs of “slow walker” seniors and the mobile disabled -include prosthetics, deaf, blind, cognitive.

OPEC - Asian Premium issue

- ❖ India is coordinating with China and other Asian countries to raise voice against Asian premium charged by Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).
- ❖ Asian Premium is extra charge being collected by OPEC countries from Asian countries in comparison of selling oil prices to western countries.
- ❖ India sources about 86% of crude oil, 75% of natural gas and 95% of LPG from OPEC member nations.
- ❖ India has emphasized implementation of ‘Responsible and Reasonable Pricing’ by oil-producing countries.

Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC)

- ❖ It was established in 1960 in Baghdad, Iraq.
- ❖ Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait, Venezuela are the first five founding members of the OPEC.
- ❖ Its headquarters is located in Vienna, Austria.
- ❖ The OPEC is an intergovernmental organization of 14 oil-exporting nations. It coordinates and unifies the petroleum policies of its member countries.

TIME's 100 Most Influential People

- ❖ The TIME Magazine has released the 100 Most Influential People List of 2018.
- ❖ The 2018 list features the names of four self-made Indians- Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli, Ola co-founder Bhavish Aggarwal and Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella, Bollywood actress Deepika Padukone.
- ❖ The list also features the US President Donald Trump and the activist Tarana Burke, who founded the Me Too movement against the sexual predators.
- ❖ Astronaut Peggy Whitson also made it to the list this year. It is also notable that Whitson recently completed her 665th day in space.
- ❖ England Prince Harry and his fiancé Meghan Markle also made their names in this list.
- ❖ In the field of sports, the list names Chloe Kim, who is breaking all the world records in snowboarding.



UN Road Safety Trust Fund

- ❖ United Nations has launched UN Road Safety Trust Fund to improve road safety worldwide and to reduce the road accidents and to reduce the road accidents related death to save lives.
- ❖ The UN General Assembly (UNGA) also Recently adopted a resolution on road safety.

- ❖ The UN General Assembly (UNGA) also adopted a resolution on road safety.
- ❖ UN Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) is secretariat for the trust fund.
- ❖ It will support other road safety related efforts along five pillars of Global Plan for Decade of Action for Road Safety (2011-20), the efforts for road safety are
 - Improved safety of road infrastructure and broader transport networks;
 - Strengthened road safety management capacities;
 - Enhanced safety of vehicles;
 - Improved behavior of road users and
 - Improved post-crash care.
- ❖ The fund aims to accelerate progress in improving global road safety by bridging gaps in the mobilization of resources for effective road safety action at all levels.

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

- ❖ Indian Prime Minister and 52 other heads of government attended the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting or CHOGM meeting in London.
- ❖ This was the first time in a decade that an Indian prime minister attended the event which is held every two years.
- ❖ The theme for the summit was “Towards a common future”.
- ❖ The meeting held on four important matters, those are
 1. Leaders' statement
 2. Commonwealth Blue Charter
 3. Agenda for Trade and Investment
 4. Revised Guidelines for Election Observation.



The Commonwealth

- ❖ A voluntary association of 53 independent and equal sovereign states and it includes both advanced economies & developing countries.
- ❖ It encompasses 19 African countries, 7 Asian countries, 13 Caribbean and Americas countries, 3 European countries, 11 Pacific Ocean countries.



- ❖ The modern Commonwealth was formed on 26 April 1949.
- ❖ All members have an equal say, regardless of their size or economic stature.

Geneva Digital Convention

- ❖ Microsoft and 33 other companies have signed on to a four-point agreement that pledges they will protect their customers and will oppose state-sponsored attacks on users.
- ❖ The cybersecurity convention is also called as “Digital Geneva Convention”
- ❖ No companies based in countries that have been blamed for cyberattacks—including Russia, North Korea, Iran, and China—are on the list of signatories.
- ❖ Four Principles of Cybersecurity Tech Accord
 - To protect users and customers everywhere
 - To oppose cyberattacks on innocent citizens and enterprises
 - To empower users, customers and developers to strengthen cybersecurity
 - To partner with each other and like-minded groups to enhance cybersecurity.

U.N.’s Economic and Social Council Election – India

- ❖ India has won six elections to United Nations Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) bodies, five of them unanimously.
- ❖ In the polls, India won places on the executive boards of four UN bodies, three commissions and a committee.
- ❖ India topped the election to the Committee on Non-Governmental Organisations.
- ❖ India was also elected by acclamation to the Commission on Population and Development for a term beginning April 16, 2018 and expiring in 2021.
- ❖ The Council elected India and Kuwait (Asia-Pacific States) by acclamation to the Commission for Social Development.
- ❖ India was among the 17 members elected by acclamation to the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.
- ❖ India was among 14 nations elected by acclamation by the Council to the Executive Board of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United



Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS).

- ❖ For the Executive Board of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Council elected by acclamation 16 members, including India, for a three-year term beginning January 2019.

Malaria Summit - London

- ❖ India failed to participate in the Malaria Summit in London.
- ❖ The summit was organized by non-profit organisation 'Malaria No More' in collaboration with Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and supported by British Prime Minister Theresa May
- ❖ India has the third largest malaria cases in the world after Congo and Nigeria.
- ❖ One in seven Indians is at risk of contracting malaria.

ECONOMY

350th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh - Coins Release

- ❖ RBI will soon come out with Rs. 350 commemorative coin to mark the 350th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh, the 10th, and last Sikh Guru.
- ❖ The coin with a standard weight of 35 grams will have 50 percent silver, 40 percent copper and 5 percent each of nickel and zinc.
- ❖ The coin will bear the Lion Capital of Ashoka Pillar in the center with "Satyamev Jayate" inscribed below.
- ❖ While the word Bharat in Devanagari script will be on its left, "India" in English will be on its right.
- ❖ The years '1666' and '2016' in international numerals will be on the left and right periphery of the coin.
- ❖ Guru Gobind Singh, born on 22 December 1666, is the 10th and last Sikh Guru.



Fine on ICICI Bank – RBI

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has slapped a penalty of Rs.58.9 crore on ICICI Bank Limited for non-compliance of directions issued by it.
- ❖ The penalty has been imposed in the exercise of powers vested in RBI under the provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949.
- ❖ RBI has imposed a penalty on the Bank for the continued sale of government securities classified as HTM.
- ❖ This is the highest penalty imposed by RBI on a bank for a single incident.

RBI guidelines

- ❖ RBI guidelines require banks to classify investments into three categories - Held for Trading (HFT), Available for Sale (AFS) and Held to Maturity (HTM).
- ❖ The securities acquired by the banks with the intention to hold them till maturity can be classified under HTM.
- ❖ If the value of sales of securities from HTM category exceeds 5% of the HTM investments, banks are required to disclose in the audited annual financial statements.

Increase in India's contribution

- ❖ In response to a United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) Flash Appeal, the Government of India has increased its annual contribution for UNRWA from US\$ 1.25 million to US\$ 5 million from 2018-19 for 3 years.
- ❖ India made this announcement of this substantive increase of annual contribution to UNRWA at the Extraordinary Ministerial Conference held in Rome.
- ❖ This enhancement was made in the backdrop of the unprecedented financial crisis being faced by UNRWA, which has been delivering valuable public services to Palestine Refugees around the world.

Nutrient Based Subsidy and City Compost Scheme

- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) has approved for continuation of Nutrient Based Subsidy (NBS) Scheme and City Compost Scheme beyond 12th Five Year plan till 2019-20.

- ❖ The proposal was forwarded by Department of Fertilizers and the total expenditure for the continuation of both schemes till 2019-20 will be Rs. 61,972 crores.
- ❖ The continuation of both schemes will ensure that adequate quantity of P&K is made available to farmers at a statutory controlled price.
- ❖ The expenditure will be on actual basis since the national rollout of DBT entails 100% payment of subsidy to fertilizer companies on sale of fertilizers to farmers at subsidized rates.
- ❖ The subsidy on Phosphatic and Potassic (P&K) fertilizers and Market Development Assistant (MDA) on City Compost will be provided on subsidy rates approved by CCEA on annual basis.
- ❖ The subsidy on P&K fertilizers is being governed by NBS Scheme which was launched in 2010.
- ❖ Similarly, Market Development Assistant is being governed by City Compost Scheme which was launched in 2016
- ❖ City Compost Scheme aims to convert all organic waste generated in cities into compost or biogas and market the compost with the help of fertilizer companies to benefit farmers.



Agreement for Avoidance of Double Taxation

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved Agreement for Avoidance of Double Taxation and Prevention of Fiscal Evasion with respect to taxes on income between India and Iran.
- ❖ The agreement will increase the flow of investment and promotes the transfer of technology and personnel from India to Iran & vice versa and prevent double taxation.



- ❖ The Central Government is authorized to enter into Agreement with other country or specified territory for the avoidance of double taxation of income for the exchange of information for prevention of evasion under Section 90 of Income Tax Act, 1961.

Closure of Burn Standard Company Limited

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved closure of Central Public-Sector Enterprise (CPSE) Burn Standard Company Ltd (BSCL) under Ministry of Railways.
- ❖ This decision was taken in view of continuous poor physical and financial performance of the company for more than a decade despite financial assistance and other support from government and low probability of its revival in future.
- ❖ BSCL was incorporated in 1976 following nationalization and amalgamation of Burn & Company and Indian Standard Wagon Company Limited under Department of Heavy Industries (DHI).
- ❖ The company was engaged in manufacturing and repair of wagons and production of steel.
- ❖ Its administrative control was transferred from DHI to Ministry of Railways in 2010 as approved by the then Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA).

SHUTTER SIGNAL

■ Burn Standard to be shut down and put on the block

■ Cabinet approves Rs 417 crore to pay severance packages to 508 employees and clear past debts and liabilities

■ Outstanding loans of Rs 35 crore from railway ministry to be written off

■ Employees to be offered a VRS



E-way Bill

- ❖ As per the previous decision of GST council, the e-way Bill System for Inter-State movement of goods across the country is being introduced from April 2018.
- ❖ With this, the businesses and transporters moving goods worth over Rs. 50,000 from one state to another will have to carry an electronic or e-way bill.
- ❖ The e-way bill provision of the goods and services tax (GST) was first introduced on February 1, 2018.

GST E-WAY BILL VERSUS ERSTWHILE WAY-BILL

Feature	GST e-way bill	Old way-bill
Reduction in detention time	Facility with transporters to raise complaints, in case vehicle is detained for more than 30 minutes	No such facility was available
Facilitates GSTR-1 filing	Relevant details in Form GSTR-1 gets auto-populated basis the details furnished in the e-way bill generation process	No such facility was available
Prevents double-checking	E-way bill verified once not to be checked again by another tax officer during goods movement	No explicit provision existed for prevention of double-checking by tax officers
Contents of way-bill	Harmonized system of nomenclature (HSN) to be mentioned on e-way bill, resulting in additional compliance. No clarity for small assesses who are not required to mention HSN on invoices	No requirement to mention HSN
Requirement of consignee's acceptance	Recipient's acceptance of the e-way bill required (within 72 hours of generation)	No such requirement existed for old way-bills
Registration requirement for transporters	Mandatory	Optional

- ❖ The system has been designed and developed by the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- ❖ Due to some technical issues, the GST Council decided to the roll-out of the e-way bill starting with inter-state from April 1 and intra-state from April 15, 2018.
- ❖ E-way bill is an electronic document generated on the GST Portal, which is a common and shared information technology (IT) infrastructure between the Centre and States; and acts as evidence for movement of goods.

SEBI

- ❖ The Securities Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has relaxed algorithm trading norms at commodity derivatives exchanges.
- ❖ The market regulator has raised the limit of trading using algorithm trading process up to 100 orders per second by the user from the existing limit of 20 orders per second.
- ❖ The decision was taken after receiving representations from exchanges along with views of SEBI's subcommittee- Commodity Derivatives Advisory Committee.
- ❖ SEBI has asked exchanges to ensure that limit provided by it is subject to its ability to handle the load

Algorithmic trading

- ❖ It was introduced in India in 2009. Algorithmic trading in financial markets refers to transaction orders generated by using advanced mathematical models that involve automated execution of the trade.

- ❖ It uses mathematical models and software codes to make transaction decisions on exchanges and execute them at high speed.
- ❖ At present, on National Stock Exchange (NSE), algorithm trades accounts close to 16% of all trades. On the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE), it was 8.56% in January 2017.

SIDBI

- ❖ The Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) celebrated its foundation day this year on April 2, 2018.
- ❖ The day was celebrated as a day of Sampark (connect), Sanwad (interaction), Suraksha (security) and Sampreshan (disseminate).
- ❖ MSME contact programme; Samridhhi, a virtual assistant; revamped SIDBI website (www.sidbi.in) and Bankability Kit were launched on this occasion.
- ❖ It was established on April 2, 1990, through an Act of Parliament (thus, it is the statutory body). It is headquartered in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh.

SIDBI

- ❖ SIDBI is the principal development financial institution for promotion, financing, and development of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector in India.



- ❖ SIDBI aims to facilitate and strengthen credit flow to MSMEs and address both financial and developmental gaps in MSME eco-system across the country.

Startup Blink Report

- ❖ According to report released by global start-up ecosystem map Start-up Blink, India was ranked 37th out of 125 countries in global start-up ecosystem in 2017.
- ❖ It's report prepared in association with ANSYS Start-up Program measures start-up ecosystem strength and activity.

World Rank	Country Name	Quantity Score	Quality Score	Business Score	Total Score
1	United States	14.066	31.826	9.000	54.892
2	United Kingdom	2.056	6.686	9.000	17.742
3	Canada	1.261	6.586	9.000	16.847
4	Israel	0.617	5.528	8.800	14.946
5	Germany	1.075	3.259	9.000	13.334
6	Sweden	0.284	3.469	9.000	12.753
7	Denmark	0.184	3.107	9.000	12.291
8	Switzerland	0.377	3.111	8.800	12.288
9	France	0.705	2.512	8.800	12.016
10	Singapore	0.144	2.646	9.000	11.790
11	Australia	0.896	1.591	9.000	11.487
12	China	0.387	2.115	8.500	11.001

World Rank	Country Name	Quantity Score	Quality Score	Business Score	Total Score
31	Bulgaria	0.129	0.119	8.800	9.049
32	United Arab Emirates	0.111	0.093	8.800	9.004
33	Chile	0.184	0.201	8.500	8.885
34	Turkey	0.277	0.087	8.500	8.864
35	Ukraine	0.223	0.113	8.500	8.836
36	Greece	0.166	0.089	8.500	8.755
37	India	1.665	0.437	6.500	8.602
38	South Africa	0.141	1.443	7.000	8.584

- ❖ Top 5 Countries in Global start-up ecosystem in 2017 are United States (1st), United Kingdom (2nd), Canada (3rd), Israel (4th) and Germany (5th).
- ❖ In Asia, the list was topped by Singapore (10th) and was closely followed by China (12th), South Korea (17th), and Japan (20th).
- ❖ In Africa, the list was topped by South Africa (38th) followed by Kenya (53rd), Egypt (54th), and Nigeria (57th).



Start-up Blink

- ❖ Start-up Blink is a global start-up ecosystem map with tens of thousands of registered start-ups, coworking spaces, and accelerators.
- ❖ It includes a global ranking index of 125 countries and 900 cities, measuring their start-up ecosystem strength and activity.
- ❖ The rankings of the country are based on thousands of data points gathered from various sources, such as incubators and accelerators that appear on Start-up Blink global ecosystem.

Action Plan for Champion Sectors in Services

- ❖ Union Cabinet has approved the proposal of Ministry of Commerce and Industry to give focused attention to 12 identified Champion Services Sectors (CSS) for promoting their development and realizing their potential.
- ❖ The 12 identified Champion Services Sectors (CSS) are
 - Information Technology & Information Technology Enabled Services (IT & ITeS),
 - Medical Value Travel, Transport, and Logistics Services, Tourism and Hospitality Services,
 - Accounting and Finance Services, Audio Visual Services, Communication Services, Legal Services,
 - Construction and Related Engineering Services, Environmental Services, Financial Services and Education Services.
- ❖ Action Plans is made to develop a vision for each of these identified Champion Sectors by the year 2022 and enumerate steps that need to be taken to achieve that vision.
- ❖ The share of India's services sector in global services exports was 3.3% in 2015 compared to 3.1% in 2014. Based on this champion sector initiative, a goal of 4.2 % has been envisaged for 2022.
- ❖ Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), the nodal department for 'Make in India' will spearhead initiative for Champion Sectors in manufacturing.
- ❖ Department of Commerce (DoC) will coordinate proposed initiative for Champion Sectors in Services.



Khadi Store Locator App

- ❖ Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises launched a mobile phone application for locating 4,000 Khadi stores in the country.
- ❖ The 9th National Board of Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) met in New Delhi and minister of the state of MSME Giriraj Singh chaired the meeting.
- ❖ Khadi and Village Industries Corporation (KVIC) is also setting up export cells to promote overseas sales of Khadi products in order to make Khadi an international brand.
- ❖ The Khadi and Village Industries products are manufactured by about 7 lakhs privately owned household units which are funded through schemes like the Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP).

Loan to Bangladesh

- ❖ The Export-Import Bank of India (Exim Bank) will provide loans worth about the US \$4.5 billion (Rs 29,200 crore) to Bangladesh for the financing of various social and infrastructure projects.
- ❖ In this regard, Exim Bank has entered into an agreement with Bangladesh Government in October 2017 to extend this line of credit (LoC) facility on behalf of Government of India (GoI).
- ❖ Exim Bank is wholly owned GoI entity for financing, facilitating and promoting foreign trade of India. It was setup in 1982 and is headquartered in New Delhi.
- ❖ It extends LoC to overseas financial institutions, regional development banks, sovereign governments and other entities abroad.

Adoption of Ind-AS - Postponement

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has deferred adoption of Indian Accounting Standards (Ind-AS) by commercial banks for a year (till April 2019) due to the unpreparedness of banks to migrate to the new accounting system.
- ❖ RBI has requested Government to amend Banking Regulation Act, 1949 as the format of financial statements as prescribed under Schedule 3 of Act is not amenable to reporting financial statements under Ind-AS.
- ❖ Ind-AS is global accounting practice that lender is mandated to adopt. The practice is on par with International Financial Reporting Standard (IFRS) 9.



- ❖ Banks and non-banking financial companies currently follow generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) standards.
- ❖ Corporate entities started complying with Ind-AS with effect from 1 April 2016.
- ❖ In February 2016, RBI had issued circular mandating commercial banks, barring regional rural banks to implement Ind-AS from April 1, 2018.

