

TNPSC THERVUPETTAGAM

CURRENT AFFAIRS – DECEMBER, 2017

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Plot No.1742, 1st Floor, 18th Main Road, Anna Nagar, Chennai – 600 040.

Phone : 044-26216435, 64597222, 4353 3445, Mobile : 94441 66435

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TNPSC BITS

- ❖ Pradeep Singh Kharola, a senior IAS officer has been appointed as the new chairman of Air India.
- ❖ Bangladesh government has inaugurated construction work on the much-awaited Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant in Ishwardi, located in the western part of the country.
 - The mega project carried out by Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission with financial and technological support from Russia through its state nuclear agency, Rosatom.
- ❖ The word 'populism' has been announced as Cambridge Dictionary's Word of the Year 2017. Populism means political ideas and activities that are intended to get the support of ordinary people by giving them what they want.
- ❖ Salil S Parekh has been appointed as the new Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Managing Director (MD) of Infosys.
- ❖ Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro has announced the creation of a new virtual currency named Petro to combat a US-led financial "blockade" and to ease the country's economic crisis.
- ❖ Founder and CEO of Paytm, Vijay Shekhar Sharma has been named the UN Environment's 'Patron for Clean Air' to help drive greater environmental action and awareness, and to advocate for the goals of UN Environment's global Breathe Life campaign.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district was included in the National Capital Region (NCR), making it the 23rd district to be included in the region. Centred upon National Capital Territory of Delhi, the NCR includes 13 districts of Haryana, eight districts of UP, and two districts of Rajasthan. It was constituted in 1985 as an interstate regional planning area.
- ❖ Inspired by a dual citizenship crisis plaguing politics in Australia "Kwaussie", a term that refers to a person who is both Australian and a New Zealander has been named as Australia's word of the year.
- ❖ **OP Sahayam** is an Indian Navy exercise for undertaking Search and Rescue (SAR) and providing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster relief (HADR) material support, over Southeast Arabian Sea and Lakshadweep & Minicoy islands in the aftermath of Very Severe Cyclonic Storm 'OCKHI'.
- ❖ Writer Bhagyam Ramaswamy, creator of the comic characters Appusami and Seethapatti passed away. Bhagyam Ramaswamy is the pseudonym of Ja Ra Sundaresan, who worked at the Tamil weekly magazine Kumudham for nearly four decades before retiring as joint editor in 1990.
- ❖ Australia will become the 26th country in the world to allow same-sex marriages, after its parliament passed the same-sex marriage bill drafted by Dean Smith, the Liberal senator.

- ❖ Retired bureaucrat, M Sheela Priya (1977-IAS) officer has become the next State Chief Information Commissioner for Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ A six-foot-high burial urn, **Mudhumakkal Thazhi**, made of clay, and pieces of pots were unearthed at Old Pallavaram. The artefacts are estimated to be around 2,000 years old. It was an ancient Tamil practice to make huge earthen pots to bury people using mudhumakkal thazhi.
- ❖ The European Union and Japan concluded negotiations on a free trade deal to create the **World's largest free-trade Agreement (FTA)**. The deal, will remove EU tariffs of 10 percent tariffs on Japanese cars and the 3 percent rate typically applied to car parts.
- ❖ Uttar Pradesh has become the **first State to endorse** the Central government's draft bill that makes **instant triple talaq** a cognisable and non-bailable offence. The draft was prepared by an inter-ministerial group headed by Home Minister Rajnath Singh.
- ❖ Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi was elected unopposed as president of the Indian National Congress in New Delhi. He is the **16th president** of the Congress since Independence and **sixth from the Nehru-Gandhi clan** to take over the party reins. Mr. Gandhi has been vice-president of the party since 2013.
- ❖ Television ratings agency Broadcast Audience Research Council India (BARC) elected Nakul Chopra as its new chairman.
- ❖ The Saudi Arabian regime plans to open movie theaters to the public in early 2018, reversing a 35-year ban.
- ❖ The Bihar government has introduced a "safe city surveillance" system across the state to check sexual harassment and crime.
- ❖ The Union Government has framed a scheme to set up 12 Special Courts to fast-track the trial of 1,581 criminal cases against people representatives who get in legislature on 2014 general election and after the period.
- ❖ Jammu and Kashmir Bank launched a finance scheme- **"J-K Bank sahafat finance scheme"** tailored for media fraternity in the state wherein a loan of up to Rs.3 lakhs can be availed by journalists and employees of media houses in the state.
 - The loan, which can be availed at an interest rate of Marginal Cost of Funds Based Lending Rate(MCLR) plus 3.4 per cent, has to be repaid in 60 monthly instalments and there are no pre-payment charges.
- ❖ The Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) has for the first time compiled a list of alien invasive animal species, totalling 157. Scientists have identified 157 animal species that pose a threat to native fauna. This number excludes invasive microbe species
- ❖ Philippines was hard hit by tropical storm Kai-Tak. The storm made landfall in Biliran island in eastern Philippines, with strong winds upto 80 kmph.

- ❖ Ola, operated by ANI Technologies Pvt. Ltd, has acquired online food delivery start-up Foodpanda India from its Germany-based parent firm, Delivery Hero Group, in an all-stock deal for an undisclosed amount and it will infuse \$200 million in Foodpanda India's operations.
- ❖ The Union Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship and Maruti Suzuki India Limited have signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to support Skill India Mission in automobile industry.
 - The Flexi MoU aims to provide high employment potential trades related to automobile and manufacturing industry to youth under Skill India Mission.
- ❖ Commerce and Industry Minister Suresh Prabhu announced that India will host meeting of World Trade Organisation (WTO) member countries in February 2018 to muster support for food security and other issues.
- ❖ Jokapath village, a tribal village in Balrampur district of Chhattisgarh, got electricity connection for the first time since India got its Independence.
- ❖ Justice Umesh Dattatraya Salvi took charge as the acting Chairperson of the National Green Tribunal (NGT), following the retirement of Justice Swatanter Kumar. Justice Salvi will continue in office until the date a new chairperson is appointed or the date of his superannuation, whichever is earlier.
- ❖ Birmingham has been selected to host the Commonwealth Games in 2022, it is first time that, a biggest sporting event is awarded to an English city since the London Olympics in 2012.
- ❖ Ugandan lawmakers voted overwhelmingly to remove presidential age limits, paving the way for President Yoweri Museveni to serve a sixth term in office. Under current laws Museveni, 73, would not be eligible to run for office again in 2021 as candidates over 75 are not allowed.
- ❖ Professor Dhirendra Pal Singh, serving as director of National Assessment and Accreditation Council, has been appointed chairperson of University Grants Commission (UGC) for a period of five years by the Government of India. The post has been lying vacant since April 2017 after the retirement of professor Ved Prakash.
- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved extension of term of Commission to examine the issue of sub-categorization of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) by 12 weeks i.e. upto 2 April, 2018.
- ❖ M. Subbarayudu, (IFS: 1994), presently Joint Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs has been appointed as the next Ambassador of India to the Republic of Peru.
- ❖ A book named **The Way I See It — a Gauri Lankesh Reader** containing selected writings by late journalist Gauri Lankesh was launched at the Mumbai Press Club. The book has been edited by writer and sociologist Chandan Gowda.
- ❖ Former India wicketkeeper Saba Karim who has played Bihar and Bengal was appointed as General Manager (Cricket Operations) of the Board of

Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). He will report directly to BCCI CEO Rahul Johri. The post has been lying vacant since the resignation of M.V. Sridhar in September.

- ❖ The Centre has recognised Odisha as a 'Champion State' for recording the highest growth in exports during 2016-17. The merchandise exports from Odisha registered the highest growth rate of 114% among all the states.
- ❖ The 13th anniversary of the devastating tsunami, which caused heavy toll on human life and devastated the state's coastal line, on December 26, 2004 was observed in various parts of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has appointed senior IPS officer Abhay, presently working in Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), as new Director General of Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB). The post was lying vacant after R R Bhatnagar took over as DG of CRPF in April 2017.
- ❖ The Assam government has altered the office timings for its staff from 10 am to 5 pm to 9.30 am to 5 pm. The new timings will be followed January 1, 2018, onwards.
- ❖ After the resignation of Robert Mugabe who has ruled Zimbabwe for more than 30 years as President, the Zimbabwe's new President Emmerson Mnangagwa has appointed the country's ex-Army chief Constantino Chiwenga as one of his two Vice Presidents. Zimbabwe's ex-State Security Minister Kembo Mohadi was appointed as the other Vice President.
- ❖ China's largest social media network, WeChat, is set to become an official electronic personal identification system in the country. It will function the same as traditional identity cards issued by the state.
- ❖ Telangana government has announced free 24-hour electricity supply to their farmers from January 1.
- ❖ The Tamilnadu based Self Help Group (SHG) has started 'The Tamil Nadu Sanitary Napkin Producers Federation' to ensure availability of sanitary napkins free of cost in to hospitals and prisons across the State.
- ❖ Sumita Misra, a 1990 batch IAS officer of Haryana cadre, has been appointed to the post in PM's economic advisory council for five years.
- ❖ Britain's Prince Harry has been named the president of African Parks, a conservation group that manages a dozen wildlife areas across the continent for dedication to African environment conservation.

TAMILNADU

New rice variety- MGR 100

- ❖ The Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu has released a new rice variety 'MGR 100', developed by the Tamil Nadu Agriculture University (TNAU) in memory of M.G. Ramachandran coinciding with the late Chief Minister's birth centenary celebrations in Thanjavur.

- ❖ MGR 100' is the rechristened nomenclature of CO 52, which, in fact, is a derivative of the cross involving BPT 5204 and CO (R) 50.
- ❖ This variety is a high yielding, superior grain quality and pest and disease resistance.
- ❖ Though the CO 52 is being released as MGR 100, the TNAU is awaiting the gazetting of the variety by the Central Seed Sub Committee for Variety Release and Notification.
- ❖ Earlier in 1994, the TNAU had released MGR (COR H1), which is the first hybrid rice in India.

Centre names two prabhari officers

- ❖ The Centre has appointed Praveen Kumar and S. Gopalakrishnan, both IAS officers of Tamil Nadu cadre and on Central deputation, 'prabhari' officers for Virudhunagar and Ramanathapuram.
- ❖ The Centre has identified Ramanathapuram and Virudhunagar as backward districts of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The identification has been made on four broad parameters — poverty, health, education and infrastructure.
- ❖ They will coordinate the efforts of the Centre and State governments in "achieving rapid transformation" of the districts.

India, Israel to open centre for floriculture in Tamil Nadu

- ❖ India and Israel have jointly set up a centre for excellence in floriculture at Thally in Krishnagiri district of Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ It is first agro-technology development centre to be set up with Israel's assistance in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ The centre at Thally and similar centre planned for vegetables to be established in Dindigul, Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ These centres form part of a three-year Indo-Israel agricultural partnership signed between Mashav, Israel's agency for international development cooperation and mission for integrated development of horticulture of Union Agriculture Ministry.

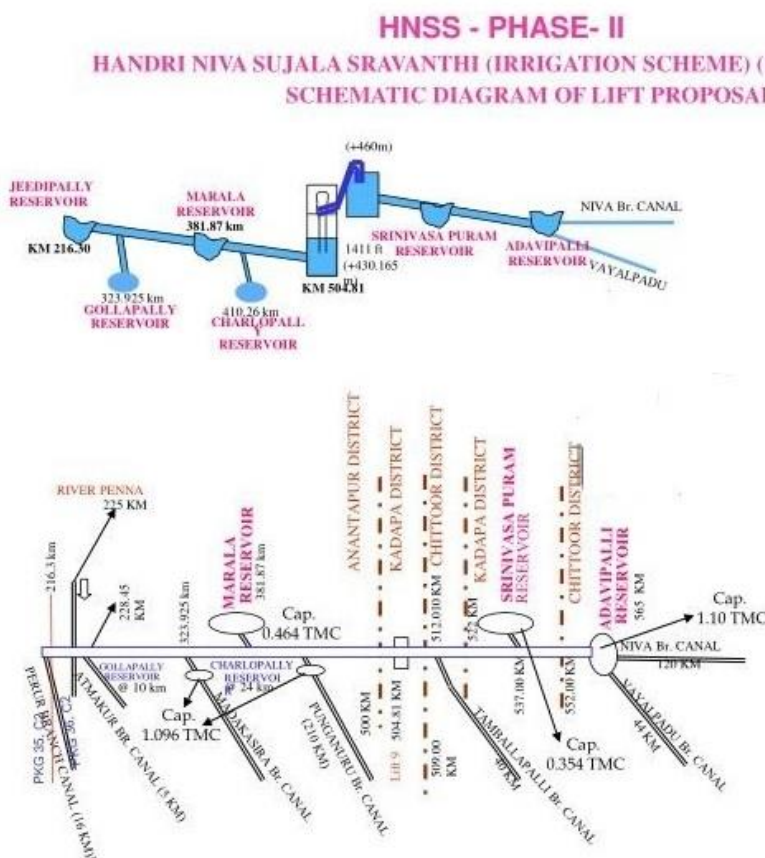
Solar park in Ramnad

- ❖ The Centre has given its nod to Tangedco to set up a 500MW solar park in Ramanathapuram district.
- ❖ This will be the first such park to be set up by a government-owned power distribution company in the country.

- ❖ The proposed solar park will be set up at Naripaiyur village in Kadaladi, a coastal town in Ramanathapuram district.
- ❖ Ramanthapuram, Sivaganga and Tuticorin are the three districts with maximum solar radiation in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ As per Tamil Nadu Energy Development Agency (TEDA), Ramanathapuram has 5.67 Global Horizontal Irradiance (GHI) and due to this the plant load factor (PLF) is high.

Handri-Neeva Sujala Sravanthi project

- ❖ Handri-Neeva water canal project links the Handri river originating from Kurnool district of Andhra Pradesh to the Neeva river in Chittoor district through Anantapur and Kadapa districts.



- ❖ The water canal project named Handri-Neeva Sujala Sravanthi project, which is being implemented by Andhra Pradesh CM, is expected to rise the ground water level in the forest areas of Tamil Nadu, bordering Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ This project was a long term dream of N.T.Rama Rao
- ❖ This project will increase water levels in forests of Koundinya Wildlife Sanctuary. The canal will lead to increase in ground water levels in reserve forests of Pernambut, Aambur, Tirupathur and other places of border district

Vellore. Furthermore, the agricultural lands in tamilnadu, bordering these forests will also get prosperity.

- ❖ The project canals can also feed by gravity the Tungabhadra high level canal and many other medium & minor tanks in Pennar River basin to provide drinking water during severe droughts.

NATIONAL

HEFA - Higher education institutions

- ❖ The newly formed Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA) has approved over RS.2000 crore interest free loans for six Indian higher education institutes to boost research and academic infrastructures.

HEFA

- ❖ It is a non-banking financial company (NBFC) formed to give a major push for creation of high quality infrastructure in premier educational institutions.
- ❖ It is registered as a Section – 8 Company under the Companies Act.
- ❖ It will be a joint venture between the HRD ministry and Canara bank.
- ❖ It will raise funds from the market and also mobilize CSR (corporate Social Responsibility) funds from PSUs/Corporates and lend to government-run higher educational institutions for promoting research and innovation.
- ❖ It would finance research and infrastructure projects through a 10-year loan.
- ❖ RBI has granted a license under the RBI Act for HEFA to operate as Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) and to leverage the equity to mobilise money from market as per the requirements of the institutions.

Naval pact- India and Singapore

- ❖ India and Singapore have signed Bilateral Agreement for Navy Cooperation that will allow Indian Navy ships logistical support, including refuelling at Singapore's Changi Naval Base located near disputed South China Sea (SCS).
- ❖ The naval logistics agreement is first for India with country located east of strategically important Strait of Malacca.
- ❖ The agreement was announced during second Defence Ministers' Dialogue between India and Singapore held in New Delhi.
- ❖ It will give boost to India's Act East Policy and strengthen India's role for safety, stability, regional peace and navigational freedom in Indian ocean.

FSSAI-Guidelines for food

- ❖ FSSAI has issued set of guidelines for the process to recall food products from markets if found unsafe, putting the onus of implementing any recall on manufacturers and distributors.
- ❖ FSSAI will monitor the progress of the recall and assess the adequacy of the action taken by food companies. It will also ensure the destruction of the recalled item.

Project Swarn

- ❖ The first revamped rake of Rajdhani under the project was launched recently between Sealdah-Delhi.
- ❖ Project Swarn was launched by the Railway Ministry to renovate India's premium trains including Rajdhani and Shatabdi.
- ❖ Under the project, the Indian Railways will focus attention on 10 key areas — punctuality, cleanliness, linen, coach interiors, toilets, catering, staff behaviour, security, entertainment, housekeeping and regular feedback.

India Hypertension Management Initiative (IHMI)

- ❖ IHMI is a collaborative project of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), Union Health Ministry, State Governments and World Health Organization (WHO).
- ❖ The primary goal of this project is to reduce morbidity and mortality due to Cardiovascular Disease, the leading cause of death in India.
- ❖ This initiative aims to strengthen the cardiovascular disease component of the government's National Program for Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke (NPCDCS).
- ❖ It will focus on strengthening hypertension management and monitoring at the primary health care level, within the existing healthcare system, and is aligned with WHO's Global HEARTS Initiative and national guidelines.
- ❖ IHMI will be progressively rolled out in 25 districts in the first two years across districts selected by the Health Ministry.
- ❖ It involves active screening and intensification of treatment activities for hypertension by improving the control of high blood pressure.

Upgraded version of CPAO

- ❖ The Controller General of Accounts has launched the upgraded version of Central Pension Accounting Office (CPAO) website.
- ❖ The website has been developed in-house by the National Informatics Centre wing of CPAO and it provides a single window for both accessing pension related information and facilitating grievance redressal of civil pensioners in Ministries/Departments and Banks.

CPAO

- ❖ The Controller General of Accounts is the apex Accounting Authority of the Central Government.
- ❖ CGA works under Ministry of Finance and not a constitutional or statutory body.
- ❖ It exercises the powers of the President under Article 150 of the constitution for prescribing the forms of Accounts of the Union and State Governments on the advice of the Comptroller & Auditor General of India.
- ❖ It is the Principal Accounting Adviser to Government of India and is responsible for establishing and maintaining a technically sound Management Accounting System.
- ❖ The Office of CGA prepares monthly and annual analysis of expenditure, revenues, borrowings and various fiscal indicators for the Union Government.

‘Ajeya Warrior-2017’

- ❖ The 14-day long Combined Military exercise ‘Ajeya Warrior- 2017’ between India and the United Kingdom began at the Mahajan Field Firing Range near Bikaner, Rajasthan.
- ❖ It is a bi-annual exercise.
- ❖ The exercise is the third joint military exercise between the two countries and While the first exercise of the series was held in 2013, in Belgium, the second such exercise was conducted in the UK in 2015.
- ❖ The main objective behind holding the drill is to increase mutual cooperation and coordination between armies the two countries.

National Nutrition Mission (NNM)

- ❖ The union cabinet has approved the establishment of a National Nutrition Mission to address serious incidence of malnutrition and stunting among infants in the country by 2% each year.

- ❖ The mission has set an ambitious goal of reducing incidence of stunting among children from 38.4 % now to 25 % by 2022.
- ❖ The mission will be jointly launched by the ministries of Women and Child Development, Health and Family Welfare and Water Resources, together with NITI Aayog.
- ❖ The government is going to implement this mission for a period of three years.
- ❖ All the states and districts will be covered in a phased manner; to begin with the worst affected 315 districts will be targeted this financial year.
- ❖ It also aims to bring down anaemia among young children, women and adolescent girls by 3% every year.

22nd meeting of SFAC

- ❖ Union Minister Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Shri Radha Mohan Singh chaired the 22nd meeting of Board of Management of Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) in, New Delhi.

Small Farmers' Agri-Business Consortium

- ❖ SFAC is an autonomous Society of Department of Agriculture and Cooperation under Union Ministry of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare.
- ❖ It was registered under Societies Registration Act 1860. The Society is also registered as Non-Banking Financial Institution by Reserve Bank of India.
- ❖ It is implementing the National Agriculture Market Electronic Trading (e-Nam) platform.
- ❖ The purpose is to provide for a single unified market for agricultural products with much higher price discovery for farmers.
- ❖ It implements Credit Guarantee Fund Scheme to Farmer Producer Companies to improve availability of working capital and development of business activities.
- ❖ It promotes development of small agribusiness through its Venture Capital Assistance Scheme for value added processing and marketing linkages.

Global Entrepreneurs Summit

- ❖ Recently Global Entrepreneurs Summit was recently held in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- ❖ It is the pre-eminent annual entrepreneurship gathering that convenes over one thousand emerging entrepreneurs, investors, and supporters from around the world.
- ❖ The summit organized annually since 2010.

- ❖ This year marks the first GES held in South Asia, and the event underscores the broad and enduring partnership with India.
- ❖ The summit will focus on four key industry sectors: Energy and Infrastructure, Healthcare and Life Sciences, Financial Technology and Digital Economy, and Media and Entertainment.
- ❖ This year's GES theme is - "Women First, Prosperity for All".

Shared Value Summit 2017

- ❖ The Shared Value Summit 2017 was held in New Delhi on December 1.
- ❖ The theme of the summit was "Equity and Empowerment". The purpose of the summit is to encourage businesses to adopt the practice of shared value by imbibing the spirit of inclusivity in their business models.
- ❖ The summit aims to provide a platform to identify and address the barriers that exist to equality and empowerment in the Indian society.

National Strategic Plan 2017-24 and Mission SAMPARK

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare launched the National Strategic Plan 2017-24 aimed at eradicating HIV/AIDS by 2030.
- ❖ It was launched on the occasion of World AIDS Day (1st December).
- ❖ Mission SAMPARK was also launched to trace those who are left to follow up and are to be brought under Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) services.

Key Facts

- ❖ The National Strategic Plan 2017-24 will pave a roadmap not only for achieving the target of 90:90:90 Strategy but also strive along with partners towards fast track strategy of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030.
- ❖ Mission SAMPARK will further aid to will help in fast-tracking the identification of all who were HIV positive and subsequently linking to ART programme.

90:90:90 Strategy

- ❖ It is a new HIV treatment narrative of UN AIDS programme.
- ❖ It aims to 90% of all HIV-positive persons, provide antiretroviral therapy (ART) for 90% of those diagnosed, and achieve viral suppression for 90% of those treated by 2020.

AROGYA 2017

- ❖ The First Ever International Conference on AYUSH and Wellness 'Arogya 2017' was inaugurated at New Delhi.
- ❖ Arogya 2017' has been jointly organized by the Union Ministry of AYUSH and Ministry of Commerce and Industry including Pharmaceuticals Export Promotion Council (Pharmexcil) in partnership with Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI).
- ❖ 'Arogya 2017' is a comprehensive exhibition cum conference on Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddhha, Sowa Rigpa, Homoeopathy and wellness (AYUSH).
- ❖ India is the second largest exporter of Ayurvedic and alternate medicine to the world.
- ❖ Its theme was 'Enhancing the global potential of AYUSH'.