Working Group to assess tax risks of HNWI's

- ❖ The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has constituted a 5-member working group (committee) to examine taxation aspects related to High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) who are migrating abroad to other jurisdictions.
- ❖ The Working Group will be headed by Pragya Sahay Saksena, a joint secretary with Foreign Tax & Tax Research Division of CBDT.
- ❖ The working group will make recommendations for policy decision in respect of tax risks of migrating HNWI's.
- ❖ The CBDT has termed migrating HNWI's as substantial tax risk as they may treat themselves as non-residents for taxation purposes in India.
- ❖ According to raw data analysis by Morgan Stanley Investment Management, in 2017 alone, 7,000 millionaires left India without paying taxes.
- ❖ It makes India top of the exodus charts of HNWI's causing huge loss the exchequer.
- ❖ The data shows that 2.1% of India's rich left country compared with 1.3% for France and 1.1% for China.















Central Board of Direct Taxes

- ❖ CBDT is a statutory authority established under The Central Board of Revenue Act, 1963.
- ❖ It is the nodal policy-making body of the Income Tax (IT) department under Finance Ministry.
- ❖ The composition of CBDT includes Chairman and six members.

Inter-departmental group to study launching of fiat digital currency

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has constituted an inter-departmental group to study and provide guidance on feasibility to introduce fiat digital currency backed by it.

- ❖ Fiat currency is the currency that a government has declared to be legal tender which is different from cryptocurrency which is not legal tender and not backed by the government.
- ❖ The Bank of England was one of the first to initiate a global discussion on prospects for introduction on Fiat digital currency.
- ❖ In November 2017, the central bank of Uruguay had announced to begin test to issue digital Uruguayan pesos.
- ❖ Fiat Digital Currency (or Central bank digital currency) is the digital form of fiat money which is currency established as money by government regulation or law.
- ❖ As opposed to private digital tokens, fiat digital currency will be issued by the central bank.
- ❖ Fiat Digital Currency will constitute a liability of the central bank and will be in circulation in addition to widely used paper and metallic currency.
- ❖ They will be based on blockchain technology which is the backbone of unregulated virtual currencies like bitcoin.

 CRYPTOCURRENCY	VS	 FIAT CURRENCY
Generated by Computers		Issued by Governments
Decentralized (No one can control)		Centralized (Monitored by Government)
Digital Medium of Exchange		Physical Medium of Exchange
Limited Supply		Unlimited Supply
   		   

Back to GDP model from GVA

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) switched back to the gross domestic product (GDP)-based measure to offer its growth estimates from the gross value added (GVA) methodology, citing global best practices.
- ❖ The GVA methodology gives a picture of the state of economic activity from producers' side or supply side whereas the GDP model gives a picture from consumers' side or demand perspective.
- ❖ Globally, the performance of most economies is gauged in terms of GDP model.
- ❖ The government had started analyzing growth estimates using GVA methodology from January 2015 and had also changed the base year to 2018 from January.



- ❖ Even the Central Statistical Office had started using GDP as the main measure of economic activities since January 15, 2018.

Wi-Fi grid - TRAI

- ❖ Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) submitted a proposal of open-architecture based Wi-Fi grid to bring down the cost of the internet by 90 percent.
- ❖ The proposed open-architecture will bring down data prices to one-tenth of the current level.
- ❖ The availability of broadband services at a very low cost is the basic requirement of the 'Digital India'.
- ❖ TRAI recommended that any entity - company, proprietorship, societies etc should easily be able to set up a public Wi-Fi access point.
- ❖ Under the system,
 - Authentication of the service provider and service seekers, along with accounting and payment settlement, would be done through cloud services.
 - Users would be able to easily use the system, do one click authentication and payment, and connect one or more devices in a single session.
- ❖ The latest recommendations of TRAI follow Bharat Net project being pursued by the Central government that intends to provide Wi-Fi services to village panchayats across the country.
- ❖ The government has completed Bharat Net's first phase and expects the project to be completed by 2019.

Committee to review the enforcement of CSR provisions

- ❖ The Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) has constituted 12-member committee to review enforcement of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) provisions under Companies Act, 2013.
- ❖ It will be headed by Regional Director (Western Region) Manmohan Juneja.
- ❖ Besides, there will be two sub-committees viz. legal and technical that will go into various aspects in relation to compliance with CSR provisions.
- ❖ Under Companies Act, 2013, a certain class of profitable companies (entities) are required to shell out at least 2% of their three-year annual average net profit towards CSR activities.



PCA Framework

- ❖ The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has placed 11 public sector banks (PSBs) out of 21 State-owned banks under its Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework because of deteriorating performance.
- ❖ The 11 banks placed under PCA framework are IDBI Bank, UCO Bank, Bank of India (BoI), Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Dena Bank, Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC), Bank of Maharashtra (BoM), United Bank of India, Corporation Bank and Allahabad Bank.

The Prompt Corrective Action framework

- ❖ Banks can be placed under Prompt Corrective Action Framework by Reserve Bank of India if they have high non-performing assets (NPAs) and insufficient common equity tier 1 capital (CET 1) and negative return on assets (ROA).
- ❖ Under RBI's new PCA framework, breaching a net NPA ratio of 6% invites action.
- ❖ Under the old rules, net NPA ratio had to breach 10% for taking action.
- ❖ The objective of the PCA framework is to facilitate the banks to take corrective measures including those prescribed by the RBI, in a timely manner, in order to restore the banks' financial health.

Index of Economic Freedom 2018

- ❖ Index of Economic Freedom 2018 was released recently. It measures the degree of economic freedom in the world countries. India ranked 130th out of 186 economies in this index.
- ❖ In this edition of the index, India with a score of 54.5 jumped 13 places from the 143rd rank in the previous year (2017) with a score of 52.6 points.
- ❖ The top 10 countries in the Index of Economic Freedom 2018 is Hong Kong, Singapore, New Zealand, Switzerland, Australia, Ireland, Estonia, United Kingdom, Canada, and UAE.
- ❖ China ranked at 111th place. It has jumped one spot compared from the 112th rank in the previous edition.

Index of Economic Freedom (IEF)

- ❖ The Index of Economic Freedom (IEF) is released by top US-based Think Tank, The Heritage Foundation.
- ❖ It ranks countries based on a score ranging from 0 (least free) to 100 (most free).

- ❖ 0 denotes countries with least free economies. 100 denotes countries with most free economics.
- ❖ The score is based on 12 factors of economic freedom, using statistics from international organizations like World Bank, IMF, Economist Intelligence Unit and Transparency International.
- ❖ Based on the score, countries are grouped into 5 different categories,
 - Free (80–100),
 - Mostly Free (70.0–79.9),
 - Moderately Free (60.0–69.9),
 - Mostly Unfree (50.0–59.9) and
 - Repressed (0–49.9).

FREE (100-80)							
RANK	COUNTRY	OVERALL	CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	OVERALL	CHANGE
1	Hong Kong	90.2	+0.4 ▲	4	Switzerland	81.7	+0.2 ▲
2	Singapore	88.8	+0.2 ▲	5	Australia	80.9	-0.1 ▼
3	New Zealand	84.2	+0.5 ▲	6	Ireland	80.4	+3.7 ▲

MOSTLY UNFREE (59.9-50)							
RANK	COUNTRY	OVERALL	CHANGE	RANK	COUNTRY	OVERALL	CHANGE
97	Tanzania	59.9	+1.3 ▲	129	Kenya	54.7	+1.2 ▲
98	Saudi Arabia	59.6	-4.8 ▼	130	India	54.5	+1.9 ▲
99	Tunisia	58.9	+3.2 ▲	131	Pakistan	54.4	+1.6 ▲
100	Nicaragua	58.9	-0.3 ▼	132	Zambia	54.3	-1.5 ▼
101	Cambodia	58.7	-0.8 ▼	133	Nepal	54.1	-1.0 ▼
102	Guyana	58.7	+0.2 ▲	134	Mauritania	54.0	-0.4 ▼
103	Namibia	58.5	-4.0 ▼	135	Burma	53.9	+1.4 ▲

Jana Small Finance Bank

- ❖ Jana Small Finance Bank, which commenced its banking operations plans to set up over 500 banking outlets by 2019 and expand its reach to unbanked rural areas.
- ❖ Jana Small Finance Bank, formerly known as Janalakshmi Financial Services



- ❖ In September 2015, the RBI had granted in-principle approval to 10 applicants for small finance bank (SFB) licenses including Janalakshmi Financial Services.
- ❖ Financial inclusion has been the primary vision of Jana Group with digitally-enabled service offerings.

Small Finance Banks

- ❖ The small finance bank will undertake basic banking activities of acceptance of deposits and lending to unserved and underserved to further financial inclusion in the country.
- ❖ It will mainly target small business units, marginal farmers and unorganized sector entities through high technology-low cost operations.

India Post Payment Bank

- ❖ In India, the Post Office Payment Bank has started its services from April 2018.
- ❖ It will be known as India Post Payment Bank and it will be the largest payment bank network in the country.
- ❖ There are 1.55 lakh post offices in the country, in which 650 payment banks will assist these post offices.
- ❖ Under this, postman and rural post offices will deliver digital payment service in urban and rural areas.
- ❖ In the year 2015, the RBI gave the Indian Post the theoretical approval for working as a payment bank. This bank was conceived by former Governor Raghuram Rajan of the RBI.

Social Pay

- ❖ ICICI Bank, India's largest private sector bank by consolidated assets, announced the launch of a service that enables Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to send money to a beneficiary in India using social media like Whats App as well as by email.
- ❖ Christened 'Social Pay', this first-of-its-kind service by any Indian bank is available on Money2India (M2I), the bank's app for remittances.
- ❖ ICICI Bank Limited is the first in India and among few globally to launch a service that allows cross-border remittances over social media.

World's sixth largest economy

- ❖ According to International Monetary Fund's (IMF) World Economic Outlook (WEO) for April 2018, India is now the world's sixth largest economy at \$2.6 trillion (in terms of GDP), replacing France.
- ❖ Then top five economies are United States, China, Japan, Germany and United Kingdom.
- ❖ According to IMF's India is expected to grow at 7.4% in 2018 and 7.8% in 2019, making it fastest growing economy in the world.

Uttarakhand's second Mega Food Park

- ❖ Uttarakhand's second Mega Food Park- Himalayan Mega Food Park Private Ltd inaugurated at Mahuakhera Ganj in Kashipur in Udham Singh Nagar district.
- ❖ The first Mega Food Park in the state is located at Haridwar and has already become operational.
- ❖ Projects under Mega Food Park Scheme are merged under comprehensive flagship scheme of 'Pradhan Mantri Kisan SAMPADA Yojana'.



A Record High Forex Reserves

- ❖ According to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), India's forex (foreign exchange) reserves have touched record high of \$424.864 billion in April 2018.
- ❖ The surge was due to massive spike in foreign currency assets (FCAs), a key component of the reserves.
- ❖ The forex are reserve assets held by a central bank in foreign currencies.

MSP for Raw Jute

- ❖ The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given its approval for an increase in Minimum Support Price (MSP) for Raw Jute for the 2018-19 season.
- ❖ The MSP for Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of Raw Jute was increased to Rs.3700 per quintal for the 2018-19 season from Rs. 3500 per quintal in the 2017-18 season.
- ❖ The increased MSP was based on recommendations of Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP).
- ❖ The Jute Corporation of India (JCI) will continue to act as Central Nodal Agency to undertake price support operations at MSP in Jute growing states.

PRICE COMFORT

- MSP of raw jute raised by Rs 200 per quintal to Rs 3,700 for the 2018-19 crop season
- Decision to benefit jute farmers in Bengal, Assam and Bihar
- These three states account for 95 per cent of the country's jute production

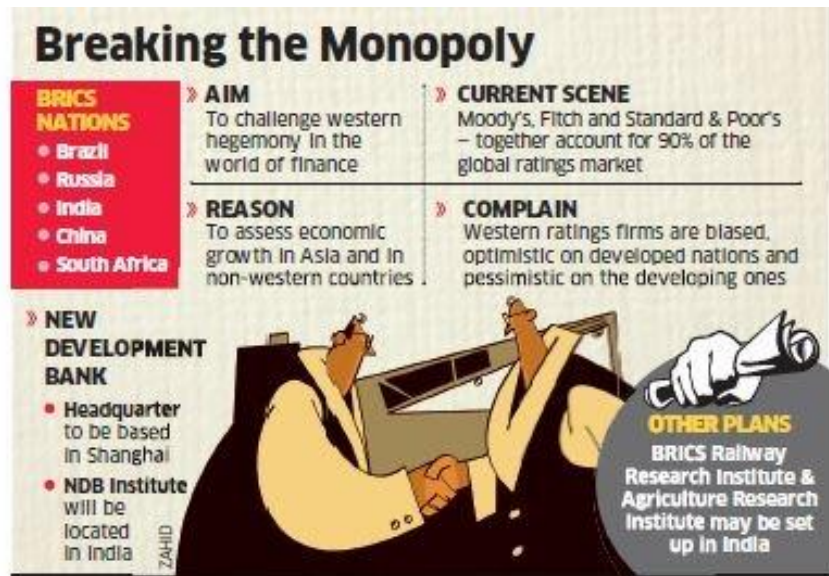
Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices (CACP)

- ❖ It is an attached office of the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. It came into existence in January 1965.
- ❖ CACP is an expert body which recommends MSPs on various crops to Central Government (CCEA) by taking into account cost of production, trends in domestic and international prices.
- ❖ Currently, CACP comprises Chairman, Member Secretary, one Member (Official) and two Members (Non-Official).
- ❖ The non-official members are representatives of farming community and usually have an active association with the farming community.

BRICS credit rating agency

- ❖ India has pressed the BRICS nations to set up an independent rating agency of the five-member group.
- ❖ The first meeting of the BRICS Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors was held on the sidelines of the IMF/World Bank Spring Meetings.

- ❖ India had first mooted the idea of having such an agency for the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) grouping to solve impediments for the emerging market economies.
- ❖ At present the dominated credit rating agency in emerging market economies are S&P, Moody's and Fitch.



Nokia tax dispute

- ❖ India and Finland have reached an accord on the tax dispute with Nokia under the Mutual Agreement Procedure (MAP).
- ❖ Nokia factory in Sriperumbudur was issued Income Tax notice and asset freeze was imposed on the factory.
- ❖ Nokia India was issued a demand notice for ₹2,500 crores in 2013, which was thereafter reduced to ₹1,600 crores.
- ❖ The issue surrounding the alleged tax payable by Nokia “has been resolved”, paving the way for the company to sell its plant shuttered for long in Chennai
- ❖ Under MAP, settling a case with the other government essentially means closing all pending proceedings related to a tax matter.
- ❖ It is increasingly seen as the preferred mode for settling cross-border disputes.

Right Call

The resolution covers disputes pertaining to Nokia India and Nokia Corp

<p>I-T dept had issued a tax notice of</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; color: red; text-align: center;">₹2,500 CRORE</p> <p>to Nokia India in 2013</p>	<p>After rectification, tax amount came to</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; color: red; text-align: center;">₹1,600 CRORE</p>
<p>ABOUT</p> <p style="font-size: 2em; color: red; text-align: center;">₹10,000 CRORE</p> <p>TAX DEMAND ON NOKIA CORP DROPPED</p>	<p style="background-color: #333; color: white; padding: 5px;">Nokia India has paid this tax</p> <p style="text-align: center;">THE FIRST HIGH-PROFILE MNC TAX CASE TO BE RESOLVED</p>

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

GPI Tracker system

- ❖ Secure financial messaging services provider SWIFT has expanded the GPI (Global Payment Innovation) Tracker system to help banks track their global transactions at all times, keeping full vigil on the payments activity.

SWIFT gpi: secure, faster, traceable & transparent cross-border payments



*Within the time zone of the receiving gpi member



Singapore Business Forum - February 2017

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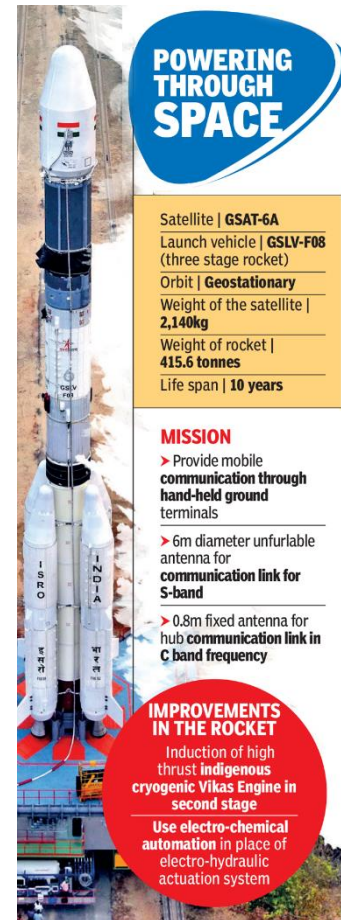
- ❖ The expansion of GPI Tracker will cover all payment instructions sent across the network and give them full visibility over all their payments activity.
- ❖ From November 2018, GPI Tracker system i.e. unique end-to-end transaction reference will be included in all payment instructions carried between all 11,000 customers on SWIFT at all times, across more than 200 countries and territories.
- ❖ SWIFT GPI was launched in May 2017 to help banks to track their global transactions at all times, keeping full vigil on payments activity.

SWIFT (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication System) platform

- ❖ SWIFT is global financial messaging service that enables financial institutions worldwide to send and receive information about financial transactions in a secure, standardized and reliable environment.
- ❖ It was founded in 1973 and is headquartered in La Hulpe, Belgium. It is used to transmit messages relating to cross-border financial transactions.
- ❖ It is a cooperative society under Belgian law owned by its member financial institutions with offices around the world.

ISRO – GSAT 6A satellite

- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched GSAT 6A communication satellite on board of GSLV-F08 rocket from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ This was overall 12th GSLV flight (and fifth successful) and sixth flight with indigenously built cryogenic upper stage engine.
- ❖ GSAT-6A is high power S-band communication satellite with a mission life of about 10 years. It was placed in Geosynchronous orbit of Earth.
- ❖ It is most powerful home-made communication satellite till date.
- ❖ It is similar to GSAT-6 which is a high power S-band communication satellite that was launched back in 2015
- ❖ The S-band's antenna of GSAT-6A was developed by ISRO's Space Applications Centre, Ahmedabad.



AYUSH QOL-2C

- ❖ The Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) has undertaken the development of coded drug AYUSH QOL-2C for improving quality of life in cancer patients.
- ❖ It had conducted clinical studies of the drug in breast cancer patients.
- ❖ CCRAS is an autonomous body under the Ministry of AYUSH and It is headquartered in New Delhi.
- ❖ It is apex body in India for formulation, coordination, development and promotion of research on scientific lines in Ayurveda and Sowa-Rigpa system of medicine.

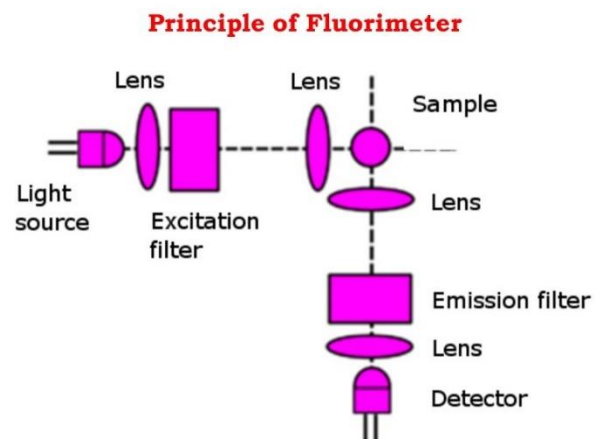
PFMS

- ❖ The Public Financial Management System (PFMS) portal has processed record Rs 71,633 crore transactions in a single day.

- ❖ This was a historical record-breaking volume of digital transactions achieved by PFMS.
- ❖ It is an end-to-end solution for processing payments, tracking, monitoring, accounting, reconciliation, and reporting.
- ❖ It is implemented by Controller General of Accounts and administered by the Department of Expenditure, both in Ministry of Finance.
- ❖ Various ministries/departments utilize this platform to monitor utilization of funds provided to the implementing agencies and states governments.
- ❖ PFMS has also used for Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) payments under MGNREGA and other notified schemes of the Government of India.
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Fluorimeter

- ❖ The Raja Ramanna Centre for Advanced Technology (RRCAT), an Indore-based unit of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) has developed an instrument called Fluorimeter, to measure traces of uranium in water.
- ❖ The device is capable of examining traces of uranium in a sample of water from 0.1 PPB (Parts-per-billion) unit to 100 PPB.
- ❖ For mass production of this instrument, DAE has transferred its technology to its other unit, Electronics Corporation of India Ltd (ECIL).
- ❖ The device will be especially helpful in areas like Punjab where uranium traces in water sources have been found to be at dangerous levels.
- ❖ Uranium is a radioactive element. The Atomic Energy Regulatory Board (AERB) has fixed a permissible radiological limit to 60 PPB of uranium concentration for drinking water.



4G connectivity - Patna

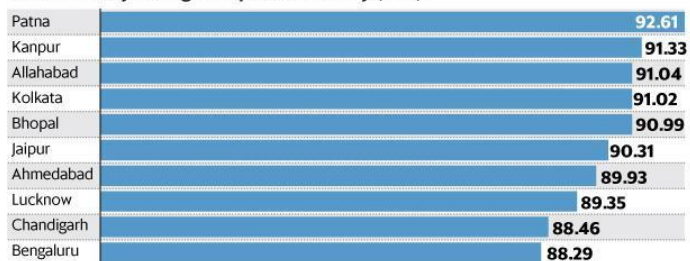
- ❖ According to a report from Open Signal, a wireless coverage mapping company, Patna tops in 4G connectivity among 20 of India's largest cities.
- ❖ Kanpur came second to Patna on the list.
- ❖ Open Signal's report said that there was an expansion of 4G networks across the country.
- ❖ Open Signal has said that Cities from eastern and central regions have much better 4G availability than other Indian cities.
- ❖ Bengaluru managed to feature in the top-ten of the 4G availability, Mumbai secured the 15th spot and national capital Delhi came 17th.

PATNA TOPS IN 4G EXPERIENCE

Patna is ahead of cities such as Bengaluru, Mumbai and Delhi in terms of 4G connectivity, according to a new report. OpenSignal, which maps wireless coverage, monitored 4G user experience in India's 20 largest cities for 90 days from 1 December 2017.



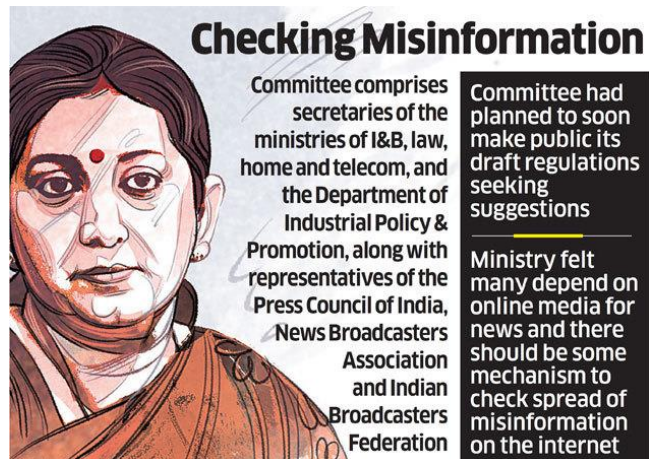
4G availability during time period of study (in %)



Source: OpenSignal

Committee to regulate News portals

- ❖ The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (I&B) has constituted a 10-member committee to regulate online portals, including news websites, entertainment sites, and media aggregators.
- ❖ The committee will include secretaries of departments of Home, Electronics and Information and Technology, Legal Affairs and Industrial Policy and Promotion.
- ❖ The CEO of MyGov and representative of Press Council of India (PCI) and National Broadcasters' Association (NBA) will also be part of the committee.
- ❖ The committee will look to bring online information dissemination under regulation.



- ❖ At present both print and electronic media are regulated but online media (as well as entertainment sites) does not come under any regulatory mechanism.
- ❖ The content telecast on television channels is regulated in terms of programme and advertisement codes under Cable Television Networks Rules, 1994.
- ❖ Similarly, autonomous body Press Council of India (PCI) regulates the print media.

Need for Regulation

- ❖ The social media platforms which are widely used for online information dissemination comes under the purview of Department of Telecom, Ministry of Communications and IT.
- ❖ It doesn't fall in the domain of Information & Broadcasting ministry, which looks at news, entertainment, infotainment, films, and music.
- ❖ Regulation of online news content had started because Government felt that there should be some mechanism to check the spread of misinformation (fake news) on the internet.

UTTAM App

- ❖ Union Minister of Railways and Coal Piyush Goyal launched the UTTAM App for Coal Quality Monitoring.
- ❖ The word 'UTTAM' here is abbreviated as 'Unlocking Transparency by Third Party Assessment of Mined Coal'.
- ❖ The app has been jointly developed by the Union Ministry of Coal and Coal India Limited (CIL) developed.
- ❖ The app aims to ensure transparency and efficiency in the coal quality monitoring process and bring coal governance closer to people.
- ❖ The app has been designed with an aim to transform the citizens as stakeholders in the coal ecosystem.

UTTAM APP FOR COAL QUALITY MONITORING

Salient features

Coverage of third party sampling

Interactive map based view for holistic coverage of coal quality

Accurate representation of declared vs analysed Gross Calorific Value

Trends of complaints reflected

Presents latest quantity sampled - infuses transparency in coal quality

Incorporates coal import trends



The ban on Imports of hormone oxytocin

- ❖ The Union government has banned imports of the hormone oxytocin to stop its misuse in the livestock industry, where activists say it causes hormonal imbalances and shortens the lives of milch animals.
- ❖ The government has decided to rely on domestic production to satisfy requirements of the hormone.
- ❖ Drug Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) in February 2018 had recommended import ban of oxytocin.
- ❖ It also recommended that sale is limited to registered government hospitals and clinics, a bar code system used on all forms of the drug to ensure tracking and prevent abuse.
- ❖ The drug is used by dairy owners and farmers to boost milk production and make vegetables look bigger and fresher.
- ❖ But, it was found that indiscriminate use of Oxytocin in milch animals and by farmers was causing irreversible hormone damage.

What is oxytocin

- Oxytocin is a hormone secreted by the pituitary gland
- It plays a role in reproduction, child birth and lactation, apart from social interaction
- Oxytocin is used both for humans and animals, to accelerate normal labour
- It is supposed to act directly on the uterus to induce rhythmic contractions



- In certain animals, especially farm animals, it is used to achieve 'milk let down'
- Oxytocin is believed to stimulate the mammary gland and induce milk production in farm animals, provided the udder is prepared to do so

Oxytocin

- ❖ Oxytocin has also been dubbed the hug hormone, cuddle chemical, moral molecule, and the bliss hormone due to its effects on behavior, including its role in love and in female reproductive biological functions in reproduction.
- ❖ It acts both as a hormone and as a brain neurotransmitter.

New website and mobile app of NCSK

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment has launched a new website and a mobile application of the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis (NCSK).
- ❖ The Mobile App will help the Commission in addressing the grievances/complaints of petitioners in an efficient manner.
- ❖ It is a statutory body established under the National Commission for Safai Karamcharis Act, 1993.



- ❖ The NCSK was established in 1994 to deal with the grievances of persons engaged in manual scavenging. It has a sanctioned strength of four members and a chairperson.
- ❖ It aims to promote and safeguard the interests and rights of Safai Karamcharis.

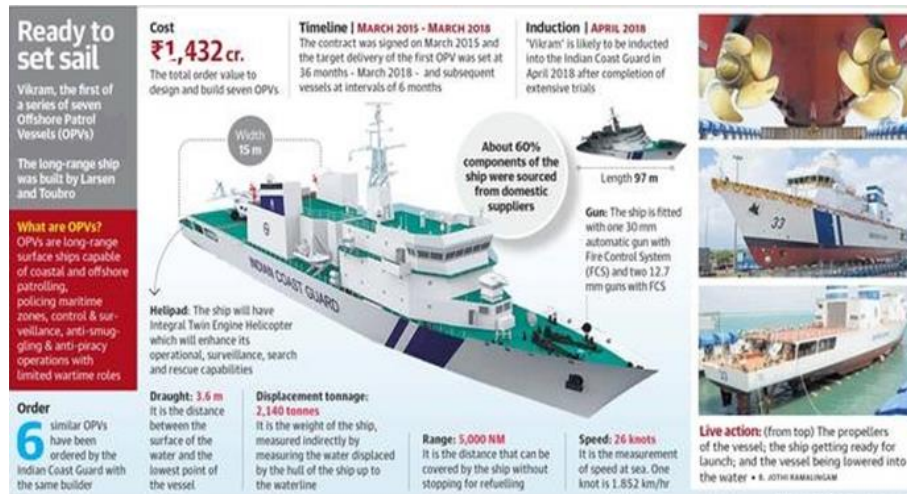
Digitally signed QR code

- ❖ The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has brought in secured digitally-signed QR Code on e-Aadhaar.
- ❖ It will contain a photograph of Aadhaar holder in addition to demographic details.
- ❖ The small QR code will be on the front side of a cutaway portion of e- Aadhaar, with demographic data.
- ❖ It will also have UIDAI digital signature to make this information more secure and tamper-proof.

ICGS Vikram

- ❖ The first indigenously developed offshore patrol vessel - ICGS Vikram - was commissioned into the Indian Coast Guard at Kattupalli Port near Ennore of Chennai.
- ❖ The platform, which has been named ICGS Vikram with pennant number 33, was officially inducted on 11th April.
- ❖ The ship's construction design and construction processes have undergone dual certifications from the American Bureau of Shipping and Indian Registrar of Shipping.
- ❖ The ICGS Vikram, designed and built by Larsen and Toubro, is the 'First of Class' of seven new generation Offshore Patrol Vessels (OPVs) contracted by defence ministry to L&T in March 2015, under government's initiative of 'Make in India.'
- ❖ Vikram inherits the name and hull number of the first ship in a class of nine that was in service with the ICG since 1983 and began retiring in 2012.
- ❖ The service currently operates a single ship, ICGS Vighraha, in this older class of vessels.
- ❖ The ICGS Vikram class OPVs are long-range surface ships, equipped to handle helicopter operations and capable of operating in Indian maritime zones including island territories.

- ❖ The role of the OPV is to conduct coastal and offshore patrolling, policing maritime zones, control and surveillance, anti-smuggling and anti-piracy operations with limited wartime roles.



09-3x Dynamic Tamping Express

- ❖ The Indian Railways has inducted three 09-3x Dynamic Tamping Express machines for improved mechanized Track Maintenance.
- ❖ This advanced technology simulator is presently only available in five countries including India.
- ❖ These machines have been manufactured in India under Make in India initiative with imported components.
- ❖ 09-3X- Dynamic Tamping Express' is an integrated machine that carries out multiple functions viz. measures pre & post track geometry corrects the track to required geometry.
- ❖ So far, each of these functions was being carried out by different machines.
- ❖ A new 3D state-of-the-art tamping simulator has been installed and commissioned at Indian Railway Track Machine Training Centre Allahabad (IRTMTC) for practical hands-on training to operate such advanced track maintenance machines.
- ❖ India Railway has planned complete mechanization of inspection, monitoring, relaying and maintenance of track by 2024.

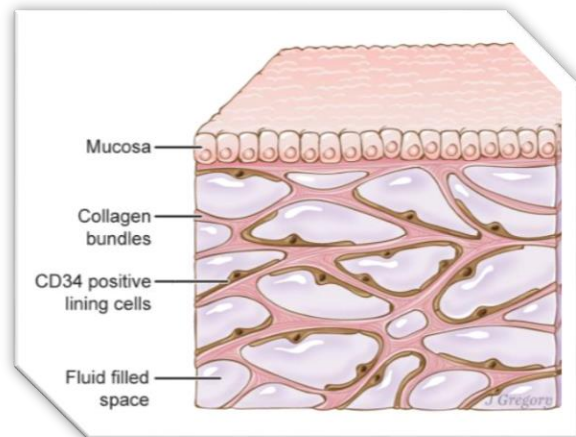
4th Mark IV LCU vessel – L54

- ❖ The fourth of eight Mark IV LCU vessels – L54, built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers Limited (GRSE), Kolkata was formally handed over to Indian Navy at GRSE, Kolkata.
- ❖ The first ship of Mark IV LCU vessels INS LCU 51 was commissioned into Indian Navy in 2016. Moreover, two more LCU ships L52 & L53 have been already delivered to Indian Navy.
- ❖ The Mark IV Landing Craft Utility (LCU) vessels are a further improved version of the Mark III LCU vessels presently being used by the Indian Navy.
- ❖ These total eight vessels Mark IV category are amphibious ships with a primary role to transport and deploy Main Battle Tanks (MBTs), armored vehicles, troops and equipment from ship to shore.
- ❖ LCU MK-IV vessels will be based in Andaman and Nicobar Command.



New organ

- ❖ Scientists have discovered a new “organ” just beneath the skin called interstitium.
- ❖ It contains collagen and elastin, proteins that give the skin its durability and elasticity.
- ❖ The layer is found in tissues lining the gut, lungs, blood vessels, and muscles.
- ❖ The organ was found using the technique called probe-based confocal laser endomicroscopy on a living tissue.



- ❖ The interstitium layer could help understand how cancer spreads in the body, and prove to be a potential diagnostic tool.
- ❖ The team behind the discovery suggest the compartments may act as “shock absorbers” that protect body tissues from damage.
- ❖ Research is being carried out to confirm whether the layer is an organ or not.

RH300 MKII

- ❖ The RH-300 MKII sounding rocket developed by IRSO’s Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC) was successfully launched from Thumba Equatorial Rocket Launching Station in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala.
- ❖ The launch is part of a study undertaken by VSSC under the Sounding Rocket Experiment (SOUREX) programme, which utilizes the RH-300 MKII sounding rocket to study the Equatorial E region and lower ionosphere regions of the atmosphere.
- ❖ The objective of the experiment is to measure neutral wind in dynamo region (80-120 km) of the equatorial ionosphere using indigenously developed Electron Density and Neutral Wind Probe (ENWi).

Sounding Rockets of ISRO				
				
FEATURES	RH- 200	RH-300	RH-300 MKII	RH-560 MKII
No. of stages	2	1	1	2
Length (m)	3.6	4.8	4.9	7.7
LOW (kg)	108	370	510	1350
Payload (kg)	10	60	70	100
Altitude (km)	85	100	150	550
Application	Meteorology	Middle Atm.	Middle Atm.	Ionosphere

FIEO Global Linker

- ❖ Ministry of Commerce and Industry has launched FIEO Global Linker, a digital platform for MSME exporters to digitize their businesses and join a global community of growing businesses.
- ❖ It has been developed by Federation of Indian Export Organisations (FIEO).
- ❖ FIEO Global Linker,
 - Help to create free e-commerce store for direct sales and improved chain management.
 - Provide up-to-date business knowledge.



FIEO

- ❖ FIEO is apex trade promotion organization in India, jointly established in 1965 by Ministry of Commerce and private trade and industry.
- ❖ It is responsible for representing and assisting Indian entrepreneurs and exporters in foreign markets. It is headquartered in New Delhi.

New Class of Antibiotics - Odilorhabdins

- ❖ Researchers have discovered a new class of antibiotics called odilorhabdins or ODLs that fights drug resistance.
- ❖ It was produced by symbiotic bacteria found in soil-dwelling nematode worms that colonize insects for food.
- ❖ The bacterium helps the nematode worms to kill insect and secrete antibiotic to keep competing bacteria away.
- ❖ ODL like many clinically useful antibiotics, work by targeting ribosome.
- ❖ But ODL is unique because it binds to a place on the ribosome that has never been used by other known antibiotics.

DARPAN - PLI App

- ❖ Minister of Communications launched the DARPAN-PLI App recently.
- ❖ It will help in the collection of the premium for Postal Life Insurance and Rural Postal Life Insurance policies at Branch Post Offices anywhere in India.
- ❖ Department of Posts has launched Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for a New India (DARPAN) Project.
- ❖ The project aims at connecting all 1.29 lakh Rural Branch Post Offices in the country to enable them to do online Postal and Financial Transactions.
- ❖ It will ensure improvement in the quality of Postal services being offered in remote rural areas.
- ❖ Postal Life Insurance is the oldest Life Insurance in the country.

Sukhad Yatra app

- ❖ Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) has launched Sukhad Yatra mobile application and 1033 Toll-free Emergency number for highway users.



- ❖ Sukhad Yatra mobile application has been prepared by National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) to empower Highway user.
- ❖ The key feature of the app includes provision for the user to know about the road quality-related information and to report accidents and other incidents and pothole on the highway.
- ❖ It also provides users with real-time data related to waiting time expected at Toll Plazas in for toll payments in highways.
- ❖ The app can also be used by the users to purchase the FASTag tag.
- ❖ It also aims at inculcating the habit of road safety, like behavioral and attitudinal changes among drivers. The training course will be conducted for drivers who carry dangerous/hazardous goods.