Akash Missile-Test

- ❖ India successfully test-fired Akash its supersonic surface-to-air missile with indigenous radio frequency seeker from at Integrated Test Range (ITR) in Odisha.
- ❖ It has been indigenously developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) under Integrated Guided-Missile Development Programme (IGMDP).

Akash Missile

- ❖ Akash is an indigenously developed medium-range, surface-to-air missile defence system.
- ❖ It can target aircraft up to 30 km away, at altitudes up to 18,000 m.
- ❖ It consists of Rohini radar that detects incoming aircraft with a range of 120 km.
- ❖ It can intercept fighter jets, cruise missiles as well as ballistic missiles.
- ❖ Recently, it was test fired with an indigenous radio frequency seeker.
- ❖ This is the first surface-to-air missile with indigenous seeker that has been test fired.
- ❖ With this success, India has achieved the capability of making any type of surface-to-air missile
- ❖ This missile is being inducted into Army as Short Range Surface to Air Missile (SRSAM).

NGT-single member bench

- ❖ The Union Environment Ministry has allowed NGT Chairperson to “constitute a single-member bench” in “exceptional circumstances”. It has amended National Green Tribunal (Practices and Procedure) Rules, 2011 and issued notification. However, it has not defined “exceptional circumstances”.
- ❖ Current rules require that every Bench of the NGT consist of “two or more” members and made up of at least one judicial and one expert member.
- ❖ It has allowed the Chairperson of NGT to constitute single member benches.
- ❖ The notification was issued following the SC criticized the union government for not filling up vacancies in the NGT principal and zonal benches.

National Green Tribunal (NGT)

- ❖ NGT was established in 2010 with its principal bench in Delhi.
- ❖ Its zonal benches are located in Pune, Chennai, Kolkatta, Bopal.
- ❖ Its objective is to provide an effective and speedy disposal of cases pertaining to environment protection, conservation of forests and for seeking compensation for damages caused to people or property due to violation of environmental laws.
- ❖ The NGT has the power to hear all civil cases relating to environmental issues that are linked to the following laws -
 - ✓ The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974
 - ✓ The Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980
 - ✓ The Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1981
 - ✓ The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986
 - ✓ The Public Liability Insurance Act, 1991
 - ✓ The Biological Diversity Act, 2002.
- ❖ There is a bar on civil court to take cases under these listed laws in Schedule 1 of NGT act.
- ❖ The NGT has not been vested with powers to hear any matter relating to the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the Indian Forest Act, 1927 and various laws enacted by States relating to forests, tree preservation etc.
- ❖ The NGT is not bound by the procedure laid down under the Code of Civil Procedure, 1908, but shall be guided by principles of natural justice.

ISA becomes treaty-based international intergovernmental organization

- ❖ India's global initiative International Solar Alliance (ISA), becomes a treaty-based international intergovernmental organisation.

- ❖ In terms of its Framework Agreement, with ratification by Guinea as the 15th country, the International Solar Alliance (ISA) will become a treaty-based international intergovernmental organization.
- ❖ ISA is first treaty-based international government organisation to be based in India. So far, 46 countries have signed and 19 ratified Framework Agreement.

ISA

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

NCM forms committee

- ❖ The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) has set up three-member committee to study the matter to give minority status to Hindus in 8 states where their population is less than 50%.
- ❖ The committee will be led by NCM's Vice Chairman George Kurien and will be assisted by NCM additional secretary Ajay Kumar. It has been given three months to submit its report.
- ❖ According to 2011 Census, Hindus are in minority in eight states — Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, J&K, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, and Punjab.
- ❖ Hindus in these states are being deprived of their basic rights, guaranteed under Articles 25 to 30 because neither central nor state governments have notified Hindus as a 'minority' under Section 2(c) of National Commission for Minority Act.

22nd conference of Asian Harmonisation Working Party

- ❖ Union Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare inaugurated the 22nd conference of Asian Harmonisation Working Party (AHWP).
- ❖ The conference aims to develop and recommend approaches for the convergence and harmonisation of medical devices regulation in Asia.
- ❖ The five-day conference is being conducted by Central Drugs Standard Control Organization and National Drug Regulatory Authority of India in collaboration with Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.
- ❖ AHWP was established in 1999 as a voluntary non-profit organisation of the 30 national regulators of member countries and industry members
- ❖ AHWP aims to promote regulatory harmonisation on medical device regulations in Asia and other regions.
- ❖ It was set up in accordance with the guidance issued by International Medical Device Regulators Forums.

International conference on Ground water

- ❖ The 7th International conference on the Ground water issues is going to be organized in New Delhi.
- ❖ It is being organized with a theme of “Groundwater Vision 2030- Water Security, Challenges, and Climate Change Adaptation”.
- ❖ The conference has been organized by the National Institute of Hydrology (NIH), Roorkee and Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) under the aegis of Ministry of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, Government of India.
- ❖ The Conference is expected to take stock of present status and challenges of Groundwater management in the country under the changing water use and climatic scenarios.

SAICON 2017

- ❖ The First International Conference on Sports Medicine and Sports Sciences SAICON 2017 was inaugurated by the Minister of State Youth Affairs and Sports Col. Rajyavardhan Rathore in New Delhi.
- ❖ The 3-day conference is organized by Sports Authority of India attended by about 1000 national and international delegates.
- ❖ The SAICON 2017 will promote scientific temperament in the country and inspire students, researchers and educationists to take up sports science and research to the next level.

India declared free from Trachoma

- ❖ India is now declared free from Trachoma according to the National Trachoma Survey Report (2014-17).
- ❖ It is a chronic infective disease of the eye and a leading cause of corneal blindness in India, affecting young children.
- ❖ Trachoma is a disease caused by poor environmental and personal hygiene and inadequate access to water and sanitation which affects the conjunctiva.
- ❖ According to the National Trachoma Survey Report (2014-17), India has become free from Trachoma with an overall prevalence found to be only 0.7%, much below the criteria set by WHO.
- ❖ According to WHO, active trachoma is considered eliminated if the prevalence of active infection among children below 10 years is less than 5%.
- ❖ The disease is found to be affecting the population in certain pockets of north Indian states like Gujarat, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and the Nicobar Islands.
- ❖ The Survey results indicate that active trachoma is no longer a public health problem in India. India has now met the goal of trachoma elimination as specified by the WHO under its GET 2020 program.

Bodhi Parva: BIMSTEC Festival of Buddhist Heritage

- ❖ India hosted "Bodhi Parva: BIMSTEC Festival of Buddhist Heritage" at the India Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi.
- ❖ It involves exhibition of international and Indian Buddhist art and architecture, discourses by eminent scholars of Buddhism, screening of film on Buddhism, dance and music performances etc.
- ❖ The festival was arranged as part of celebrations of 20th Anniversary of BIMSTEC and it will help in building an awareness of BIMSTEC's rich and common heritage.
- ❖ BIMSTEC (the Bay of Bengal Initiative for multi-sectoral technical and economic cooperation), comprises of India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan.

BIMSTEC

- ❖ Bay of Bengal Initiatives for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) is the sub-regional grouping comprising seven countries of South Asia and South East Asia. These are: Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Bhutan and Nepal.
- ❖ On 6 June 1997, a new sub-regional grouping was formed in Bangkok and given the name BIST-EC (Bangladesh, India, Sri Lanka, and Thailand Economic Cooperation). Later Myanmar and Nepal joined this group, after which the organisation was renamed as BIMSTEC

- ❖ Nepal is the current Chair of the BIMSTEC. Its Secretariat is located in Dhaka.

India's first-ever mobile food testing laboratory

- ❖ Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar launched country's first-ever mobile food testing laboratory.
- ❖ It is entirely funded by the Centre, which will also bear the maintenance cost for five years.
- ❖ The laboratory is mounted on a bus which will travel across the state for checking the standards of food samples on the spot and it will also check the hygiene level of water.

Public Procurement Portal for MSMEs

- ❖ The Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) has launched a Public Procurement Portal 'MSME Sambandh' in New Delhi.
- ❖ The objective of the portal is to monitor the implementation of the Public Procurement from MSMEs by Central Public Sector Enterprises.
- ❖ The procurement policy mandates the Central government departments/CPSEs to procure an overall 20 per cent of their total annual purchases from MSMEs.
- ❖ MSME sector generates more employment next only to Agriculture sector. 80% of jobs in industry is given by MSME with just 20% of investment.

President's Colours to submarine arm of Navy

- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind awarded **Presidential Colours** to the **submarine arm of the Indian Navy** that is celebrating its **golden jubilee** in Visakhapatnam.
- ❖ It was a historic day to Navy sources, as the awarding of President's Colour is the highest honour to be bestowed upon any military unit.
- ❖ The commissioning of the first Submarine, INS Kalvari on December 8, 1967, laid the foundation of the submarine arm.
- ❖ The Golden Jubilee year, 2017, is being celebrated as the "**Year of the Submarine**" by the Indian Navy.

15th Meeting of the Foreign Ministers of RIC

- ❖ The 15th Russia, India, China (RIC) Foreign Ministerial meeting was held in New Delhi.

- ❖ The discussions of meeting focused on regional security, issues affecting Asia-Pacific region, counter-terror efforts and coordination at regional and multilateral forums.
- ❖ The RIC meeting comes as Russia and China are seen developing close bilateral ties against the backdrop of the two developing tensions with the US for separate reasons.
- ❖ It is a trilateral grouping of Russia, India and China that has met annually since 2002.

NIC-CERT

- ❖ The Centre has unveiled the first NIC-CERT centre that would monitor and help in early detection and mitigation of cyberattacks on government networks.
- ❖ It is a dedicated body to detect, prevent and mitigate the impact of cyber-attacks on the National Informatics Centre (NIC).
- ❖ NIC-CERT will work to ensure early detection and immediate mitigation of cyber-attacks by monitoring data across the NIC platform, including communication between all the levels of government and between governments to citizens.
- ❖ NIC-CERT will operate in close coordination and collaboration with sectoral CERTs and more so with CERT-IN.
- ❖ It has been designated to serve as the national agency to collect, analyse and disseminate information on cyber incidents.

CERT-In

- ❖ CERT-In is the national nodal agency under the IT ministry, which deals with cyber security threats such as hacking and phishing.
- ❖ It is tasked with the collection, analysis and dissemination of information on cyber incidents and even taking emergency measures for handling cyber security incidents.

Laqshya Initiative

- ❖ On the day of observance of Universal Health Coverage Day, the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare has launched Laqshya - Labour Room Quality Improvement Initiative, a mobile Application for health workers who manage normal and complicated deliveries in the peripheral areas.
- ❖ Its objective is to reduce preventable maternal and new-born mortality, morbidity and stillbirths by improving the quality of care provided in the labour room.

- ❖ It will be implemented in Government Medical Colleges besides District Hospitals, and Sub- District Hospitals and Community Health Centres.
- ❖ The initiative plans to conduct quality certification of labour rooms and also incentivize facilities achieving the targets outlined.

Annual Meeting of Board of Governors of AIIB

- ❖ India will host the 3rd Annual Meeting of the Board of Governors of Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) at Mumbai.
- ❖ The Theme of the Annual Meeting, 2018 will be “Mobilizing Finance for Infrastructure: Innovation and Collaboration”.
- ❖ India and the AIIB signed a memorandum of understanding to this effect.

New bridges inaugurated in eastern Arunachal Pradesh

- ❖ Two crucial bridges in eastern Arunachal Pradesh have been dedicated to the nation. The bridges have been built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO).
- ❖ The new two bridges are,
 1. **Injupani Bridge**- It is a 140-metre long-bridge.
The completion of the Injupani Bridge will provide an uninterrupted access between Roing & Tezu, both important district HQs in Arunachal Pradesh.
 2. **Deopani/Eze Bridge**- It is 300-metre long pre-stressed concrete balanced cantilever bridge over the Eze river at Roing in Arunachal Pradesh.
The completion of the Eze bridge has come as a boon for the people of the area, especially those of Dibang Valley district, as the district remained cut off from the rest of the country during the monsoons each year.

BRO

- ❖ Functioning under the control of the Ministry of Defence since 2015, the BRO is engaged in road construction to provide connectivity to difficult and inaccessible regions in the border areas of the country.
- ❖ It is staffed by officers and troops drawn from the Indian Army's Corps of Engineers, Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, Army Service Corps, Military Police and army personnel on extra regimental employment.
- ❖ Currently, the organisation maintains operations in twenty-one states, one UT (Andaman and Nicobar Islands), and neighbouring countries such as Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka.

- ❖ The BRO operates and maintains over 32,885 kilometres of roads and about 12,200 meters of permanent bridges in the country.

First Scorpene-class submarines

- ❖ Prime Minister of India has commissioned India's first indigenous Scorpene-class submarine Kalvari into the Navy at Mumbai's Naval Dockyard.
- ❖ The submarines of Scorpene class are propelled by diesel-electric engines and Torpedo is mounted as a primary weapon.
- ❖ INS Kalvari is built by Mazagon Dock Limited (MDL) with assistance and technology transfer from France's DCNS.
- ❖ The submarine is named after the dreaded tiger shark.
- ❖ It also features an additional air-independent propulsion (AIP) system.
- ❖ Conventional diesel-electric submarines have to surface every few days to get oxygen to recharge their batteries. With AIP systems, they can stay submerged for much longer periods.

In-depth look

The Navy is set to induct *INS Kalvari*, its first modern conventional submarine into the fleet on Thursday



What is a Scorpene?
A conventional powered submarine weighing 1,500 tonnes that can go up to depths of 300m. Built by the Naval Group, formerly DCNS, of France

The India connection
In October 2005, India signed a \$3.75 billion deal for six such submarines to be built by the Mazgaon Dock Limited in Mumbai with transfer of technology. Additional deals were signed with Thales and MBDA for systems and weapons

What is the status of the deal?
After repeated delays over four years, the first submarine began sea trials in May 2016 and is set to be commissioned on Thursday. The second Scorpene Khanderi is undergoing sea trials and is expected to be commissioned by the year-end. All six submarines are expected to be inducted by the end of 2020

The Navy now possesses 13 conventional submarines and one nuclear attack submarine INS Chakra on lease from Russia

Power point

- *Kalvari* weighs about 1,600 tonnes
- Carries heavyweight wire guided surface and underwater target torpedoes
- For self-defence, it has mobile anti-torpedo decoys
- Has two 1,250 kW MAN diesel engines for rapid battery charging
- *Kalvari* borrows its name from India's first submarine *INS Kalvari*, which was commissioned on Dec. 8, 1967 and served till May 31, 1996

- ❖ It weighs 1500 tonnes and can go up to depths of 300m.
- ❖ It will have both anti-surface and anti-submarine warfare.
- ❖ It is first of the six submarines developed by the French DCNS under Project 75.
- ❖ INS Kalvari is followed by INS Khanderi which is currently undergoing sea trails and expected to be inducted by the end of 2020.

NITI Aayog - ATL Community Day

- ❖ Atal Innovation Mission under the aegis of the National Institute of Transforming India (NITI) launched the Atal Tinkering Lab's Community Day.
- ❖ The Community Drive Initiative is aimed at extending innovation to over 200 children not enrolled in the formal education system.
- ❖ The idea is to extend innovation to children in the community so they can become problem solvers.
- ❖ AIM targets to have at least one Atal Tinkering Lab in every district and proposed Smart City of India.
- ❖ NITI Aayog's Atal Innovation Mission is among one of flagship programs of Government to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in country and to set up Atal Tinkering Labs across the country.
- ❖ It aims to give substantial boost to the innovation ecosystem and to catalyse the entrepreneurial spirit in the country.

India-Maldives - 'EKUVERIN 2017'

- ❖ The eight edition of India, Maldives bilateral military exercise EKUVERIN 2017 was held in India at Belagavi, Karnataka.
- ❖ The aim of the exercise was to conduct military training between armies of both countries with emphasis on counter insurgency, counter terrorism operations (CICT Ops).
- ❖ Ekuverin means friends in Maldivian language.
- ❖ The exercise was aimed at enhancing interoperability between two armies and it provided opportunity for two armies to activate Joint Operations Centre at Belagavi.
- ❖ Indian Army and Maldives National Defence Force have been holding Exercise Ekuverin since 2009 on alternate years in their countries.

National Workshop on Role of Sakhi One Stop Centres

- ❖ A National Workshop on Role of Sakhi One Stop Centres in Strengthening Multi Sectoral Response to Violence was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ It was inaugurated by Women and Child Development Minister Maneka Sanjay Gandhi and was organized by the **Union Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD)**.
- ❖ Around 400 Sakhi- One Stop Centre Functionaries and nodal officials from State Department of Women and Child Development from 33 States/UTs across the country, participated in the workshop.

Sakhi scheme

- ❖ The scheme is being implemented since 1st April 2015.
- ❖ The scheme aims to facilitate access to an integrated range of services including medical aid, police assistance, legal aid/case management, psychosocial counselling, and temporary support services to women affected by violence.
- ❖ Under the scheme, it has been envisaged that One Stop Centres (OSC) would be set up across the country in a phased manner.

North-East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the introduction of a new Central Sector Scheme - 'North East Special Infrastructure Development Scheme' (NESIDS) from 2017-18.
- ❖ The scheme is being introduced to fill up the gaps in the creation of infrastructure in specified sectors till March 2020 and it will be fully funded by the central government.
- ❖ The NESIDS will broadly cover the creation of infrastructure under following sectors,
 - Physical infrastructure relating to water supply, power, connectivity and especially the projects promoting tourism.
 - The infrastructure of social sectors of education and health.
- ❖ The assets to be created under the new scheme will not only strengthen health care and education facilities in the region but will also encourage tourism thereby the employment opportunities for local youth.

Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (NLCPR) scheme

- ❖ The Cabinet also approved the continuation of the existing Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources (Non-Lapsable Central Pool of Resources - NLCPR) scheme till March 2020.
- ❖ The funding of the scheme would be done by both centre and state in a ratio of 90: 10 with the total outlay being Rs.5300 crores. The scheme is aimed at enabling speedy completion of the ongoing projects.
- ❖ The Ministry for Development of Northeastern Region (DoNER) allocates funds from NLCPR to various Northeast states for infrastructure projects.
- ❖ The ministry allocates funds under two schemes viz. NLCPR (State) and NLCPR-Central for which annual budgetary allocations are provided in normal budgetary process.

Cabinet approves Agreement with UNESCO on establishment of ITCOO

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the establishment of **International Training Centre for Operational Oceanography (ITCOO)**, as a Category-2 Centre (C2C) of UNESCO, in **Hyderabad** (UNESCO has designated 94 International and Regional Institutes and Centres as Category 2 under the auspices of UNESCO).
- ❖ Its purpose is to establish a training centre towards development of capacity for the countries on the Indian Ocean Rim (IOR), African countries bordering the Indian and Atlantic Oceans, small island countries under the framework of UNESCO.
- ❖ The operational oceanography is an activity of conducting systematic oceanographic studies towards providing information services to various sectors viz. fisherman, disaster management, shipping, ports, coastal states, navy, coast guard, environment, offshore industries for conducting their day-to-day operations.
- ❖ The Centre will provide assistance in areas of capacity building and training, knowledge sharing and exchange of information.
- ❖ The establishment of **UNESCO Category-2 Centre** will provide an opportunity for India to emerge as a leading country in the Indian Ocean.
- ❖ The Centre could contribute to achieving **Sustainable Development Goal-14** (SDG 14) related to building marine scientific research capacity.
 - Goal 14: Life Below Water - "Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development."
- ❖ The centre is currently operational with the state-of-the-art facilities available at Indian Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS), Hyderabad.

UIDAI suspends Airtel's eKYC license

- ❖ Bharti Airtel and Airtel Payments Bank have temporarily lost their licenses to conduct Aadhaar-based eKYC SIM verification of mobile customers.
- ❖ There were complaints that the company had used Aadhaar numbers acquired during the eKYC process to open Airtel Payments Bank accounts for customers without their informed consent.
- ❖ Following this Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has revoked the temporarily suspended e-KYC licence key of Bharti Airtel.

Rafale deal

- ❖ The Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) with France for 36 Rafales was arrived at to meet the critical requirement of the Air Force (IAF) and was cleared by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS).
- ❖ In September 2016, India and France signed the €7.87-billion agreement for the aircraft, spares, weapons, 10 years of annual maintenance and associated equipment.
- ❖ The much awaited Rafale fighter aircraft will be a major boost to India's firepower as the fighters will come fitted with Meteor and Mica missiles from Europe.
- ❖ The range of meteor and mica missile is exceptionally long at 100 kilometers.
- ❖ These missiles will give immense advantage to Rafale fighter aircraft as these are 'beyond visual range' weapons.

Continuation of National Ayush Mission (NAM)

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the continuation of centrally sponsored scheme of National AYUSH Mission (NAM) from April 2017 to March 2020 over the 3-year period.
- ❖ The NAM is being implemented by Ministry of AYUSH with the objectives of providing cost effective universal access to AYUSH Services.
- ❖ The government has set aside funds worth Rs. 2400 crore for the project over the 3-year period. The Mission was launched in September 2014.
- ❖ The NAM is addressing the gaps in health services through supporting the efforts of State/UT Governments for providing AYUSH health services/education in the country, particularly in vulnerable and far-flung areas.
- ❖ The mission is aimed at better access to AYUSH healthcare services through an increased number of healthcare facilities, better availability of medicines and trained manpower.
- ❖ The NAM intends to build on India's unmatched heritage represented by its ancient systems of medicine like Ayurveda, Yunani, Sidhha, Unani and Homeopathy (AYUSH), which are treasure house of knowledge for preventive and promotive health care.

Tobacco pack warnings struck down

- ❖ The Karnataka High Court has struck down the 2014 amendment rules that mandated pictorial health warnings to cover 85 per cent of tobacco product packaging space, holding that they violated Constitutional norms.

- ❖ However, the court made it clear that the 40 per cent pictorial health warning rule, which existed prior to the amendment rules, would remain in force.
- ❖ A division bench comprising Justices B S Patil and B V Nagarathna passed the order on a batch of petitions challenging the 85 per cent pictorial warning rule notified by the Union Health Ministry.
- ❖ The Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products (Packaging and Labelling) Amendment Rules, 2014 (COTPA) came into effect from April 1 last year.
- ❖ The high court bench held that the Union Health Ministry violated constitutional norms as it was an "unreasonable restriction" on the right to do business guaranteed under Article 19 (1) (g) of the Constitution.
- ❖ The global average size for graphic health warnings (GHWs) was only about 30 per cent of the principal display area.
- ❖ The top three cigarette consuming countries, the US, China and Japan which together account for 51 per cent of global cigarette consumption, have only text based warnings and not adopted GHWs.