Antibiotic Consumption

- ❖ According to a new study, India has witnessed the highest increase in consumption of antibiotics over 15 years and is the biggest consumer of a specific class of newer antibiotics taken as a last resort.
- ❖ Antibiotic consumption in India increased 103% between 2000 and 2015 — the highest in low and middle-income countries.
- ❖ The average amount of antibiotics consumed by 1,000 inhabitants in India every day also increased 63% during 2000-2015
- ❖ Compared to this, antibiotic consumption increased by 65% globally.
- ❖ In 2012, India also overtook the United States as the highest consumer of a class of new antibiotics known as Oxazolidinones, which are prescribed as a last resort when more commonly used antibiotics are not effective.
- ❖ Antibiotic consumption is a primary driver of antibiotic resistance. This resistance, the ability of microbes to evolve and withstand the effects of antibiotics, is a significant cause of diseases and death globally.

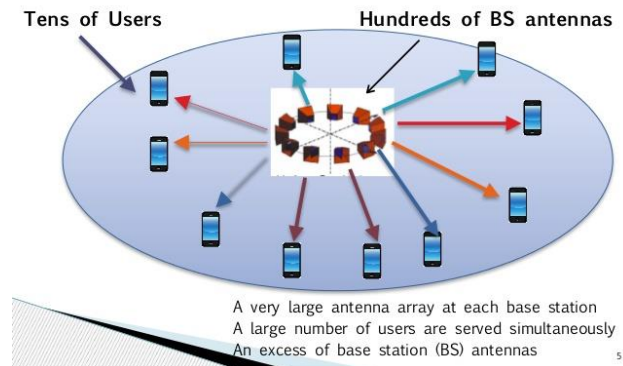
India's first 5G lab

- ❖ The Indian Institute of Technology (IIT)-Delhi has installed Massive Multiple-Input, Multiple-Output (MIMO) lab on campus for standardization, R&D, and manufacturing of 5G equipment.

- ❖ It will be the first of its kind 5G lab in the country. And it has been set-up at Bharti School of Telecommunication Technology and Management.
- ❖ The lab will serve as 5G base station prototype that will be used to test and verify algorithms and also helps to develop complete 5G base station.

What is Massive MIMO

Essentially multiuser MIMO with lots of base station antennas

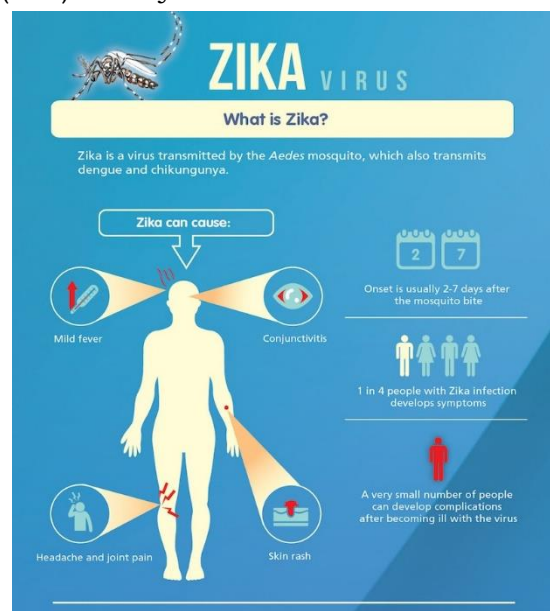


World's first contact lens

- ❖ The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the use of Acuvue Oasys Contact Lenses with Transitions Light Intelligent Technology, world's first contact lens that automatically darkens when exposed to bright light.
- ❖ It is first of its kind contact lens to incorporate same technology that is used in eyeglasses that automatically darken in the sun.

Zika virus – National Institute of Virology

- ❖ Recent National Institute of Virology (NIV) study has found that Indian Aedes aegypti mosquito that transmits dengue and chikungunya viruses is easily susceptible to Zika virus.
- ❖ During the study, it was found that Indian Aedes aegypti mosquito infected with African strain MR-766 of Zika virus (ZIKV) can easily transmit infection.
- ❖ Zika virus is vector-borne disease transmitted primarily by Aedes aegypti mosquitoes.
- ❖ It can also spread through blood transfusion and sexual contact and is capable of causing serious birth defects





- ❖ In 2013, the first zika virus outbreak was reported in the Marquesas Islands in the southern Pacific Ocean and it subsequently spread to Brazil in May 2015.

IRNSS-1I

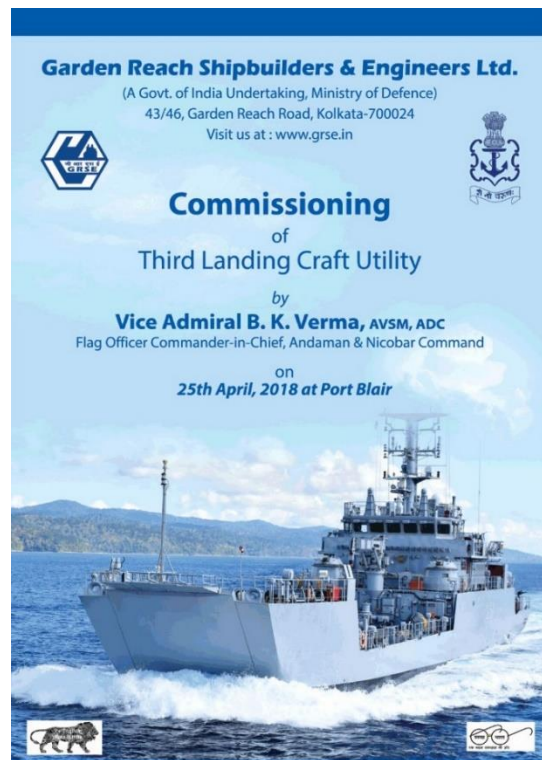
- ❖ The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has successfully launched IRNSS-1I navigation satellite from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The satellite was launched on board of PSLV-C41.
- ❖ IRNSS-1I was made by Bengaluru-based Alpha Design Technologies in collaboration with ISRO.
- ❖ The IRNSS-1I is overall eighth satellite to join ISRO's NAVIC (Navigation with Indian Constellation) navigation satellite constellation.
- ❖ The NAVIC Navigation satellites system is constellation of seven satellites -namely IRNSS-1I, 1B, 1C, 1D, 1E, 1F and 1G - of which three are geostationary and four are non-geostationary.
- ❖ It replaced IRNSS-1A, the first of seven navigation satellites of IRNSS series that was rendered ineffective after its three rubidium atomic clocks failed.
- ❖ IRNSS-1I will be stationed in Geosynchronous Orbit at 36,000 km height.

e-court fee payment facility

- ❖ Madras High Court has introduced the e-court fee payment facility for fee payments of the adjudicating cases.
- ❖ With this Madras High Court became first court in south India and overall eighth in the country to introduce e-court fee payment facility.
- ❖ Tamilnadu Chief Minister and Chief Justice Indira Banerjee launched this facility at the principal seat of the High Court in Chennai as well as at its Madurai Bench.

LCU L53

- ❖ The Indian Navy has inducted Landing Craft Utility (LCU) INLCU L53 at Port Blair.
- ❖ LCU L53 is the third ship in series of eight Mark IV LCU vessels built and designed by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata for Navy.
- ❖ The first ship of the series was commissioned in 2016.

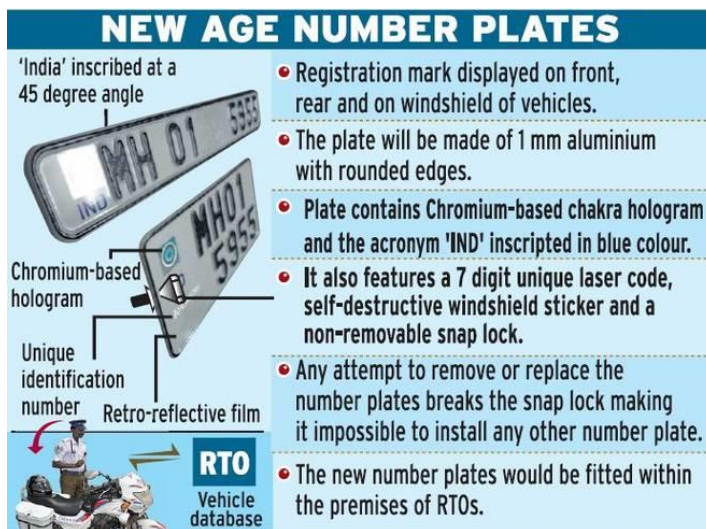


- ❖ LCU L53 MK-IV ship is amphibious ship with a displacement of 830 Tons and can sail through the sea at speed of 15kt.
- ❖ It is fitted with state-of-the-art equipment and advanced systems such as Integrated Bridge System (IBS) and Integrated Platform Management System (IPMS).
- ❖ The ship will be based in Andaman and Nicobar Command.

High Security Registration Plates

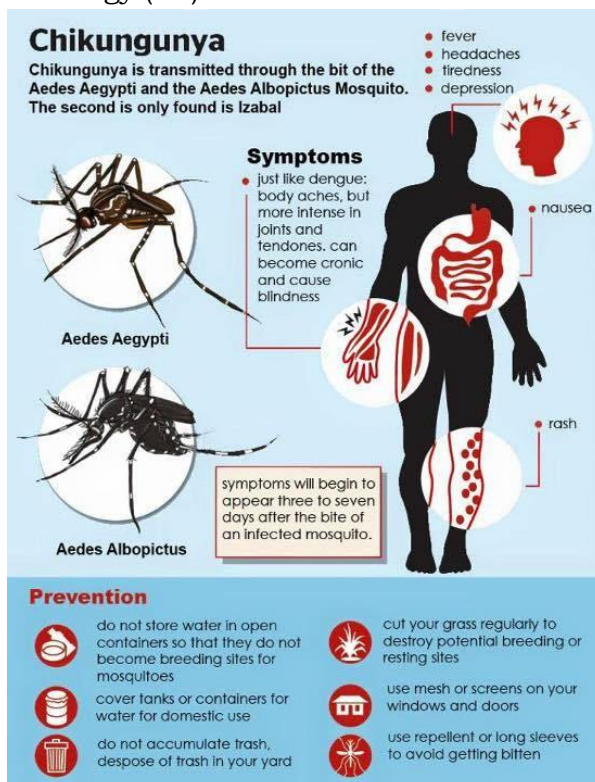
- ❖ From January 1, 2019, all classes of motor vehicles will come fitted with tamper-proof High Security Registration Plates (HSRP) that have a host of in-built security features.
- ❖ They are expected to offer increased protection against theft.

- ❖ The HSRPs will come with a 15-year guarantee. They will have in-built security features such as a self-destructive sticker with the engine and chassis number of the vehicle.
- ❖ The plates will be fitted on the front and rear of the vehicles and windscreens will have a number plate tag with hologram.
- ❖ Vehicle manufacturers can themselves produce the HSRP and obtain the Type approval certificate from the Central Road Research Institute, New Delhi, or any one of the six testing agencies authorised by the Centre.



Potent molecule to treat chikungunya

- ❖ Researchers from Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Roorkee have identified two small potent molecules Pep-I and Pep-II.
- ❖ These two molecules are very much useful in Chikungunya disease treatment because of its great inhibitory activity.
- ❖ The antiviral activity of these molecules was so high that their small amount was able to achieve almost 99% reduction in virus activity.
- ❖ Pep-I molecule was very efficient in killing the virus, 99% reduction in virus at 5 micro Molar.
- ❖ It was found to effectively bind to protein of virus and prevent virus from replicating.



- ❖ Chikungunya is a mosquito-borne virus that causes a disease which is transmitted by *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus* mosquitoes.

ENVIRONMENT

Jawad Rahim - acting chairperson of NGT

- ❖ The Supreme Court appointed Justice Jawad Rahim, a former judge of the Karnataka High Court, as acting chairman of the National Green Tribunal NGT, 3 months after the previous chairperson retired.
- ❖ The NGT's previous chairman, Justice Swatanter Kumar—a former Supreme Court judge—retired in December 2017.
- ❖ The order came from a three-judge Bench headed by Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra on a petition filed by NGT Bar Association.
- ❖ Justice Rahim will discharge his duties until a regular appointment is made and will take part in the selection process of other members of the NGT.

Rhino census

- ❖ Assam has seen a steady rise in the number of one-horned rhinos in Kaziranga national park with the total number standing at an impressive 2,413, which is an increase of 12 more from the last rhino census conducted in 2015.
- ❖ There are 793 breeding females of the 2,413 rhinos in Kaziranga counted this year.
- ❖ Kaziranga is home to about 70 percent of the one-horned rhino population in the world.
- ❖ NK Vasu, the state principal chief conservator of forests (wildlife) said that, on the technical committee recommendation, the census-count will be repeated next year as all compartments could not be covered this time.

TROUBLING NUMBERS

Rhinos killed between 2001 and 2016

- Kaziranga National Park: 161
- Orang National Park: 34
- Pobitora wildlife sanctuary: 15
- Manas National Park: 9
- Other parts of Assam: 20
- Total: 239



A rhino in Kaziranga National Park

- ❖ A total area of 882 sq km, including the Brahmaputra river zone which makes for the 6th Addition to Kaziranga, was divided into 74 compartments for the census count.
- ❖ The rhino population in Assam saw a boom of 2,048 rhinos in 2009, an unimaginable increase of 193 rhinos in three years' time. From 1,855 rhinos in 2006, the population had been briskly swelling up.
- ❖ The Indian Rhino Vision 2020, an ambitious plan launched in 2005 to attain a wild population of at least 3,000 greater one-horned rhinos in Assam by the year 2020, has yielded good results.
- ❖ International Rhino Foundation (IRF) has partnered with the Assam Forest Department, the Bodoland Territorial Council, the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), and the US Fish and Wildlife Service to address the threats facing Indian rhinos.

CA|TS Partnership - Tiger Survey

- ❖ According to a recent survey, only 13% of tiger conservation areas that are part of Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) Partnership meets global standards.
- ❖ The survey was conducted over hundred tiger conservation areas by 11 leading conservation organizations and countries with tiger range that are part of CA|TS Partnership.

A rapid assessment of management effectiveness against the Conservation Assured Tiger Standards

Safe Havens for Wild Tigers



Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA|TS) aims to help stabilise and rebuild tiger populations throughout their range by ensuring effective management. It is an accreditation system, where participating tiger conservation areas provide evidence demonstrating that they meet a range of agreed management standards, which together should ensure effective tiger conservation.

To gain a better understanding of the challenges that tiger range governments face in protecting wild tigers and to provide a baseline for CA|TS implementation, a rapid survey was undertaken of current management in 112 sites throughout the tiger range.

- ❖ The surveyed area is home to approximately 70% of the world's wild tigers.



- ❖ The survey found that at least one-third of tiger conservation these areas are severely at risk of losing their tigers and most of these sites are in Southeast Asia.

About Conservation Assured | Tiger Standards (CA | TS) Partnership

- ❖ It was officially launched in 2013 and was developed by a tiger and protected area experts.
- ❖ CA|TS is set of criteria that allow tiger conservation areas to check if their management will lead to successful tiger conservation.
- ❖ It is organized into seven pillars and 17 elements of critical management activity. Its mission is to secure safe havens for wild tigers.
- ❖ It is an important part of Tx2, World Wildlife Fund's global tiger programme that aims to double wild tiger number by the year 2022.

Ganga Hariteema Yojana

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh Government has launched Ganga Hariteema Yojana (also known as Ganga Greenery scheme) in 27 districts of the state located on the bank of river Ganga.
- ❖ The scheme aims at increasing green cover in catchment areas of river Ganga and controls land erosion.
- ❖ Under it, tree plantation will be carried out in 1 Km areas from both side banks of the river.
- ❖ General people will be encouraged for tree plantation on their private lands under 'One Person One Tree' slogan.
- ❖ Department of Forest has been nominated as nodal department for the scheme. High power committee under the chairmanship of CM will monitor implementation of the scheme.
- ❖ The scheme will be carried out on September 16, 2018, which is observed as world Ozone Day.

Sight of 4 kingfisher species

- ❖ Four kingfisher bird species thriving in Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary in Andhra Pradesh were recently sighted.
- ❖ In India, 12 species of Kingfisher bird can be sighted. The species have been identified are
 - Pied Kingfisher (Ceryle rudis),



- White-throated Kingfisher (*Halcyon smyrnensis*),
- Black-capped Kingfisher (*Halcyon pileate*) and
- Common Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*).
- ❖ The four sighted in the sanctuary are wetland dependents where wetland ecosystem is a prime attraction for them. The conservation status of four sighted species is “least concern”.
- ❖ Kingfisher belongs to the family of small to medium-sized, brightly colored birds in order Coraciiform.

Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary

- ❖ Krishna Wildlife Sanctuary is a wildlife sanctuary and estuary located in Andhra Pradesh, India.
- ❖ It is one of rarest eco-regions of the world because of its harbor's vast tracts of pristine mangrove forests.
- ❖ It is believed to be one of the last remaining tracts of thick primary mangrove forests of South India and it spread across Krishna and Guntur districts of Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The estuary of Krishna River passes through it. It is believed that this region potentially holds one most significant populations of fishing cats in the world.

New source of global nitrogen

- ❖ According to recently published study, over a quarter of nitrogen on Earth comes from weathering of planet's bedrock.
- ❖ For centuries, the prevailing science indicated that all of the nitrogen on Earth available to plants comes from the atmosphere.
- ❖ The study has found that up to 26 percent of the nitrogen in natural ecosystems is sourced from rocks, with the remaining fraction from the atmosphere.
- ❖ The discovery could greatly improve climate change projections.
- ❖ This study shows that nitrogen weathering is a globally significant source of nutrition to soils and ecosystems worldwide.
- ❖ Rock-derived nitrogen may fuel the growth of forests and grasslands, and allow them to sequester more CO₂ than previously thought.



India's first filament bulb-free panchayat

- ❖ The Pilicode grama panchayat in Kasaragod has become the first filament bulb-free grama panchayat in the nation.
- ❖ The panchayat made this rare achieved by replacing all the filament bulbs by LED bulbs under its unique project 'Oorja Yaanam scheme', which aims to make the panchayat energy efficient
- ❖ The project was implemented with the support of Energy Management Centre (EMC) of the State government, which enforces the Energy Conservation Act, 2001.
- ❖ Last year, Pilicode panchayat won the State energy conservation award, instituted by the State Energy Management Centre (EMC).

Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve - new Grass species

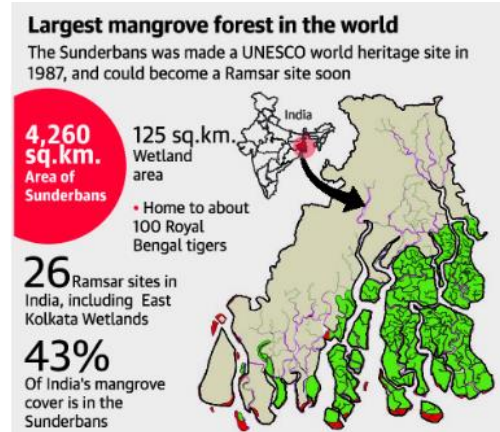
- ❖ Researchers have discovered new grass-like plant species named *Fimbristylis agasthyamalaensis* in Ponmudi hills within the Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve in the Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot.
- ❖ It has been classified as sedge, the grass-like plant and has been named after the locality from which it was found.
- ❖ The new species of plant belongs to the Cyperaceae family. Its flowering and fruiting were observed from October to March.
- ❖ Researchers have recommended preliminary conservation assessment of plant as 'critically endangered,' according to IUCN criteria.

Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve

- ❖ Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve was established in 2001 in the Western Ghats.
- ❖ In March 2016, Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve was included in the World Network of Biosphere Reserves of UNESCO.
- ❖ Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve is situated at the southern-most end of the Western Ghats and spread over two southern states Kerala and Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Agasthyamala Biosphere Reserve is home to rare endemic animals include tiger, Asian Elephant, and Nilgiri Tahr.
- ❖ It is home to Kanikaran tribe, one of the oldest surviving ancient tribes in the world.

Ramsar site status - Sunderbans

- ❖ West Bengal government has given its approval to State Forest Department to apply for Ramsar Site recognition under Ramsar Convention to Sunderban Reserve Forest.
- ❖ Once it is conferred Ramsar site status, Sundarbans Reserve Forest will be largest protected wetland in the country.
- ❖ There are currently 26 sites in India recognised as Ramsar wetland sites of international importance. West Bengal already has one Ramsar wetland called East Kolkata Wetlands.
- ❖ Sundarbans is vast contiguous mangrove forest ecosystem in the coastal region of Bay of Bengal spread across India and Bangladesh.
- ❖ It is located in delta region of Padma, Meghna and Brahmaputra river basins.
- ❖ It is the largest tidal halophytic mangrove forest in the world. It was recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Site in 1987.



Malvi's adder's-tongue fern

- ❖ Researchers have discovered the world's smallest land fern named Malvi's adder's-tongue fern (*Ophioglossum malviae*) in Ahwa forests of the Western Ghats in Gujarat's Dang district.
- ❖ Ferns are seasonal and mostly grow with first monsoon rains.
- ❖ The fingernail-sized fern belongs to a group known as adder's-tongue ferns, named after their resemblance to snake's tongue.
- ❖ Its size is just one centimeter.





New pollution - forecast

- ❖ India is tying up with the United States and Finland to develop a pollution-forecast system that will help to know anticipate particulate matter (PM) levels at least two days in advance.
- ❖ The Ministry of Earth Sciences (MoES) will be coordinating this exercise and will be jointly developed with expertise from Finnish Meteorological Institute and US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).
- ❖ Currently, the System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), run out of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, serves as the apex forecaster of pollution trends in Delhi, Mumbai, Pune, and Ahmedabad.
- ❖ The Union Environment Ministry has recently released a draft of the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) that aims to improve air quality monitoring in India.

New Frog Species Found

- ❖ Scientists have identified a new species of frog called *Fejervarya goemchi* in the highland plateaus of the Western Ghats parts of Goa.
- ❖ It has been named after the state of Goa where the species is discovered.
- ❖ *Fejervarya goemchi* are large-sized terrestrial frogs.
- ❖ It was identified using a combination of morphology, geographic distribution range and molecular methods to distinguish from other *Fejervarya* species found in South and South-East Asia.

Diu Smart City

- ❖ Diu Smart City has become the first city in India to run on 100% renewable energy during daytime.
- ❖ With this, it has set new benchmark for other cities to become clean and green.
- ❖ Diu was importing 73% of its power from Gujarat until last year.
- ❖ With these renewable energy initiatives, the Diu has been saving about 13,000 tonnes of carbon emissions every year.

STATES

National Water Digest Award - Chhattisgarh

- ❖ Chhattisgarh was awarded National Water Digest Award for Water Conservation-Diversion and increasing the irrigation capacity in the state.
- ❖ The award was presented to Chhattisgarh Water Resources Department (CWRD) on the occasion 'World Forestry Day' (observed on March 21) in New Delhi.
- ❖ This is the first time that CWRD was given national Award during the past 17 years.

National Water Digest Award

- ❖ The Award is presented every year by the globally renowned magazine 'Water Digest' which focuses mainly on water resources.
- ❖ The award is given in association with Central Water Resources River Development (CWRRD) and Ganga Cleaning Ministry, UNESCO, Central Water Board (CWB), Central Water Commission (CWC) and Ganga Purification National Mission.
- ❖ The award is recognized by UNESCO.

Videsh Aaya Pradesh ke Dwaar

- ❖ The External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division of Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) launched 'Videsh Aaya Pradesh ke Dwaar', an engagement programme with regional media in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- ❖ The initiative aims to enhance public diplomacy outreach of MEA and its commitment to take objectives of foreign policy to people at grassroot-level.
- ❖ It involves engagement MEA with regional media based in different cities across the country to communicate foreign policy priorities in simple terms.
- ❖ It also intends to create a pool of media professionals interested in foreign policy and guide them in connecting with MEA.

11th Rashtriya Rifles Conference 2018

- ❖ The 11th Rashtriya Rifles (RR) Biennial Conference is being conducted at Nagrota in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) from 26 to 27 March, 2018.
- ❖ The Chief of the Army Staff has headed this conference.



- ❖ The Rashtriya Rifle is a wing of Indian army under the Ministry of Defence
- ❖ The Rashtriya Rifles is a counter-insurgency force made up of soldiers deputed from other parts of the Indian Army.
- ❖ The force is currently deployed in the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

PV Sindhu - Deputy Collector

- ❖ Olympic medallist PV Sindhu took charge as a deputy collector in the state secretariat in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh government has announced group I service for PV Sindhu in order to honor her for winning the silver in 2016 Rio Olympics.
- ❖ In May, the state legislature had passed a Bill amending the State Public Services Act to appoint Sindhu as a Group-I officer in the government.
- ❖ As any recruitment in public services has to be only through the State Public Service Commission, selection committee or employment exchange, the government had to amend the Andhra Pradesh (Regulation of Appointments to Public Services and Rationalisation of Staff Pattern and Pay Structure) Act, 1994.

Hindon Elevated Road

- ❖ Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister inaugurated Hindon Elevated Road, India's longest elevated road in Ghaziabad.
- ❖ It connects UP Gate to Rajnagar Extension and will make it easier to commute between Delhi and Ghaziabad.
- ❖ It has been built on Transit-oriented development (TOD) basis, a type of urban planning that makes public transportation easily accessible to residential, business and leisure space.

Rupa shree scheme

- ❖ West Bengal government has launched a scheme called "Rupa shree" to ensure safe future for young women.



GOVERNMENT OF
WEST BENGAL

Rupashree Scheme

West Bengal

(Assistance for marriage of poor
women)

- ❖ Under this scheme, the government provides one-time financial support for marriage of poor girls. Rs. 25,000 will be credited to girl's bank account
- ❖ Previously West Bengal government has launched Kanya Shree scheme to promote education among women.

Two-tier Panchayati Raj

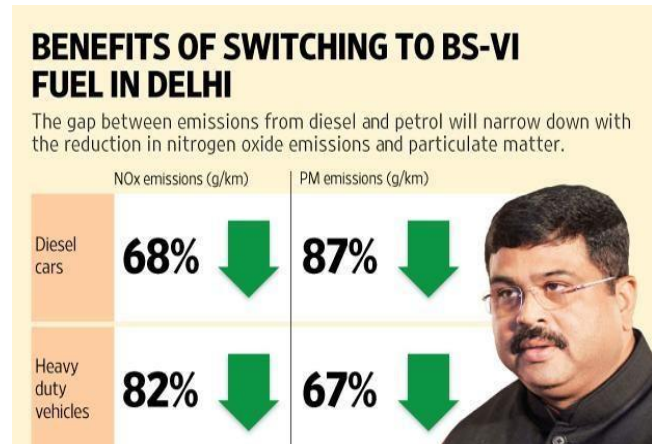
- ❖ Arunachal Pradesh Assembly passed Panchayati Raj (Amendment) Bill 2018 to do away with the Anchal Samiti, the intermediate level of the three-tier Panchayati Raj system and set up a two-tier system in the state.
- ❖ This is being done as per 73rd Amendment of Constitution that enables state having less than 20 lakh population not to have an intermediate level and Arunachal has a population of 13.84 lakh.
- ❖ Three-tier Panchayati Raj institutions were set up in the state in 2003, 2008 and 2013, and elections for next five-year term were due in April-May 2018.
- ❖ In two-tier Panchayati Raj system, planning and execution of schemes will be faster as there will be a direct connection between Gram Panchayats and Zilla Parishads, the village and district levels of Panchayati Raj system.

Multi-Modal Logistic Park

- ❖ Multi-Modal Logistics Park at Balli Station near Madgaon in Goa was recently inaugurated. The park is located on Konkan Railway route.
- ❖ It has been set as per MoU entered between Konkan Railway & Container Corporation of India Ltd (CONCOR).
- ❖ The park from its economic transport solutions and state of the art facilities will benefit both trade and industry in Goa.

The first city to roll-out BS-VI fuel

- ❖ Delhi became the first city in India to supply ultra-clean Bharat Stage (BS) VI grade fuel (both petrol and diesel).
- ❖ It has been done with an aim to combat the rising levels of air pollution in Delhi-NCR region.
- ❖ Other cities in NCR like Noida, Gurugram, Ghaziabad, and Faridabad as well as other 13 major cities, including Mumbai, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Pune will roll-out cleaner BS-VI grade fuel from January 1, 2019.
- ❖ By switching to BS-VI, India will join the league of US, Japan, and European Union, which follow Euro Stage VI emission norms.
- ❖ The major difference in standards between the existing BS-IV and new BS-VI auto fuel norms is
 - BS-IV fuels contain 50 parts per million (ppm) sulfur,
 - while BS-V and BS-VI grade fuel will have 10 ppm sulfur.
- ❖ Thus, newly introduced BS VI fuel is estimated to reduce the amount of sulfur released by 80%.



Protocol to confirm brain death

- ❖ Kerala has become the first state in the country to adopt a standard operating procedure (SOP) for determining brain death cases with an aim to make organ transplants more transparent in the state.
- ❖ As per the SOP guidelines, three stages of procedures have to be followed--precautions to be taken before tests to determine brain death, analysis of reflective actions of the brain and Apnea Test (an important component of brain death assessment).
- ❖ In this procedure, a team of four doctors including at least one government doctor is authorized to declare a patient brain dead.



- ❖ The norms are applicable to both government and private-run hospitals in the state.

Spring Festival

- ❖ The two-day Assam Spring Festival was conducted at Manas National Park to promote local food and culture of fringe villagers.
- ❖ This festival was jointly organized by Indian Weavers' Association and Swankar Mithinga Onsai Afat association.
- ❖ Manas National Park is UNESCO Natural World Heritage site, a Project Tiger reserve, an elephant reserve and a biosphere reserve in Assam.
- ❖ The Manas river, a major tributary of Brahmaputra River passes through this national park and it is located in Himalayan foothills and is contiguous with Royal Manas National Park in Bhutan.
- ❖ It is home to a great variety of wildlife, including many endangered species viz. tiger, Indian one-horn rhinoceros, and Indian elephant.

'State of the Year'

- ❖ Chhattisgarh won the 'State of the Year' Award under the 'business leader' category at the India Business Leader Awards (IBLA) in New Delhi.
- ❖ Chhattisgarh was awarded for various decisions taken on the policy in the field of business in the past few years and its effective implementation.
- ❖ The India Business Leader Awards (IBLA) was organized by CNBC-TV18 channel.
- ❖ Notably, Chhattisgarh occupies the 4th rank in World Bank's list of 'Ease of Doing Business'.

Jammu - first tulip garden

- ❖ Jammu's first tulip garden has been set up at Sanasar in Ramban district of Jammu region.
- ❖ This is the first tulip garden of Jammu region and second after the tulip garden of Srinagar in Jammu and Kashmir.



- ❖ The tulip garden was developed by the Floriculture Department. This year, only red, yellow and white tulips have been grown here.
- ❖ Tulip, which has its origin in Persia (Iran), was introduced in Europe in the 17th century, where it had been developed in different varieties. Holland is the largest producer of tulips.

Discovery of 2 unknown languages

- ❖ A linguist from the University of Hyderabad has discovered two endangered languages Walmiki and Malhar predominantly spoken in remote regions of Odisha.
- ❖ They were discovered by Professor Panchanan Mohanty as part of the activity of Centre for Endangered Languages and Mother Tongue Studies.
- ❖ Walmiki is spoken in the district of Koraput of Odisha and on bordering districts of Andhra Pradesh. It is an isolate language and does not belong to the particular family of languages.
- ❖ Malhar is spoken in a remote and isolated hamlet about 165 km away from Bhubaneswar, Odisha.
- ❖ Malhar belongs to “North Dravidian subgroup of a Dravidian family of languages.
- ❖ It has close affinities with other North Dravidian languages like Malto and Kurux spoken in Jharkhand, West Bengal, and Bihar.

Manu Bhaker

- ❖ India's teen shooting sensation Manu Bhaker will be the brand ambassador of Haryana's Measles and Rubella (MR) vaccination campaign.
- ❖ This campaign will be launched by Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on 25th April 2017.
- ❖ Vaccination of about 85 lakh children -- from nine months to 15 years of age -- would be carried out under this campaign.
- ❖ The campaign, which would continue for 5-6 weeks, was decided in a meeting of State Level Steering Committee for Measles Rubella Campaign held under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary, D S Dhesi.



Hike of retirement age – Madhya Pradesh

- ❖ Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan has announced the state has increased the retirement age for government employees from 60 to 62 years.
- ❖ The decision has been taken to ensure that all employees receive their due promotions.

Kadaknath chicken - Madhya Pradesh GI tag

- ❖ Chennai based Geographical Indication Registry and Intellectual Property India has awarded Geographical Indication (GI) Tag to Madhya Pradesh's Kadaknath chicken.
- ❖ Kadaknath chicken breed is considered unique one because of its black color due to its black-feathers. due to the deposition of melanin pigment its looks in black color.
- ❖ It is native tribal districts of Jhabua, Alirajpur in Madhya Pradesh.



- ❖ Recently, there is a bone of contention between Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh with both the States staking claim over its nativity for GI tag.
- ❖ The Kadaknath is popular mainly for its adaptability, and the good-tasting black meat, it is believed to have medicinal properties.
- ❖ In the recent past, the Madhya Pradesh government had launched a mobile app called 'MP Kadaknath'.

Geographical Indication (GI)

- ❖ The Geographical Indication (GI) is name or sign used on certain products which correspond to specific geographical location or origin.
- ❖ It is used for agricultural, natural and manufactured goods having a special quality and established a reputation.
- ❖ The registration of a GI is valid for 10 years after which it needs to be renewed.
- ❖ GI is covered as an element of intellectual property rights (IPRs) under Paris Convention for Protection of Industrial Property.
- ❖ At the international level, GI is governed by WTO's Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS).
- ❖ In India, Geographical Indications are given under Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 by Indian Patent Office.

Mission Buniyaad - New Delhi

- ❖ The Delhi government has launched the 'Mission Buniyaad' scheme to improve learning levels of children from classes 3 to 9.
- ❖ In Delhi, the Primary education falls within the ambit of the Municipal Corporations of Delhi (MCDs).



'Mission Buniyaad'

- Joint campaign by the Delhi government and municipal corporations to improve primary education
- Education Minister appeals to parents of students of Class III to VIII to send their wards to creative camps if their child's assessment results are poor
- Baseline assessment of students to check reading ability and maths skills
- Classes will be conducted in "mission mode" between May and June at creative camps
- Government to train mentor teachers for primary schools across Delhi

- ❖ The programme, Mission Buniyaad will run from April to June for class 3 to 5 in MCD schools and class 6 to 9 in government schools.
- ❖ Under this mission, children will undergo a reading level assessment based on which they will be enrolled in specialised classes.
- ❖ The scheme was launched after the National Achievement Survey 2017 data, released by NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) last month.
- ❖ This survey found that Delhi government school students were found to have lowest learning levels in these classes-3 to 9.

Happy Cities Summit

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu inaugurated a three-day long 'Happy Cities Summit 2018' at Mangalagiri town in Amaravati.
- ❖ It is a unique event bringing the best of minds in urban innovation across the world.



- ❖ The Government of Andhra Pradesh is hosting it, the event partners are Confederation of Indian Industries (CII), and Centre for Liveable Cities-Singapore.
- ❖ This is the first time the event is happening in Andhra Pradesh in tune with the government's thrust on raising the Happiness Index in the State.
- ❖ The four central themes of this summit are – citizen-centric governance; livable communities; clean and healthy environment; and vibrant economies.

QUEST - Maharashtra

- ❖ The Maharashtra government set up an institution 'QUEST' to evaluate and quantify special development budget allocations and assess their impact on tribal development.
- ❖ QUEST stands for Quality Evaluation for Sustainable Transformation (QUEST) centre.
- ❖ It is the first initiative in the country by Maharashtra to ensure that every rupee awarded for tribal development is not only accounted but the development in lives of tribal people through the projects undertaken is also quantified.

'181-Sakhi'

- ❖ Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal has launched '181-Sakhi', a toll-free helpline number for women.
- ❖ This helpline has been launched in wake of increasing crimes against women in Assam.
- ❖ Initially, the toll-free helpline will work from 9 am to 5.30 pm, but will soon be a 24×7 service.
- ❖ It is a part of Union Ministry of Women and Child Development's scheme to provide 24 hours' response to women affected by violence.



**New Helpline
Number 181-
Sakhi Women
Assam**

Konark Sun Temple

- ❖ Union Minister of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated the world-class Interpretation Centre and tourist facilities at Konark Sun Temple here coinciding with Utkal Divas celebrations in Odisha.
- ❖ The Indian Oil Foundation (IOF) developed the state-of-the-art tourist facilitation centre having an auditorium with digital audio and visual systems.
- ❖ Indian Oil Foundation (IOF) is a non-profit trust fully funded by Indian Oil Corporation (Indian Oil), under the aegis of Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas.



Community radio

- ❖ The Kerala government is set to launch a community radio for farmers to update them on latest developments related to farming.
- ❖ Significantly, it will be the first such community radio to get connected with the farming community under a government initiative in the country.
- ❖ The community radio would be launched under the Farm Information Bureau (FIB) of the state Agriculture Department.
- ❖ The first farm radio in the state is expected to start broadcast from Kuttanad in Alappuzha district, once popularly known as the 'rice bowl of Kerala'.
- ❖ Famed for its vast expanse of paddy cultivation, Kuttanad is one of the few places in the world where farming is carried out below sea level.