India, Myanmar ink pact

- ❖ India and Myanmar inked an agreement on restoration of normalcy and development of the Rakhine State
- ❖ This is the first government to government pact inked by Myanmar with a cooperation partner focused on socio-economic development and livelihood initiatives in the Rakhine State.
- ❖ Under this MoU, India proposes to take up, among others, a project to build prefabricated housing in Rakhine State so as to meet the immediate needs of the returning people.

India, Oman conducts naval exercise

- ❖ The 11th edition of Naseem-Al-Bahr (Sea Breeze) 2017 Naval exercise between India and Oman was held at Said Bin Sultan Naval Base, Wudam in Oman.
- ❖ The exercise is a biennial feature since 1993 and this year marks 24 years of Indian Navy-Royal Navy of Oman bilateral exercises.
- ❖ The Indian Navy also deployed two naval ships - INS Trikand and INS Teg - in the exercise and it has reached Muscat for the harbour phase.
- ❖ The Indian Navy deployed a submarine and the P8I long-range maritime aircraft for the first time for a bilateral naval exercise with the Omani navy.
- ❖ India has an ancient maritime tradition and maritime interaction with Oman dating back to more than 4,000 years.

- ❖ Bilateral relations between Indian and Oman were formally established with the signing of the 1953 Indo-Oman Treaty of Friendship, Navigation and Commerce, a first between India and an Arab country.

India's First National Rail and Transportation University

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has approved the Ministry of Railways' transformative initiative to set up the first ever National Rail and Transport University (NRTU) in Vadodara to skill its human resources and build capability.
- ❖ The University will be set up as a Deemed to Be University under de novo category as per the UGC [Institutions Deemed to be Universities] Regulations, 2016.
- ❖ A not-for-profit Company under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013 will be created by the Ministry of Railways which shall be the Managing Company of the proposed university.
- ❖ The company will provide financial and infrastructural support to the university, and appoint Chancellor and Pro-Chancellor of the university.
- ❖ The funding of the new University/Institute is to entirely come from Ministry of Railways.
- ❖ It will support 'Startup India' and 'Skill India' by channelling technology and foster entrepreneurship, generating large scale employment opportunities.

Sixth Offshore Patrol Vessel 'Sujay'

- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard Ship 'Sujay', the sixth in the series of six 105m Offshore Patrol Vessel (OPV) was commissioned into service in Goa.
- ❖ The ship is based at Paradip, Odisha under the operational and administrative control of Commander Coast Guard Region (North-East).
- ❖ The 105 meter OPV has been designed and built indigenously by Goa Shipyard Ltd and is fitted with state-of-the-art navigation and communication equipment, sensors.
- ❖ The ship's name 'Sujay' means 'Great Victory'.
- ❖ It will be deployed extensively for EEZ surveillance and will give a fillip to the maritime protection in the state of Odisha and West Bengal in particular.

Capacity Building in Textiles Sector

- ❖ The **Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs** has given its approval for a new skill development scheme titled **Scheme for Capacity Building in Textiles Sector (SCBTS)** from 2017-18 to 2019-20.

- ❖ SCBTS covers the entire value chain of textile sector excluding Spinning & Weaving in organized Sector and it ensures steady supply of skilled manpower in the labour-intensive textile sector.
- ❖ The scheme will have **National Skill Qualification Framework (NSQF)** compliant training courses with funding norms as per the Common Norms notified by **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**.

'Ganga Gram' project

- ❖ Government has formally launched the 'Ganga Gram' project at the Ganga Gram Swachata Sammelan in New Delhi.
- ❖ The project is launched under the Union Ministry of Drinking Water & Sanitation.
- ❖ The Centre declared all 4,470 villages on the banks of the Ganges, located in Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal, Open Defecation-Free (ODF).
- ❖ Of these villages, the Centre and the state governments have identified 24 villages to be taken up under a pilot project to transform them into 'Ganga Grams'.
- ❖ As part of its clean Ganga mission - Namami Gange, the Ganga Gram project is an integrated approach for the holistic development of villages situated on the banks of the holy river with the active participation of villagers.
- ❖ The project envisages solid and liquid waste management, renovation of ponds and water resources, water conservation projects, organic farming, horticulture, and promotion of medicinal plants.

SAMEEP – Taking Indian foreign policy across the country

- ❖ Ministry of External Affairs launched a new programme called SAMEEP which stands for Students and MEA Engagement Programme.
- ❖ The main objective of SAMEEP is to take Indian foreign policy and its global engagements to students across the country.
- ❖ Under this programme, all the ministry officers - under-secretary and above will be asked to go to their hometowns, particularly their alma maters. They will be expected to interact with the students about the way the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) works, basic elements of its policies, how diplomacy is conducted, and generally give students an idea of what a career in the MEA would look like.
- ❖ The agenda of the programme is not only to make students interested and aware of India's place in the world and its global ambitions, but also to drive interest in diplomacy as a career option.

Two Day Regional Conference on Good Governance

- ❖ The two-day Regional Conference on Good Governance and Replication of Best Practices was conducted in Guwahati
- ❖ Technical sessions on Good Governance Index for Ranking of States pointed out that there are five major Indicators to rank any State on performance level. States have been categorized into three categories: UTs, Hill areas which comprises North East, J&K, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh, and the third category comprising rest of the States.
- ❖ The Ranking of States is with an objective to improve Governance for citizens. Such ranking will lead to competitive federalism.
- ❖ 22 States and 150 participants from all over the country took part in the two-day-long Conference.

First Runway On A 'Sea Bridge' At Lakshadweep's Agatti Airport

- ❖ The Airports Authority of India (AAI) has got green nod to extend Lakshadweep's Agatti Airport by building an RCC platform on the beach and shallow sea.
- ❖ The runway will be extended on this platform which is built to connect a sea surrounded separated two land portions
- ❖ And the final longer airstrip will allow bigger ATRs to operate on the island.
- ❖ If once it completed, the runway will be long enough for ATR-72 to operate.
- ❖ At present, only smaller turboprops operate there.
- ❖ This project is India's first successful runway-on-sea bridge. Earlier projects, one for Juhu airport in Mumbai, and the other for Kullu were not found suitable for those places.

India's first air-conditioned suburban train service

- ❖ India's first broad gauge air-conditioned (AC) EMU suburban train was flagged off from Borivali station on western railway in Mumbai, Maharashtra.
- ❖ The train, operated by the Western Railway (WR), began its journey from the Borivili station to Churchgate in South Mumbai.
- ❖ The first of its kind air-conditioned suburban local train fitted with an indigenous three-phase propulsion system." was brought to Mumbai from the Integral Coach Factory, Chennai.
- ❖ It is also equipped with GPS-based passenger information system with audio-visual indication of stations for guard-driver and passenger communication.

e-HRMS

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions launched the Electronic-Human Resource Management System (e-HRMS) on the occasion of Good Governance Day (25 December).
- ❖ e-HRMS is an online platform for central government employees to apply for leave and access their service-related information.
- ❖ It will enable these employees to see all their details with respect to service book, leave, salary, GPF, etc. and also apply for different kind of claims and reimbursements, loan and advances, leave, leave encashment, LTC advances, tour etc. on a single platform
- ❖ The e-HRMS was launched as a step towards the ease of governance and is in lines with Government's goal of minimum government, maximum governance.
- ❖ 25 applications of five modules of the system were also launched. The launch of e-HRMS is in the direction of fully automated human resource management system with target to bring all government employees on employee portal.

India -World Bank loan agreement - Tamil Nadu irrigation scheme

- ❖ A tripartite agreement was signed between the central government, the World Bank and the Tamil Nadu government for the Tamil Nadu Irrigated Agriculture Modernization Project.
- ❖ The \$318 million loan from World Bank's lending arm International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) has maturity of 19 years with 5-year grace period.
- ❖ It aims to promote climate resilient agriculture technologies, improve water management practices, and increase market opportunities for small and marginal farmers.

India set to predict tsunami inundation in real time

- ❖ India is set to become the first country to predict the extent of inundation caused by tsunami waves in real time.
- ❖ This would be a major breakthrough after India set up the Indian Tsunami Early Warning Centre (ITEWC) at the Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Sciences, Hyderabad.
- ❖ Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Sciences (INCOIS) is an autonomous body under the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

- ❖ At present, ITEWC provides information on the possible height of tsunami waves and the time to impact on the coast.
- ❖ After upgradation, it would tell the extent and level of inundation and it would be beneficial for Indian Ocean rim countries, Australia and Indonesia.

India to become fifth largest economy in 2018

- ❖ According to the report titled 2018 World Economic League Table, India is set to overtake the United Kingdom and France to become the world's fifth largest economy in 2018.
- ❖ The report was recently released by The Centre for Economics and Business Research consultancy based in Britain.
- ❖ India currently ranked seventh will overtake UK and France to become the world's fifth largest economy in 2018 in US dollar terms and further move to third spot by 2032.
- ❖ China is likely to overtake the United States as the world's No.1 economy in 2032.
- ❖ In world economic market, Cheap energy and technology prices will boost the global economy in 2018.
- ❖ Russia will fall to 17th place among world's largest economies by 2032, from 11th place in 2017, mainly because of low commodity (oil) prices in international market and its over dependency on energy sector.

Commercial flight nod for made-in-India plane

- ❖ The DGCA)Directorate General of Civil Aviation(has allowed Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL)-manufactured Dornier 228 to be used for civilian flights.
- ❖ Till now the Dornier 228 aircraft has been used by defence forces and is the first plane to be made in the country for commercial flights.
- ❖ HAL can sell this plane to airlines in India. It can be used by them for regional flights under the government's ambitious UDAN scheme.
- ❖ Dornier 228 is a highly versatile multi-purpose light transport aircraft.

India successfully test-fires supersonic interceptor missile

- ❖ India has successfully test fired its indigenously designed and built Advanced Air Defense (AAD) Abdul Kalam wheeler Island in off the coast of Odisha in the Bay of Bengal.
- ❖ This was the third supersonic interceptor test carried out in 2017.

- ❖ The AAD interceptor destroyed an incoming Prithvi ballistic missile within 30 kilometers of the earth atmosphere.
- ❖ The interceptor is a 7.5-meter long single stage solid propelled guided missile equipped with a navigation system, a hi-tech computer and an electro-mechanical activator.
- ❖ It is a part of India's planned two-layered ballistic missile defense (BMD) system. It constitute as a second tier of defense system.
- ❖ Israel, Russia, and the United States are the only three countries to have successfully developed and built an indigenous ballistic missile defense system.

Ekuverin

- ❖ Ekuverin , the joint military exercise between Indian and Maldivian defence forces was held at Belagavi , Karnataka.
- ❖ The aim of the exercise was to conduct military training between armies of both countries with emphasis on counter insurgency, counter terrorism operations
- ❖ The exercise gave an opportunity to the two armies to activate the Joint Operations Centre at Belgaum.
- ❖ Starting 2009, Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Force have been holding Exercise Ekuverin, meaning 'friends' in the Maldivian language, in their countries on alternate years. The last one was held at Kaddhoo in the Lammu Atol of the tiny Indian Ocean nation.

INTERNATIONAL

Hwasong-15

- ❖ North Korea successfully launched a new type of nuclear-capable intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) named Hwasong-15.
- ❖ Hwasong-15 is the 'greatest ICBM' that could be armed with a 'super-large heavy nuclear warhead' capable of striking the 'whole mainland' of the United States of America.
- ❖ It was North Korea's 20th launch of a ballistic missile this year and third successful test of an ICBM in the recent antagonism between America and North Korea.
- ❖ The ICBM was launched from near South Pyongan Province, Pyongyang and It is the first time a missile was fired from this location.

- ❖ It accurately destroyed its target which is fixed in the Japan's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) in Sea of Japan.

India -IMO

- ❖ India won the election to remain a member of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) for the next two years with a second highest margin.
- ❖ India was re-elected to the body under Category B at an assembly of the organization at its headquarters (London).
- ❖ India managed to secure 144 votes of member countries. Germany scored a maximum of 146 votes.
- ❖ This for the first time voting was held for Category-B in the IMO council since its inception.
- ❖ Earlier all 10 members in Category-B were elected unanimously and India has been a member since 1959.
- ❖ India has been elected to the Council of the IMO ever since it started functioning, except for a two-year during 1983-1984.

International Maritime Organization

- ❖ It is the global standard-setting authority for the safety, security & environmental performance of international shipping by creating a regulatory framework for the shipping industry.
- ❖ It is the only UN special agency to have its headquarters in the United Kingdom.
- ❖ It is the first ever international organization devoted exclusively to maritime matters.
- ❖ The objective of IMO is the improvement of Maritime safety and the prevention of marine pollution
- ❖ India has been a member of the IMO since 1959.
- ❖ There are three category of membership in the organization.
 - ✓ Category A - has countries which have interest in providing international shipping services It consists of 10 members.
 - ✓ Category B- has large nations with interest in international seaborne trade. It consists of 10 members.
 - ✓ Category C- has special interests in maritime transport or navigation. It consists of 20 members.
- ❖ Currently, India has Category-B membership and it hopes to get an upgrade in IMO status to Category – A membership.

- ❖ It would enable India to be part of the several committees of the body, which would essentially mean greater participation in the decision-making process.

Minamata Convention

- ❖ The Minamata Convention is a global treaty established to protect human health and the environment from the adverse effects of mercury.
- ❖ The Minamata Convention on Mercury entered into force in August 2017 with ratification by over 50 countries.
- ❖ The first meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Minamata Convention on Mercury (Mercury CoP1) was held at Geneva, Switzerland.
- ❖ The report, 'Towards a pollution-free planet', was launched during the CoP1.
- ❖ Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the financial mechanism for Minamata Convention.
- ❖ India is a signatory to this convention, but it yet to ratify this.

Chabahar Port

- ❖ The first phase of the chabahar port project known as the "Shahid Beheshti port" was inaugurated recently.
- ❖ It opens up a new strategic transit route between Iran, India and Afghanistan, bypassing Pakistan under the 2016 Indo-Afghan-Iran trilateral pact.
- ❖ The port lies outside the Persian Gulf and is easily accessed from India's western coast.
- ❖ India is also constructing a railway line between Chabahar and Zahedan to connect the port to rest of the Iranian railway network.
- ❖ It is further to be linked with Delaram-Zaranj road, built by India in Afghanistan that connects at Afghan-Iran border via rail through Zahedan.
- ❖ The port, through Zahedan railway network, could also be linked with the International North South Transport Corridor connecting India with Russia.
- ❖ Over a month ago, India sent its first consignment of wheat to Afghanistan by sea through the Chabahar port.

U.S. South Korea largest-ever joint air drill

- ❖ South Korea and the United States have launched large-scale joint aerial drills, Vigilant Ace at Seoul in South Korea.
- ❖ The exercise comes after North Korea tested Hwasong-15, its most advanced and powerful Inter Continental Ballistic Missile (ICBM).

- ❖ The joint exercise is designed to enhance readiness and operational capability and to ensure peace and security on the Korean peninsula.
- ❖ The annual US-South Korean drill, called Vigilant Ace.
- ❖ The fighters will fly to Korean Peninsula from Kadena Air Base on Okinawa, Japan.

USA's withdraw from UN's Global Compact on Migration

- ❖ The United States has pulled out of Global Compact on Migration.
- ❖ It has argued that Obama-era negotiated UN compact process deal contains numerous provisions that inconsistent with country's immigration and refugee policies and Trump Administration's immigration principles.
- ❖ The US has been a part of the non-binding New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants since it was unanimously adopted by the UN General Assembly last year.
- ❖ The declaration called for negotiations on a Global Compact for Migration, aimed at protecting the rights of refugees and migrants and helping them resettle.
- ❖ The refugees and migration compact is the fourth initiative the United States has withdrawn from this year.

UAE, UK, US and French Armies Hold Joint Exercises in Abu Dhabi

- ❖ UAE's Armed Forces along with the UK, US and French armies are participating in joint exercises in Abu Dhabi.
- ❖ The drill code is named as "Flag 4".
- ❖ The two-week long joint exercise aims to increase combat efficiency, gain more field expertise, and work to unify military concepts among brotherly and friendly participating parties.

International conference on Climate Change

- ❖ The International conference on climate change was held in Nepal.
- ❖ The four- day long conference to draw attention on climate change and adverse effects of global warming in the Hindu Kush mountain range.
- ❖ It was inaugurated by Nepal President Bidya Bhandari second president as well as first female president of Nepal.
- ❖ It was organized by Nepal's Ministry for Environment in collaboration with International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

- ❖ Hindu Kush Himalaya is a mountain range that spans from Afghanistan to Myanmar.
- ❖ It is source to 10 major river systems in Asia that provide water, eco system services and livelihoods to more than 210 million people.

New group from GCC

- ❖ The UAE has formed a new economic and partnership group named “joint cooperation committee” with Saudi Arabia, separate from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC).
- ❖ It is considered as a move that could undermine the six-member GCC amid a diplomatic crisis with Qatar.
- ❖ The Newly formed committee is assigned to cooperate and coordinate between the UAE and Saudi Arabia in all military, political, economic, trade and cultural fields, as well as others, in the interest of the two countries.”
- ❖ It will be headed by Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi.

GCC

- ❖ Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) is a regional intergovernmental political and economic union consisting of all Arab states of the Persian Gulf, except for Iraq.
- ❖ Its member states are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates
- ❖ It promotes economic, security, cultural and social cooperation between the six states and holds annual summit to discuss cooperation and regional affairs.
- ❖ It is notable that all current member states of GCC are monarchies, including
 - Three constitutional monarchies (Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain),
 - Two absolute monarchies (Oman and Saudi Arabia) and
 - One federal monarchy (UAE which is composed of seven member states, each of which is absolute monarchy with its own emir).

UNESCO recognises Kumbh Mela and Naples' pizza

- ❖ The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage under UNESCO has inscribed ‘Kumbh Mela’ on the Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity during its 12th session being held at Jeju, South Korea

- ❖ The committee observed that 'Kumbh Mela' is the largest peaceful congregation of pilgrims on earth and the festival is held in Allahabad, Haridwar, Ujjain and Nasik which takes place once in every 12 years.
- ❖ This inscription is the third in two years following the inscriptions of 'Yoga' and 'Norouz'
- ❖ The art of pizza twirling from Naples, Southern Italy also joined in UNESCO's list of "intangible heritage".

Wassenaar Arrangement

- ❖ India was admitted as the 42nd member of the Wassenaar Arrangement - a global grouping that regulates trade and use of dual use technology.
- ❖ The decision was taken at the two-day plenary meeting of the grouping in Vienna, Austria.



- ❖ India's membership is expected to facilitate high technology tie-ups with Indian industry and ease access to high-tech items for our defence and space programmes.
- ❖ The WA membership is also expected to build up a strong case for India's entry into the 48-member Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG).
- ❖ Earlier in June 2016 India has gained entry into the Missile Technology Control Regime.

U.S. recognition of Jerusalem

- ❖ U.S. President Donald Trump has officially recognized Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, reversing decades of U.S. policy.
- ❖ President of United States has directed the State Department to initiate the process of moving the American embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

- ❖ Jerusalem is home to sites that are among the holiest in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.
- ❖ Because of its unique cultural and religious significance, the UN General Assembly set aside Jerusalem to be a corpus separatum, or separated body, under UN trusteeship when it voted in 1947 Under resolution 181(II) to divide the British mandate of Palestine into two states, an Arab one and a Jewish one.
- ❖ Jerusalem is claimed as the capital by both Israel and Palestine. East Jerusalem was annexed by Israel in 1967 in a move not recognised internationally.
- ❖ Arabs, Europe, UN rejects Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israeli Capital.

UAE launches its first programme

- ❖ Dubai's ruler Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum has launched the UAE's first astronaut programme.
- ❖ The programme is designed to train four Emirati astronauts for various space missions, eventually sending them to the International Space Station (ISS) within five years.
- ❖ Earlier this year, the UAE had announced plans to send an unmanned probe to Orbit Mars by 2021.

11 WTO Ministerial Conference

- ❖ The 11th Ministerial Conference (MC11) will take place from 10 to 13 December 2017 in Buenos Aires, Argentina.
- ❖ The Conference will be chaired by Minister Susana Malcorra of Argentina.
- ❖ Argentina will be the first South American country to host the biennial event.
- ❖ The WTO Ministerial Conference, which is the topmost decision-making body of the organisation, usually meets every two years, and it brings together all members of the WTO, all of which are countries or customs unions.
- ❖ The Ministerial Conference, will be attended by trade ministers and other senior officials from the organization's 164 members.
- ❖ The last Ministerial Conference took place in Nairobi, Kenya, in December 2015.

Sri Lanka formally hands over Hambantota port to China

- ❖ Sri Lanka formally handed over the strategic southern port of Hambantota to China on a 99-year lease.

- ❖ The lease is accordance to repay the \$8 billion loan that the country owes to China.
- ❖ China Merchants Port Holdings Company and the Sri Lanka ports Authority will own the port and the investment zone around the port.
- ❖ The Sri Lankan government had signed a \$1.1 billion deal in July to sell a 70 per cent stake in the Hambantota port to China.
- ❖ The port city is twinned with Chinese city of Guangzhou since 2007.
- ❖ Twin towns are a form of legal or social agreement between towns, cities, provinces, regions, states, and even countries in geographically and politically distinct areas.
- ❖ It is intended to foster friendship and understanding between different cultures as an act of peace and reconciliation and to encourage trade and tourism.
- ❖ Sri Lanka also assured that the strategic port Will not be used as a military base by any foreign country.

World's Biggest Floating Solar Power Project

- ❖ China is building a one billion yuan cost incurred floating solar power plant, the world's biggest, in the nation's eastern province of Anhui.
- ❖ Built on unused water in a mining area, the power station has an installed capacity of 150 MW.
- ❖ Compared with traditional solar power plants on land, the floating station will help save land resources, reduce water evaporation, and prevent algae from growing.
- ❖ In addition, the water is also able to cool down the cables and modules, thus improving efficiency.
- ❖ The previous largest floating project of 40 MW was constructed by Asia's largest inverter manufacturer Sungrow, also in the Anhui Province.

World Economic Situation and Prospects Report

- ❖ The report is a jointly published by the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN-DESA), the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
- ❖ This year report marks the 70th anniversary of the publication.
- ❖ It is the flagship report on the state of global economy.
- ❖ It states that, India is set to see the growth accelerating to 7.2% in 2018-19 and 7.4% in 2019-20, up from the 6.7% in 2017-18.

UN-DESA

- ❖ UN-DESA is based at UN Headquarters in New York.
- ❖ It is an entity of the UN Secretariat responsible for economic, social and environmental issues.
- ❖ It promotes international cooperation in the pursuit of sustainable development.
- ❖ It helps countries individually and regionally to formulate and implement national development strategies.
- ❖ It publishes “Sustainable Development Goals Report” which is the annual assessment of global and regional progress towards the Goals.

UNCTAD

- ❖ It is headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland.
- ❖ It is a part of the United Nations Development Group (UNDG).
- ❖ It was formed specifically to handle the problems of developing countries dealing with trade, investment and development issues.
- ❖ Other reports published by UNCTAD – Trade and Development Report, World Investment Report, The Least Developed Countries Report, Information and Economy Report, Technology and Innovation Report and Commodities and Development Report.

IMT Highway

- ❖ India is planning to hold talks with ASEAN countries to extend the India-Myanmar-Thailand highway up to Vietnam.
- ❖ As per proposals from India, the highway could be extended to Vietnam via Laos and Cambodia.
- ❖ The India–Myanmar–Thailand Trilateral Highway is a highway under construction under India’s Look East policy that will connect Moreh, India with Mae Sot, Thailand via Myanmar.
- ❖ The road is expected to boost trade and commerce in the ASEAN–India Free Trade Area, as well as with the rest of Southeast Asia. It is important to note that the project already missed its first deadline in 2015 and India has consistently faced difficulty in implementing its projects in Myanmar.
- ❖ Besides, Government is also working to connect India with South East Asia is IMT Motor Vehicle Agreement (IMT MVA). India, Myanmar and Thailand had commenced negotiations for finalising and implementing IMT MVA in 2014 to utilise physical road infrastructure on IMT Trilateral Highway.

World's largest automated container terminal

- ❖ China started trial operations of world's biggest automated container terminal at Yangshan Deep Water Port in Shanghai, the country's commercial hub.
- ❖ The project uses automated handling equipment designed and manufactured in China.
- ❖ The port also used a domestically developed automated management system to ensure safety and efficiency.
- ❖ The automated terminal not only increases the port's handling efficiency, but also reduces carbon emissions by up to 10 per cent.

UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture

- ❖ The Second UNWTO/UNESCO World Conference on Tourism and Culture is being held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman.
- ❖ It will bring together, for the second time, Ministers of Tourism and Ministers of Culture as well as private sector stakeholders and experts with the objective of building and strengthening partnerships between the Tourism and Culture sectors and enhance their role in the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- ❖ The conference aims to address a wide range of topics, including governance models, tourism development and protection of cultural heritage, culture and tourism in urban development and creativity, and exploring cultural landscape in tourism as a vehicle for sustainable development in destinations worldwide.

UNWTO

- ❖ The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
- ❖ Its headquarters located at Madrid, Spain.
- ❖ Including India, 158 countries are members of UNWTO.
- ❖ UNWTO encourages the implementation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism, to maximize tourism's socio-economic contribution while minimizing its possible negative impacts, and is committed to promoting tourism as an instrument in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), geared towards reducing poverty and fostering sustainable development worldwide.

Norway FM shuts down

- ❖ Norway became the world's first country to shut down national broadcasts of its FM network by completing its transition to digital radio.
- ❖ The transition will allow for better sound quality, a greater number of channels and more functions, at a cost eight times lower than FM radio
- ❖ The transition only involves national radio channels. Most local stations continue to broadcast on FM.

World Inequality Report

- ❖ The report is published by World Inequality Lab, based at the Paris School of Economics, which aims to promote research on global inequality dynamics.
- ❖ According to the report, since 1980, 27% of all new income worldwide was captured by the richest 1%, while the poorest 50% captured only 13% of growth.
- ❖ It has highlighted the inequality prevailing in India and stated that the top 10% of the earners accounted for 56% of the income earned in 2014.
- ❖ The report says that deregulation and opening-up reforms in India since 1980s have led to substantial increase in inequality.

China, Britain pledge cooperation

- ❖ Britain and China pledged to promote London as a center for offshore use of Beijing's currency and cooperate in clean energy research and promoting trade as the UK prepares to leave the European Union.
- ❖ The two sides agreed to promote international use of China's tightly controlled yuan and develop yuan-based business in London.
- ❖ Chinese and British officials also agreed to look at ways to expand Britain's role in Beijing's "Belt and Road Initiative," a vast project aimed at expanding trade across Asia to Europe by building railways, ports and other infrastructure.

Chile's New President - Sebastian Pinera

- ❖ Conservative Sebastian Pinera won Chile's presidential election.
- ❖ Pinera got 54.6 percent of the votes to 45.4 percent for center-left Sen. Alejandro Guillier.
- ❖ He was President of Chile between 2010 and 2014.

- ❖ Mr. Pinera has promised to make Chile the first country in Latin America to achieve “developed nation” status in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, a Paris-based club of wealthy nations.

UNSC resolution on Jerusalem decision

- ❖ The U.S. has voted against a United Nations resolution calling on President Donald Trump to withdraw recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital.
- ❖ This was the first veto exercised by the Trump administration and the first one by the U.S. in six years.
- ❖ Mr. Trump on December 6 announced that he would recognise Jerusalem as Israel’s capital and move the U.S. embassy there from Tel Aviv, triggering protests and strong condemnation.
- ❖ The resolution calling on Mr. Trump to withdraw recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital was supported by close allies of the U.S. — Britain, France and Japan.

Gabon as polio-free country

- ❖ The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Gabon a “polio-free country”, given the lack of new reported or suspected cases in the central African country.
- ❖ Polio is a highly-infectious viral disease which mainly affects young children and can result in permanent paralysis.
- ❖ There is no cure and it can only be prevented through immunisation.
- ❖ Cases of polio have decreased by 99 per cent since 1988, when polio was endemic in 125 countries and 350,000 cases were recorded worldwide.
- ❖ Now the disease is endemic only in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where the WHO recorded four cases this year – two in each country.

Global Innovation Index-2017

- ❖ India climbed up six places to the 60th spot among 130 nations on the Global Innovation Index (GII) 2017, emerging as the top-ranked economy in Central and South Asia.
- ❖ The index which is released by Cornell University, INSEAD and World Intellectual Property Organisation show India’s rise as an emerging innovation centre in Asia, although the country ranks far behind China which is at 22nd position.
- ❖ In order to make India an innovation- driven economy, NITI Aayog, Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (DIPP) and Confederation of

Indian Industry (CII) together launched a mega initiative “India Innovation Index”

- ❖ India Innovation Index will rank states on Innovations through country’s first online innovation index portal that will capture data on innovation from all Indian states and regularly update it in real time.

Iraq - India’s top oil supplier

- ❖ Iraq has overtaken Saudi Arabia for the first time to become India's top crude oil supplier in the current fiscal.
- ❖ This has been made possible by the sale of heavy crude oil at discounted price by Iraq to India.
- ❖ After Saudi at second position, its Iran who is at third place in terms of crude oil supply to India.
- ❖ India is highly dependent on import of crude oil to fulfil its oil requirements. As per the statistics, India imports 80 per cent oil to meet its oil needs.
- ❖ Earlier it was Iran, India’s second biggest supplier of crude oil after Saudi Arabia. But western sanctions over its suspected nuclear programme relegated it to the 7th spot in the subsequent years.
- ❖ Indian refiners have further increased their purchase from Iran after the easing of western sanctions in 2015.

India, Sri Lanka complete 2nd phase of joint oceanographic survey

- ❖ The Indian Navy in collaboration with the Sri Lankan navy successfully completed the second phase of the joint oceanographic survey conducted off the South Western Coast of Sri Lanka.
- ❖ The main aim behind launching the joint oceanographic survey was to update all the navigational charts, covering the southern Sri Lankan waters with the latest hydrographical data.

Joint oceanographic survey

- ❖ The Indian Navy and Sri Lanka Navy conducted the first phase of the survey from 30 March to 11 May 2017.
- ❖ The first survey task was undertaken by Indian Naval ship INS Darshak, which is an indigenously designed and constructed vessel.
- ❖ The third phase is expected to be undertaken in 2018.3

Forbes' list of best countries for business in 2018

- ❖ The United Kingdom has topped Forbes' rankings of best countries in the world for business in 2018 for the first time, up from fifth last year.
- ❖ The list ranks 153 countries on 15 factors including property rights, innovation, taxes and red tape.
- ❖ The UK is followed by New Zealand and the Netherlands, while India was ranked 62nd on the list.

Kimberley Certification Scheme

- ❖ India was selected as Chair of Ad Hoc Committee on Review & Reforms (AHCRR) to reform the process for the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme at recently held KP Plenary Session in Brisbane, Australia.
- ❖ Angola will be the Vice Chair of this Adhoc Committee
- ❖ India was appointed as the Kimberly Process (KP) Vice Chair for 2018 & Chair for 2019 in the last plenary of KP held in Dubai in November, 2016. The EU will be KP Chair for 2018.
- ❖ India is one of the founding members of KPCS. At present, KPCS has 54 members representing 81 countries including EU with 28 members.
- ❖ The Kimberley Process is a joint Government, International Diamond Industry and Civil Society to stem the flow of Conflict Diamonds which are rough diamonds used by rebel groups to finance wars against legitimate governments.
- ❖ In India, the scheme is administered through Department of Commerce under aegis of the Union Commerce and Industry Ministry.
- ❖ The KPCS completely bans import and export of rough diamonds without certification.

India, Russia review economic ties

- ❖ Seeking to strengthen bilateral trade and investment, foreign minister Sushma Swaraj and visiting Russian deputy PM Dmitry Rogozin took stock of economic ties between the two countries.
- ❖ The two leaders co-chaired a meeting of the India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, Technological and Cultural Cooperation (IRIGC-TEC).
- ❖ Apart from raising the level of the Joint Working Group on trade and economic cooperation to that of deputy minister/commerce secretary level and creating a mechanism to discuss and remove barriers to trade, if any, the two sides also created working groups to boost ties in agriculture and pharmaceuticals.

- ❖ The two sides also decided to expedite implementation of the Green Corridor for exchange of pre-arrival data between the customs administrations of the two countries.

UNGA's resolution on Jerusalem

- ❖ The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has overwhelmingly adopted resolution declaring United States of America (USA) recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital as 'null and void'.
- ❖ It was adopted with more than a two-thirds majority of the 172 nations that voted — 128 nations including India supported the measure, nine voted against it and 35 countries abstained.
- ❖ The resolution was moved by Turkey and Yemen and The draft resolution rejecting US move was sent to UNGA after it was vetoed by United States at UN Security Council (UNSC), although all other 14 council members voted in favour.
- ❖ The resolution was drafted following US President Donald Trump's announcement of shifting US embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and officially recognising ancient disputed city as capital of Israel.

China launches land exploration satellite

- ❖ China has launched its second Land Surveying Satellite (LKW-2) into a preset orbit for remote sensing operations in China's Gansu Province.
- ❖ It was launched from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Center in the Gobi Desert.
- ❖ A Long March-2D (two-stage rocket) rocket carried the satellite into space. The launch was the 259th mission of the Long March rocket series.
- ❖ Developed by the China Academy of Space Technology (CAST), LKW-2 is probably an electro-optical observation satellite based on the military Jianbing-6 series.
- ❖ LKW-2 (also known as Yaogan Weixing-32) is a land-exploration satellite that will be mainly used for remote sensing exploration of land resources.

World's Largest amphibious aircraft

- ❖ China's home-grown AG600 codenamed 'Kunlong', the world's largest amphibious aircraft in production took off from the southern city of Zhuhai and landed after roughly an hour-long flight.
- ❖ Its successful maiden flight makes China among the world's few countries capable of developing a large amphibious aircraft.

- ❖ The amphibious aircraft has military applications but will be used for firefighting and marine rescue.
- ❖ The AG600 amphibious aircraft can land and take off from water having wingspan of 38.8 metres and it is powered by four turboprop engines.
- ❖ It has been designed and built by China's state-owned manufacturer Aviation Industry Corp of China.

Guatemala embassy to Jerusalem

- ❖ Guatemala's president, Jimmy Morales has announced his plans to move his country's embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.
- ❖ The announcement makes Guatemala the first country to follow the U.S. decision to move its embassy to Jerusalem.
- ❖ Guatemala was one of seven countries to join the United States and Israel in voting against the UNGA resolution.
- ❖ The resolution has overwhelmingly rejected the Trump administration's decision to recognize the disputed city of Jerusalem as Israel's capital.

India, Afghanistan launch second air corridor

- ❖ The second India-Afghanistan air cargo route linking Kabul to Mumbai was officially launched at Hamid Karzai international airport in Kabul.
- ❖ It aims to boost the export of fresh fruits and medicinal plants from Afghanistan.
- ❖ The second route follows the success of the first air cargo route connecting Kabul-New Delhi that was inaugurated by Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani in mid-June 2017.
- ❖ The air corridors between Afghanistan and India will enable the two countries to carry out the trade by circumventing the obstacles posed by Pakistan where earlier trade between former two was happened through land route via Pakistan.

Saudi and Board Games

- ❖ Saudi Arabia is hosting a world chess tournament for the first time, nearly two years after the country's top cleric issued a religious edict against playing the board game.
- ❖ The tournament has been named as the King Salman World Rapid and Blitz Chess Championships.
- ❖ The world's top three chess players from Norway, Armenia and Azerbaijan are participating in the tournament.

- ❖ Norwegian Magnus Carlsen is the defending world chess champion.

China's ruling party to fully control paramilitary police

- ❖ China has announced that the country's paramilitary police force will be fully controlled by the ruling Communist Party's armed forces from January 1, 2018.
- ❖ The paramilitary police force serves as a backup for the military in times of war and maintains domestic security.
- ❖ The 660,000-strong force is currently under the dual leadership of the government's cabinet, the State Council, and the party's Central Military Commission.

WHO to classify 'gaming disorder' as mental health condition

- ❖ The World Health Organisation (WHO) is set to classify gaming disorder as a mental health condition in its forthcoming 11th International Classification of Diseases (ICD) is due to be published in 2018.
- ❖ The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual (DSM) of Mental Disorders -V, a diagnostic bible for mental health professionals published by the American Psychiatric Association, has already classified gaming disorder as a mental health condition.
- ❖ The ICD is designed as health care classification system to provide a system of diagnostic codes for classifying diseases.
- ❖ It is maintained by WHO. It is revised periodically and is currently in its tenth revision.

George Weah - Liberia President

- ❖ Former football star George Weah has won Liberia's presidential run-off with a projected 61.5 percent of the vote according to the country's election commission.
- ❖ Mr Weah had ran for office in 2005 and won the first round before losing the second round to Africa's first female President, Nobel Peace Prize victor Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, who is stepping down after two terms.
- ❖ George Weah emerged from Liberia's slums to become a superstar footballer in the 1990s. He belongs to Kru ethnic group

ECONOMY

Maruti Suzuki - 6th most valuable Indian firm

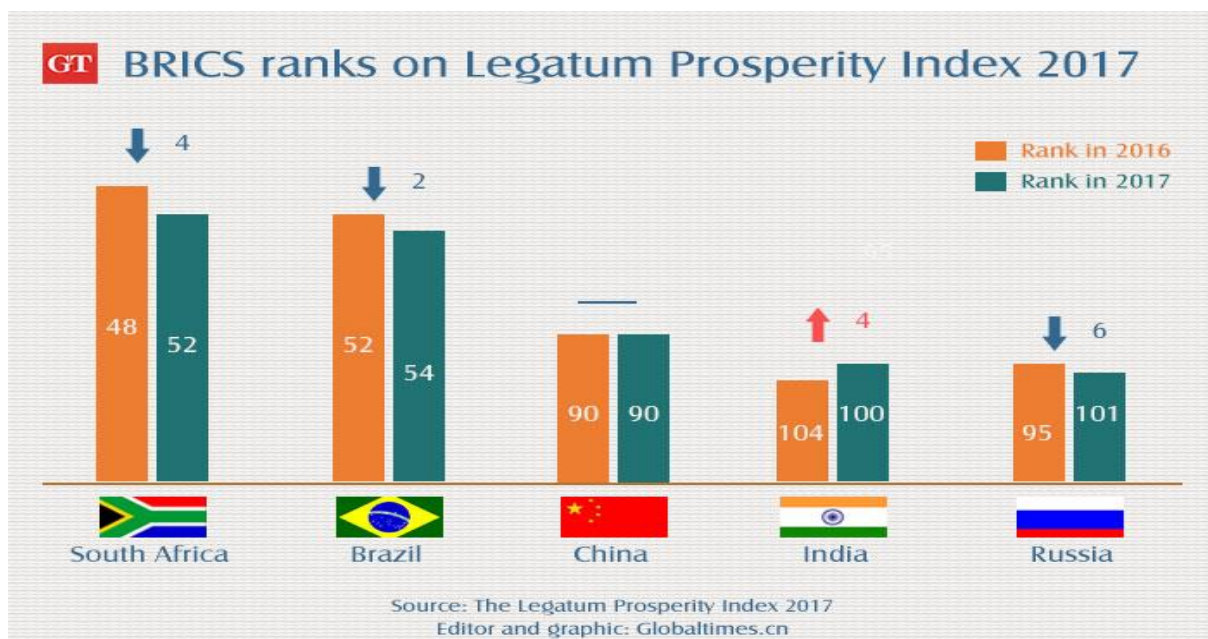
- ❖ India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki became India's sixth most valued firm, crossing India's largest lender SBI.
- ❖ Maruti Suzuki's market capitalisation stood at ₹2.74 trillion, marginally ahead of SBI's market value of ₹2.71 trillion.
- ❖ Shares of Maruti have increased 73% in the last one year because of a slew of successful products in the last couple of years.
- ❖ The list of the most valued companies on the Bombay Stock Exchange is led by Reliance Industries Ltd, followed by Tata Consultancy Ltd (TCS), HDFC Bank Ltd, ITC Ltd and Hindustan Unilever Ltd.

India Ranks 100 in Global Prosperity Index 2017

- ❖ India was ranked 100th among 149 countries on the list of prosperous countries released as part of the Legatum Prosperity Index 2017.
- ❖ This marks an improvement of 4 spots as compared to 104th rank in 2016 making it the only country among BRICS nations to show an improvement.
- ❖ India performs best on Governance and Economic Quality and scores lowest on the Natural Environment pillar.
- ❖ The list has been topped by Norway and followed by New Zealand, Finland, Switzerland and Sweden.

Legatum Prosperity Index

- ❖ Legatum Prosperity Index is an annual ranking developed by the London-based Legatum Institute.
- ❖ The index offers an insight into how prosperity is forming and changing across the world.
- ❖ It is world's leading global measure of economic and social wellbeing that studies 104 indicators under these categories: Economic Quality, Governance, Business Environment, Personal Freedom, Safety and Security, Social Capital, Education, Health and Natural Environment.



		Economic Quality	Business Environment	Governance	Personal Freedom	Social Capital	Safety and Security	Education	Health	Natural Environment
2017 Rank	Country									
1	Norway	8	8	2	8	5	3	4	7	1
2	New Zealand	3	2	3	1	2	23	16	17	13
3	Finland	14	10	1	9	12	15	3	14	3
4	Switzerland	6	9	5	19	20	8	1	3	16
5	Sweden	1	13	4	12	19	13	14	6	8
6	Netherlands	4	14	6	6	11	9	2	8	46
7	Denmark	5	11	8	14	4	14	11	21	19
8	Canada	15	4	9	2	6	24	13	24	18
9	Australia	20	7	14	15	1	22	5	10	10
10	United Kingdom	7	5	10	18	16	17	8	19	9

GST e-way bill mechanism

- ❖ Shipping goods across states is set to get quicker as the GST Council has decided to implement the e-way bill mechanism throughout the country by June 1 after reviewing the readiness of the IT network.
- ❖ This will bring uniformity across states for seamless inter-state movement of goods.
- ❖ To generate an e-way bill, the supplier and transporter will have to upload details on the GST Network portal, after which a unique e-way bill number (EBN) will be made available to the supplier, the recipient and the transporter on the common portal.
- ❖ The mechanism will not only help the tax authorities monitor inter-state and intra-state movement of goods but also cut transportation time by reducing loss of time at check posts.

Cashless payments on e-NAM

- ❖ The government has engaged private lender ICICI Bank to enable online payments at 470 mandis integrated with national portal of electronic National Agriculture Market (e-NAM).
- ❖ At present, e-NAM participants are doing payments through traditional ways via bank branches, debit cards and net banking. ICICI Bank will enable BHIM (Bharat Interface for Money) and Unified Payments Interface (UPI) on the e-NAM portal for making cashless payments.
- ❖ The e-NAM model aims at revolutionising agri markets by ensuring better price discovery, bringing in transparency and competition to enable farmers to get improved remuneration for their produce moving towards 'One Nation, One Market'.

Prompt Corrective Action framework- Bank of India

- ❖ Reserve Bank of India has placed Bank of India (BoI) under Prompt Corrective Action Framework due to the bank's high non-performing assets (NPAs), insufficient common equity tier 1 capital (CET 1) and negative return on assets (ROA).
- ❖ The decision was taken consequent to the onsite inspection under the risk based supervision model carried out for year ended March 2017.
- ❖ Bank of India is the ninth bank to be placed under the RBI's PCA framework.
- ❖ Under RBI's new PCA framework, breaching a net NPA ratio of 6% invites action. BoI's net NPA ratio breached 6% in the March 2016 quarter and stood at 6.90% at the end of March 2017.
- ❖ 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.

DARPAN - financial inclusion of rural population

- ❖ Ministry of communications has launched DARPAN (Digital Advancement of Rural Post Office for A New India) aimed at realising financial inclusion of un-banked rural population.
- ❖ DARPAN offers core banking services such as cash deposit in savings bank (SB) and recurring deposit (RD), withdrawal from SB, new account opening for SB and RD, higher value withdrawal, mini statement, and daily transaction report.

- ❖ The project will increase the rural reach of the Postal Department and enable post offices to increase traffic of all financial remittances, savings accounts, Rural Postal Life Insurance, and Cash Certificates among others.
- ❖ so far, 43,171 Branch Post Offices have migrated under the 'DARPAN' project and it will also aim to improve mail operations processes.

Fixed Income Indices for Debt Markets

- ❖ ICRA Management Consulting Services (IMaCS), an arm of ICRA, has launched a set of four fixed income indices including one on corporate bonds with an aim to create more depth in the Indian debt market.
- ❖ The four indices which has been launched are ICRA Gilt Indices, ICRA Liquid Indices, ICRA Corporate Bond Indices and ICRA Composite Debt Indices.
- ❖ It will enable asset managers and investors with effective benchmarks to measure the risk returns dynamics of the fixed income markets.
- ❖ The constituents of the Indices are well diversified covering various issuers and sectors and the rebalancing would be every fortnight in case of liquid indices and on a monthly basis for the others.
- ❖ ICRA Limited (ICRA) is an Indian independent and professional investment information and credit rating agency. It was established in 1991
- ❖ Non-Executive Chairman & an Independent Director of ICRA is **Arun Duggal**.

National Highways Investment Promotion Cell

- ❖ The National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) has created a National Highways Investment Promotion Cell (NHIPC) for attracting domestic and foreign investment for highways projects.
- ❖ The cell will focus on engaging with global institution investors, construction companies, developers and fund managers for building investor participation in road infrastructure projects.
- ❖ The government has set an ambitious target of construction of 35,000 km of national highways in the next five years involving an investment of Rs 5,35,000 crore under Bharatmala.
- ❖ Therefore, the scale of investment required, both foreign and domestic investment from public and private sector is pivotal.