Rural Connectivity Project – Madhya Pradesh

- ❖ The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) has approved \$140 million loans for a development project aimed at improving rural roads connectivity in Madhya Pradesh.
- ❖ It was approved at a meeting of Board of Directors of AIIB recently held in Beijing, China. The Project will be co-financed by World Bank.

Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB)

- ❖ AIIB is multilateral development bank initiated by China. Its purpose is to provide finance to infrastructure development and regional connectivity projects in Asia-Pacific region.
- ❖ It was officially established in December 2015 and opened for business in January 2016. It is headquartered in Beijing, China.
- ❖ So far it has 84 members including India. China is the largest shareholder of AIIB with 26.06% voting shares.
- ❖ India with 7.5% vote share is second largest shareholder followed by Russia, Germany, and South Korea.

Climate Resilient Agriculture- Maharashtra

- ❖ Central Government and Maharashtra Government have signed the US \$420 million loan agreement with World Bank for Project for Climate Resilient

Agriculture to help small and marginal farmers in Marathwada and Vidarbha regions of Maharashtra.

- ❖ The loan will be provided by World Bank's International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). It will have the maturity of 24 years and grace period of 6 years.
- ❖ The project will help to mitigate the emission of Green House Gases (GHGs) through carbon sequestration 'planting trees in upper catchment areas and afforestation.

First regional conference of eastern states

- ❖ The first regional conference of eastern states on Water Resources was held in Kolkata, West Bengal in a bid to address major water resources issues.
- ❖ This conference was convened by Ministry of Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation.
- ❖ The conference was aimed at addressing outstanding water resources issues, inter-state issues, intra and inter-basin issues among five eastern states of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Odisha, and West Bengal.

GI tag to Adilabad dokra and Warangal Dhurries

- ❖ Chennai based Geographical Indication Registry has awarded Geographical Indication (GI) Tag to two craft forms from Telangana viz. Adilabad Dokra and Warangal Dhurries.
- ❖ Adilabad Dokra is form of ancient bell metal craft practiced by Woj community native to Adilabad district of Telangana. They use ancient casting technique called cire perdue - lost wax casting technique.
- ❖ Warangal Dhurries is popular traditional thick cotton rug in which weavers create beautiful patterns and dye them using vegetable colours, which are washed in flowing water after the printing process.





Prototype Intelligent Traffic Management Solution

- ❖ Bengaluru Smart City is testing prototype of an intelligent traffic management solution in collaboration with the Electronics City Township Authority (ELCITA) to improve traffic management in the city.
- ❖ It aims to provide traffic information of Bengaluru to traffic management officials and help improve management of commuter traffic.
- ❖ Intelligent Traffic Management Solution involves capturing video streams from several cameras and processing them using artificial intelligence.
- ❖ This will help in automation of traffic management tasks such as vehicle detection, traffic density estimation and control of traffic lights for real - time performance.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

CEO of Ayushman Bharat mission

- ❖ Indu Bhushan was appointed as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Centres ambitious Ayushman Bharat National Health Protection Mission (ABNHPM).
- ❖ Bhushan, the Director General of East Asia Department, Asian Development Bank (ADB) in Manila, Philippines, has been appointed to the post for a period of two years.
- ❖ The scheme has the benefits cover of Rs. 5 lakhs per family per year. The cover will take care of almost all secondary care and tertiary care procedures.
- ❖ The scheme aims to target over 10 crore families belonging to poor and vulnerable population based on the 2011 Socio-Economic and Caste Census database.

UNESCO's Executive Board

- ❖ The Union Government nominated Professor JS Rajput, former Director of NCERT, as India's representative to the Executive Board (EXB) of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).
- ❖ The elections for the Members of the EXB for the term 2017-21 took place on November 8, 2017.



- ❖ In that, India won with 162 votes in Group IV during the 39th session of the General Conference which was held from October 30 to November 14, 2017.

Executive Board of UNESCO

- ❖ The Executive Board of UNESCO has a four-year term of office and 58 seats.
- ❖ The executive board is one of the constitutional organs of UNESCO and is elected by the General Conference.
- ❖ The board examines the work of the organization and the corresponding budget estimates.
- ❖ It is the main organ responsible for all policies and programmes of UNESCO.

Lalit Kala Akademi

- ❖ President of India has appointed M L Srivastava, Joint Secretary of Ministry of Culture's as Protem Chairman of the Lalit Kala Academy.
- ❖ The Lalit Kala Akademi or National Academy of Art is India's National Academy of Fine Arts.
- ❖ It is an autonomous organization, established at New Delhi in 1954 to promote and propagate an understanding of Indian art, both within and outside the country.
- ❖ It is the Government's apex cultural body in the field of visual arts in India.
- ❖ The Akademi was inaugurated in New Delhi in 1954, by India's first Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and It fully funded by the Ministry of Culture.
- ❖ It has substantial independence in making decisions related to national and international exhibitions, events and providing financial assistance to artists and art organizations through scholarships and grants.

Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2018 List

- ❖ Forbes announced its third annual "30 Under 30 Asia" list, featuring 300 young disruptors, innovators, and entrepreneurs across Asia, all under the age of 30, who are challenging conventional wisdom and rewriting the rules for the next generation.
- ❖ Themed "Disruption and Innovation", this year's list features a distinctive list of 300 youthful visionaries and disruptors.

- ❖ Bollywood actress-producer Anushka Sharma and Badminton Ace P V Sindhu got featured in the Forbes 30 Under 30 Asia 2018 list for the first time in their career.
- ❖ The list's 'Entertainment & Sports' category features a total of four Indians, including cricketer Smriti Mandhana and national polo team captain Padmanabh Singh.
- ❖ Across the region, India had the highest number of honorees with 65 on this year's list, followed by China with 59 honourees and Australia with 35 honorees.
- ❖ Notably, it is also the first time that honourees from North Korea, Fiji, Azerbaijan, and Tajikistan appeared on the list.



Satya Pal Malik - Governor of Odisha (additional charge)

- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind has given Bihar Governor Satya Pal Malik (72) additional charge of Odisha until regular arrangements are made.
- ❖ He was given additional charge after incumbent governor S C Jamir completed his five-year tenure.
- ❖ The five-time Chief Minister of Nagaland S C Jamir had taken over as Odisha governor in March 2013 after serving as governor of Goa and Maharashtra.
- ❖ He had also been given additional charge of Gujarat in 2009.

NPPA Chairman

- ❖ Rakesh Kumar Vats, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has been given the additional charge of chairman of drug price regulator National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority.
- ❖ Because of appointment of NPPA's chairman Bhupendra Singh as a chairperson of National Authority for Chemical Weapons Convention under the Cabinet Secretariat Rakesh Kumar Vats has given with this additional charge.



National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA)

- ❖ NPPA is an independent body under Department of Pharmaceuticals under Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers.
- ❖ Set up in 1997, NPPA has been entrusted with the task of fixation/revision of prices of pharma products, enforcement of provisions of Department of Pharmaceuticals and monitoring of prices of controlled and decontrolled drugs.

Awards to Tamil scholars

- ❖ Tamil Nadu CM presented Chithirai Tamil New Year Awards to eminent Tamil scholars and institutions that made noted contribution for the development of Tamil, its literature, grammar and related archaeology and epigraphy.
- ❖ The Tamizhthai Award for 2017 was given to Bengaluru Tamil Sangam.
- ❖ Kabilar Award for 2017 was given to K.V. Balasubramanian for his contributions to the field of epigraphy and archaeology.
- ❖ U.Ve.Sa. Award for 2017 went to S. Krishnamurthy for his noted efforts in manuscriptology.
- ❖ Sugi. Sivam received Kambar Award for 2017 and Vaigaiselvan received Sollin Selvar Award for 2017.
- ❖ G.U. Pope Award for translating Tamil literature to a foreign language for 2017 went to K. Rajeswari Kothandam and Umaruppulavar Award for 2017 went to Haji M. Mohammad Yusuf.
- ❖ V. Nallathambi received Elangovadigal Award for 2017.
- ❖ Amma Literary Award for 2017 and Chief Minister's Tamil Computing Award for 2016 went to M.S. Srilakshmi and R. Doraipandi of Ultimate Software Solutions respectively.
- ❖ Under the World Tamil Sangam Award for 2016, the literary award was given to N. Andiappan.
- ❖ In World Tamil Sangam Award for 2017, Chandrika Subramanian of Australia received the literary award, Ulrike Nicholas of Germany received Grammar Award and Mahadeva Iyer, Jayarama Sarma got Linguistic Award.

World Hindi Conference

- ❖ The eleventh edition of World Hindi Conference will be hosted by Mauritius in its capital city Port Louis on August 18-20, 2018.

- ❖ It will be organized by Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India in association with Government of Mauritius.
- ❖ The theme of the Conference is “Vaishvik Hindi Aur Bharatiy Sanskriti”.
- ❖ The First World Hindi Conference was held in 1975 in Nagpur and was inaugurated by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.
- ❖ The 10th edition of World Hindi Conference was held in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh (India) in 2015 with the theme of “Hindi Jagat - Vistar and Sambhavnaye”.



DG of CISF

- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed senior IPS officer Rajesh Ranjan as Director General of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF).
- ❖ He will have a tenure until November 30, 2020.
- ❖ The DG of CISF post was lying vacant for few months after incumbent OP Singh took over as DG of Uttar Pradesh Police in January 2018.



Central Industrial Security Force

- ❖ 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.

DG of ICMR

- ❖ The Union Government has appointed AIIMS professor Balram Bhargava as Director General of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Secretary of the Department of Health Research.
- ❖ He will have a tenure of three years or until attainment of the age of 60 years.



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.

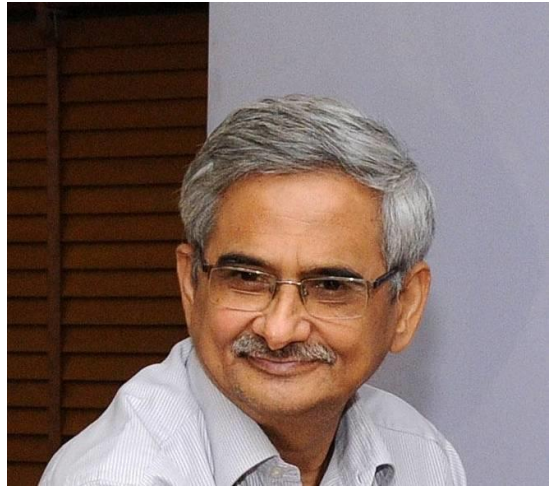
Banks Board Bureau chairman

- ❖ The Union Finance Ministry has reconstituted the Banks Board Bureau (BBB) and appointed Bhanu Pratap Sharma as its chairman, replacing former Comptroller and Auditor General Vinod Rai.
- ❖ Mr. Sharma was formerly the chairman of recruitment and assessment centre of DRDO (Defence Research and Development Organisation) and former Principal Secretary (Finance) in the Bihar government.

- ❖ The body was also reconstituted and the government also appointed Vedika Bhandarkar, P. Pradeep Kumar and Pradeep Shah as the new members.

Banks Board Bureau (BBB)

- ❖ The BBB, which has the responsibility of selecting members, including MDs & CEOs of public sector banks, started functioning in April 2016 with Mr. Rai at the helm.
- ❖ The BBB was set up on the recommendations of a committee headed by banker P J Nayak.
- ❖ Its mandate is to improve PSB governance, recommend on the selection of chiefs of government-owned banks and financial institutions and to help banks in developing strategies and capital raising plans.
- ❖ It is based in Mumbai, at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).
- ❖ The chairman and its committee members had a two-year term, which ended in March 2018.



Nasscom chairman (2018-19)

- ❖ IT industry body Nasscom has appointed Wipro chief strategy officer and board member Rishad Premji as its chairman for 2018-19.
- ❖ Rishad Premji replaces the incumbent NASSCOM Chairman Raman Roy, Chairman and Managing Director of Quatrro Global Services.
- ❖ Besides, Nasscom has appointed WNS Group CEO Keshav Murugesh as the vice chairman.
- ❖ Mr Premji has been a member of Nasscom's executive council and was the vice chairman for 2017-18.



Bisket Jatra festival 2018

- ❖ In Nepal, the famous Bisket Jatra Festival is being celebrated in Bhaktapur and other parts of Kathmandu valley.
- ❖ The 9- day annual festival marks beginning of new year in traditional calendar of Nepal. The Jatra begins four days before the start of new year.



- ❖ It is believed that the festival started during Malla dynasty. The main attraction of Bisket Jatra is chariot procession of Lord Bhairavanath.

Home Expo India 2018

- ❖ The Union Minister of Textiles and Information and Broadcasting Smriti Irani inaugurated the 7th edition of Home Expo India 2018 at India Expo Centre and Mart in Greater Noida.
- ❖ The 3-day expo, organized by the Export Promotion Council for Handicrafts (EPCH), is on three segmented categories shows comprising Housewares, Textiles, and Furniture.
- ❖ EPCH is the nodal export promotion body for handicrafts in India and plays an important role as a catalyst for the exporters, buyers and the government.
- ❖ The main objective of EPCH is to boost trade in Handicrafts.

Kishore Sahu memorial national award

- ❖ Chhattisgarh will confer Kishore Sahu memorial national award to veteran film director and screenwriter Shyam Benegal.
- ❖ The award was constituted this year by the cultural department in memory of Kishore Sahu.
- ❖ Sahu was a film actor, director, and producer who appeared in 22 films between 1937 and 1980 and directed over 20 movies.

- ❖ The award will be given to creative writers, directors, actors, and screenwriters in Hindi and Chhattisgarhi cinema.

Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2018

- ❖ As per the Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2018, Reliance Industries chairman Mukesh Ambani is the richest person in India with a net worth of \$38 billion.
- ❖ He is also the third richest Asian as per the list.

Rank	Name	Total net worth	\$ Last change	\$ YTD change	Country	Industry
1	Jeff Bezos	\$127B	-\$2.35B	+\$28.2B	United States	Technology
2	Bill Gates	\$91.8B	-\$450M	-\$49.1M	United States	Technology
3	Warren Buffett	\$85.9B	-\$43.9M	+\$546M	United States	Diversified
4	Bernard Arnault	\$73.8B	+\$19.5M	+\$10.5B	France	Consumer
5	Mark Zuckerberg	\$69.0B	-\$727M	-\$3.80B	United States	Technology
6	Carlos Slim	\$66.9B	-\$731M	+\$5.32B	Mexico	Diversified
7	Amancio Ortega	\$66.3B	-\$738M	-\$9.00B	Spain	Retail
8	Larry Page	\$53.0B	-\$587M	+\$631M	United States	Technology
9	Larry Ellison	\$52.3B	-\$588M	-\$820M	United States	Technology
10	Sergey Brin	\$51.7B	-\$594M	+\$625M	United States	Technology
11	Charles Koch	\$47.0B	-\$324M	-\$1.21B	United States	Industrial
12	David Koch	\$47.0B	-\$324M	-\$1.21B	United States	Industrial
13	Francoise Bettencourt Meyers	\$46.9B	+\$45.6M	+\$2.49B	France	Consumer
14	Jack Ma	\$46.5B	-\$372M	+\$1.06B	China	Technology
15	Rob Walton	\$42.5B	-\$371M	-\$4.11B	United States	Retail
16	Jim Walton	\$42.0B	-\$366M	-\$4.08B	United States	Retail
17	Alice Walton	\$41.2B	-\$374M	-\$4.17B	United States	Retail
18	Pony Ma	\$40.3B	-\$521M	-\$707M	China	Technology
19	Mukesh Ambani	\$39.0B	-\$601M	-\$1.23B	India	Energy
20	Sheldon Adelson	\$38.1B	+\$919k	+\$2.21B	United States	Entertainment

- ❖ As many as 24 Indians feature in the Bloomberg Billionaires Index 2018 of the world's 500 richest people.
- ❖ Alibaba's Jack Ma is Asia's richest person with \$47.2 billion net worth followed by Tencent co-founder and CEO Pony Ma with \$41.1 billion net worth.
- ❖ Globally, Amazon chief Jeff Bezos has dominated the index by securing the top rank with a net worth of \$121 billion.
- ❖ Bill Gates and Warren Buffett are placed at the second and third spot with a net worth of \$90.4 billion and \$85.5 billion respectively.

34th annual session of FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO)

- ❖ The President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, graced and addressed the 34th annual session of FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) in New Delhi.
- ❖ The theme for the 34th Annual Session was WOMEN TRANSFORMING INDIA.
- ❖ Commemorating the occasion, FLO recognized 9 Indian Women Achievers with FLO ICON AWARDS, those who have touched the peak of their careers/businesses and are inspirational leaders in their respective fields.
- ❖ First of its kind in India, Gender Parity Index is being created to measure the extent of gender parity in the formal sector.

FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO)

- ❖ FLO was established in 1983, as a division of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) which is the apex body of industry and commerce in India.
- ❖ FICCI Ladies Organization (FLO) is the women wing of the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) headquartered in New Delhi.

55th Maharashtra state Marathi Film Festival

- ❖ Maharashtra state government has announced prestigious Raj Kapoor Lifetime Achievement award for Bollywood actor Dharmendra and Raj Kapoor Special Contribution award for filmmaker Rajkumar Hirani.



- ❖ The awards, instituted by the Maharashtra state government, will be given away at the 55th Maharashtra state Marathi Film Festival.
- ❖ In 2012, Dharmendra was conferred India's third highest civilian honor Padma Bhushan.

- ❖ Veteran Marathi actor Vijay Chavhan has been chosen for the V Shantaram Lifetime Achievement award.
- ❖ Actor-Director Mrinal Kulkarni has been chosen for the V. Shantaram Special Contribution award.

The Shorenstein Journalism Award

- ❖ Siddharth Varadarajan, the founding editor of The Wire, was awarded the Shorenstein Journalism Award for 2017 at Stanford University, America.
- ❖ He has been awarded for his courageous accounts of India's domestic and foreign policies.



About Shorenstein award

- ❖ The award, given annually by Stanford University's Walter H. Shorenstein Asia - Pacific Research Centre.
- ❖ Shorenstein Journalism bestowed to honor the journalists who have "produced outstanding reporting on Asia and contributed significantly to the Western understanding of the region".
- ❖ Fifteen journalists have previously received the Shorenstein award instituted in 2002.
- ❖ Originally Shorenstein Journalism award designed to honor distinguished American journalists.
- ❖ But in 2011, changes were made in this award to bestow this award to honor the distinguished journalist from West and Asia.