First home-grown high purity gold reference standard

- ❖ **India's first** home-grown high purity gold reference standard - the **Bharatiya Nirdeshak Dravya (BND-4201)** - was launched at the India Government Mint, Mumbai.
- ❖ BND-4201, which is the reference material for gold of '9999' fineness (gold that is 99.99 per cent pure), will be beneficial to the consumers and public at large to ensure purity of gold.
- ❖ The high purity gold reference standard has been developed through a collaboration between
 - IGM, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre -- National Centre for Compositional Characterisation of Materials (Hyderabad), and Council of Scientific & Industrial Research-National Physical Laboratory (New Delhi).
- ❖ India despite being second largest markets for gold after China, goldsmiths in the country were depended on imported reference gold bars to check purity of their biscuits, coins and jewellery.
- ❖ The measurement of the high purity BND-4201 is traceable to SI units (International System of Units). Therefore, the possibilities of exporting to other economies are very high.
- ❖ The BND-4201 standard gold bar are 25% cheaper than the imported version and save foreign exchange (spent on importing the standard) and dependence on foreign countries.
- ❖ IGM, Mumbai, is a unit of the Security Printing and Minting Corporation of India Ltd.

MHA directions to NGOs -PMFS

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has all NGOs, individuals and business entities receiving foreign funds to open accounts in any of 32 designated banks, including one foreign, within a month.
- ❖ These accounts opened in 32 designated banks will be integrated with central government's Public Financial Management System (PFMS).
- ❖ Its purpose is to provide higher level of transparency and hassle-free reporting compliance.
- ❖ The MHA order comes in exercise of the powers conferred under Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act (FCRA), 2010.
- ❖ The FCRA 2010 provides for regulation of acceptance of foreign funds/foreign hospitality by certain individuals, associations, organisations and companies.
- ❖ PFMS functions under the Controller General of Accounts in the Ministry of Finance.

100th Indian Economic Association conference

- ❖ President of India inaugurated the 100th Annual Conference of the Indian Economic Association at Acharya Nagarjuna University in Guntur of Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Indian Economic Association is a registered body of Indian economic professionals, established way back in 1917.
- ❖ The objective of IEA is to provide a forum for debate and discussion of policy-oriented issues related to economic growth of the country and growth in agriculture, industry and service sectors.

High NPA Levels

- ❖ A report by CARE Ratings stated that India has the highest level of non-performing assets (NPA) among BRICS countries and is ranked fifth on a list of countries with the highest levels of NPAs.
- ❖ The only countries ranked higher than India on the list are Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Ireland.
- ❖ Spain is the only PIIGS country ranked lower than India on the list.
- ❖ PIIGS is an acronym used to refer to the five Eurozone nations that were considered weaker economically following the financial crisis: Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece and Spain. All these countries have been victims of sovereign debt crises in recent years.
- ❖ Indian Government announced recapitalization package to revitalize state-owned public sector banks grappling with NPAs.
- ❖ This was to help these banks resolve bad loans, clean up their balance sheets and to comply with Basel III capital adequacy standards, which kick in from March 2019.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

IL-78 Refueller Aircraft

- ❖ For the first time, an IL-78 refueller aircraft has recently carried out air-to-air refuelling of the Embraer aircraft.
- ❖ It is a multi-purpose four-engine turbofan strategic airlifter designed by the Russia.
- ❖ The IAF is one of the few air forces in the world to operate mid-air refuellers. It now operates six Russian IL-78 refuellers.

- ❖ The name of the air-to-air refuelling method is 'Probe and Drogue'.

Solar-wind hybrid project with battery back-up

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh is planning to develop a 160 MW solar-wind hybrid project with battery back-up facility.
- ❖ This is the first such project to be developed in the country and it is the world's first as well as the largest Solar Wind Hybrid Park is to be located in Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ The World Bank is going to fund this project.
- ❖ 120 MW of energy will be from Solar and 40 MW from wind turbines.
- ❖ The energy generated by solar and wind turbines will be stored in the hydrogen battery instead of transferring it to grid.

Conference of Power and New & Renewable Energy Ministers

- ❖ The Conference of Power and New & Renewable Energy Ministers of States and UTs was held in New Delhi.
- ❖ At the culmination of the Conference, a resolution was adopted by a wide consensus. Summary of the resolution is given below,
 - Electrify all remaining Census inhabited un-electrified villages by December 2017.
 - Provide electricity connections to all willing households by December 2018.
 - Promote solar rooftops and ensure hassle free grid connectivity
 - Promote solar pumps to replace diesel pumps
 - Participate in **Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (KUSUM)** for setting up of 10,000 MW of Decentralized Ground Mounted Grid Connected Solar Power Plants.
 - Identify at least one city for making it 100% Renewable Energy city.
 - Promote use of BEE Star Rated Energy Efficient Pumps for agricultural purpose.

New form of matter - excitonium

- ❖ Scientists have proven the existence of new form of matter called **Excitonium** - which was first theorised almost 50 years ago.
- ❖ There are five known phases of matter - solids, liquids, gases, plasma and Bose-Einstein condensates

- ❖ Excitonium which exhibits phenomena like a superconductor is made up of particles known as excitons, which are made from an escaped electron.
- ❖ The term 'excitonium' was coined in the 1960s by Harvard theoretical physicist Bert Halperin.

Chandigarh launches smart city cards

- ❖ Chandigarh Administrator has launched smart city cards for facilitating payments for various government and commercial utilities in the Union Territory.
- ❖ It is Launched by the UT administration in collaboration with the Bank of India and it can also be used as a valid identity proof.
- ❖ All Aadhaar card holders can get the card at e-Sampark centres or at the Bank of India branches and website.

MIT scientists create plants that can glow

- ❖ Researchers of Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), US have proved that it is possible to inject the luminescent chemical used by fireflies into leaves so that they shimmer brightly.
- ❖ To create the glowing plants, scientists has turned to luciferase, the enzyme that gives fireflies their glow.
- ❖ Luciferase acts on a molecule called luciferin, causing it to emit light, while a third chemical co-enzyme A helps the whole process along by removing the obstacles which block luciferase.
- ❖ All three components were packaged into tiny silica nano particles of different sizes so they could get into different parts of the leaves.
- ❖ They were then either injected into the plant or allowed to soak in over a few hours.
- ❖ The light is ultimately powered by the energy metabolism of the plant itself and it is considered a major step towards using plants to illuminate the workspace.
- ❖ This technology could also be used to provide low- intensity indoor lighting, or to transform trees into self- powered streetlights.

SpaceX resupplies the ISS

- ❖ SpaceX has been carrying supplies to the International Space Station (ISS) for more than five years.

- ❖ The Dragon spacecraft, operated by California-based Space Exploration Technologies (SpaceX), carries cargo to the International Space Station under commercial agreements the company has with NASA
- ❖ SpaceX completed the mission using a refurbished Falcon 9 rocket and Dragon spacecraft together for the first time.
- ❖ The uncrewed Dragon capsule was captured by astronauts using the space station's robotic arm.

Eighth planet in Kepler-90 solar system

- ❖ NASA has discovered eighth planet circling Kepler-90 a Sun-like star which is 2545 light-years far from Earth known as Kepler-90i
- ❖ The planet Kepler-90i, is a small rocky planet, which orbits so close to its star that the surface temperature is a 'scorchingly hot' 800F (426C). It orbits its own sun once every 14 days.
- ❖ With eight planets, Kepler-90 system equals our own solar system in terms of number of planets orbiting single star. Kepler-90 star system is like a mini version of our solar system.
- ❖ The eight planet was discovered by Researchers Christopher Shallue and Andrew Vanderburg by applying Google's machine-learning technology to data collected by NASA's Kepler Space Telescope.
- ❖ Machine learning is an approach towards artificial intelligence (AI). In this case of planetary exploration, machine-learning approach was based on networks of neurons that populate human brain.

Videos on Indian heritage sites

- ❖ A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the content was signed between Samsung India and UNESCO MGIEP to launch virtual reality content and 360-degree videos on Indian heritage sites.
- ❖ Samsung India has entered into a partnership with UNESCO MGIEP (Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development) to launch 360 video and Virtual Reality (VR) content of two magnificent Indian heritage sites, the Sun Temple in Konark, Odisha and Taj Mahal in Agra, Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ Samsung India may take up more sites to develop 360 video and VR content in future and The project will provide experiential educational content to students across the country
- ❖ VR content will also be provided to the Union Ministry of Tourism and State Tourism Boards to be used for tourism promotion in India and across the world.

Reservoir Computing System

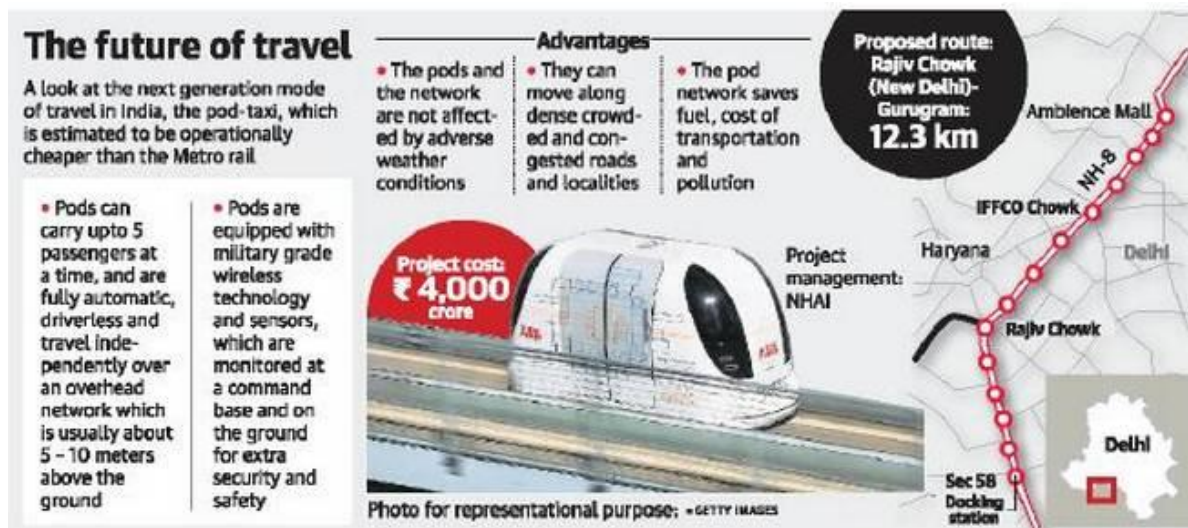
- ❖ Scientists have developed a new type of neural network chip using a reservoir computing system to improve the efficiency of teaching machines to think like humans.
- ❖ The network developed using this system can predict words before they are said during conversation and help predict future outcomes based on the present.
- ❖ Reservoir computing systems have been created in the past with larger optical components.
- ❖ Researchers from University of Michigan in the U.S. created their system using memristors, which require less space and can be integrated more easily into existing silicon-based electronics.
- ❖ Memristors are a special type of resistive device that can both perform logic and store data.
- ❖ This contrasts with typical computer systems, where processors perform logic separate from memory modules.

India's 1st pod taxi to follow U.S. safety norms

- ❖ The five-member committee constituted for technical and safety standards of India's first pod taxi project or Personal Rapid Transit (PRT) has invited fresh proposals for strictest safety standards on lines of those prescribed in the US.
- ❖ The committee has recommended issuance of a fresh EOI (expression of interest) incorporating (automated people movers) APM standards and specifications, along with other general safety parameters with Niti Aayog recommendations.
- ❖ The NHAI has been mandated to execute it on a PPP (public-private partnership) basis.
- ❖ It will be executed on Delhi-Gurgaon pilot corridor (12.3 km) from Delhi-Haryana border to Rajiv Chowk in Gurgaon.
- ❖ The model is in place in London's Heathrow airport, Morgantown and Masdar city.

PRT

- ❖ It is an advanced public transport using automated electric pod cars to provide a taxi-like demand responsive feeder and shuttle services for small groups of travellers
- ❖ It is a green mode of uninterrupted journey.



India's first bitcoin trading app

- ❖ Dubai based "Pluto Exchange" has launched the India's first Bitcoin trading app for transacting in virtual currencies
- ❖ The first app-based wallet will enable the transaction of bitcoin using a mobile number and it is specifically targeted at the Indian market.
- ❖ It offers a solution to the coordination problem between payment processors, financial gateways and banks
- ❖ The app would permit a range of transactions, including payments, remittances, business-to-business commerce, supply chain finance, asset management and trading.
- ❖ Bitcoin is a crypto currency used as a payment system and is said to be the first decentralized digital currency.
- ❖ There is no central bank or administrator for this system. This is carried via peer-to-peer connections and all transactions take place with the support of cryptography.

Mobile app forewarning of livestock diseases

- ❖ The Union Ministry of Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare has launched Livestock Disease Forewarning –Mobile Application (LDF-Mobile App) in New Delhi.
- ❖ LDF-Mobile App was developed by ICAR-National Institute of Veterinary Epidemiology and Disease Informatics (ICAR-NIVEDI), Bengaluru.
- ❖ This app will be beneficial for consumers and stakeholders engaged in disease control programmes.

- ❖ The app will provide early diseases warning and also information about clinical samples for diagnosis in case of epidemic so that immediate action in case of epidemic.
- ❖ The app considers both climatic and non-climatic factors and categorizes districts for a particular disease into Very High Risk, High Risk, Moderate Risk, Low Risk, Very Low Risk and No Risk so that stakeholders can effectively plan to control the epidemic disease of livestock.
- ❖ ICAR-NIVEDI had identified 13 priority diseases based on their past incidence patterns and built strong database of these diseases on app.

First Photovoltaic road - China

- ❖ China successfully tested its first photovoltaic highway based on home-grown technology in the country's eastern Shandong province.
- ❖ The solar road is made up of an insulating layer on the bottom, photovoltaic panels in the middle, and transparent concrete on top.
- ❖ The tested segment of highway can generate 817.2 KW of power and is expected to generate 1 million KW hours of electricity each year.
- ❖ Electricity produced by the test section will be used to power highway lights, sign boards, surveillance cameras, tunnel and toll gate facilities. Surplus power will be supplied to the state grid.
- ❖ China has become the second country to construct a photovoltaic highway. France was introduced the world's first photovoltaic road fitted with solar panels in late 2016.



Human Genome project - China

- ❖ China has launched the world's largest human genome research project to document the genetic makeup of one lakh people to help generate the precision medicines for the future.

- ❖ The project will collect the genetic data of Han ethnic majority people from all over the country and nine other ethnic minority groups with a population of more than 5 million including the Zhuang and Hui people.
- ❖ The project includes four stages - collecting, sequencing gene samples, gathering the data and sharing the findings.
- ❖ The project will conclude all its gene sequencing and analysis within four years, which will also make it the fastest genome engineering project in the world.

ENVIRONMENT

Clean Sea- 2017

- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard (ICG) conducted a Regional Level Marine Oil Pollution Response Exercise 'Clean Sea - 2017' at sea off Port Blair, Andaman and Nicobar Islands.
- ❖ The main objective of the exercise was to ascertain the preparedness of the ICG, resource agencies and other stakeholders in responding to a major oil spill in line with the provisions of the National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOS-DCP).
- ❖ The Indian Coast Guard is responsible for marine environment protection in the maritime zones of India and is the coordinating authority for response to oil spills in Indian waters.
- ❖ ICG has drawn up National Oil Spill Disaster Contingency Plan (NOS-DCP) and has established three pollution response centres at Mumbai, Chennai and Port Blair.

India and CITES

- ❖ India was awarded certificate of commendation for its effort to combat illegal wildlife trade by Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES).
- ❖ The award was given to Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) for its efforts in conducting and coordinating species-specific wildlife enforcement operation, codenamed 'Operation Save Kurma'.
- ❖ It recognizes exemplary enforcement action of WCCB's regional and global effort to combat illegal wildlife trade.

Operation Save Kurma

- ❖ The operation was conducted to combat the illegal trade of live turtles and its parts from the country to destinations abroad.

- ❖ India was the only recipient of the Certificate of Commendation at the recently held 69th Standing Committee meeting of CITES at Geneva.

WCCB

- ❖ The Government of India constituted a statutory body, the Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB) in 2007, by amending the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972.
- ❖ It was established to combat organized wildlife crime in the country.

Biomass trading Platform-India

- ❖ India is set to launch its first waste management and pollution exchange and trading platform.
- ❖ London based leading provider of exchange technology will collaborate with the Centre for Ganga River Basin Management and Studies (C Ganga) to launch this Platform.
- ❖ It will address the waste management and pollution related problems in the Ganga river basin, which is a part of the Ganga clean-up initiative.

C Ganga

- ❖ C Ganga is the new think-tank formed under the aegis of NMCG and one of its stated objectives is to make India a world leader in river and water science.
- ❖ The Centre is headquartered at IIT Kanpur and represents leading science and technological institutes of the country.

NGT bans plastic items in towns located along banks of Ganga

- ❖ The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has imposed a complete **ban on plastic items** like carry bags, plates and cutlery in towns located on the banks of the River Ganga like Haridwar and Rishikesh.
- ❖ A bench headed by NGT chairperson **Justice Swatanter Kumar** also banned the sale, manufacture and storage of such items till Uttarkashi.
- ❖ The green panel order comes while it was hearing a plea of environmentalist MC Mehta.

Fly ash is harming creek ecology

- ❖ Industrial activity, particularly coal fly ash pollution emanating from ash conveyance, storage and impounding structures have drastically altered the hydrology, ecology and topography of the Ennore creek says an expert study commissioned by the National Green Tribunal.

- ❖ The expert committee reviewed the environmental impacts of coal ash pollution on Ennore creek and areas surrounding North Chennai Thermal Power Station (NCTPS) at Ennore



- ❖ A total of 20 samples of fish, including fin fish, crab, prawn and oyster/mussels were taken. All samples contained detectable levels of copper which could cause deformity of gills and harm their ability to navigate and hunt for food.
- ❖ The levels of cadmium and lead found in the fish taken from the creek were in excess of maximum concentration limits prescribed by European Union regulations.
- ❖ Five samples of home-grown vegetables also had detectable and significant levels of chromium and lead.
- ❖ The experts also noticed degradation of mangroves.
- ❖ The NGT has commissioned a separate study on the effects on human health as the fisher folk in contact with contaminated water and fish consumers were at risk.

Kaleshwaram Irrigation Project gets environmental clearance

- ❖ The Expert Appraisal Committee of the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change has accorded environmental clearance for the Kaleshwaram Irrigation Project (KLIP) in Telangana.
- ❖ The Kaleshwaram project, being built across Godavari River in seeks to provide drinking water facility for Hyderabad and Secunderabad.

- ❖ However, it directed the Telangana Government to take care of changes in the micro-climatic conditions in the project area as it involves submergence of a large area.
- ❖ The KLIP envisages construction of barrage across Godavari River after the confluence by its tributary Pranahita near Madigadda village
- ❖ It is redesigned version of Pranahitha-Chevella Lift Irrigation Scheme, proposed in 2007 by the undivided Andhra Pradesh Government.
- ❖ The Kaleshwaram Irrigation Project calls for the construction of a stream across River Godavari near Madigadda village in Karimnagar district of Telangana.
- ❖ The 81 km long tunnel built between Yellampally barrage and Mallannasagar reservoir under this project will be the longest tunnel to carry water in Asia after completion.

New frog species identified in Arunachal

- ❖ Scientists have discovered a new frog species at the Talle Valley Wildlife Sanctuary in Arunachal Pradesh.
- ❖ The new species found in Arunachal Pradesh's Lower Subansiri district has been named **Odorrana arunachalensis**.
- ❖ Odorrana is a genus of frogs (family Ranidae) habitat located in East Asia and surrounding regions and the species is sighted during the wet season from April to September.
- ❖ It is a medium-sized green frog adapted for a life in torrential waters.
- ❖ The frog inhabits fern-covered rocky areas along hill streams in mixed wet tropical forests.
- ❖ The presence of a black band-like mark between the eyes is a distinguishing character that separates it from all the other frog species.

New scorpion species in Tripura

- ❖ Scientists have discovered new scorpion species named **Schaller's wood scorpion (*Liocheles schalleri*)** from at Trishna Wildlife Sanctuary, Tripura.
- ❖ The new species has been named *Liocheles schalleri* in honour of celebrated wildlife biologist George Schaller who has studied wildlife across the world, including the snow leopards of the Himalayas and central India's tigers.
- ❖ Schaller's wood scorpion is the eleventh wood scorpion species to be discovered in India.
- ❖ Wood scorpions are also called dwarf scorpions which are smaller than commonly seen large scorpions.

- ❖ They live in small burrows on the ground, making them very difficult to spot and they have fairly large and powerful pincers with which they crush their prey.
- ❖ India is home to more than 125 species of scorpions and nine of India's 11 wood scorpions are endemic to the country.
- ❖ Schaller's wood scorpions are found in low elevations in parts of Tripura, including Trishna and Bison National Park, and is likely to be found in Bangladesh too, which is three km away.

Environment ministry launches pilot project 'Blue Flag'

- ❖ The environment ministry has launched a pilot project 'Blue Flag' to enhance standards of cleanliness on beaches.
- ❖ Its prime objective is to enhance standards of cleanliness, upkeep and basic amenities at beaches.
- ❖ The 'Blue Flag' is a certification by the Foundation for Environmental Education(FEE) that a beach, marina or sustainable boating tourism operator, meets its stringent standards.
- ❖ Under the pilot project, each of coastal state/UT was requested to identify and nominate a beach, which is to be funded through ongoing Integrated Coastal Management Programme (ICMP).
- ❖ All the coastal states have nominated the pilot beaches in their receptive territories including Goa.
- ❖ The coastal states in India – Tamilnadu, Gujarat, Karnataka, Goa, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, West Bengal.
- ❖ The coastal UT's in India - Daman and Diu, Puducherry, Lakshadweep and Andaman and Nicobar.

New regional project to tackle stubble burning

- ❖ The Environment Ministry has approved regional project on 'Climate Resilience Building among Farmers through Crop Residue Management' under National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC).
- ❖ The project was approved at meeting of National Steering Committee on Climate Change (NSCCC) held in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Secretary, Environment Ministry.
- ❖ The first phase of the project was approved for Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan at cost of approximately Rs. 100 crores.
- ❖ The project aims to mitigate climate change impacts and enhance adaptive capacity and counter adverse environmental impacts arising from stubble burning which carried over by farmers during post harvest period.

- ❖ The problem of open burning of agriculture has resulted in serious issues contributing towards global warming and environmental pollution. It also has an adverse impact on air quality, soil health and human health.
- ❖ The open field burning emits Carbon Dioxide (CO₂), Carbon monoxide (CO) and Nitrous Oxide (NO) along with particulate matter.

National Adaptation Fund for Climate Change (NAFCC)

- ❖ NAFCC is a flagship Scheme of Union Government launched in 2015 to provide 100% central grant to the State Governments for implementing climate change adaptation projects.
- ❖ The Scheme has been designed to fulfill objectives of National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) and operationalize State Action Plans on Climate Change (SAPCCs).
- ❖ The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) is National Implementing Entity (NIE) responsible for implementation of adaptation projects under NAFCC.

STATE

New Chief Secretary of Karnataka

- ❖ Additional Chief Secretary Ratna Prabha is the new Chief Secretary of Karnataka. She will head the State administrative machinery till March 2018.
- ❖ For the first time in the State's history, two top administrative offices are being headed by women with Ms. Prabha as chief secretary and Neelamani N. Raju as DGP (State's first woman Director-General and Inspector General of Police)
- ❖ Earlier she also bagged the 'Woman of the Year' award of the American Biographical Institute Inc., the U.S.

Hornbill-Nagaland

- ❖ President of India has inaugurated the 18th edition of the Hornbill Festival at the Naga Heritage Village in Kisama, Nagaland.
- ❖ The festival coincided with 54th statehood day of Nagaland.
- ❖ Hornbill Festival also called as the 'Festival of Festivals' in Nagaland.



- ❖ This festival which aims to revive, protect and preserve the richness and uniqueness of Naga heritage.
- ❖ The festival pays tribute to Hornbill, the most admired and revered bird for the Nagas for its qualities of alertness and grandeur.
- ❖ Hornbill Festival is celebrated in Nagaland every year in first week of December. It is one of biggest indigenous festivals of country.

Reservation for Kapu's

- ❖ Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly has unanimously passed Kapu Reservation Bill, 2017 to provide 5% quota in education and employment.
- ❖ The kapu, Telaga, Balija and ontari communities would get the quota under the new category 'F'
- ❖ With this reservation, it will take the total quota in the state to 55 per cent, which is more than 50 per cent limit restricted by the Supreme Court.
- ❖ The bill will be sent to the Centre for its consent which is necessary to include this reservation in the 9th Schedule to get insulate from judicial review.
- ❖ The Kapu community, with 27 per cent population in the state of Andhra Pradesh, has been demanding reservations for decades.
- ❖ In 2016, Manjunath Commission was set up to recommend quota for Kapus and it has submitted its report.

Floating Solar Power Plant

- ❖ India's largest floating solar power plant project at the Banasura Sagar Dam in Wayanad district is completed and going to be commissioned soon.

- ❖ It has the generating capacity of 500 Kilo watt and it will be fed to the Kerala State Electricity Board grid using underground cables.



- ❖ The unique feature of this plant is usage of anchoring mechanism which would help to maintain the plant with the alteration of the water level.
- ❖ Earlier in the year NETRA (NTPC Energy Technology Research Alliance), installed a 100kW floating solar plant at Kayamkulam, which is also in Kerala.

World's first IT Campus for differently-abled persons

- ❖ The Telangana State Government will set up the world's first IT Campus for differently-abled persons.
- ❖ On the occasion of the December 3, World Disability Day the state Government has signed an agreement with Vindhya E-Info Media Private Limited to set up the Information and Technology (IT) campus to focus on creating employment opportunities for persons with disabilities.
- ❖ The proposed campus will be set up in an area of 10 acres near the IT park developed by the state Government near the Hyderabad international airport.

The 6th International Tourism Mart 2017- in Assam

- ❖ The 6th 'International Tourism Mart' (ITM) was inaugurated at Guwahati, Assam.
- ❖ The mart has been organised by the Ministry of Tourism in association with the North Eastern States.

- ❖ The mart aims to put special emphasis on India's 'Act East Policy', blossoming ties with ASEAN and the larger East Asia region, which is home to the world's rapidly growing economies and India's emerging tourism markets.
- ❖ The International Tourism Marts are organised in the North Eastern States on a rotation basis.
- ❖ It is aimed at creating awareness about the rich and varied tourism products of the North Eastern region in the domestic and international markets.

Kacheguda becomes first energy-efficient rail station

- ❖ Kacheguda in Telangana has earned the distinction of being the first energy-efficient 'A1 Category' railway station in India.
- ❖ The station, under the Hyderabad Division of South Central Railway, achieved 100 per cent Energy Efficiency.
- ❖ The historic Kacheguda Railway station has completed 100 years.
- ❖ This imposing structure was built in 1916 by the Nizams Guaranteed State Railway during the reign of Mir Osman Ali Khan, the seventh Nizam.

India's first Electronic Manufacturing Cluster

- ❖ India's first Electronic Manufacturing Cluster (EMC) will be coming to Andhra Pradesh. The electronics manufacturing cluster (EMC) will be setup at Renigunta in Chittoor district.
- ❖ An EMC is designed and developed for providing facilities and amenities for manufacturing mobiles and allied products.
- ❖ The first exclusive mobile and electronic manufacturing cluster was announced in Andhra Pradesh and for this a (SPV) by the name Sri Venkateswara Mobiles and Electronics Manufacturing Hub Private Limited was formed.
- ❖ Around 50,000 jobs will be created every year in the cluster.

Email service in Hindi – Rajasthan

- ❖ Rajasthan becomes the first state in the country to offer free email addresses to its residents in Hindi.
- ❖ The first email id that was created was for the chief minister Vasundhara Raje.
- ❖ The project has been implemented by the state IT department in collaboration in the form of in-sourcing with private IT companies.

- ❖ This e-mail is small part of the bigger picture 'Rajasthan DigiKit' which has an enrolment of more than one crore people.
- ❖ In December 2016, state-run BSNL had launched e-mail address service in eight Indian languages for its broadband users by launching a 'DataMail' service.
- ❖ However, unlike BSNL, the Hindi email offered by Rajasthan government is for all the Internet users.

Rajasthan - 'Loktantra Sainani'

- ❖ The state government of Rajasthan has decided to recognise political prisoners held in jails during the emergency period (1975-77) as 'Loktantra Sainani'.
- ❖ To provide pension for all people who were kept in jail during Emergency Rajasthan has changed the name of Rajasthan MISA and DIR Bandi Pension Rules 2008 to the Rajasthan Loktantra Sainani samman Nidhi.
- ❖ Till now, only those people who were detained under MISA and DIR and kept in any of the Rajasthan jails were given the monthly pension of Rs. 12,000 and a monthly allowance of Rs. 1200.
- ❖ However, after the cabinet's decision, every Rajasthani, who was held in any jail in the country during emergency period will also be eligible for the pension.
- ❖ Such people will not need to produce the certificate of the respective Jail Superintendent or Superintendent of Police for getting pension. Now only self-certification has to be given.

The third World Telugu Conference

- ❖ The **third World Telugu Conference** began in Hyderabad, Telangana.
- ❖ The main aim of the Conference is to promote Telugu and its literature besides helping the present generation learn more about Telugu language and its rich culture and heritage.
- ❖ Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu had formally inaugurated the Conference.

Gita Research Institute to be set up in Mathura

- ❖ A research institute for the study of the 'Bhagavad Gita' will be soon set up by the Uttar Pradesh government in Mathura town.
- ❖ For research on Gayan (singing), Vadan (the art of music) and Nritya (dance) of the Krishna age, the government is setting up the institute.

- ❖ The research centre will be set up under Minister for Religious works and culture of UP Government.

PM to dedicate 60 MW Tuitial Hydro Power Project

- ❖ Prime Minister has formally dedicated the **60 MW Tuitial Hydro Electric Power Project (HEPP)** in **Mizoram** to the nation.
- ❖ This is the **biggest power project located in Mizoram** and will feed the entire energy to be generated to home State, to facilitate the state achieve government of India's Mission '24x7 Affordable Clean Power for All'.
- ❖ The Tuitial HEPP has been constructed as a Central Sector Project and implemented by North Eastern Electric Power Corporation (NEEPCO), under the administrative control of the Union Ministry of Power.
- ❖ The State's current demand of electricity is only 87 MW and with the additional 60 MW of electricity from the project, the State of Mizoram will now be the **third power-surplus State in North East India** after Sikkim and Tripura.

Meghalaya launches India's first social audit law

- ❖ Meghalaya became the first state in India to operationalise '**The Meghalaya Community Participation and Public Services Social Audit Act, 2017**', at a national convention in Shillong.
- ❖ It is a law that makes social audit of government programmes and schemes a part of government practice and it was launched by Chief Minister Mukul Sangma.
- ❖ The legislation which is applicable to 11 departments and 21 schemes was passed on April 2017 and was followed by pilot social audits for 26 schemes in 18 villages of the north-eastern state.
- ❖ Prior to enacting this law, social audits of government programmes were done at the initiative of civil society organisations. These social audits had no official sanction.
- ❖ A social audit facilitator will be appointed to conduct the audit directly with the people. He will present findings to the Gram Sabha, who will add inputs and the result will finally go to the auditors.

Eastern India's first CNG station – Bhubaneswar

- ❖ Union petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan inaugurated eastern India's first Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) stations at Chandrasekharapur and Patia in Bhubaneswar city under Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga programme.

- ❖ The service is an initiative under City Gas Distribution (CGD) project implemented by the GAIL (India) Limited, a government-owned natural gas transmission company.
- ❖ The company will bring natural gas to Bhubaneswar in special containers called as 'cascades' by road from Vijayawada in Andhra Pradesh.
- ❖ Later, it will be supplied through the 2,655 km long Jagdishpur-Haldia and Bokaro-Dhamra Natural Gas Pipeline (JHBDPL), which is known as Pradhan Mantri Urja Ganga project.

Water purification plants in Telangana with Japan's Grant Assistance

- ❖ A contract was signed in Chennai to provide financial assistance to set up the two water purification plants at Podichenpalle and Shankarampet villages in Medak district, Telangana.
- ❖ The groundwater in these areas has high fluoride content and salinity.
- ❖ These two stations will be equipped with remote monitoring system, reject water management system and solar panels for cost-effective and sustainable operation.
- ❖ These water stations are locally called 'iJal' stations meaning "My Water" in Hindi.
- ❖ The Grant Assistance for Grassroots Projects (GGP) was signed between Consul General of Japan, Chennai and Safe Water Network India, a non-profit organisation.
- ❖ The Consulate General of Japan, Chennai, which covers Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Kerala and Puducherry, has supported various such projects since 1990.

Andhra Pradesh government signs agreements with Alphabet X

- ❖ The government of Andhra Pradesh has entered into an agreement with the moon shot factory of Alphabet (earlier Google) - X - to bring the breakthrough Free Space Optical Communication (FSOC) technology.
- ❖ It is first of its kind in the world to provide wireless internet connection at a higher speed of up to 20Gbps and to a distance of up to 20kms.
- ❖ The purpose of the FSOC project is to provide high quality & affordable digital services through internet under state government's Fiber grid project.
- ❖ By using FSOC technology, Andhra Pradesh will be able to use better bandwidth data to every house hold including houses in tribal belt.

Losar Festival celebrated in Ladakh

- ❖ The traditional festival of Losar was celebrated in Ladakh region of Jammu and Kashmir to mark the beginning of New Year in this Himalayan region.
- ❖ Losar is a community-based socio-religious festival celebrated by the Buddhists of Ladakh, which has 19 major monasteries celebrating 18 monastic festivals every year. Losar is Tibetan word for 'new year'.
- ❖ It is celebrated from the first day of the 11th month of the Tibetan lunar calendar which is considered to be the most important festival of the region Ladakh/Tibet.

Hamesha Vijayee Military Exercise

- ❖ Southern Command are conducting a major exercise called 'Hamesha Vijayee' in the deserts of Rajasthan from 16 to 22 December 2017.
- ❖ The exercise aims at assessing the strengths and capabilities of the armed forces to strike into enemy territories to ensure the battle-preparation of the army troops.
- ❖ The Southern Command's headquarters located in Pune and it is a formation of the Indian Army which is active since 1895.
- ❖ During World War II, Southern Command was reformed as Southern Army in April 1942. The formation reverted to the title Southern Command in November 1945.

India's First Design University in Haryana

- ❖ India's first and only Design University, '**World University of Design**' opened its campus in Sonipat, Haryana.
- ❖ The University is promoted by **Om Prakash Bansal** Educational and Social Welfare Trust, Punjab.
- ❖ The university is currently located on the NH1 in Rajiv Gandhi Education City (NCR), Sonipat – the largest planned integrated city for education in India.

Maharashtra, UP tops in GST collection in first 5 months

- ❖ Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh are the top contributors among states and Union Territories in the first five months since the rollout of the GST regime.
- ❖ Maharashtra tops State GST SGST collections with Rs. 18,701 crores. Tamil Nadu is at the second spot with Rs. 8,739 crore collection followed by Karnataka and Gujarat.

- ❖ Maharashtra garnered Rs 3,702 crore and Uttar Pradesh collected Rs 3,549 crore through cess levied on sin and luxury goods. Karnataka ranks third followed by Chhattisgarh.
- ❖ The GST regime implemented from July 1, 2017 has tax four slabs of 0, 5, 12, 18 and 28%.
- ❖ Additional cess ranging from 1 to 290% is levied over and above highest tax rate of 28% on sin and luxury goods such as tobacco, cigarettes and luxury cars.
- ❖ The amount collected through cess flows into compensation fund, which is used to compensate states for revenue losses on account of implementation of GST.

Bengaluru becomes first city to get its own logo

- ❖ Bengaluru has become the first Indian city to get its own logo to give the city its own identity and highlight its global image.
- ❖ With a tagline 'Bengaluru Be U', the unique red-black logo is in part English and Kannda.
- ❖ The letters “B”, “E” and “U” in the logo are highlighted in red to emphasize the tagline, “Be You” represents the welcoming character of the city.
- ❖ It was unveiled at the Namma Bengaluru Habba festival by Karnataka Tourism Minister Priyank Kharge in Vidhana Soudha.
- ❖ The city now joins the band of mega cities like Amsterdam, New York, Paris, London, Singapore, Berlin and Melbourne that have their own tourism logos.
- ❖ The logo was designed by Nammur, a design start-up, which won a contest and received a prize money of Rs 5 lakh from the government.

Delhi Metro's Magenta Line inaugurated

- ❖ Prime Minister inaugurated the first section of the Delhi Metro's Magenta line in Noida.
- ❖ The 12.64-km-long Magenta Line presently connects Botanical Garden to Kalkaji Mandir and will be extended till Janakpuri by March next year.
- ❖ The Magenta Line will have, for the first time in India, trains that will run unattended (driverless) and the platform screen doors (PSDs) are also being used for the first time.
- ❖ The Magenta Line has automated platform screen doors at every station, set to open only when trains arrive at the platform.
- ❖ driverless trains are to be introduced along with the Communication-Based Train Control (CBTC) signalling technology, which facilitate the movement of trains within a frequency of 90 to 100 seconds.

'Prakash Hai to Vikas Hai' scheme-U.P

- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh government has launched a free household power connection scheme 'Prakash hai to vikas hai' for the poor in the state to mark former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's birthday.
- ❖ Initially two villages Lohban and Gausana of Mathura district have been covered for 100 per cent electrification.
- ❖ Under the scheme, state government has set ambition target of covering 16 million by the end of 2018.

UP - South Korea cooperation on tourism

- ❖ The Uttar Pradesh government signed a memorandum of understanding with South Korea to enhance cooperation in the field of tourism, skill development, culture and farming.
- ❖ An agreement was signed in 2000 to develop Ayodhya and Gimhae as sister cities, following which a memorial was constructed in Ayodhya
- ❖ The people in South Korea believe that 2,000 years ago, Ayodhya princess had married Korean King Kim Suro.
- ❖ At present, members of the 'Crock Clan' are considered as their descendants.

President inaugurates Andhra Pradesh Fibre Grid Project

- ❖ President Ram Nath Kovind has formally inaugurated the Andhra Pradesh Fibre Grid Project at Amaravathy and dedicated it to the nation.
- ❖ The project was initiated by AP CM N Chandrababu Naidu and will be implemented by the Andhra Pradesh State Fibernet Limited (APSFL).
- ❖ Andhra Pradesh State Fibernet Limited (APSFL) is the largest state government-owned telecommunication company in the country,
- ❖ The Andhra Pradesh Fibre Grid Project aims to provide high speed internet facility in across state

'Harivarasanam' award- K S Chitra

- ❖ Singer K S Chitra has been selected for this year's prestigious 'Harivarasanam' award, instituted by the Kerala government.
- ❖ Chitra has been selected for the award in recognition of her contribution to propagate the spirit of secularism, equanimity and universal brotherhood.
- ❖ 'Harivarasanam' award was instituted by the Kerala government in 2012.

- ❖ Singers K J Yesudas, S P Balasubramanyam, Gangai Amaran and M G Sreekumar are among earlier winners of the award.

Indian Science Congress

- ❖ The 2018 edition of the historic Indian Science Congress will be held at Manipur University, Imphal, in March.
- ❖ The event was scheduled at the Osmania University (OU), Hyderabad, in the first week of January but had to be moved out due to “security problems.”
- ❖ This was the first time the 106-year-old ISC, the largest congregation of scientists in India, had to be postponed at the last minute.

Rooftop solar plant - Uttar Pradesh

- ❖ State-owned gas utility GAIL India Ltd has commissioned the country's second largest rooftop solar power plant.
- ❖ The firm has installed a 5.76 MWp (Mega Watt peak) solar plant at its petrochemical complex at Pata in Uttar Pradesh covering 65,000 square meters.
- ❖ Captive solar power initiative of GAIL will reduce carbon emissions by 6,300 tonnes per annum and help India achieve climate goals.
- ❖ GAIL's solar rooftop project is also a step under 'Make in India' with Indian vendors entrusted for manufacture, supply and execution.
- ❖ The country's largest rooftop solar plant is located in Amritsar and has a capacity of 12 MW built by Tata Power Solar, the plant produces more than 150 lakh units of power annually and offsets over 19,000 tonne of carbon emissions every year.

PERSONALITIES, AWARDS AND EVENTS

Kathakar

- ❖ 7th edition of three days ‘Kathakar: International Storytellers Festival’ was recently inaugurated at the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), New Delhi.
- ❖ The partners for this year’s festival are the IGNCA of Union Ministry of Culture in Delhi.
- ❖ Kathakar is the only oral storytelling festival in India and is a part of Ghummakkad Narain- the Travelling Literature Festival which was started under the aegis of UNESCO in 2010.

- ❖ Kathakar is an attempt to not just preserve the art form but also create new audiences for the same.

Alappuzha – UNEP

- ❖ United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) recently released a report named 'Solid approach to waste: how 5 cities are beating pollution'.
- ❖ As per this report Alappuzha in Kerala is among the five cities recognized by the UNEP that have successfully tackled solid waste management.
- ❖ The other four cities are Osaka (Japan), Ljubljana (Slovenia), Penang (Malaysia) and Cajicá (Colombia).
- ❖ Alappuzha, which is known as 'the Venice of the East' for its backwaters and coastal lagoons adopted decentralized waste management system.
- ❖ The biodegradable waste was segregated at the ward level, and treated in small composting plants which provide biogas for residents.
- ❖ Alappuzha has also received the Clean City Award from the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) in 2016.

Surya Prakash - Prasar Bharati

- ❖ Former journalist A. Surya Prakash has been appointed as the chairman of the public broadcaster Prasar Bharati for a second term.
- ❖ Prasar Bharati runs Doordarshan and All India Radio.
- ❖ Prakash, who has been at the helm of Prasar Bharati for three years since 2014, retired earlier in October.
- ❖ He is reappointed for a period of two years till February 2020.
- ❖ Reappointment was approved by a three-member committee headed by the Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu.

Prasar Bharati

- ❖ Prasar Bharati is a statutory autonomous body established under the Prasar Bharati Act and came into existence on 1997.
- ❖ It is the Public Service Broadcaster of the country.
- ❖ It is working under the aegis of Ministry of Information and Broadcasting.
- ❖ It is the Public Service Broadcaster of the country.

Miss Supranational 2017

- ❖ Jenny Kim, a South Korean has been crowned as a Miss Supranational 2017 in a beauty pageant which was held at Poland on December 1, 2017.

- ❖ She was crowned by the very beautiful Miss Supranational 2016 “Srinidhi Ramesh Shetty” of India.
- ❖ India’s Peden Ongmu Namgyal was placed 15th place.

Hello Kitty appointed -UNWTO's Special Ambassador

- ❖ The UN World Tourism Organization has appointed fictional character Hello Kitty as Special Ambassador of the 'International Year of Sustainable Tourism Development 2017'.
- ❖ Hello Kitty will promote the 'Travel. Enjoy. Respect' campaign, and highlight the role tourism can play in achieving Sustainable Development Goals.

World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

- ❖ The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) is the United Nations agency responsible for the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism.
- ❖ Its headquarters are located in Madrid.
- ❖ It was formed on 1975.

Actor Shashi Kapoor passed away

- ❖ Veteran Hindi film actor Shashi Kapoor (79), passed away after prolonged illness.
- ❖ The veteran actor made his debut as a leading man in the 1961 film "Dharmputra" .
- ❖ In 2011, he was awarded the Padma Bhushan by the Indian government.
- ❖ In 2015, he became the third in his family to be honoured with the Dadasaheb Phalke Award.

11th Annual MedTech Summit of Biodesign Programme

- ❖ 11th Annual MedTech Summit was organised under the Bio Design Programme in New Delhi.
- ❖ The Biodesign programme has been implemented by the Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, jointly at AIIMS and IIT Delhi in collaboration with International partners.
- ❖ It aims
 - to develop innovative and affordable medical devices as per unmet clinical needs of India

- to train the next generation of medical technology innovators in India for bringing such impactful devices to the real world.
- ❖ During the event, the Government has formally launched Noxeno- a nasal foreign body removal device developed by start-up InnAccel Technologies Private Limited, trained under the Biodesign program.

Child rights activist -National award

- ❖ Chezhan Ramu, a social worker and child rights activist based in Tiruvannamalai district, was awarded the Rajiv Gandhi Manav Seva Award by President of India.
- ❖ The Award, instituted by the Ministry of Women and Child Development is given to individuals for their outstanding contribution towards service for children.
- ❖ He is among the three social workers selected across the country for the award.
- ❖ In the year 1994, he set up TDH CORE - Terre Des Hommes Children Organisation for Relief and Education in Tiruvannamalai, and Lifeline in 1998, where over 900 children are currently being looked after in 16 homes across the State.

Time's Person of the Year for 2017

- ❖ Time magazine has named "the Silence Breakers" as its "Person of the Year"
- ❖ It was referring to those individuals, mostly women, who came forward this year with #MeToo movement to publicly expose patterns of sexual harassment and assault by powerful public figures in United States
- ❖ #MeToo was actually founded by activist Tarana Burke a decade ago to raise awareness about sexual violence.
- ❖ The two runners-up for Time person of the year were Chinese President Xi Jinping and U.S. President Donald Trump.
- ❖ The Person of the Year is an annual honour bestowed by the Times magazine. It was started in 1927 and it is announced in month of December every year.