2018 Pulitzer Prize

- ❖ The 2018 Pulitzer Prizes were awarded by Pulitzer Prize Board for work during 2017 calendar year.
- ❖ In Journalism, New York Times newspaper won three Pulitzer Prizes. With this so far New York Times has won 125 Pulitzer Prizes in total.

- ❖ The New York Times and The New Yorker have jointly won the Pulitzer Prize, in the Public Service category for reporting long-running Harvey Weinstein's sexual harassment and abuse in Hollywood.
- ❖ In Letters, Drama & Music, Andrew Sean Greer's comic novel Less won best Fiction award.

Journalism

Public Service - New York Times.	Breaking News Reporting - Staff of The Press Democrat.
Investigative Reporting - The Washington Post	Explanatory Reporting - The Arizona Republic and USA Today Network.
Local Reporting - The Cincinnati Enquirer Staff	National Reporting - New York Times and Washington Post
International Reporting - Clare Baldwin, Andrew R.C. Marshall and Manuel Mogato of Reuters	Feature Writing - Rachel Kaadzi Ghansah, freelance reporter, GQ
Commentary - John Archibald of Alabama Media Group, Birmingham, Ala.	Criticism - Jerry Saltz of New York magazine
Editorial Writing - Andie Dominick of the Des Moines Register.	Editorial Cartooning - Jake Halpern, freelance writer, and Michael Sloan, freelance cartoonist, New York Times.
Breaking News Photography - Ryan Kelly of the Daily Progress	Feature Photography - Photography Staff of Reuters

Letters, Drama & Music

Fiction - Less, by Andrew Sean Greer.	Drama - Cost of Living, by Martyna Majok.
History - The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea, by Jack E. Davis (Live right/W.W. Norton).	Biography or Autobiography - Prairie Fires: The American Dreams of Laura Ingalls Wilder, by Caroline Fraser
Poetry - Half-light: Collected Poems 1965-2016, by Frank Bidart.	General Nonfiction - Locking Up Our Own: Crime and Punishment in Black America by James Forman Jr.
Music - by Kendrick Lamar	

Pulitzer Prize

- ❖ It was established in 1917 by American-Hungarian newspaper publisher Joseph Pulitzer.
- ❖ The Pulitzer Prize is an annual award for achievements in newspaper, magazine and online journalism, literature, and musical composition in the United States.

- ❖ The award is administered by Columbia University in New York City.
- ❖ Prizes are awarded yearly in 21 categories.

National Testing Agency- Vineet Joshi

- ❖ The Government has appointed former CBSE chairperson and Secretary Vineet Joshi as the director general of the National Testing Agency.
- ❖ An order regarding this was issued by the Department of Personnel and Training
- ❖ Vineet Joshi is 1992-batch IAS officer of the Manipur cadre.
- ❖ Joshi has been appointed to the director general post for five years in National Testing Agency.

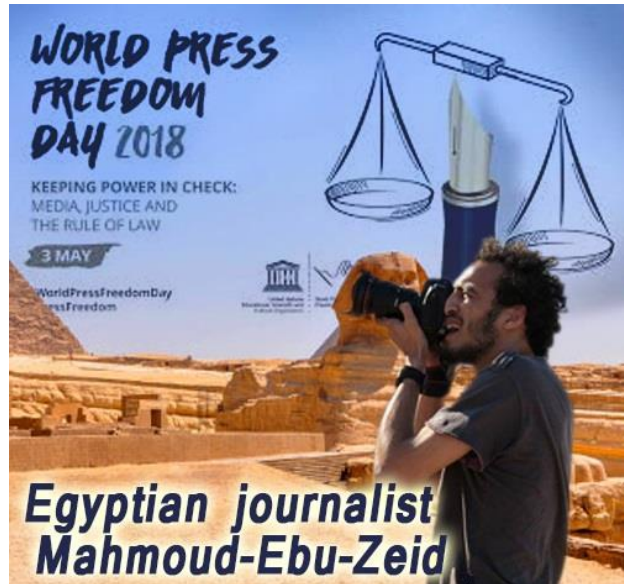


National Testing Agency

- ❖ Union Cabinet has recently approved the creation of National Testing Agency (NTA) to conduct entrance examinations for higher educational institutions.
- ❖ It will be registered as a society under the Indian Societies Registration Act.
- ❖ It will act an autonomous and self-sustained premier testing organization chaired by eminent educationist appointed by Ministry of HRD.
- ❖ The setting up of NTA was announced in the union budget of 2017-18.
- ❖ It would initially conduct those entrance examinations which are currently being conducted by the CBSE (NEET, JEE etc).
- ❖ The entrance examinations will be conducted in online mode at least twice a year, giving adequate opportunity to candidates.
- ❖ It will be given a one-time grant of Rs.25 crore from the Government to start its operation in the first year. Thereafter, it will be financially self-sustainable.
- ❖ It will relieve CBSE, AICTE, and other agencies from the responsibility of conducting the entrance examinations.

2018 UNESCO Press Freedom Prize

- ❖ Egyptian photojournalist Mahmoud Abu Zeid, popularly known as Shawkan, will be awarded United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO) for year 2018.
- ❖ The award was established in 1997 by United Nations' cultural body UNESCO's in honour of Colombian journalist Guillermo Cano Isaza.
- ❖ It honours person, organization or institution for their outstanding contribution to the defence and promotion of freedom of press anywhere in the world, especially achieved in face of danger.
- ❖ Guillermo Cano Isaza was a Colombian journalist was assassinated on 17 December 1986 in front of the offices of his newspaper, El Espectador in Bogota because of his publishment on Colombian internal issues.



First woman lawyer - SC judge

- ❖ Senior Advocate Indu Malhotra was sworn in as Judge of Supreme Court of India. She was administered the oath to the office by Chief Justice (CJI) Dipak Misra.
- ❖ With this, she became first woman Judge to be elevated directly from the Bar. Her appointment raises total tally of SC judges to 25 from sanctioned strengthened of 31 (including CJI).
- ❖ Overall, she will be seventh woman judge in SC. In 1989, Justice M. Fathima Beevi became first woman judge in Supreme Court.
- ❖ So far Justice R. Banumathi is the lone woman judge in SC.
- ❖ In the 67-year history of the Supreme Court, there have been only two occasions when it has had two sitting women judges together.





SPORTS

2018 Formula One Australian Grand Prix

- ❖ German's Sebastian Vettel, currently driving in Formula One for Scuderia Ferrari, has won the championship in the 2018 Formula One Australian Grand Prix tournament in Melbourne, Victoria.
- ❖ He is a four-time Formula One World Champion, having won the championship in 2010, 2011, 2012 and 2013 with Red Bull Racing.

8th Hockey Senior Men National Championship India 2018

- ❖ Hockey Punjab has won the 8th Hockey India Senior Men National Championship title at the Padma Shri Mohammad Shahid Synthetic Hockey Stadium in Lucknow.
- ❖ In the final, they defeated Petroleum Sports Promotion Board by 2-1.
- ❖ In the Bronze medal match, defending champions Railway Sports Promotion Board (RSPB) defeated Air India Sports Promotion Board by 5-3 on penalties after the scores were tied at 1-1.

Anti-Corruption Head - BCCI










- ❖ The BCCI has appointed ex-Director General of Police (Rajasthan), Ajit Singh, as the head of its Anti-Corruption unit ahead of the Indian Premier League 2018.
- ❖ Ajit Singh replaces ex-Police Commissioner of Delhi Neeraj Kumar as BCCI's Anti-Corruption unit head, and Neeraj Kumar has been appointed as an Advisor to this unit till May 31, 2018.

ISSF Junior World Cup

- ❖ India ended the ISSF Junior World Cup held at Sydney, Australia, by reaching second in the medal standings with nine Gold, five Silver and eight Bronze medals for a total of 22 medals.

- ❖ China topped the standings with nine Golds, eight Silver and eight Bronze medals for a total of 25 medals won.
- ❖ Italy was third with three Gold medals, and among gold clinched countries. The host country, Australia got the fourth place by winning one gold.

Final medal standings

Rank	Nation	Individual			Team			Total			
		Gold	Silver	Bronze	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	CHN 	5	4	4	4	4	4	9	8	8	25
2	IND 	4	1	4	5	4	4	9	5	8	22
3	ITA 	1	1	1	2		1	3	1	2	6
4	AUS 	1				2		1	2		3
5	TPE 		1			1			2		2
6	THA 		1	1			2		1	3	4
7	HUN 		1	1					1	1	2
8	FIN 		1						1		1
8	GBR 		1						1		1
		11	11	11	11	11	11	22	22	22	66

Indian Medalists

- ❖ **GOLD clinched players:** ANISH, VALARIVAN Elavenil, BHAKER Manu, MUSKAN
- ❖ **SILVER clinched players:** RANA Gaurav.
- ❖ **BRONZE clinched players:** BABUTA Arjun, ANMOL, KAPOOR Vivaan, SEKHON Ganemat.

Wisden's Leading Cricketers

- ❖ India captains Virat Kohli and Mithali Raj were named as the leading men's and women's cricketers in the world respectively.
- ❖ Kohli won this award for the second year in a row. With this, Kohli has become the third cricketer after Virender Sehwag and Kumar Sangakkara to be honored with the award multiple times.
- ❖ While Raj was acknowledged after a year in which she became the leading run-scorer in One-day Internationals during India's run to the World Cup final.



- ❖ Along with them, three English women cricketers - Heather Knight, Anya Shrubsole, and Nat Sciver - also made it to the Wisden's five cricketers of the year.
- ❖ The Wisden Leading Cricketer in the World is an annual cricket award selected by Wisden Cricketers' Almanac.
- ❖ It was established in 2004, to select the best cricketer based upon their performances anywhere in the world in the previous calendar year.

World No. 1 Badminton Player

- ❖ Kidambi Srikanth became the first Indian male to become world No. 1 in badminton rankings.

Men's Singles							More
Country Filter:		All	Filter				
Rank	Country	Player	Member ID	Points	Tournaments	Confederation	Country
1	IND	KIDAMBI Srikanth	93627	76895	12	Asia	India
2	DEN	Viktor AXELSEN	25831	75470	11	Europe	Denmark
3	KOR	SON Wan Ho	54346	74670	19	Asia	Korea
4	CHN	CHEN Long	75787	73466	12	Asia	China
5	CHN	SHI Yuqi	57945	72743	15	Asia	China
6	TPE	CHOU Tien Chen	34810	65521	19	Asia	Chinese Taipei
7	MAS	LEE Chong Wei	50152	65394	13	Asia	Malaysia
8	CHN	LIN Dan	50906	62076	13	Asia	China
9	HKG	NG Ka Long Angus	45171	55029	18	Asia	Hong Kong
10	INA	Anthony Sinisuka GINTING	95661	54235	17	Asia	Indonesia

- ❖ The ace Indian shuttler dethroned Denmark's Viktor Axelsen to reach to the top of rankings.

- ❖ He's the second Indian to do so after Saina Nehwal, who became the first Indian to climb atop the world rankings in 2015.

Commonwealth Games

- ❖ Muhammed Anas Yahiya has become the first Indian to qualify for the men's 400m final at the Commonwealth Games since Milkha Singh.
- ❖ Anas was the joint-third fastest runner to qualify for final with a timing of 45.44 seconds.
- ❖ Milkha had won gold in the 400m race (then called 440-yard race) at the British Empire and Commonwealth Games in 1958.



2018 Santaizi ATP Challenger tournament

- ❖ Yuki Bhambri from India has won the championship title by defeating his compatriot Ram Kumar Ramanathan in the final of Santaizi ATP Challenger tennis tournament 2018 held in Taipei, Taiwan.
- ❖ For Yuki Bhambri this his first singles Challenger title of the 2018 tennis season.
- ❖ By this victory, Yuki Bhambri re-entered into top 100 international rankings.

Asia Cup-2018

- ❖ The Asian Cricket Council (ACC) has shifted the 50-over Asia Cup Venue from India to the United Arab Emirates as the BCCI could not procure permission from the central government to host Pakistan.
- ❖ The tournament will now be held from September 13-28 in Dubai



and Abu Dhabi after all the member nations of ACC agreed unanimously for the change during a meeting at its Kuala Lumpur headquarters.

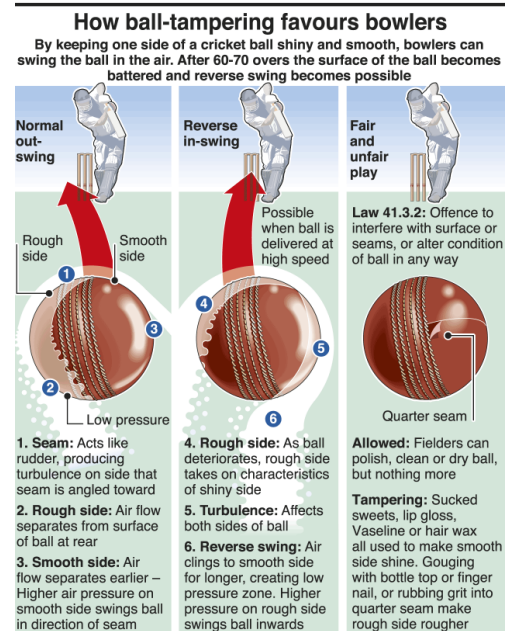
- ❖ The biennial event was due to be held in India in September. But there were sparking protests from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) who called for the event to be relocated.
- ❖ 50-over Asia Cup is played between the national cricket teams of India, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

Ball tampering issue

- ❖ Cameron Bancroft of Australia, On Day 3 of the third Test against South Africa in Cape Town, was caught using sandpaper to alter the condition of the ball.
- ❖ Steve Smith, David Warner, and Bancroft were charged with bringing the game into disrepute.
- ❖ Smith and Warner were then banned from all international cricket and domestic cricket in Australia for twelve months while Bancroft received a nine-month ban.
- ❖ In his regard, the coach of the team Darren Lehmann stepped down from his post.

Ball tampering

- ❖ It is the act of altering the condition of the match ball in cricket in order to interfere with its aerodynamics and generate help for bowlers.
- ❖ This includes rubbing the surface of the ball with sandpaper (or any other object), scuffing the surface or seam of the ball with fingernails or rubbing the ball on the ground.
- ❖ According to MCC's (Melbourne Cricket Club) Laws of Cricket, article 41, subsection 3, cricketers are allowed to polish the surface of a ball without using any external substance.



2018 Miami Open

- ❖ John Isner has won the Miami Open for the first time by beating Germany's Alexander Zverev.
- ❖ Isner is the first US player since Andy Roddick in 2010 to lift the Miami title.



Miami Open

- ❖ The Miami Open, sometimes known as the Miami Masters, is an annual tennis tournament for men and women currently held in Key Biscayne, Florida, an island town just off the coast of Miami.
- ❖ The event is held annually in March.

Santosh Trophy

- ❖ Kerala has won its sixth Santosh Trophy at the Salt Lake Stadium, Kolkata.
- ❖ This was Kerala's sixth Santosh Trophy title and first since 2004-05.
- ❖ The Santosh Trophy is an association football knock-out competition contested by the regional state football associations and government institutions under the All India Football Federation (AIFF), the sport's governing body in India.
- ❖ This was the 72nd edition of the Santosh Trophy.

South East Asian Women Handball Championship

- ❖ India defeated Bangladesh to win the fifth South East Asian Women Handball Championship at K.D. Singh Babu Stadium in Lucknow.
- ❖ The Handball Federation of India, in collaboration with the South Asian Handball Federation, recently organized the 5th Women's South East Asian Handball Championship.
- ❖ Handball teams from five countries participated in the tournament and they are Bhutan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal, and India.

- ❖ While Nepal finished as runner-ups in the five-country tournament, Bangladesh settled for the third spot and a bronze medal.

Commonwealth Games 2018

- ❖ The 21st edition of Commonwealth Games has recently held in Gold Coast, Australia.
- ❖ More than 4,500 athletes from 71 nations competed for 275 gold medals at the Commonwealth Games.
- ❖ This is the first major multi-sport event which has the same number of men's and women's medal events.
- ❖ India has sent a 227-member strong contingent for the Games.
- ❖ The badminton player PV Sindhu was the flag-bearer for India at the opening ceremony of this commonwealth.
- ❖ In this edition, India secured third place in the medal tally by winning 46 medals totally including 26 gold, 20 silvers and 20 bronzes.
- ❖ Australia secured the first place in the medal tally by winning 198 medals totally including 80 gold, 59 silver, and 59 bronze.
- ❖ England secured second place in the medal tally by winning 136 medals totally including 45 gold, 45 silver and 46 bronzes.

CWG MEDALS TALLY 2018

POS	COUNTRY				TOTAL
1	 Australia	80	59	59	198
2	 England	45	45	46	136
3	 India	26	20	20	66
4	 Canada	15	40	27	82
5	 New Zealand	15	16	15	46
6	 South Africa	13	11	13	37
7	 Wales	10	12	14	36
8	 Scotland	9	13	22	44
9	 Nigeria	9	9	6	24
10	 Cyprus	8	1	5	14



Gold Winners & Events

- ❖ Saina Nehwal - women's singles badminton.
- ❖ Vikas Krishan - Boxing -75kg category.
- ❖ Manika - Table tennis women's singles-becoming the first Indian woman to do so.
- ❖ Vinesh Phogat - women's wrestling freestyle 50 kg Nordic event.
- ❖ Neeraj Chopra - javelin throw - first Indian javelin thrower to claim a gold medal at the Commonwealth Games
- ❖ Gaurav Solanki -Boxing -52kg category
- ❖ Sumit Malik - wrestling -men's freestyle 125 kg category.
- ❖ Sanjeev Rajput - shooting - 50m Rifle 3 Position shooting event.
- ❖ M.C. Mary Kom – boxing- 45-48 kg category event- claiming gold in her debut Commonwealth Games.
- ❖ Bajrang Punia - wrestling -freestyle 65kg category.
- ❖ Tejaswini Sawant - shooting - 50m rifle position event
- ❖ Anish Bhanwala - shooting - 25m rapid fire Pistol-Youngest Gold Medallist.
- ❖ Sushil Kumar - wrestling -men's freestyle 74 kg category -third straight Commonwealth gold medal.
- ❖ Rahul Aware - wrestling - Men's Freestyle 57 kg- category.
- ❖ Shreyasi Singh - shooting - double trap women shooting.
- ❖ Heena Sidhu - shooting – 25 m pistol shooting event
- ❖ Jitu Rai - shooting -10 m men's air pistol event
- ❖ Manu Bhaker-Shooting-10m women's air pistol event
- ❖ Punam Yadav – Weightlifting - women's 69 kg category
- ❖ Venkat Rahul Ragala – Weightlifting- men's 85 kg category.
- ❖ Satish Kumar Sivalingam – Weightlifting- men's 77 kg category
- ❖ Sanjita Chanu – Weightlifting- women's 53 kg category
- ❖ Mirabai Chanu – Weightlifting- women's 48 kg category
- ❖ Indian men's table tennis team – by beating Nigeria.
- ❖ In the women's table tennis event, the Indian team won its first ever Commonwealth gold medal.