International Children's Peace Prize

- ❖ Sixteen-year-old Mohamad Al Jounde from Syria was awarded the International Children's Peace Prize for his efforts to ensure the rights of Syrian refugee children.

- ❖ Al Jounde, a refugee of the Syrian civil war, received the prize from Malala Yousafzai, who won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014 for her work for children's rights.
- ❖ He set up a school together with his family in a Lebanese refugee camp that currently provides 200 children with education.
- ❖ Since 2005, Kids Rights, the foundation committed to defending children's rights worldwide, annually awards the International Children's Peace Prize.

5th Ballon d'Or Award - Cristiano Ronaldo

- ❖ Real Madrid forward Cristiano Ronaldo (Portugal) has won the Ballon d'Or award, 2017 as soccer's best player of the year for the fifth time to move level with rival Lionel Messi(Argentina).
- ❖ Ronaldo won the trophy awarded by France Football magazine at a ceremony held at the Eiffel Tower in Paris.
- ❖ Ronaldo is the all-time leading scorer in the history of the Champions League with 115 goals.

Sarvesh Tiwari appointed as President Para Sports Foundation

- ❖ On the occasion of International Day of Persons with Disabilities, a renowned communication expert, Sarvesh Kumar Tiwari, was appointed as the President of Para-Sports Foundation (PSF), India.
- ❖ Para Sports Foundation is a non-profit organization working towards the social welfare of persons with disabilities.
- ❖ The PSF is founded by Pradeep Raj, an international athlete with a disability and a national youth awardee from the President of India.

India's first woman photo journalist

- ❖ Search engine giant, Google, paid homage to India's first woman photojournalist, Homai Vyarawalla, with a doodle on her 104th birth anniversary.
- ❖ Homai Vyarawalla who carved a place for her in photojournalism during the pre-independence era, started her career as a photojournalist during the onset of World War II
- ❖ Her first published pictures were in the 'Bombay Chronicle' and Majority of her works were published under the name of Dalda 13.
- ❖ Her pictures include the first tricolour-hoisting after the Independence, Lord Mountbatten departing from India and Jawaharlal Nehru addressing the crowd after the Independence.

- ❖ She was awarded with the second highest civilian award Padma Vibhushan in 2011.

'Yeraringar' Award - M.S. Swaminathan

- ❖ The Vice President of India conferred '**YERARIGNAR**' Award to Prof. M.S. Swaminathan, in Chennai.
- ❖ The award was presented in recognition of his contribution to the field of agriculture.
- ❖ Dr. M.S. Swaminathan is an agricultural legend who is known for his innovation and research in the field of agriculture.
- ❖ He is also known as Father of Indian green revolution.
- ❖ He was a Fellow of many of the leading scientific academies of India and the world, including the Royal Society of London and the US National Academy of Sciences.

Father of DNA fingerprinting in India passes away

- ❖ Eminent scientist and 'father of DNA fingerprinting in India Lalji Singh died following a heart attack.
- ❖ Dr.Singh was one of the leaders, instrumental in making DNA fingerprinting mainstream in India, both at the level of research as well as for forensic applications.
- ❖ He was tasked by the government, in the late 1990s, to establish the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics (CDFD) with a mandate of making it a nodal centre for DNA fingerprinting and diagnostics for all species and several diseases.
- ❖ Dr. Singh served as a director at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) in Hyderabad from 1998 to 2009.It is notable that he is the founder of this centre.
- ❖ He went on to become 25th Vice Chancellor of the Banaras Hindu University (2001 - 2014).
- ❖ Until recently, he was active in the Genome Foundation, a non-profit organisation that aims to diagnose and treat genetic disorders affecting the underprivileged, especially from rural India.
- ❖ Singh was also the recipient of the prestigious Padma Shri award.

Secretary General of International Buddhist Confederation

- ❖ Buddhist monk Dhammapiya from Tripura has been elected as the new secretary general of the International Buddhist Confederation (IBC).

- ❖ He was elected on the post at the second general assembly of the IBC.
- ❖ The IBC is a global Buddhist forum for preservation and development of heritage sites of the religion in India and other parts of the world.

Priyanka Chopra - Mother Teresa Memorial award

- ❖ Priyanka Chopra was honoured with the Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice for her work in helping refugees with food, shelter and education.
- ❖ She is also UNICEF's Goodwill Ambassador and is known for supporting various philanthropic activities.
- ❖ The award has been conferred to several famous personalities in the past such as Malala Yousafzai, Anna Hazare, Kiran Bedi, Oscar Fernandes, Sudha Murty, Sushmita Sen and Bilquis Bano Edhi.
- ❖ The award is given in honour of Mother Teresa, one of the greatest social reformers.
- ❖ The awards were established in 2005 at the initiative of Harmony Foundation, an organization created by Abraham Mathai in Mumbai. Since then, they have been given annually or biannually.
- ❖ The Mother Teresa Awards are conferred to honour individuals and organizations that promote peace, equality and social justice.

New IOA President

- ❖ International Hockey Federation (FIH) chief Narinder Batra was elected as president of Indian Olympic Association (IOA) for a next four-year period.
- ❖ Incumbent Secretary General Rajeev Mehta was re-elected for his second term.
- ❖ Handball Federation of India's Anandeshwar Pandey was elected as the treasurer of IOA.

Niyog from India in Polar Expedition

- ❖ Fjällräven Polar is a polar expedition of adventure travellers across the world. It is an annual expedition organised by Swedish company Fjällräven since 1997.
- ❖ Niyog, 26-year-old adventure traveller from Punalur in Kerala's Kollam district has become the first Indian to take part in Fjällräven Polar expedition.

- ❖ The participants of expedition set to be held in April, 2018 will have to travel 300 km at minus 30° Celsius through the arctic wilderness in Norway and Sweden.

Francois Gabart completes solo navigation around the world

- ❖ A sailing prodigy, Frenchman Francois Gabart made the world record for the fastest non-stop solo navigation of the world on his first attempt.
- ❖ The sailor completed his tour in 42 days, 16 hours, 40 minutes and 35 seconds.
- ❖ Francois is winner of 2013 Vendee Globe and 2014 Route de Rhum yacht races.

BBC's Sports Personality of the Year - Mo Farah

- ❖ Sir Mo Farah was named the winner of the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year award.
- ❖ Mo Farah received more votes and surpassed Superbikes world champion Jonathan Rea and Paralympian Jonnie Peacock.

HOW VOTING FIGURES HAVE FALLEN			
2014		2016	
1 Lewis Hamilton	209,920	1 Andy Murray	247,419
2 Rory McIlroy	123,745	2 Alistair Brownlee	121,665
3 Jo Pavey	99,913	3 Nick Skelton	109,197
2015		2017	
1 Andy Murray	361,446	1 Mo Farah	83,524
2 Kevin Sinfield	278,353	2 Jonny Rea	80,567
3 Jessica Ennis-Hill	79,898	3 Jonnie Peacock	73,429

National Design Award

- ❖ G. Satheesh Reddy, Scientific Adviser to Raksha Mantri and Director General, Missiles and Strategic Systems, has been conferred with the prestigious National Design Award.
- ❖ Satheesh Reddy is known for being a navigation expert and is the only scientist from India holding the distinction of being inducted as Fellow of Royal Institute of Navigation, London and Royal Aeronautical Society, UK.
- ❖ He has bagged this award for his significant national contribution towards indigenous design and development of diversified missile systems, guided

weapons, avionics technologies and for his sustained efforts leading to the advancement of aerospace technologies and industries in India.

- ❖ Satheesh Reddy spearheads Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Missile Complex, 'the Missiles hub of India', steering the design and development of a wide variety of tactical and strategic missile systems.

Joy Goswami - Moortidevi Award 2017

- ❖ Eminent Bengali poet Joy Goswami will be honoured with the 31st Moortidevi Award for the year 2017.
- ❖ Goswami will be conferred with the award for his poetry collection titled Du Dondo Phowara Matro which is an autobiographical account of the poets' life featuring his close ones including a pet cat.
- ❖ He will be the first Bengali poet to get this award.
- ❖ Secret trysts, chance loves and more of the fantastical quotidian which makes up the poets' consciousness are some highlights of poet's literary work.
- ❖ He has Kendriya and Bangla Sahitya Akademi Awards, Ananda Purashkar, and the first Tata Literature Live Poet Laureate Award.

Moortidevi Award

- ❖ The Moortidevi Award is an India literary award annually presented by the Bharatiya Jnanpith, a literary and research organisation, to an author for their "contemplative and perceptive work".
- ❖ The award is bestowed only to Indian writers writing in Indian languages
- ❖ The award consists of a Saraswati Statue, a Citation Plaque and cash award of Rupees 4 lac.
- ❖ Kannada writer C. K. Nagaraja Rao was the first person to be honoured with the award in 1983 for his novel, Pattamahadevi Shantala Devi.

Sahitya Akademi Awards

- ❖ Sahitya Akademi, India's national academy of letters, has announced its annual awards recognising the literary works of 24 writers writing in 24 Indian languages.
- ❖ The Tamil Poet Inquilab has been selected posthumously for the Sahitya Akademi award for 2017
- ❖ The award has been given for "Gaandhaal Naatkal", a compilation of Inquilab's poems.
- ❖ Shahul Hameed, familiarly known by his pen name Inquilab was born in Kilakarai, Tamilnadu. Few of his notable works include Vellai Iruttu, Sooriyanai Sumappavargal, Ovvouru pullaiyum peryar solli azaippen.

Sahitya Akademi Prize for Translation in Tamil language

- ❖ Yuma Vasuki from Tamilnadu has been conferred with Sahitya Akademi Prize for Translation in Tamil language category for his work 'Kacaakkin Itikaacam' ('கசாக்கின் இதிகாசம்'). The novel was originally written in Malayalam by renowned writer O.V. Vijayan , titled 'Khasakkinte Ithihasam'.
- ❖ Yuma Vasuki was born in Pudukkottai. His birth name is Maarimuthu. Some of his poetic works include Amudhaparuvam valampuriyaa anaithoru sangu (அமுதபருவம் வலம்புரியாய் அணைந்ததொரு சங்கு), Iravugalin nilarpadam (இரவுகளின் நிழற்படம்). He has written two novels namely Ratha Uravu (ரத்த உறவு), and Manjal Veyil (மஞ்சள் வெயில்). He has also written a short story titled Uyirthiruthal (உயிர்த்திருத்தல்).

7th International Coffee Fest

- ❖ The seventh edition of the India International Coffee Festival (IICF) will be held in Bengaluru from January 16-19.
- ❖ The four-day IICF 2018, being organised by the India Coffee Trust and State-run Coffee Board to promote the Indian coffees globally.
- ❖ IICF 2018 would be a precursor to the International Coffee Organisation's World Coffee Conference being hosted by India in Bengaluru in 2020.
- ❖ The Board was working with artificial intelligence and biotech firms to find a solution to the pest menace like problems posed by the white stem borer to the Arabica variety.
- ❖ Coffee white stem borer, Xylotrechus quadripes, is a serious pest of arabica coffee causing a yield loss up to 40 per cent in all coffee growing areas of India.

Director General of NCC

- ❖ Lieutenant General B S Sahrawat took over the reins of National Cadet Corps as its Director General.
- ❖ He has served in numerous Staff and Command appointments in various parts of the country and abroad, which includes the Military Observer in Iraq and Kuwait for a year. He has been awarded the Sena Medal during the floods of Kosi River in Bihar in 2008.

National Cadet Corps

- ❖ The National Cadet Corps is the Indian military cadet corps with its Headquarters at New Delhi, India.
- ❖ The NCC in India was formed with the National Cadet Corps Act of 1948. It was raised on 15 July 1948.

- ❖ National Cadet Corps is a Tri-Services Organization, comprising the Army, Navy and Air Force, engaged in grooming the youth of the country into disciplined and patriotic citizens.
- ❖ The National Cadet Corps in India is a voluntary organization which recruits cadets from high schools, colleges and universities all over India.
- ❖ Motto: Unity and Discipline.

Golden Peacock award for 2017

- ❖ Cholamandalam MS General Insurance, a Murugappa Group company, has bagged the Golden Peacock award for risk management for the year 2017.
- ❖ It has bagged the award under the Insurance (General) category at the recently concluded Global Convention on Corporate Ethics and Risk management in Singapore.
- ❖ The Golden Peacock Awards set up in 1991 by Institute of Directors (IOD) is now regarded as a benchmark of corporate excellence worldwide.

Ronaldo wins Globe award

- ❖ Cristiano Ronaldo has been named Globe Soccer's Best Player for the second year in a row and the fourth time overall.
- ❖ The Portuguese international also won the prize, instituted by the EFAA (European Association of Football Agents) and ECA (European Clubs Association), in 2011, 2014 and 2016.

Amardeep Singh Bhatia appointed as Director of SFIO

- ❖ Senior IAS officer Amardeep Singh Bhatia was appointed as new director of Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO).

Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO)

- ❖ The SFIO is a fraud investigating agency in India, under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, headquartered in New Delhi.
- ❖ The SFIO is involved in major fraud probes and is the co-ordinating agency with the Income Tax Department and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).
- ❖ It was established in January 2003 based on the recommendation of Naresh Chandra Committee on corporate governance.

Indian History Congress

- ❖ The three-day long 78th session of the Indian History Congress was held at the Jadavpur University, Kolkata.
- ❖ The Indian History Congress is held in six sections - Ancient India, Medieval India, Modern India, Countries Other than India, Archaeology and Contemporary India.
- ❖ The aim of conducting Indian History Congress is for promotion and encouragement of the scientific study of Indian History, holding Congresses and publishing of the proceedings, bulletins, memoirs, journals and other works.

Vinay Sahasrabuddhe - President of ICCR

- ❖ National vice-president of the BJP, Vinay Sahasrabuddhe, who is also member of Rajya Sabha has been appointed the President of Indian Council of Cultural Relations (ICCR).
- ❖ Sahasrabuddhe is the vice-president of Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini which is South Asia's only training and research academy for elected representatives and voluntary social workers.

Indian Council of Cultural Relations

- ❖ ICCR was founded in 1950 by India's first Education Minister Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, who also served as its first President.
- ❖ The ICCR's main objectives are to actively participate in the formulation and implementation of policies and programmes pertaining to India's external cultural relations and to foster and strengthen cultural relations and mutual understanding between India and other countries.

SPORTS

Asian Archery Championships

- ❖ Indian archers grabbed three gold, four silver and two bronze medals at the Asian Championships held at Dhaka, Bangladesh.
- ❖ Indian Archer Abhishek Verma won the gold beating Korean Jongho Kim
- ❖ Akash won the gold medal beating Dhiraj Bommadevara in the men's recurve division.
- ❖ Indian women's compound team of Jyothi Surekha Vennam, Trisha Deb and Parveena win the gold medal.

- ❖ 15-year-old Himani Kumari and 14-year-old Akash of Haryana bagged the quota places for the 2018 Youth Olympics in Argentina.

Shiva Keshavan wins Gold in Asian Championships

- ❖ India's veteran Winter Olympian Shiva Keshavan won a gold medal at the Asian Luge Championships at Altenberg, Germany.
- ❖ The sole Indian participant and defending Asian champion retained his title.
- ❖ The race, which was originally scheduled in Nagano, Japan, was shifted to Germany due to technical issues.
- ❖ Keshavan will represent India at the 2018 Winter Olympic Games at Pyeongchang in South Korea for his record sixth Olympics.

Cricket

- ❖ Virat Kohli became the first captain to score six double tons surpassing Brian Lara's record in Test cricket.
- ❖ Virat Kohli became the first captain to register a hat-trick of centuries in a three-match series and second Indian to score back-to-back double centuries, only after Vinod Kambli.

Winter Olympics 2018

- ❖ Russia was banned from the 2018 Winter Games by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) over its state-orchestrated doping programme.
- ❖ Those athletes who do go to the Games will participate under the name "Olympic Athlete from Russia" and the country's flag will not fly at any 2018 ceremony.
- ❖ The sanction was the toughest ever levelled by the IOC for drug cheating and came just 65 days ahead of the games in Pyeongchang, South Korea.
- ❖ An explosive report by the World Anti-doping Agency (WADA) and two subsequent IOC investigations have confirmed that Russian athletes took part in an elaborate drug cheating programme which peaked during the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi.
- ❖ The IOC also banned Russia's Deputy Prime Minister Vitaly Mutko — who was sports minister during the Sochi Games — for life.
- ❖ Mutko is currently the head of the organising committee for the 2018 World Cup, which Russia is hosting.

World Para-Swimming Championship

- ❖ Visually impaired swimmer Kanchanmala Pande of Nagpur became the first Indian to win gold in at the World Para-Swimming Championships in Mexico.
- ❖ Pande, who works with Reserve Bank of India (RBI), stood first in the in 200 meters medley event in S-11 category.
- ❖ She was chosen to represent India in the championships at the back of her outstanding performance in the IDM Berlin Para-Swimming Championships on July.

Indonesia Open Aquatic Championship 2017.

- ❖ Indian Diving Team won 1 Gold, 3 Silver and 2 Bronze Medals in **Indonesia Open Aquatic Championship 2017** held in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Hockey World League

- ❖ India defeated Germany 2-1 to win the bronze medal at the Hockey World League Final held in Bhubaneswar Odisha.
- ❖ Australia beat Argentina 2-1 in the final of the Hockey World League Final (HWLF) to win gold at Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. They retained their Hockey World League Final title.

Asian Airgun Championship

- ❖ The 10th Asian Airgun Championship was Held at the Asaka Shooting Range in Wako City, Japan, the venue for the 2020 Olympics.
- ❖ India returned home with 21 medals including six gold, eight silver and seven bronze
- ❖ More importantly, four junior shooters – Tushar Mane, Mehuli Ghosh, Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker – also claimed quota places for the 2018 Youth Olympics Games which will be held in Buenos Aires

10th Asian Airgun Championship

- ❖ India's Saurabh Chaudhary by winning a gold medal has qualified for the Youth Olympics Games which is scheduled to be held in 2018 at Buenos Aires, Argentina and a set junior world record in 10m air pistol at the ongoing Asia Youth Olympics Games qualification tournament in Wako City, Japan.

- ❖ He became the third Indian to bag quota places for the 2018 Youth Olympic Games at the 10th Asian Airgun Championship.

Siwach named ABC's best youth boxer

- ❖ World youth champion Sachin Siwach was named the Asian Boxing Confederation's best youth boxer of the year.
- ❖ Siwach, who won the world title last year, claimed the Asian youth championships silver this year besides a gold at the Youth Commonwealth Games.

Beijing unveils 2022 Winter Olympics emblems

- ❖ China unveiled emblems for the Beijing 2022 Winter Olympics and Paralympics inspired by Chinese calligraphy.
- ❖ Beijing, which hosted the Olympics in 2008, will become the first city ever to hold both the summer and winter Games.
- ❖ Designed by artist Lin Cunzhen, the emblems combine traditional and modern elements of Chinese culture, as well as features embodying the passion and vitality of winter sports.
- ❖ Inspired by 冬, the Chinese character for "winter", the emblem resembles a skater at the top and a skier at the bottom.



- ❖ The flowing ribbon-like motif between them symbolises the host country's rolling mountains, Olympic venues, ski pistes and skating rinks. It also points to the fact that the Games will coincide with the Chinese New Year.

Commonwealth Wrestling Championships

- ❖ Sushil Kumar secured a gold medal at the Commonwealth Wrestling Championships in Johannesburg, South Africa. This is Sushil's first international medal since his gold medal in the 2014 Commonwealth Games in Glasgow.

- ❖ Competing in the 74kg weight category, he defeated New Zealand Akash Khullar in the final to clinch the gold medal for India.
- ❖ India's other wrestler in same category, Parveen Rana won a bronze medal.

PV Sindhu wins silver in World Superseries

- ❖ Top Indian shuttler P.V. Sindhu won silver medal in Dubai World Superseries.
- ❖ Sindhu lost gold medal to World No. 2 Akane Yamaguchi of Japan
- ❖ This is the third major event where Sindhu has had to settle for a silver after Olympics 2016 and World Championships 2017.
- ❖ Sindhu ends a successful year, where she won the Korea Super Series and India Open, with a silver in the Dubai World Superseries Finals.

Indian junior boxers claim six gold medals

- ❖ Indian junior boxers won six gold, four silver and a bronze medal at the fifth International Sven Lange Memorial Tournament held in the German city of Schwerin. India finished as overall champions.
- ❖ Bhavesh Kattamani (52kg) picked up the best boxer trophy along with his gold medal.
- ❖ The performance of these boxers also earned them the 'Best Team' of the tournament award.

Junior National Badminton Championships

- ❖ Aakarshi Kashyap has won the girls' singles title in both the under-17 and the under-19 sections at the 42nd Junior National Badminton Championships 2017 held in Guwahati, Assam.
- ❖ Mithula UK has won both the girls' doubles U-19 and the mixed doubles U-19 sections
- ❖ Vishnuvardhan Goud has won both the boys' doubles U-17 boys' and the doubles U-19 sections in the Championship.

9th International Youth Sailing Competition

- ❖ Krishnapatnam Port in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh, is hosting the 9th edition of International Youth Sailing Competition of India from December 27th to December 31st 2017.
- ❖ The event is the largest sailing competition in the country

- ❖ It is organised by the Navayuga Sailing Academy, Tamil Nadu Sailing Association (TNSA) and Yachting Association of Andhra Pradesh (YAAP) under the aegis of the Yachting Association of India (YAI) and the Asian Sailing Federation (ASAF).
- ❖ The port is also holding YAI Senior and Youth National Championships
- ❖ Earlier eight editions of India International youth sailing were held at Chennai.

Vijender Singh beats Ernest Amuzu

- ❖ Vijender Singh defended his WBO Oriental and Asia Pacific super middleweight titles against Ghana's Ernest Amuzu.
- ❖ The 32-year-old Haryana pugilist, who is currently sixth in WBO rankings, fought in the mega show called 'Rajasthan Rumble'.
- ❖ With this win, he registered his tenth consecutive win in his professional boxing career.

Sushil Kumar - Most Expensive Wrestler

- ❖ Double Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar was picked for a whopping Rs 55 lakh by the Delhi Sultans during the Pro Wrestling League auctions in New Delhi.
- ❖ Sushil earned the highest bid is now the most expensive player in the history of the tournament.
- ❖ Among the women, the highest bid came for World Championship gold medallist Helen Maroulis (Under-57kg category) of the United States, who was bought for Rs 44 lakh from Haryana Hammers.
- ❖ The upcoming season of the PWL will be its third edition. The first edition was won by Revanta Mumbai Garuda and the second season by scooped by NCR Punjab Royals.
- ❖ In both the editions, Haryana Hammers reached the final but failed to get over the line.