- ❖ The Indian mixed team of a pair of Satwik Ranki Reddy and Ashwini Ponnappa in badminton claimed gold for the first time in the Games' history.

Silver Winners & Events

- ❖ P.V. Sindhu – badminton - women's singles - against Saina Nehwal.
- ❖ Kidambi Srikanth – badminton- men's singles.
- ❖ Dipika Pallikal Karthik and Joshna Chinappa -women's doubles squash.
- ❖ Dipika Pallikal and Saurav Ghosal - mixed doubles squash
- ❖ Manish Kaushik – Boxing - Men's 60 kg category.
- ❖ Amit Panghal -Boxing -Men's 46-49 kg category.
- ❖ Manika Batra and Mouma Das –Table tennis- women's doubles, the first-ever silver for India in Table Tennis in the Commonwealth Games.
- ❖ Anjum Moudgil –Shooting- women's 50 m rifle 3 positions event.
- ❖ Pooja Dhanda –Wrestling women's 57 kg category.
- ❖ Mausam Khatri- Wrestling- men's freestyle 97 kg category.
- ❖ Seema Punia - women's discus throws.
- ❖ Mehuli Ghosh - shooting - 10m women's air rifle event.
- ❖ Heena Sidhu- shooting -10m women's air pistol
- ❖ P. Gururaja - Weightlifting- men's 56kg category.
- ❖ Tejaswini Sawant – shooting- 50m Air pistol shooting.
- ❖ Babita Kumari - Wrestling - 53kg category.

Bronze Winners & Events

- ❖ Manika Batra and G. Sathiyar - mixed doubles in table tennis.
- ❖ Sharath Kamal - table tennis Men's Singles.
- ❖ Harmeet Desai and Sunil Shankar Shetty - men's doubles Table Tennis.
- ❖ Ashwini Ponnappa and Sikki Reddy - women's doubles badminton.
- ❖ Somveer –Wrestling- Men's Freestyle 86 kg.
- ❖ Sakshi Malik – wrestling- Women's Freestyle 62 kg Category.
- ❖ Naman Tanwar - boxing -Men's 91 kg Category.
- ❖ Manoj Kumar - boxing -Men's 69 kg Category.
- ❖ Hussamuddin Mohammed - boxing -Men's 56 kg Category.
- ❖ Divya Kakran –Wrestling- women's freestyle 68 kg Category.

- ❖ Navjeet Dhillon - women's discus throw.
- ❖ Kiran - wrestling- women's freestyle 76 kg Category.
- ❖ Ankur Mittal – shooting-men's double trap shooting event.
- ❖ Om Mitharval – shooting- 50 m men's pistol, 10 m men's air pistol event.
- ❖ Apurvi Chandela - Shooting- 10 m women's air rifle event.
- ❖ Vikas Thakur – weightlifting- men's 94 kg category.
- ❖ Sachin Chaudhary - men's heavyweight category in para powerlifting.
- ❖ Ravi Kumar - Shooting - men's 10 m air rifle event.
- ❖ Deepak Lather - men's 69 kg category-youngest Indian weightlifter to claim a Commonwealth Games medal

About Commonwealth Games

- ❖ Commonwealth Games is a multi-sport event where athletes from 53-member countries of Commonwealth nations make participation.
- ❖ The games were first held in 1930.
- ❖ Commonwealth Games are conducted once in every 4 years.
- ❖ Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) is nodal agency to oversee the games.
- ❖ India had hosted the 19th edition of Commonwealth Games in New Delhi from 3 to 14 October 2010.
- ❖ The South African city of Durban is selected to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games at the Federation's general assembly in Auckland, New Zealand.

Chinese Grand Prix 2018

- ❖ The 2018 Chinese Grand Prix was a Formula One motor race that took place at the Shanghai International Circuit in Shanghai, China.
- ❖ Red Bull's Daniel Ricciardo won the race and the Valtteri Bottas of Mercedes and Kimi Raikkonen of Ferrari secured second and third places respectively.
- ❖ The race was the third round of the 2018 FIA Formula One World Championship and marked the fifteenth time that the Chinese Grand Prix has been run as a round of the Formula One World Championship.



Asian Arm wrestling Championship

- ❖ The differently-abled Indian arm wrestler Shrimant Jha clinched a bronze medal at the Asian Arm wrestling Championship held in Kazakhstan.
- ❖ Shrimant Jha, a resident of Naxal-hit Chhattisgarh finished behind Tajikistan's Firuz and Magolia's Munkhbold to settle for the bronze in the 80kg senior category.
- ❖ It is notable that he also secured a silver medal in Para-Arm Wrestling World Cup in Poland under 80 kg category.

11th Monte Carlo Masters Title

- ❖ Rafael Nadal of Spain has won the 11th Monte Carlo Masters title, held in France, by defeating Japan's Kei Nishikori in final and retained the world number one ranking.
- ❖ Nadal also overtook Serbia's Novak Djokovic to clinch most Masters 1000 titles. So far Nadal has won 31 Masters 1000 titles.



8th South Asian Judo Championship

- ❖ India has clinched the title of team champion in the 8th series of South Asian Judo Championship held at Kathmandu in Nepal.
- ❖ In the men's team category, India defeated Pakistan in the finals to claim the title. Under the women's team category, India thrashed Nepal to seal the title.
- ❖ India ended this tournament by securing first place in the medal tally with 15 medals in total including 12 Gold medals and three Bronze medals.
- ❖ In the event, Nepal stood second with two Gold medals, seven Silver and 13 Bronze medals in total.
- ❖ Nepal secured second place in the medal tally with 22 medals in total including 2 Gold medals, 7 silver, and 13 Bronze medals.
- ❖ Pakistan secured third place in the medal tally with 9 medals in total including 2 Gold medals, 4 silver, and 3 Bronze medals.
- ❖ As per the decision taken at South Asian Judo Federation's meeting next series of South Asian Judo Championship will be held in Bangladesh.



National Junior Athletics Championship

- ❖ The 16th Federation Cup National Junior athletics championship has begun in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ Coimbatore is hosting it for the first time and is organised by the Tamil Nadu Athletic Association.
- ❖ The three-day meet, which features athletes aged between 16 and 20, will serve as selection trial for the
 - Third South Asian junior championship in Colombo.
 - 18th Asian junior championship in Gifu, Japan.
 - The IAAF World under-20 championships in Tampere, Finland.

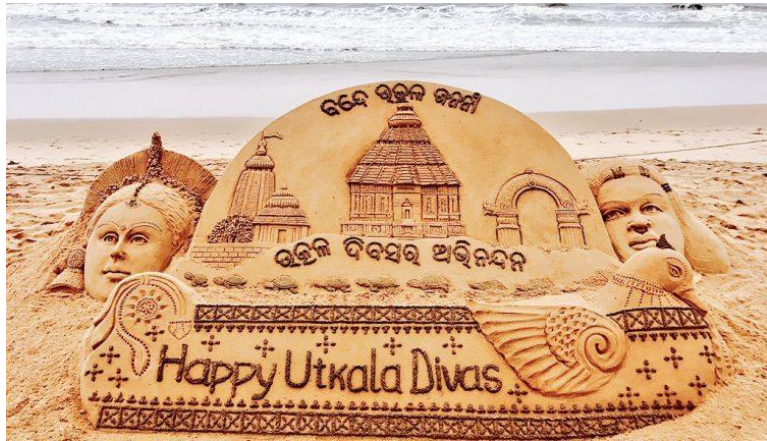
IMPORTANT DAYS

International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade – 25 March

- ❖ The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade is observed every year on March 25 across the world.
- ❖ Observance of this day honors and remembers those who suffered and died as consequence of transatlantic slave trade.
- ❖ The theme for the year 2018 is 'Remember Slavery: Triumphs and Struggles for Freedom and Equality'.
- ❖ It celebrates freedom of African descent people from slavery. It also acknowledges challenges faced by people in the movement towards freedom and equality.
- ❖ The International Day of Remembrance of Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade was instituted by United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by adopting a resolution in 2007.
- ❖ It was first observed in 2008 and since then it is observed annually. The same year, UNGA had established Remember Slavery Programme to honor the memory of victims of slavery and the transatlantic slave trade.
- ❖ It is managed by Education Outreach Section of Department of Public Information's Outreach Division of UN.

Odisha Day – 01 April

- ❖ Utkal Divas also known as Odisha Day is celebrated on 1 April every year in all over Odisha.
- ❖ It is celebrated to commemorate the formation of the state, which was carved out of the combined Bengal-Bihar-Orissa province in 1936.
- ❖ With the defeat and death of king Mukunda Dev, the last Hindu king in 1568 Orissa lost its complete political identity. Then it continued to be a part of Bengal province for many years. led to the formation of a separate state under British rule on the basis of the language on 1 April 1936.
- ❖ The leaders such as Madhusudan Das, Gopabandhu Das, Maharaja Krusha Chandra Gajapati, Fakir Mohan Senapati, and Gouri Shankar Ray played a key role in the formation of a separate Odisha State on the linguistic basis under British rule.



World Autism Awareness Day – 02 April

- ❖ The World Autism Awareness Day is observed every year on 2 April across the world to raise awareness about autism and problems faced by people suffering from it.
- ❖ Autism is a lifelong developmental disability that manifests itself during the first three years of life.



**World Autism
Awareness Day**

- ❖ The theme of the year 2018 is "Empowering women and girls with autism".
- ❖ The day was designated by the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) by passing resolution "62/139 in 2007. It is also one of only four official health-specific UN Days.

National Maritime Day – 05 April

- ❖ Every year 5th April is being observed as National Maritime Day of India. It was first celebrated on 5 April 1964.
- ❖ On 5 April 1919 navigation history was created when SS Loyalty, the first ship of The Scindia Steam Navigation Company Ltd journeyed to the United Kingdom.
- ❖ This was a crucial step in India shipping history when sea routes were controlled by the British.
- ❖ The theme of the 55th edition of the National Maritime Day 2018 celebrations is "Indian Shipping – An Ocean of opportunity".



International Day of Sport for Development and Peace - 06 April

- ❖ The International Day of Sport for Development and Peace (IDSDP), observed on 06 April every year.
- ❖ It is an annual celebration of the power of sport to drive social change, community development and to foster peace and understanding among people.
- ❖ On August 23, 2013, the UN proclaimed that the International Day of Sport for Development and Peace would be celebrated on April 6 each year.
- ❖ This date marks the opening of the first modern Olympic Games in Athens in 1896.

World Health Day – April 7

- ❖ World Health Day is observed every year on 7th April under the leadership of the World Health Organisation to draw attention among the mass people towards the importance of global health.
- ❖ The theme of the World Health Day 2018 is Universal Health Coverage: everyone, everywhere.
- ❖ World Health Day is celebrated to mark the anniversary of the World Health Organisation which was founded in 1948.
- ❖ Therefore, in 1948 in Geneva, World Health Assembly was held the first time and it was decided to celebrate annually on 7th April as World Health Day.
- ❖ In the year 1950, World Health Day was first time celebrated worldwide.



**UNIVERSAL
HEALTH
COVERAGE:
EVERYONE,
EVERYWHERE.**

World Homoeopathy Day – 10 April

- ❖ The World Homoeopathy Day (WHD) is observed every year on April 10 to honor and to pay tribute to Dr. Christian Friedrich Samuel Hahnemann, founder, and father of Homeopathy system of medicine.
- ❖ This year it is the 263rd birth anniversary of the founder of Homoeopathy.
- ❖ On this occasion, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu inaugurated scientific convention on WHD 2018 in New Delhi organized by Ministry of AYUSH.
- ❖ The theme of the two-day convention was “Innovate Evolve, Progress: Exploring Science since 40 years”.
- ❖ Homeopathy as a system of medicine was developed by Dr. Samuel Hahnemann in Germany in 1796.

National Safe Motherhood Day – 11th April

- ❖ The National Safe Motherhood Day (NSMD) is celebrated every year on April 11 to create awareness on proper healthcare and maternity facilities to pregnant and lactating women.

- ❖ The theme of 2018 NSMD was 'Respectful Maternity Care'.
- ❖ The NSMD is an initiative of White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood, India (WRAI)
- ❖ It aims to ensure that every woman has access to services childbirth services during pregnancy and postnatal services.
- ❖ At the request of WRAI, the Central Government in 2003 had instituted this day on the occasion of birth anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi, wife of MK Gandhi.
- ❖ India is the first country in the world to celebrate National Safe Motherhood Day.

The World Aviation and Cosmonautics Day – 12 April

- ❖ On April 12 the whole World celebrates an Aviation and Cosmonautics Day – a date to commemorate the first-ever flight of a human in space.
- ❖ On April 12, 1961, a citizen of the Soviet Union, first lieutenant Yuri Gagarin orbited the Earth onboard "Vostok" spacecraft for the first time in mankind history, thus opening the era of manned space missions.

World Liver Day - April 19

- ❖ Every year, April 19 is celebrated as World Liver Day across the world.
- ❖ This year on World Liver Day 2018, the theme is "Riding new waves in liver diagnosis, staging, and treatment."
- ❖ According to the study of World Health Organisation, liver-related disease is the 10th most common cause for a high number of deaths in India.



Civil Services Day – April 21

- ❖ Every year Civil Services Day is celebrated in India on April 21 to commemorate the address of countries first home minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel to the first batch of IAS officers at Metcalfe House, Delhi on April 21, 1947.
- ❖ A two-day Civil Services Day function was organized in New Delhi by Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions on 20-21 April 2018.

- ❖ In the inaugural session, Vice President released a book titled: 'Emulating Excellence — Takeaways for Replication'.
- ❖ Prime Minister conferred the Awards for Excellence in Public Administration for effective implementation of identified Priority Programmes and Innovation to districts administrations and other Central, state organizations.
- ❖ Following four priority programmes have been identified for the awards to be presented on Civil Services Day 2018:
 - Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana,
 - Scheme for the Promotion of Digital Payments
 - Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Urban & Rural.
 - Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana.

Earth Day - April 22

- ❖ Every year world Earth Day is celebrated worldwide on April 22 to create awareness among world masses about the need of protection of the planet and the necessity of preservation of its environment.



- ❖ The Earth Day observed globally from 1990 and is now celebrated by 192 countries.
- ❖ According to a report of Earth Day Network, Earth Day 2018 will focus on fundamentally changing human attitude and behavior about plastics and focus on catalyzing a significant reduction in plastic pollution.



World Book and Copyright Day – 23 April

- ❖ Every year World Book and Copyright Day is being observed on 23 April to increase the reading habit among world public and to promote publishing and copyright of books.
- ❖ The UNESCO and the other international organizations select the World Book Capital for a one-year period, effective 23 April each year.
- ❖ This year, UNESCO designated Athens, Greece as the World Book Capital for 2018.
- ❖ The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) had created this day and was first observed in 1995.

National Panchayati Raj Day - 24 April

- ❖ The National Panchayati Raj Diwas (Day) is celebrated every year in India on 24th April.
- ❖ This day is celebrated to marks the passing of Constitution (73rd Amendment) Act, 1992 that came into force with effect from 24 April 1993.
- ❖ The first National Panchayati Raj Day was celebrated in 2010.
- ❖ The enactment of 73rd Amendment Act had led a Power devolution moment in the history of India. It helped in decentralization of political power to the grassroots level.

World Malaria Day - 25 April

- ❖ The World Malaria Day (WMD) is being observed every year on 25 April across the world to recognise the global efforts to control preventable vector borne disease malaria.
- ❖ The theme of 2018 World Malaria Day is “Ready to beat malaria”.
- ❖ The World Malaria Day (WMD) was established by the 60th session of World Health Assembly, a decision-making body of World Health Organization (WHO) in May 2007.



MISCELLANEOUS

Ookla's Speedtest Global Index

- ❖ As per the Ookla's Speedtest Global Index, India globally ranked 67th in fixed broadband speeds and 109th in terms of mobile internet speeds.
- ❖ Last year, the country ranked 76th in terms of fixed broadband download speed.
- ❖ The report says that the country's performance in fixed broadband download speeds has increased from average speeds of 18.82 Mbps in November 2017 to 20.72 Mbps in February 2018.
- ❖ India's neighbor China was ranked 26th with an average mobile broadband download speed of 33.96 Mbps, Sri Lanka 82nd, Pakistan 92nd, Bangladesh 115th and Nepal 118th.
- ❖ India's neighboring countries China was ranked 20th, Sri Lanka 76th, Bangladesh 86th, Nepal 89th and Pakistan 112nd, in terms of fixed-line broadband download speed.
- ❖ The February Speedtest Global Index shows Norway at pole position in the world for mobile internet with an average download speed of 62.07 Mbps.
- ❖ Singapore takes the top spot for fixed broadband with a 161.53 Mbps average download.
- ❖ Ookla's Speedtest Global Index compares Internet speed data from around the world via 7,021 servers, out of which 439 are present in India.



Mobile				Fixed Broadband			
Global Average				Global Average			
Download Mbps		Upload Mbps		Download Mbps		Upload Mbps	
22.16		9.01		42.71		20.39	
Rank	Country	Download Mbps		Rank	Country	Download Mbps	
1	- Norway	62.07		1	- Singapore	161.53	
2	+2 Iceland	58.44		2	- Iceland	157.73	
3	- Netherlands	54.53		3	- Hong Kong (SAR)	129.64	
4	-2 Singapore	51.92		4	- South Korea	117.49	
5	- United Arab Emirates	51.72		5	- Romania	105.74	
6	+4 Qatar	51.61		6	+2 Sweden	93.24	
7	-1 Australia	50.04		7	- Hungary	90.94	
8	- Hungary	46.39		8	-2 Macau (SAR)	87.92	
9	- Canada	45.67		9	- United States	84.66	
10	+1 Belgium	45.16		10	- Netherlands	83.41	
100	- Paraguay	11.04		60	+4 Croatia	24.05	
101	+7 Syria	10.85		61	- Vietnam	22.79	
102	+3 Mauritius	10.49		62	+1 Malaysia	22.56	
103	+11 Costa Rica	10.44		63	+7 Macedonia	21.72	
104	+3 Trinidad and Tobago	10.10		64	+15 Ghana	21.62	
105	+1 Indonesia	10.04		65	+1 Saudi Arabia	21.58	