World Blitz & Rapid Championships 2017

- ❖ Former multiple World Champion Viswanathan Anand of India defeated reigning champion Magnus Carlsen at the World Rapid Championship (WRC) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.
- ❖ In women's category china's ju Wenjun won the title.

61st National Shooting Championship

- ❖ Anisa Sayyed won the women's 25m pistol gold with a new record at the ongoing 61st National Shooting Championship Competitions (61st NSCC), in Trivandrum.
- ❖ In the junior women's 25m pistol, another Haryana shooter Chinki Yadav won gold with national record.

IMPORTANT DAYS

52nd Raising Day of BSF observed – 1 December

- ❖ The Border Security Force (BSF), 'India's first line of defence' celebrated its 52nd Anniversary of Raising Day.
- ❖ The BSF is a paramilitary force responsible for guarding India's land border during peacetime and preventing transnational crime.
- ❖ Governed by the Ministry of Home Affairs, the BSF stands as the world's largest border security force.
- ❖ Due to its large size and operations, BSF is the only CAPF to have its own Air Wing, Marine Wing and Artillery Regiments.
- ❖ It is one of the five Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF), currently headed by Director General K.K Sharma.
- ❖ The BSF covers of over 6,000 km of border from Pakistan to Bangladesh, across which it has 656 border outposts.

World AIDS Day – 1 December

- ❖ The World AIDS Day is celebrated every year all over the world on December 1 to raise awareness, as a global public health problem.
- ❖ The theme selected by World Health Organization (WHO) for year 2017 is 'My health, my right'.
- ❖ Founded in 1988, World AIDS Day was the first ever global health day.

International Day for the Abolition of Slavery-December 2

- ❖ The International Day for Abolition of Slavery is celebrated on December 2 every year with an objective to raise awareness about slavery and its impact on the society.
- ❖ The International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, 2 December, marks the date of the adoption, by the General Assembly, of the United Nations

Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others.

Facts

Global Estimates of Modern Slavery

- ❖ “Global Estimates of Modern Slavery” report released a Walk Free Foundation (WFF).
- ❖ The report was published on behalf of the global body International Labour Organisation (ILO).
- ❖ The country wise figures are not mentioned in the report but it has revealed that 40.3 million people are victims of modern slavery in 2016.

Global Slavery Index

- ❖ “Global Slavery Index” also released by this walk free foundation.
- ❖ India has been ranked 4th out of 167 countries.
- ❖ In 2016, it was deemed to have some 18.3 million people trapped in slavery.

International Day of Persons with Disabilities - December-3

- ❖ The International Day of Persons with Disabilities observed on December 3 every year which aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilize support for the dignity, rights and well-being of persons with disabilities.
- ❖ This year the theme for this day is “Transformation towards sustainable and resilient society for all”.
- ❖ WHO figures say that 15.3% of the world’s population lives with some kind of disability.
- ❖ India’s 2011 census says that 2.21% of the population have disabilities.

Indian Navy Day – December 04

- ❖ The Indian Navy Day is celebrated on December 4 every year to commemorate Operation Trident, an attack on the Karachi harbour during the Indo-Pakistan war in 1971.
- ❖ This year is 46th Navy Day
- ❖ The Indian Navy is the fifth largest in the world
- ❖ The Navy has three commands: Eastern headquartered in Vishakhapatnam, Western Command in Mumbai, and Southern Command in Kochi. The Navy operates in 66 bases under the Commands.

INDIAN NAVY DAY : 04th DEC

Commemorating the Operation Trident during the Indo-Pakistani War of 1971




This operation was the response to the Pakistan air attack in the western sector on 3 rd Dec 1971.	Operations was launched on Pakistan's port city of Karachi by the Indian Navy on 4 th Dec 1971.	Operation consisted of Vidyut class missile boats, anti-submarine and fleet tankers etc.	No Casualties reported from India's side, while Pakistan suffered huge losses of Naval ships & casualties.	Operation Trident had introduced to the war, the first ever ship launched missiles in the region.
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World Soil Day - 5 December

- ❖ World Soil Day is celebrated annually on the 5th of December by Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) which has headquarters in Rome.
- ❖ The theme for world soil day 2017 is 'caring for the planet starts from the ground'
- ❖ It aims to communicate messages on the importance of soil quality for food security, healthy ecosystems and human well-being.
- ❖ The International Union of Soil Sciences (IUSS) had adopted resolution proposing 5th of December as World Soil Day in 2002 to celebrate importance of soil as critical component of natural system and as vital contributor to human wellbeing.
- ❖ Later in June 2013, the FAO Conference unanimously endorsed World Soil Day and requested official adoption at 68th UN General Assembly.
- ❖ In December 2013, 68th UNGA declared 5th of December as the World Soil Day.

Armed Forces Flag Day – December 07

- ❖ The Indian Armed Forces Flag Day is observed every year on December 7 since 1949 to honour the soldiers, airmen and sailors of India who fought on the borders to safeguard the country's honour.

- ❖ The idea behind observing a Flag Day was to distribute small flags to the general population and in return collect donations.
- ❖ The fund collected on the Flag Day is used for
 - Rehabilitation of battle casualties
 - Welfare of serving personnel and their families
 - Resettlement and welfare of ex-servicemen and their families.

International Civil Aviation Day – December 07

- ❖ International Civil Aviation Day has been celebrated by the International Civil Aviation Organization since 7 December 1994, to mark the 50th anniversary of the signing the Convention on International Civil Aviation.
- ❖ The purpose of the day is to recognize the importance of aviation, especially international air travel, to the social and economic development of the world.
- ❖ International Civil Aviation Day theme for 2015-2018 theme- **Working Together to Ensure No Country is Left Behind.**

International Anti-Corruption Day - 09 December

- ❖ The United Nations' (UN) International Anti-Corruption Day is annually observed on December 9 to raise public awareness of corruption and ways to fight it.
- ❖ The Theme for the year 2017 is **United against corruption for development, peace and security.**
- ❖ On 31 October 2003, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Corruption and requested that the Secretary-General the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) as secretariat for the Convention's Conference of States Parties.
- ❖ The Assembly also designated 9 December as International Anti-Corruption Day.
- ❖ The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) are at the forefront of these efforts.

Human Rights Day - 10 December

- ❖ Human Rights Day is observed every year on 10 December.
- ❖ The date was chosen to mark the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the first global enunciation of human rights on 10 December 1948, in the UNGA.

- ❖ The Theme for the year 2017 is **Let's stand up for equality, justice and human dignity.**
- ❖ This year, Human Rights Day kicks off a year-long campaign to mark the upcoming **70th anniversary** of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- ❖ In addition, it is traditionally on 10 December that the five-yearly United Nations Prize in the Field of Human Rights and Nobel Peace Prize are awarded.

International Mountain Day - 11 December

- ❖ International Mountain Day has been observed every year on 11 December, designated by the United Nations General Assembly since 2003.
- ❖ It aims to create awareness about the importance of mountains to life, to highlight the opportunities and constraints in mountain development and to build alliances that will bring positive change to mountain peoples and environments around the world.
- ❖ The theme for the year 2017 is "Mountain under Pressure: climate, hunger, migration".
- ❖ This year, the theme is also linked to the Mountain Partnership Global Meeting, to be held on 11-13 December at FAO headquarters in Rome, Italy.

Universal Health Coverage Day

- ❖ Universal Health Coverage Day was commemorated on 12th December, 2017.
- ❖ It is the anniversary of the first unanimous United Nations resolution calling for countries to provide affordable, quality health care to every person, everywhere.
- ❖ Universal Health Coverage (UHC) means everyone can access the quality health services they need without financial hardship. Universal health coverage has been included in the new Sustainable Development Goals adopted by the United Nations.

National Energy Conservation Day - 14th December

- ❖ National Energy Conservation Day is organized on 14th December each year in India by Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), under Ministry of Power.
- ❖ It aims to demonstrate India's achievements in energy efficiency and conservation.

International Tea Day - December 15

- ❖ International Tea Day is observed annually on December 15
- ❖ It aims to draw global attention of governments and citizens to the impact of the global tea trade on workers and growers.
- ❖ The decision to observe ITD on December 15, 2005, was taken after deliberations amongst various international organizations and trade unions during the World Social Forum in Mumbai, India (2004) and Porto Alegre, Brazil (2005).

Vijay Diwas

- ❖ Vijay Diwas was observed to commemorate the soldiers who lost their lives in 1971 Indo-Pak war.
- ❖ Eastern Naval Command observed the 47th anniversary of Vijay Diwas at Amar Jawan Jyoti.
- ❖ On December 16, 1971, the Chief of Pakistani Forces, Lieutenant General AAK Niazi along with 93,000 troops surrendered to the allied forces, comprising of the Indian Army and the Mukti Bahini, led by Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora, who was the Eastern Army Commander during the war.

International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers – 17 December

- ❖ International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers is observed annually on December 17 by sex workers, their advocates, friends, families and allies.
- ❖ The day calls attention to
 - Hate crimes committed against sex workers worldwide, as well as
 - The need to remove the social stigma and discrimination
 that have contributed to violence against sex workers and indifference from the communities they are part of.
- ❖ **First observed in 2003**, the International Day to End Violence Against Sex Workers was founded by Dr. Annie Sprinkle and the Sex Workers Outreach Project USA (SWOP-USA), an American sex worker rights organization.
- ❖ The International Committee on the Rights of Sex Workers in Europe (ICRSE) adopted the **red umbrella** as a symbol of resistance to discrimination in 2005.

Wright Brothers Day

- ❖ President Donald Trump issued an official proclamation to mark this year's holiday by honouring Wright brothers.
- ❖ It marks the 114th anniversary of the first airplane flight that Dayton brothers Orville and Wilbur Wright made along a windswept beach in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina on December 17, 1903. The first aircraft powered by gasoline reached 120 feet in the air for 12 seconds during its maiden flight.
- ❖ In honour of the twelve second flight that ushered in the age of aviation, December 17 has been officially designated "Wright Brothers Day".

Goa Liberation Day - 19 December

- ❖ Goa Liberation Day is observed every year on 19th of December
 - To celebrate the liberation of Goa from Portuguese control after almost 450 years of colonial rule.
 - To pay their homage to the martyrs who laid down their lives on 19 Dec 1961 in the "Operation Vijay"
- ❖ It was provided statehood in 1987 and thereby became one of the richest and top per capita income states of India.
- ❖ It is **56th Liberation Day** for **Goa**.
- ❖ It was on 19 Dec 1961 "Operation Vijay" undertaken by the Indian Navy for liberation of Anjadiv Island and Territories of Goa, Daman and Diu from the Portuguese rule.
- ❖ The deposed governor general of Portugal in India Manuel Antonio vassalo e-silva surrendered to the then Chief of Army Staff General Pran Nath Thapar.

International Human Solidarity Day – 20 December

- ❖ The United Nations' (UN) International Human Solidarity Day is annually held on December 20 to celebrate unity in diversity and to raise public awareness of the importance of solidarity.
- ❖ Its objective is to eradicate poverty and promote human and social development in developing countries, in particular among the poorest segments of their populations.

December 22: National Mathematics Day

- ❖ The National Mathematics Day is observed every year on 22nd December to celebrate birth anniversary of great Indian Autodidact Mathematician **Srinivasa Ramanujan**.

- ❖ This year, it is 130th birth anniversary of Srinivasa Ramanujan and his birthday is celebrated as 'State IT Day' in Tamil Nadu.
- ❖ His contributions in Mathematics include number theory, mathematical analysis, infinite series, and making formulas and equations and his discoveries in mathematics include Ramanujam Prime and Ramanujam theta.
- ❖ He along with Godfrey Harold Hardy, a British Mathematician, discovered the smallest number represented as sum of two cubes 1729. This number is known as Hardy–Ramanujan number 1729.
- ❖ SASTRA Ramanujam Prize is annually given by SASTRA University of Tamil Nadu to a mathematician who is not more than 32 years in age for his/her outstanding contributions in an area of mathematics influenced by Ramanujan
- ❖ The National Mathematics Day was instituted in 2011 by former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to celebrate Ramanujan's 125th birth anniversary. Besides, the year 2012 was also declared National Mathematics Year.

National Farmers' Day

- ❖ The birthday of former Indian Prime Minister Chaudhary Charan Singh – December 23 is celebrated every year as National Farmers Day.
- ❖ Former Prime Minister Charan Singh was born in an agricultural family in Meerut district of Uttar Pradesh.
- ❖ In July 1979, Charan Singh became the country's 5th Prime Minister. Charan Singh, who was in power for seven months till January 14, 1980 brought the Zamindari Abolition and Land Reform Act that ended the power of feudal land-lords.
- ❖ Further, Charan Singh raised objections, condemnations and criticisms of money-lenders and abusive land owners.
- ❖ The Agricultural Produce Market Bill was the famous bill introduced by Chaudhary Charan Singh in the parliament for sale of farmers produce in the market.

Good Governance Day 2017 - 25 December

- ❖ Good Governance Day is observed annually on December 25th, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.
- ❖ The objective of the day is to
 - make people aware about the government commitment for providing a transparent and accountable administration in the country.

- Standardise the government functioning and to make it a highly effective and accountable governance for the citizens of the country.
- ❖ Good Governance Day was established in 2014 to honour Mr Vajpayee by fostering awareness among the people of accountability in government.
- ❖ Mr Vajpayee is the recipient of the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award and he is the only parliamentarian elected from four different States at different times - UP, Gujarat, MP and Delhi.

MISCELLANEOUS

Cyclone OCKHI

- ❖ The deep depression which had formed in the Bay of Bengal near Kanyakumari district in Tamil Nadu, bordering Kerala, has now intensified into a cyclonic storm named OCKHI.
- ❖ The name Ockhi, given by Bangladesh which in Bengali language means 'eye'.

Cyclones naming

- ❖ The World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) started the tropical cyclone naming system in 2000.
- ❖ Cyclones are named to provide ease of communication between forecasters and the general public regarding forecasts, watches, and warnings.
- ❖ The Cyclones worldwide are named by 9 regions — North Atlantic, Eastern North Pacific, Central North Pacific, Western North Pacific, North Indian Ocean, South West Indian Ocean, Australian, Southern Pacific, South Atlantic.
- ❖ Cyclones in the North Indian Ocean basin are named by the Indian Meteorological Department and the first tropical cyclone was named in 2004 as Onil (given by Bangladesh).
- ❖ Eight north Indian Ocean countries (Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Myanmar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Thailand) gave eight names each which was combined into a list of 64 names. One name from each country is picked in an order to name the cyclones.
- ❖ The previous storm Mora that caused severe flooding across Northeast India in May month, 2017 was named by Thailand. Mora is the name of one of the healing stones and also means star of the sea.
- ❖ The next cyclone will be named Sagar — a name given by India.

Stages of Cyclone Warning

- ❖ The cyclone warnings are issued to state government officials in four stages.

- ❖ The first stage warning known as "Pre Cyclone Watch" contains early warning about the development of a cyclonic disturbance.
- ❖ The second stage warning known as "Cyclone Alert" contains information on the location and intensity of the storm and coastal districts likely to experience adverse weather, advice to fishermen, general public, media and disaster managers.
- ❖ The third stage warning known as "Cyclone Warning" forecasts likely point and time of landfall.
- ❖ The fourth stage of warning known as "Post Landfall Outlook" forecasts expected time of landfall.

Taj Mahal - 2nd best UNESCO world heritage site

- ❖ The Taj Mahal, India's iconic ivory-white marble mausoleum in Agra, is the second best UNESCO world heritage site in the world.
- ❖ The survey Conducted by online travel portal Trip Advisor lists the UNESCO Cultural and Natural heritage sites best rated by travellers around the globe.
- ❖ Cambodia's Angkor Wat, a temple complex has bagged the first spot in the survey.

Mount Hope - UK's new highest mountain

- ❖ Britain has a new highest mountain after new satellite data revealed the peak was almost 400 metres taller than previously thought.
- ❖ Mount Hope, in the British Atlantic Territory, was recently re-measured and found to be 377 metres taller than previous calculations.
- ❖ Therefore, Mount Hope is 3,239 metres, meaning it knocks Mount Jackson, the current title holder at 3,184 metres, off the top spot.

India ranked 109th in mobile internet speed

- ❖ The popular internet speed testing service Ookla has released the November edition of the Speed Test Global Index, ranking average internet speeds in different countries, on mobile and home broadband.
- ❖ India is ranked 109 out of 122 countries in terms of mobile internet speed. On an average mobile data networks in India is 8.80Mbps.
- ❖ At present, Norway has the fastest mobile networks in the world with an average speed of 62.66Mbps.
- ❖ India is ranked 76 out of 133 countries for broadband speed.

- ❖ In broadband speed, Singapore leads the way with average speed of 153.85 Mbps.

New Island

- ❖ The world's newest island "Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai" was formed during a volcanic eruption in the remote Pacific three years ago.
- ❖ The island rose from the seabed about 65 km northwest of the Tonga capital Nuku'alofa.
- ❖ Scientists expected that the island will last anywhere from six to 30 years due to its resilience.
- ❖ It is mainly because warm sea water combined with ash during the volcanic explosion to create a concrete-like substance known as "tuff" (a light porous rock).
- ❖ Scientists believe that studying the life cycle of this new island will give insights in to Mars environment, since it is having many similar volcanic islands.

Govt to bear MDR on small digital transactions

- ❖ The Union Cabinet has decided that Government will borne **Merchant Discount Rate (MDR)** charges on transactions up to Rs. 2,000 made through debit cards, BHIM UPI or Aadhaar-enabled payment systems (AePS) to promote digital transactions.
- ❖ It will be borne by the government **for two years** with effect from 1 January, 2018 by reimbursing the same to the banks.
- ❖ MDR is the cost paid by a merchant to a bank for accepting payment from their customers via credit or debit cards every time a card is used for payments in their stores.
- ❖ In India, the **RBI specifies maximum MDR charges** that can be levied on every card transaction.
- ❖ A Committee will look into industry cost structure of such transactions which will form basis to determine levels of reimbursement.
- ❖ It will comprise of Secretary Department of Financial Services, Secretary Ministry of Electronics & IT (MeITY) and CEO, National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI).

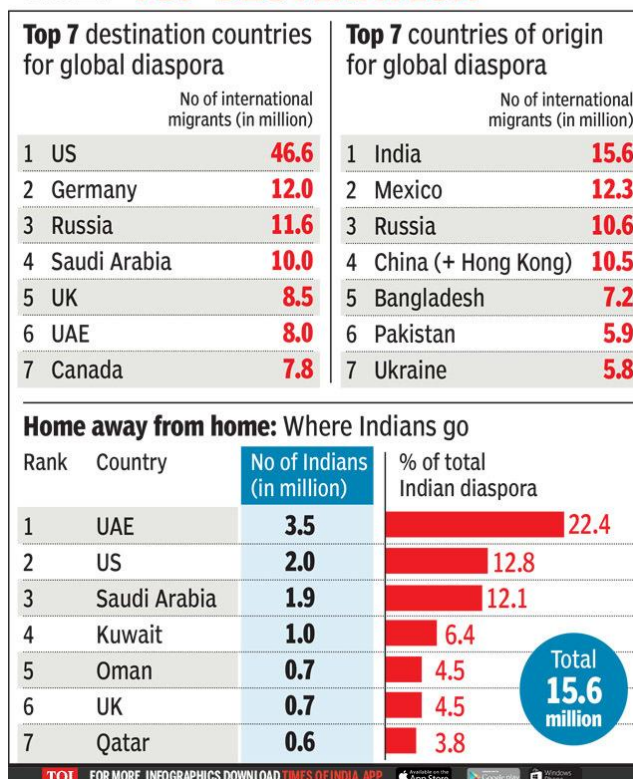
‘Youthquake’ named word of the year by Oxford Dictionaries

- ❖ “Youthquake”, defined as “a significant cultural, political, or social change arising from the actions or influence of young people”, has been selected by Oxford Dictionaries as the 2017 word of the year.
- ❖ While the word of the year is usually added to Oxford dictionaries, Youthquake is already listed; it was originally coined in the 1960s by Vogue editor Diana Vreeland to describe how British youth were changing fashion and music around the world.

India’s diaspora largest in the world

- ❖ India has the largest diaspora population in the world, with 16 million Indians living outside the country they were born in, according to United Nations report on migration trends.
- ❖ The survey, conducted by the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, found 224 million people lived as international migrants, or in a country other to the one they were born in.
- ❖ The richest Indian diaspora is in the US, where Indians counted for the third-largest ethnic group in 2015, making one per cent of the total US population.
- ❖ Mexico had the second largest diaspora population at 12 million, followed by Russia and China.

GULF TOP DESTINATION



- ❖ The Indian diaspora constitutes 6% of the total number of international migrants (people living outside the country of their birth), which was estimated at 243 million in 2015.

Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh election results

- ❖ The BJP has won 99 of Gujarat's 182 assembly seats while the Congress and its alliance has won 80, A party needs 92 seats or more to form government in Gujarat.
- ❖ In Gujarat, almost 2 percent (5.5 lakh votes) of the voters chose the "None Of The Above" (NOTA) option and that's higher than the shares of all other parties apart from the BJP or Congress.
- ❖ The BJP has won 44 of Himachal Pradesh's 68 seats and the Congress has won 21. A party needs 35 seats or more to form government in Himachal.
- ❖ While in Gujarat the BJP won for the consecutive 6th term and in Himachal Pradesh, the ruling party Congress lost its government to the BJP.

CM designates for Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh

Gujarat

- ❖ A new BJP government, led by Vijay Rupani, was sworn in at a grand ceremony in Gujarat capital Gandhinagar.
- ❖ Governor Om Prakash Kohli administered the Oath of Office and Secrecy to 20 Ministers, including Mr. Rupani and his deputy Nitin Patel.
- ❖ Along with Mr. Rupani and Mr. Nitin Patel, a total of 19 Ministers — nine of them in the Cabinet rank and 10 Ministers of State (MoS).

Himachal Pradesh

- ❖ Five-time MLA and Rajput leader Jairam Thakur designated as 13th Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh after BJP won by two-third majority in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly election.
- ❖ A decision in this regard was unanimously taken at the BJP Legislative Party meeting.

Delhi government tests Anti- Smog gun to tackle air pollution

- ❖ The Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has tested an Anti-Smog gun at Anand Vihar to tackle its air pollution problem in Northern areas of Delhi.
- ❖ Anti-Smog gun is simply a Water mist cannon.

- ❖ The droplets merge with dust particles replicating the effect of rain, as rain lowers levels of air pollution by bringing particulates in pollution down to the ground.

2017's top-grossing actor in Forbes list

- ❖ Vin Diesel has been named the top-grossing actor of 2017 by Forbes, with \$1.6 billion in global ticketing receipts from his film 'The Fate of the Furious'.
- ❖ The second spot was occupied by Dwayne Johnson 'The Rock', with \$1.5 billion receipts.
- ❖ 'Wonder Woman' actress Gal Gadot, whose films earned \$1.4 billion worldwide, featured in the third spot on the list.
